

# Acts 10

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[ 0 : 00 ] All of Acts 10 this morning. So, kind of after talking to Nathan, it became pretty clear that really, it would be really hard to divide this up. It would be best if we just preached all the way through it.

And as you look at the text, as you're glancing over it, you see that there's so much there. And especially if you're familiar with the Bible, too, you know that there's a lot of the weeds there that you can really easily get lost in.

Because we're talking about some really, really complex topics this morning. And there's probably about six little mini sermons in there that you really could use as a springboard to talk about so many different things.

So, how do you make just one concise sermon? That's the thing that I've been praying about this week and that I've been thinking about in this morning is, I want this to be clear. I want there to be clarity.

I want us to walk away with an understanding of the text and for us to be changed by the Lord. As I was looking through some of the commentaries on this text, I came upon this quote by R.C. Spirrell.

[ 1 : 02 ] So, he says, So, now there's no pressure on me or any pressure on you.

We can kind of look at this text and discern what is God teaching the original people that were reading this text? What is he teaching the people that were going through this story?

And then what is he teaching us right now? Is that text relevant to our situation right now? And I would say an overwhelming yes. So, the way that I'm going to do this, I just, after looking through a lot of the commentaries and looking over this text, there's not, I can't really present this sermon to you in this really clever way of this happened and this happened and this happened.

So, what I'm going to really do is I'm just going to walk through the text with you this morning. I meant that, that I don't have clever bullet points. I'm just not that clever. But, the text is really powerful and so what we're going to do is we're going to walk through it together and we're going to explain some of the things that God's doing here.

So, but the, kind of the theme, if you're taking notes, the thing that I want you to be thinking about as we're going through this text together is how does God relentlessly pursue sinners of every kind?

[ 2 : 31 ] How does he do it in this text? How has he been doing it in Acts? How has he been doing that so far in the times that we've been talking as community groups? So, how does God relentlessly pursue sinners of every kind?

So, with that, I do want to take a second and just pray and ask the Lord that he would give clarity, that he would allow our hearts to understand this text. If you've been bringing, whatever it is that you brought in, whatever it is that you're about to leave and go towards this morning, I believe that God has something to say to us from his text and that that is extremely relevant and that we pay attention to that.

So, let me just pray for us real quickly. Heavenly Father, thank you so much for your word. Thank you that we get to meet in public this morning without fear, without shame, that God, the majority of the people in this room have a copy of your word.

And we know that those pages, these words have been fought over and then have died over these words. And that you've preserved this text so that we can look at it, God.

This is not just another story. This is not just another piece of wisdom literature. But it is your word, Lord. We believe it is from you. So, Lord, would you speak to us through your text this morning?

[ 3 : 59 ] God, the man or woman who feels alienated from you this morning, who feels hopeless, God, would you bring them in? Or would you make this message clear for those of us that have grown cold to the gospel, have grown apathetic to it, Lord?

I pray that you would wake our hearts up to it, God. We love you. Please give me clarity as I preach this morning.

God, I just pray out with David that the words in my mouth and the meditations in my heart would be pleasing and acceptable in your sight. We ask this in your name.

Amen. Okay. So, what has God been doing so far in Acts? I'm not going to spend 20 minutes going over that because we've been talking about it for the past couple of months.

But just to paint the picture so that we all understand what God has been doing. Let's kind of look at it really, really quickly. So, Jesus, before he's crucified, he promised the Holy Spirit.

[ 5 : 00 ] He says, hey, it's better that I leave and that the Holy Spirit come than it would be for me to stay. Which is kind of an insane statement because I know that if you've read that, you've kind of thought to yourself, like, I would much rather have Jesus around here in the flesh.

But we learn, we soon learn why he says those things. So, he says that. He's crucified. He's resurrected. And then he's ascended. And then right after he ascends to heaven, there's this insane event that happens called Pentecost.

And that happens in Acts chapter 2. Then after that, we see these massive conversions. We see Acts chapter 2, verse 41.

We see, like, 3,000 people coming in one day. We see Peter preach a sermon and 5,000 people come. And we keep seeing the Lord add day after day to their number.

So, we see these massive conversions despite persecution, right? Like, we've kind of started getting to that a little bit more as far as Stephen was persecuted. But we still see the church growing.

[ 5 : 59 ] And then we see these wonders and signs. We see people being healed. We see people being resurrected from the dead. So, just imagine this picture if you're kind of in the early church. Like, all these things that are happening.

You've seen, like, your world's kind of been changed over the past year or so. So, and then the text that we talked about last week that Clay preached on, he talked about healing.

And this situation in Acts 9, verses 32 through the end about Peter healing someone and then raising someone from the dead. So, if you haven't gotten a chance to listen to that sermon, I really, really recommend it.

