

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

ACTS 9:32-10:48

Next to Jesus' death and resurrection and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, the events that take place in Acts 10 are the most important developments in the history of Christianity.

If ever there was a power lunch, this was it!

Up until Acts 10, the Church was made up mostly of Jews. Christianity was viewed as a sect of Judaism.

But Jesus promised Peter the keys to the kingdom. And the man with those keys would open the door of salvation to **Jews, and Samaritans, and Gentiles**

In Acts 10, God blazes a new trail, and Peter leads the way. God uses a vision from heaven to open up Peter's mind, his heart, *even his mouth - and eventually the community of God*. A heavenly vision supplies Peter with the courage to chart a new course.

God teaches Peter that what He once called **unclean** He now calls **okay** - *and that includes both pork chops and Gentiles*. Acts 10 forever changes the scope of Christianity and the make-up of the Church. We cannot over-emphasize this chapter's significance.

We pick up where we left off last Sunday in 9:32...

"Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all parts of the country, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda." Lydda was an Israeli city with a large Gentile

population, 25 miles NW of Jerusalem, about 8 miles from the Mediterranean port of Joppa.

Today, **Lydda**, or its OT name, **Lod**, is between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem - home to the Ben Gurion airport.

Verse 33, “There (Peter) found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. And Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed.”

Every morning, mothers all over the world command their children, “*Arise and make your bed.*” And even those kids with two functional legs, are rarely obedient.

But Aeneas, a man who’d been crippled for eight years, “*Arose immediately.*” It was a miracle! His lame legs were strengthened - made limbered - then walked.

And miracle of miracles, *he even made his bed!* “*So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.*” The miracle became broadcast all across “*Sharon*” - or the coastal plain - including Israel’s two port cities: the *Jewish Joppa*, and *Roman Caesarea*.

Verse 36, “At Joppa, there was a certain disciple named Tabitha (the name is Aramaic for “*gazelle*”), which is translated Dorcas. (the Greek equivalent.)

“This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid *her* in an upper room. And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring *him* not to delay in coming to them.

Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought *him* to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.” Apparently, the sister had been some sort of a seamstress. Maybe a fashion designer. Friends were paying tribute to her skill - displaying her handiwork.

Peter is about to put Jesus' handiwork on display!

“But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed.” Now, look at the similarities here between the methods of Peter and His Master. Peter does some of the same things Jesus did in raising Jairus' daughter from her death bed... **The first similarity** was to put out the professional mourners. First-century Jews paid women to wail and weep at their loved one's funeral. It was feigned grief. And both Jesus and Peter had no tolerance for their crocodile tears. God prefers to work His miracles in an atmosphere of faith and sincerity.

But **the similarities continue**, “And turning to the body (Peter) said, “Tabitha, arise.” This was verbatim what Jesus said to Jairus' daughter. “Talitha Cumi (or little girl), I say to you, Arise...” *You get the impression Peter knows he's in over his head.* He's a fisherman, not a miracle-worker, so he takes his cues from Jesus. He recalls what Jesus did and follows Him precisely.

And Peter got the same results... “She opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. Then he gave her *his* hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive.”

The man who'd been a chicken now has the courage of a lion. Peter is walking on water again - operating by faith - *daring to trust Jesus even for the supernatural.*

“And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord. So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with Simon, a tanner.” A tanner was as close as you could get to an ancient taxidermist. He was skilled in dressing and preserving animal hides. And since a tanner worked with dead animals, the laws of Judaism considered him ceremonially unclean. This prohibited Simon the tanner from participating in the Jewish rituals of the Temple.

In fact, his trade was so despised by Jews that he was forced to work outside the city. Because of the defilement associated with his work, the Jewish Mishnah gave a tanner's wife the right to divorce him.

That Peter even stayed in the house of a tanner was another example of him doing what Jesus did! Peter befriended and identified with outcasts. He reached out to the unreachable and loved the unlovable. I'm sure Peter recalled the words of Jesus, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick..."

It's interesting, Peter seems to already be *leaning* in the direction of grace. But in Acts 10, he *free falls*.

Verse 1, “There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment...” Caesarea was a Mediterranean port built by Herod the Great in honor of Caesar. It was a magnificent city with a world-renown harbor.

Caesarea was Rome's political and military capital in Israel - home to the governor, and headquarters of the Roman occupation. And there was a Roman soldier, a Gentile, stationed in Caesarea, Cornelius.

