

The Community Grows

April 27, 2008

Acts 10:1-23; 11:19-30

This is the classic story of Peter and his vision and the house of Cornelius.

Goals for today:

1. To discover a cultural group present in our community, but under-represented in the church
2. to understand what it means for us today not to call anyone *impure or unclean*
3. To work towards understanding and connecting with folks of another culture

Back in your high school days, were there folks that you would not have invited into your life? Nerds? Jocks? Brainiacs? Rebels? Kids of other races? Druggies?

Have you ever experienced a time when someone who would have been uninvited into your life broke through, and became a significant part of your life?

Is there a person or group that you believe would be uninvited into the life of our church? Why or why not? **Prov 6:16-19.**

What is the key to turning enemies into friends?

Let's get into the text: These scripture passages are all from the Book of Acts.

1. **10:1-8.** What might an angel of God have to say about YOUR prayer life these days?
2. **10:9-16.** Why would God speak to Peter in a vision? Was it weird for Peter to be on the roof of the house? When has God showed you a new perspective on your beliefs? How did you respond?
3. **10:17-23.** How would your outreach to other be different if you truly believed that no person or group of persons is *unclean*? How does the arrival of the men from Cornelius connect to Peter's vision?
4. **11:19-21.** In what ways might God be calling you to go beyond your *comfort zone*? How will you respond?
5. **11:22-24.** What gift did Barnabas use in the town of Antioch? Has anyone encourage you lately? How can YOU encourage someone this week?
6. **11:25-26.** Why would Barnabas go fetch Saul (Paul) to work alongside him in Antioch? Who has especially helped you in the work you do? How can you thank this person?
7. **11:27-30.** Are you experiencing some *famine* in an area of your life? How could your Christian brothers and sisters help you in the midst of this *famine*?

Why did Peter hesitate to follow the directions of the vision?

What is the central meaning that Peter learned from this vision? What is the central meaning that WE learn from this scripture? How do we *live in the world, but not of the world*? How do we *hate the sin, but love the sinner*?

What impresses you most about Cornelius?

What does a church miss out on when it stops attempting to evangelize its community. What is the danger when those inside the fellowship consume the time of the saints to the neglect of those outside the current fellowship? What is the evidence that something like that is happening in a church?

What are the kinds of different *cultures* that make up our community? What kinds of things, ideas, or unwritten rules separate people from one another in our community? What can our church do to bridge those gaps?

Ephesians 4:11-16 What is the goal for us as the body of Christ, the followers of Jesus?

Next week's lesson: **A praying church. Acts 12, 13, and 14**