

HOOK (right away): Anyone here likes jellybeans?

Buttered Popcorn jellybeans are the best-

my daughters hate them, even when they tried to like them; my friends hate them (“eww!” ykwya)

Even when others may struggle to welcome you or even reject you- treat you like buttered popcorn jellybeans

God welcomes you on the basis of Jesus

Buttered Popcorn Jellybeans

SERIES: THE MOVEMENT- A journey through the astonishing book of Acts

TEXT: Acts 10:1-48 (Not going to actually cover 2 chapters as I had said last week- so merry Christmas)

If we're honest with ourselves, all of us deal with some prejudices as we step out our front door into the world

It seems society divides itself on status, class, race, culture

We (Christian or not) have to be careful not to assume that the Kingdom of God is like this

THE TENSION- If we have ever thought that ourselves or someone else was less desirable to God because of *who they were* or *what they have done*, then we have missed who Jesus is and what Jesus has done.

Good ol' Pete is about to learn that lesson, but we begin our journey with another man-

There was a man in Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment.

Caesarea (named after Caesar Augustus/ 1st Roman emperor) was the capital of the roman occupation in Israel

31 miles north of *Joppa*- both coastal towns

Cornelius was a high ranking officer: Italian regiment was made up of some 600 elite soldiers, he overlooked 100

² He was a devout man and feared God along with his whole household. He did many charitable deeds for the Jewish people and always prayed to God.

Cornelius (and his whole family we see also) was a **religious** man, but not a **redeemed** one

The gospel, Jesus, is for both the irreligious and the religious

³ About three in the afternoon he distinctly saw in a vision an angel of God who came in and said to him, “Cornelius!”

⁴ Looking intently at him, he became afraid and said, “What is it, lord?” The angel told him, “Your prayers and your acts of charity have come up as a memorial offering before God. ⁵ Now send men to Joppa and call for Simon, who is also named Peter. ⁶ He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea.” ⁷ When the angel who spoke to him had gone, he called two of his household slaves and a devout soldier, who was one of those who attended him. ⁸ After explaining everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

The Lord sends an angel directly to Cornelius- tells him to get Peter cause He has a message for him

Couldn't the angel just have told him the message directly?

God chooses others, often people who are not like us, to bless, encourage, and teach us;

When we only surround ourselves with those most like us, we are forfeiting the blessing of seeing what the Kingdom of God will be like

⁹The next day, as they were traveling and nearing the city, Peter went up to pray on the housetop about noon. the rooftop was a flat area of the house (not sloped like our houses) used for storage or socializing, would've been a private area for Peter to go pray (you can actually visit the tanners house by the sea in Joppa)

Saul & Ananias had both had a vision to meet up; now Peter and Cornelius are about to have the same
Both Peter and Cornelius were praying when they receive their visions- both were actively seeking the Lord
We should make it a habit to **seek God in unhindered and unhurried prayer**, as best we can

¹⁰Then he became hungry and wanted to eat, but while they were preparing something, he went into a visionary state. can I just take a moment to acknowledge the fact that the bible is relatable! Lol

Now its ironic the vision God's about to send him is about...food! Just not the kind he would want.

¹¹He saw heaven opened and an object that resembled a large sheet coming down, being lowered by its four corners to the earth. ¹²In it were all the four-footed animals and reptiles of the earth, and the birds of the sky. ¹³Then a voice said to him, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat!" ¹⁴"No, Lord!" Peter said. "For I have never eaten anything common and ritually unclean!" ¹⁵Again, a second time, a voice said to him, "What God has made clean, you must not call common." ¹⁶This happened three times, Peter has a history of repeating things 3 times:

3 times denied Jesus, 3 times Jesus restores him, 3 times now he's challenged to obey
and then the object was taken up into heaven.

Jews under the Old Covenant were prohibited to eat certain animals (reptiles, crawlers, scavengers, pigs, etc)
Show they were different (the way they worshipped, treated each other, and even the way they ate),
It was a commitment to God (life without bacon is a commitment)

In his vision, Peter sees clean and unclean animals together

Peter may have thought this is s test of his orthodoxy – (he may be hungry but he's proud not to violate the code!)
God responds saying, **'Don't you dare call unholy, dirty what God has cleaned'**
Spoiler alert- He's not just talking about animals (although yaay bacon)

Never belittle what God has valued

Romans 8:31-39 (34) Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is the One who died, but even more, has been raised; He also is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us.