Verse 2, he was “a devout *man* and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.” Cornelius was a Roman from Italy - a centurion, equal to an Army sergeant. Cornelius was the backbone of their military.

It's interesting, whenever a centurion appears in the NT it's usually in a favorable light. To rise to this rank, such a man had to be disciplined and trustworthy.

In verse 1, we're told this Cornelius was in charge of the Italian Regiment - the detachment that served as the Roman governor's personal bodyguard. Cornelius was the head of the Secret Service in Caesarea.

Cornelius was also called “a God-fearer.” He was a Gentile who'd tired of paganism. He was hungry for the true God. He had embraced Judaism, *short of being circumcised*. These *God-fearers* were sincere seekers.

They obeyed the Law's moral demands and gave offerings to the local synagogue. These Roman God-fearers were *good people*, yet they were *lost people*.

In all this man's good works, he'd failed to find God.

“About the ninth hour of the day (or 3:00 in the afternoon) he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, “Cornelius!” And when he observed him, he was

afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?" So he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God."

God had heard Cornelius' prayer. God always hears the sincere prayer of a searching heart. "Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do."

Remember in Acts 8, Philip was called to leave a revival in Samaria to find a solitary seeker of God on a lonely deserted highway outside Gaza. He preached Jesus to him. God never allows the person who fears Him and seeks Him to return home empty-handed...

Whether it's the aborigine in the Australian outback, or a little boy growing up under strict Islam, or the girl born into Jewish Orthodoxy - somehow, somehow God will get a sincere seeker the truth about His Son Jesus.

It reminds me of a young lady who'd always asked, "*what about the man on the island who's never heard the Gospel?*" This had been an obstacle to her faith.

This girl went on a mission trip to Uganda. On an island in the middle of Lake Victoria, she shared the Gospel with a man who'd never heard of Jesus. He was moved to tears. That's when it hit her, **she** was the answer to her own question, "*what about the man on the island who never heard?*" God has ways to get the Gospel to sincere hearts! And His way might be you!

Verse 7, “And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. So when he had explained all *these* things to them, he sent them to Joppa.” Their mission was to fetch Peter... “The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour.”

As we’ve mentioned, when God does a work He operates on both sides of the equation. Cornelius’ men are en route, as God tackles Peter’s reluctance. *It was noontime, on the rooftop, when Peter sees a vision...*

And Joppa was the perfect backdrop for this vision. *Today, there’s a whale-shaped fountain in the town center, a reminder of Jonah who set sail from this port.*

Remember, Jonah was the bigoted prophet. He was prejudiced against Ninevites. He hated Gentiles. In his mind and heart, God’s salvation was for “*Jews only.*”

But God altered Jonah’s direction. He stirred up a storm - scared a ship’s crew into slinging Jonah into the sea - *where a fish swallowed him; then spit him up on a bank. A repentant Jonah; then went on to preach to Assyria’s Gentiles.* Here, God is again at Joppa, where He once more busts up *The Jews Only Club.*

It’s noon. The tropical heat is on the rise. Peter climbs to the rooftop patio to enjoy some shade, and cool off in the ocean breeze. And it’s lunchtime...

“Then (Peter) became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance...”

Peter’s stomach is growling. He’s longing for a bowl of lentils, or Matzo balls, or a mutton sandwich. He’ll settle for a falafel. *But God Himself serves Peter lunch!*

“And (Peter) saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” A huge picnic blanket lowers from heaven, but all the entrees are non-koshered. Nothing Peter is being offered is on the Jewish menu.

God’s tasty treats fly in the face of what Peter’s religion taught him he could munch. Yet Peter hears the voice of God that says, “*Rise Peter; kill and eat.*”

Realize in the first century, Jews and Gentiles were separated *by pedigree, by circumcision, by Sabbath worship* - but above all, they were defined *by diet*.

A *kosher Jew* was religiously superior to a *non-kosher Gentile*. And that kosher Jew would never in a million years pull up to a table-full of God-forbidden food - nor eat with folks who occupied that table.

Jewish dietary laws were the epitome of *religion*. Yes, the distinction between *clean* and *unclean* had some definite health benefits - especially in a day when meat wasn’t always properly prepped and refrigerated.

