

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide SB 01.24.2021

VISITATION AND RESTORATION – ACTS 10

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

Throughout history, God has been building a people for Himself from every tribe, tongue, nation, and people. The gospel is a message that crosses all of these boundaries and brings people together under Jesus. Our love for God and for others should motivate us to take the gospel into cross-cultural settings. Here in Acts 10 we see the gospel coming to a Roman Centurion and his household. Centurions (soldiers/officers) in the Bible are always spoken of in a positive light. This man cried out to God and God sent him an Angel! Here was a man walking in the light he had. It is so important that we walk in the light we have been given. If we walk in the Light we have, God will give us More Light! As a typical Roman he had been exposed to the Roman gods – Jupiter, Mars Venus etc. but found they had been exposed to the enlightenment concepts of Judaism and become devoutly monotheistic. He was a “God-fearer” who loved the God of Israel but stopped short of becoming full Jew. Here we see Peter using the Keys of the Kingdom for the 3rd and last time. He opened the door of faith for the Jews (Acts 2), and also for the Samaritans (Acts 8), and now he is used by God bring the Gentiles to Himself. Let's get into our study.....

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you most or spoke to you from Pastor Ray's message this last weekend?
2. How do you relate to people from different religions and races? Is this something Christians are known for doing well or poorly?
3. Have you been on the receiving end of prejudicial judgments? How did it make you feel? Did it motivate or demotivate you to treat people differently than you were treated?

Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 10:1-8

1. Who was Cornelius? What do we learn about him from the opening 2 verses? How is he different from Peter? How are they alike?
2. Have someone read Hebrews 11:6. How did Cornelius model this verse? What happened as a result?
3. How does Cornelius respond to the angel? How do you imagine he must have felt?

Cornelius was a devout, respectful, giving, and praying man. Though not a Jew, he was a worshiper of God. A centurion would have commanded around 600 soldiers, and would have been paid very well. Cornelius was a prominent man socially and financially. The angel appears to him at the ninth hour or about 3 p.m., which was the traditional Jewish hour for prayer. Although Cornelius was a God-fearer and extremely devout, he was not saved—delivered from his sins through faith in Christ. Cornelius's prayers and acts of charity prompted God's further revelation to him through Peter (vv. 5-6), which would lead to his and his family's salvation.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 10:9-16

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1. Describe Peter's vision in your own words. What did the vision mean? Why was Peter so concerned about what he ate?
2. Can you think of a modern-day parallel in our Christian faith to the Jewish food restrictions? What would it be like if God suddenly reversed that practice?
3. What does it tell us about God that He gave both Cornelius and Peter visions?

Peter had observed the dietary law and restrictions of Leviticus 11 for his entire life. Though Jesus declared all foods clean (Mark 7:17-23), some habits are harder to shake than others. The vision from the Lord dramatically altered Peter's perspective. Although Peter had walked with Christ and was instrumental in the early spread of Christianity, he was still operating under a list of rules he'd carried over from Judaism. We all have patterns and practices we have carried over from our life before Christ, Peter was no different. God used the vision to teach Peter and prepare him for the opportunity to share God's love with Cornelius..

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 10:17-33

1. How did Peter respond to the vision that he received? How does God use the vision and Peter's confusion for His glory?
2. What motivated Peter to cross the racial and religious divide between himself and Cornelius?
3. Why is it significant that Cornelius had gathered his whole family to hear what Peter had to say?
4. How do these verses show God's divine prerogatives and Peter's obedience working together?

A change in mind-set leads to a change in actions. That is exactly what we see in Peter's life. In order to meet with Cornelius, Peter had to cross lines that were previously set in religious stone. To first-century Jews, Gentiles were considered "unclean," and many Jews considered it against their religion to eat with Gentiles. When he entered Cornelius's house, Peter said God had sent him and stressed the truth he had learned: He was not to consider anyone common or unclean (vv. 24-28).

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 10:34-48

1. When Peter said, "God doesn't show favoritism" (v. 34), how do you think Cornelius and his household responded? What might they have been thinking or feeling?
2. What do we learn about Jesus through this passage? What do we learn about how God's message spreads through nations?

With the words, "God doesn't show favoritism," Peter shared a radical truth: Salvation is available to all people from all nations through Jesus Christ. This was an uncomfortable truth in Peter's day. We can't even begin to fathom the worldview shift first-century Jews faced when they realized God's grace was available to all. Faith in Jesus transcends ethnic and cultural boundaries and identities.

Applying God's Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

Peter preaches that only through Jesus the Messiah is there salvation! Those who say we should worship the "God of many names" and not "change people's religions" are going contrary to the Bible. Jesus alone is ordained by God to be the Judge of the living and the dead. Through His name Alone is the forgiveness of sins. Jesus said, "Salvation is of the Jews" (Jn. 4:22) and there is no salvation apart from faith in Jesus Christ. Some will say, "leave Cornelius alone, his religion is part of his culture, and it's a shame to change his culture!" But God does not see it that way. Apart from hearing the message of the Gospel and trusting Christ, Cornelius had

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no hope.

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

1. Are there any habits or patterns from your life before Christ that you need to let go of for the sake of the Kingdom?
2. Have any assumptions or misconceptions ever kept you from sharing the gospel with someone? How does this story challenge the judgments we make about those outside the kingdom?
3. What are some practical ways you can reach out to people who are different from you? What is keeping you from taking these steps?

PRAYER” Thank God for caring about people from every tribe, language, and people. Pray that we would see people the way God does. Ask that God’s desire for the nations would motivate us as we share the gospel with people who are not like us and fulfill the great commission.

“Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. 2 For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. 3 The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.” (Is. 60:1-3)