¹⁷While Peter was deeply perplexed about what the vision he had seen might mean, the men who had been sent by Cornelius, having asked directions to Simon's house, stood at the gate.

This is a defining moment for Peter- what will he do?

Always be open to God changing your mind

Wherever the Lord leads we should follow- even when we haven't been given the full picture yet

¹⁸They called out, asking if Simon, who was also named Peter, was lodging there.

Luke the writer intends for this to be a tense moment for us readers!

¹⁹While Peter was thinking about the vision, the Spirit told him, "Three men are here looking for you. ²⁰Get up, go downstairs, and accompany them with no doubts at all, because I have sent them." ²¹Then Peter went down to the men and said, "Here I am, the one you're looking for. What is the reason you're here?"

Peters still trying to figure this whole thing out- AND he's STILL hungry! (where's my chick-fil-a!)

²²They said, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who has a good reputation with the whole Jewish nation, was divinely directed by a holy angel to call you to his house and to hear a message from you." ²³Peter then invited them in and gave them lodging.

Remember Peter's staying at the (leather) tanners house; he may not have been able to invite these non-Jews in to spend the night if he wasn't in a house already considered unclean to Jewish society!

The next day he got up and set out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went with him. ²⁴The following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. Perhaps by staying at the tanners house Peter thought “wow what a stretch I’m going out in for God”, but God is about to stretch his comfortability even more

Listen CHRISTIANS: **For God’s mission to be carried out, God’s people must step out from their comfort zones**

Why are we not seeing more people saved? Maybe because we are avoiding most people

²⁵ When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, fell at his feet, and worshiped him.

Cornelius a Roman officer bows before this Jewish fisherman

²⁶ But Peter helped him up and said, “Stand up! I myself am also a man.”

Sidenote: in the bible you will see followers of God always directing worship to God- Jesus didn’t, He accepted it

²⁷ While talking with him, he went on in and found that many had come together there.

The same shock my wife had 1st time going to spend Christmas at my family’s house

²⁸ Peter said to them, “You know it’s forbidden for a Jewish man to associate with or visit a foreigner.

Well that’s a rude way to enter someone’s house!

He is only acknowledging what they were all aware of (Peter was like Kanye, he said what was on his mind)

You must understand the social tension between these 2 groups

In the Jewish worldview there are 2 kinds of people: Jews and Gentiles (anyone who’s not ethnically Jewish)

Jews believed gentiles were not loved by God nor had any salvation in Him, they were not part of the chosen people

They forgot that what made them chosen people, what set them apart wasn’t their numbers, nor their ingenuity, not even how good they were! (they sucked! Read the OT)

none of those things helped them escape Egypt’s slavery, settled in a new land, build a kingdom

GOD’S GRACE SET THEM APART! Not their skin color or nationality

It’s starting to sink in to Peter

But God has shown me that I must not call any person common or unclean. ²⁹That’s why I came without any objection when I was sent for. So I ask: Why did you send for me?”

Peter may be in a house full of people different than him, but they’re still people- IMAGE BEARERS of the Living God

To value other human life, is to value God- to do anything less than is to offend God

It’s true of the way we speak of politicians, celebrities, our neighbors, our haters, and even of the unborn

Peter wants to know, ‘why am I here?’

³⁰ Cornelius replied, “Four days ago at this hour, at three in the afternoon, I was praying in my house. Just then a man in a dazzling robe stood before me ³¹ and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your acts of charity have been remembered in God’s sight. (there’s a sermon right there, for another day) ³² Therefore send someone to Joppa and invite Simon here, who is also named Peter. He is lodging in Simon the tanner’s house by the sea.’ ³³ Therefore I immediately sent for you, and you did the right thing in coming. So we are all present before God, to hear everything you have been commanded by the Lord.”

Cornelius immediately obeyed; Peter immediately obeyed -

Delayed obedience is disobedience

If you already know what God requires, why you still putting it off!

Obedience tomorrow is still disobedience today

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak: “Now I really understand that God doesn’t show favoritism, that truth is found all over the OT, but just now is Peter understanding it (2 Chronicles, Proverbs, Deuteronomy)

God chooses a fisherman (Peter) and a PhD guy (Cornelius); and they both need to hear the same message: that ALL people (regardless of race, culture, education level, or socioeconomic level),

ALL people are made in the image of God.

That should change we view ourselves and others (you may need to believe it for yourself/ someone else)

Peter had his own conclusions, his own criteria and perspective on life (don’t we all?), and what God is telling Peter challenges Peter’s worldview.