But kosher laws were part of a bigger picture. God had ingrained in His people, Israel, a sense of right and wrong. Almost every dimension of life was delineated as *clean and unclean, holy and unholy, pure and impure, acceptable to God and unacceptable to God.*

This distinction was a grid that overlaid food, sacrifices, washing, houses, even people. The Law provided a means of differentiating “good” from “bad.”

And by learning the Law, you could pick out *the good guys* from *the bad guys*. This is the purpose behind not just Jewish religion, but all religion: *Muslim religion, Buddhist religion, even pseudo-Christian.* All religions define *clean from unclean - acceptable from unacceptable.* It contains standards, and taboos, and rituals that allow you to label people “pure” or “defiled.”

Often liberal critics attack religion as the enemy of unity. They claim religion is the Great Divider in the world. **Rather than bring us together, it keeps us apart. It separates us into factions and inflames hostilities. And in a sense this is true.** Every religion provides criteria that divide up humanity into *holy and unholy.*

And no other religion did this as comprehensively and rigorously as did God’s religion, Judaism. Kosher Jews were reminded at every mealtime there was such a thing as *right and wrong - holy and unholy.* Good guys ate “clean” foods. Bad guys ate the “dirty birds.”

And Judaism didn’t end with diet... In fact, it did such a thorough job identifying good from bad, that by the time you

subjected your life to the entire Mosaic Law you had to conclude with Rabbi Saul in his letter to the Romans, *"There is no one righteous, no, not one."*

An honest OT Jew was forced to an uncomfortable conclusion: **Everybody is a bad guy!** We're all sinners. Among humanity, there are no good guys!

This is why Christianity picks up where Judaism leaves off. We say this all the time, but without its full implication hitting us. ***Christianity is not a religion!***

Christianity is about salvation - not religion.

Religion chooses sides. It identifies the good guys from the bad guys - it assigns white hats and black hats - it awards merit badges to people for accumulating filthy rags... *but that's not Christianity!*

The Gospel declares that we're all bad guys. There's only one good guy, and His name is Jesus! **And the goal of Christianity is to bring everybody to Jesus!**

Whether you're a Tech fan or Georgia fan - a Mac-user or PC-user - a Republican or Democrat... *you're still a bad guy, and you need Jesus!* Unrighteous bad guys *and* self-righteous bad guys... secular bad guys *and* religious bad guys... pew-sitting bad guys *and* pulpit-occupying bad guys... *all of us need Jesus!*

Folks should no longer be categorized as *clean and unclean* - *chosen or common*. Jesus put an end to religion. Today, **the line in the sand for all humanity is no longer *the food we put in our mouth*, but *the faith we put in Jesus!*** God bestows

favor not on people who are religious, but on folks who come to Jesus by faith!

Here's what's happening in Peter's vision, God is replacing religion with *salvation*. Judaism was religion. *It was God's religion - even a perfect religion - but it was still religion*. Now God puts religion on the shelf and chooses new terms for His covenant with mankind.

Christianity is **salvation**, not *religion*... Since none of us are good, salvation is all about grace. And the only *place* you'll find *grace* is at the cross of Jesus.

This was the lesson God taught me when He introduced me to Calvary Chapel. At the time, I was a straight-laced Baptist. I thought my rules and religious compliance made me right with God. **But Calvary Chapel was my heavenly vision...** *I saw long-haired hippies, in bell-bottom jeans - with electric guitars and drums - loving each other and singing praise to Jesus.*

I thought you had to dress up to go to church. In my frame of reference, there was no way you could have long hair and go to heaven. I'd been told by pastors that electric guitars and drums were the devil's music.

Yet God said to me, ***"Rise, Sandy, play and sing!"*** The love and holiness I sensed at Calvary Chapel left me no choice. It was of God, *and obviously, God was not behaving according to the rules I'd been taught!*

Theologically, I believed in grace - but when I saw it in action it challenged me. It forced me out of my comfort zone. *This is what it did for Peter*. Suddenly, he realized you don't have to live up to *his* standards, *his* prejudices, *his* tradition to be accepted by God. If God calls a man ***"clean;"*** who is Peter

to call him unclean? Only Jesus can make a person clean in God's eyes.

Obviously, God was up to something new, but Peter isn't sure what God is cooking up. He's reluctant. Thus, his reply, verse 14, "But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean."

And here's the ultimate oxymoron... You can say, "not so friend" or "not so buddy" - but you can't say "not so Lord." "Lord" means "master, boss." If Jesus is your Lord you're under His command. "Not so" is a no-no!

Yet I empathize with Peter's reluctance. Asking a good Jew to eat non-kosher would be like requiring a diehard vegan to pig out on a chili-cheese burger.

This was a complicated decision. Years of religious training, and the bias it had created in him, kept Peter hemmed-in. He was trapped by three powerful forces: by principle, by prejudice, and by precedence.

Understand, principles can be either *informed* or *misinformed* - depending on how they're *formed*. Peter grew up a good Jewish boy. He kept kosher according to Leviticus 11. He ordered only off the "clean" menu. His wife shopped at the deli with the Orthodox sticker on the window. Shrimp had never crawled over his lips.

Peter had never savored a BLT sandwich - or a plate of pork BBQ! *It was a matter of principle!*... I'll never doubt Peter's devotion to principle. In my mind, a life without pork BBQ rivals the zeal of a suicide bomber!

So when God told him to eat unclean foods - *it was as if 1500 years of tradition, and the Law of Moses, and a thousand rabbis, and his entire Jewish family were screaming in Peter's ear to ask for another menu.*

From birth, Peter's conscience was drilled to keep kosher. This wasn't a simple preference - but a deeply-held matter of conscience. It was a **principle** to Peter. Yet please notice, **a misinformed principle could've kept Peter on the wrong side of God's will.**

Our conscience is an organ we train to act on cue. The conscience is taught by both *truth* and *tradition*. Thus, it can fight against the Holy Spirit, or be His ally.

Peter needs to surrender his conscience to the Lordship of Jesus. Some of Peter's principles were wrong - some no longer applied. God was blazing a new trail. A sovereign God is now stepping out of the box, and he's recruiting Peter to step out with Him.

But Peter has to cut ties with a few long-held **principles** if he's going to be part of this work of grace.

Peter was also trapped by **prejudice**. *And don't underestimate the power of a prejudice!* When Peter thought of eating pork or visiting Gentiles it just didn't "**feel right.**" Whether it *was right* wasn't his biggest hurdle! This was outside his comfort zone. *Prejudicial **feelings*** caused his resistance to what was God's will.

I know some prim and proper Baptists who would never come to church wearing short pants, or mow their lawn on Sundays... It just wouldn't "**feel right.**"

There are some things that don't "*feel right*" to you, but that doesn't make it wrong for someone else.

A Christian has to represent God's *truth*, not his *own prejudices*. To live by grace I make the decision not to let my preferences, or my feelings, or my traditions govern my interactions? Your prejudices will close the door to certain people. Grace keeps those doors open.

And for Peter to obey God, he also had to step over a *precedent*. He answered God, "*nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.*" Some behaviors had never, ever happened. *Peter never had sausage on his pizza!* To eat it would've been a first.

This is the type of conviction religious folks usually applaud. We hold on to a tradition by making a costly sacrifice. Well, Peter does the same, **but ironically his commitment works against God's will in his life.**

Some steps are hard to take, just because they've never been taken before. God wants to do an exciting work with Peter - take him to new places. Yet to obey God and go there, he has to step over a precedent.

This was a tough decision for Peter. Perhaps this is why God repeated the vision three times. Verse 15, "*And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common."* This was done three times. *And the object was taken up into heaven again.*" Peter had to wrestle with the truth and end up discarding a prejudice.

On the rooftop in Joppa, God was weaning Peter off religion so he could embrace grace. *And perhaps this is what needs to happen in your life?* Unlike religion, Christianity is NOT a commitment to a **principle**, or a **prejudice**, or a **precedent**. It's the pledge of allegiance to **a person!** It's all about Jesus! *The Ruler always trumps the rules. The Lord always overrides the Law.*

A Christian's conscience is bound to one passion: **to follow Jesus!** *Will you go where **He** sends you? Do what **He** says do? Love whoever **He** sends to your door?* And there will always be a knock on your door!

Verse 17, *"Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate."*

We get grace from God, but then we give grace to everyone around us. And it's *the giving of God's grace* that makes life an adventure. Religion is *uniform*, and *boring*, and *mechanical*, and *predictable*. Grace is wild and wooly. It's the call of the wild! **It's orthodox to believe in grace, but it's really risky to practice grace.**

Apply grace and you'll be criticized by religious folks. Dare to extend grace and it'll put you in *uncomfortable places*, with *uncomfortable people*, dealing with *uncomfortable situations*. This happened to Peter.