³⁵ but in every nation the person who fears Him and does righteousness is acceptable to Him.

This isn’t saying you have to work your way to get to God, or work your way to stay there,

the only requirement for entry into God’s Kingdom is **faith in Jesus evidenced by obedience**

³⁶ He sent the message to the Israelites, proclaiming the good news of peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all. ³⁷ You know the events that took place throughout Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John preached: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were under the tyranny of the Devil, because God was with Him. ³⁹ We ourselves are witnesses of everything He did in both the Judean country and in Jerusalem, yet they killed Him by hanging Him on a tree. ⁴⁰ God raised up this man on the third day and permitted Him to be seen, ⁴¹ not by all the people, but by us, witnesses appointed beforehand by God, who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead. ⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to solemnly testify that He is the One appointed by God to be the Judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about Him that through His name everyone who believes in Him will receive forgiveness of sins.”

There’s a lot we can unpack about Peters sermon here- just a brief overview

- Jesus is Lord of all
- Jesus liberated the devil’s captives by the power of the Holy Spirit
- Jesus died under the curse others deserved
- Jesus was raised up, reigns forever
- Jesus will judge everyone
- the scriptures speak that there is forgiveness for everyone who trusts in Jesus’ name

Notice that he focuses on the historical facts of Jesus’ life

Christianity is not a mere philosophy or idea; it is good news about what God did in human history

The cross and the resurrection are not myths or metaphors but events that changed the course of humanity

Great resource if you want to explore evidence: [Right Now Media- Browse- Apologetics](#)

V43 is a glimpse into God’s heart

The Lord loves to save lost souls

and to include outsiders & outcasts into his kingdom

Matthew 22:1-14 the king’s wedding banquet for His son

(Guests don’t come, invites people in the byways and highways to come-

one guy is thrown out because he isn’t wearing proper attire-

Salvation is found only when we are clothed with Jesus’ righteousness)

What ‘outsiders’ are in your life? School, work, neighbors, fam, friends, frenemies

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came down on all those who heard the message. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speaking in other languages and declaring the greatness of God.

The 3rd Pentecost-

In Chapter 2 the H.S. was given to the disciples & spoke in other languages; same phrase "poured out"

Ch. 8 H.S. given to the Samaritans (half Jews) and spoke in other languages; same phrase "came down"

Landmark moments for the church

Matthew 16:18 Jesus had told Peter on this rock I will build my church, meaning he would use him to do so-

And he has: to the Jews at Pentecost- to the Samaritans – now to the gentiles

Then Peter responded, ⁴⁷ "Can anyone withhold water and prevent these people from being baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" ⁴⁸ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay for a few days.

Understand that they first believed, as Peter was preaching- then they received the Holy Spirit, then they were baptized

Chris Green, *"Man has one problem: sin; there's one Savior: Jesus; we're all part of 1 race: human; with one hope: the resurrection"*

MAIN TAKEAWAY- The gospel (good news) is designed for anyone because Jesus cares for everyone

The good news is that God who is spirit became flesh, infinite being became finite existence, and the immortal One became mortal man in order that death might be undone and humanity might be drawn up into eternal life.

No one is out of reach of God's redemptive hand, not you, not your child, not your friend- no one

THE CHALLENGE- What does the reality of the good news of Jesus demand of me today?

Former President Jimmy Carter said,

"I have one life and one chance to make it count for something... My faith demands that I do whatever I can, wherever I am, whenever I can, for as long as I can with whatever I have, to try to make a difference."

To surrender? To share? To seek ?

BULLPEN-

GK Chesterton in book *Orthodoxy*- The man of this school goes first to a political meeting, where he complains that savages are treated as if they were beasts; then he takes his hat and umbrella and goes on to a scientific meeting, where he proves that they practically are beasts. In short, the modern revolutionist, being an infinite sceptic, is always engaged in undermining his own mines. In his book on politics he attacks men for trampling on morality; in his book on ethics he attacks morality for trampling on men. Therefore the modern man in revolt has become practically useless for all purposes of revolt. By rebelling against everything he has lost his right to rebel against anything.

All along the prohibition on eating unclean animals had just been a picture of human sinfulness (just like they couldn't eat certain animals because eating them would make them unclean, sin defiles the human spirit, making it unable to enter God's presence)... but now that Jesus has died he has removed the defilement for the whole human race, for all who would receive it...