No sooner does God fold up the picnic blanket that three Gentiles - *Romans no less* - knock on his door.

“And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there. While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are seeking you. Arise therefore, go down and go with them, (*I love the encouragement that follows*) doubting nothing; for I have sent them.”

Legalistic leanings can be deeply ingrained and can derail a faith. That's why to live in grace you have to remove all doubts. Act immediately and decisively!

“Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, “Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?”

And they said, “Cornelius *the* centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you. Then he invited them in and lodged *them*.” *A new venture of faith is about to begin.*

“On the next day Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his relatives and close friends. As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped *him*. But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I myself am also a man.” I'm sure on the way from Joppa to Caesarea, Peter considered the implications of all this. A Jew was forbidden to enter the home of a Gentile since it would defile him. He would be unclean.

But Peter realizes once you strip away religion there's no difference between him and Cornelius. They both put their britches on the same way. They're both bad guys in need of Jesus. This is why Peter is so quick to admit he's just a man, like every other man.

Verse 27, "And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together. Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?" So Cornelius said, "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.' So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come.

Now, therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God."

Talk about eager listeners - *this is it!* They're all ears! I love what Charles Spurgeon once said, "It's not a great preacher that makes a great congregation, but a great congregation that makes a great preacher."

Verse 34, "Then Peter opened *his* mouth and said: "In truth, I perceive that God shows no partiality." Red and yellow,

black and white we're all precious in His sight... O prejudiced Peter has come a long way!

“But in every nation (not just Israel) whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ - He is Lord of all - that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, *even* to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God *to be* Judge of the living and the dead. To Him, all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.”

Peter preaches - and there's nothing fancy, or clever, or eloquent about his sermon. He just lays out the facts, *which is what I wish all preachers would do!*

For “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.”

Peter wasn't even through with his sermon. He doesn't even have an opportunity to give His invitation or an altar call before he's interrupted by God's Spirit.

It's funny, but Peter holds the unique distinction of being the only man interrupted by all three members of the Trinity... *On the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter was interrupted by God the Father... On several occasions, he was interrupted by God the Son... And here, He's interrupted by God the Spirit...* There are times when we also need to be interrupted. We need to quiet our opinions and let the Holy Spirit speak into our situation.

“And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.”

The Jews who came with Peter saw what happened. Before Peter could *brief the Gentiles on keeping kosher, or clip a single circumcision, or make a sacrifice, or read the Law...* God saved the Italian Guard, just as He did the Jews at Pentecost.

And it had absolutely nothing to do with anything but God's *grace and their faith*. It's about amazing grace.

“For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.” The same evidence of the filling of the Spirit the Jews received at Pentecost was apparent among the Gentiles in Caesarea. *The Gentiles entered the same covenant, in the same way, as had the Jews.*

“Then Peter answered, “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” In essence, they were baptized as Christians - *not Jews*.

“Then they asked him to stay a few days.”

Throughout the OT, you had to be *a child of Abraham* to be *a child of God*, but when Jesus died on the cross, He took away the sins of the whole **world**, not just the Jews. Access to God is now available to all people.

It's often been said, **“The only level ground in all the world is at the foot of the cross.”** Today, the only *“in crowd”* that matters are those who are **“in Christ.”**

Yet sadly, that's not the case in many churches. Leaders lay down their own law. Folks who conform are given special status. They ride in the front of the bus. Believers get divided into coach and first-class.

It's a religious caste system - *the opposite of grace!*

But there are no second-class citizens in God's kingdom. Never forget what Peter learned, **“What God has cleansed you must not call common!”** Later he'll send a letter to all believers to tell us we're **“complete in (Christ)”** - *not because we toe the party line!*

This was an amazing adventure for a good Jew like Peter... *Gentiles* knock on his door. He travels with *Gentiles* to a *Gentile* city - enters a *Gentile* home - then preaches to a roomful of *Gentiles*. In a sense, Peter just went up the coast, but in another sense, his Acts 10 experience was *the shot heard round the world*.

Jewish rabbis would've said a Gentile wasn't worthy to set foot under the same roof as a Jew. Yet by the end of the day, Gentile believers know the *same God*, participate in the *same*

covenant, and enjoy the same Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts as Jewish believers.

The future of Christianity is forever altered by Peter's obedience to this heavenly vision. Closer to home, you and I owe our place in God's family to Peter's courage.

May we also spread God's grace and dare to move out of our comfort zone into new ventures of grace.