Clay talks about, does God still heal today? If he does, why does he? And if he chooses not to heal in certain circumstances, why does he not? So, I would really recommend going back and listening to that.

But if you've listened to all those things that I just talked about, 95% of those things really pertain to Jews only, right? Pentecost, mostly Jews. The massive conversions, we see Paul or Saul as Jewish.

[ 7 : 01 ] We see all these things. And the trend that's kind of going throughout them is Jews. We do see Peter go to the Samaritans. And the Samaritans are kind of, they're not quite Gentiles, but they're not quite Jews.

They're kind of in between. So, with the exception of, does anyone know what would be the exception to that list? Someone that wouldn't be a Jew. The Ethiopian, right? So, we had that story where the Ethiopian was converted.

And then he goes back. That's kind of the catch point, is that he goes back to Ethiopia. He doesn't stay with the church and fellowship with the church. So, we see that 95% of the things that I just listed really pertains to Jews only.

So, let's pick it up in chapter 10 at verse 1 and see that this story, that narrative, that list is about to change. Let me rip some more.

So, starting in verse 1. At Caesarea, there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian cohort. A devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God.

[ 8 : 09 ] About the ninth hour of the day, he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, Cornelius. And he stared at him in terror and said, What is it, Lord? And he said to him, Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God.

And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him.

And having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa. So just as a pause there, we're going to get through the rest of the text, but I want to take a moment and kind of talk about who is this Cornelius guy. Clay found a way to slip himself into my sermon, so I have to give him credit about what does it mean to be a Roman centurion of the Italian cohort.

And I say that because Clay is our history buff. And so what does this mean for Cornelius to be Roman and the Italian cohort? So it's most likely that he would be comparable to a captain in the Roman army.

And he is Roman with a capital R. So think about that for a second. He's from the Italian cohort. That would mean that his origins are from Italy. He's not someone who was kind of drafted into the Roman army because as the Roman army spans their reach, they're going to take over new lands, right?

[ 9 : 33 ] And they're going to bring people into their army. So, and but they would be considered Roman at that point, but they're not from Rome. And so Cornelius is from Rome.

Okay, what are the other things that we see about him? We see that he's a devout man. In verse 2, he fears God with all his household. He gave alms generously.

And he prays. Okay, so this word you'll see in verse 2. Look, it says a devout man who fears God. That is actually a term, like a label, not just describing him necessarily with just a kind of a bunch of random adjectives.

So, there's a couple of labels that the Bible gives to different groups of people that are in this geographic area. So, there's Jews. There would be Gentiles. There would be Samaritans, which we talked about earlier, which is kind of they, I don't know if this is an offensive term, but like half-breeds, you know what I mean?

Between Jews and Gentiles. And then there were God-fearers. And God-fearers were Gentiles who conformed to the Judaic law and the customs.

[ 10 : 43 ] So, that means that Cornelius probably got to see all the gods of the Roman Empire and then decided that he most likely, or that he agreed with most of the Jewish God.

So, that meant that he worshipped God of the Torah and that he, but the only difference would be that he wasn't circumcised.

I'm sorry, I'm trying to say that right. So, the only difference would be that he's not circumcised. He worships God. He gives alms. We see that he's devout, but he's not circumcised. And then he prays.

So, this is kind of a, this is a really good description of Cornelius, right? Like, if you're reading this and you're looking at Cornelius, this is a good guy, right? He does all those things. Like, how many of you would like to be described in that way?

That's a good description. You're devout. You fear God. You give alms. You pray continuously. And we find out that God hears his prayers. So, Cornelius is a good guy. But I want to ask the question, is Cornelius saved?

[ 11 : 48 ] Is he forgiven? Is he clean in the eyes of God? I mean, and what do you say? Like, he, there are all those things that we just listed.

He sounds like a really, really good guy. Like, he does everything right. And even, I can hear the objection of someone saying, wait, are you suggesting that he's not saved? Like, look at all the things that he does.

Look, let's look at, or so what, are you saying that you're better than him? Are you saying that Mother Teresa, if, with all the good things that she did, that if she didn't believe in Christ, that she's not saved? This is the question that you're going to get when you talk to other people about the gospel.

Because Cornelius, on paper, looks like a really, really good guy. But we learn that he is later on referred to as not saved.

And so that's the offense of the gospel that our, the offense of the gospel is that even our best works, the things that we do that you might volunteer at the homeless shelter out of the goodness of your heart, you might not cuss, you might not drink, you might not be as bad as someone else.

[ 12 : 56 ] But the offense of the gospel is that our best deeds, our best things that we do, apart from God, are like filthy rags before him. That it doesn't matter, that God's not saying like, God's not impressed with Cornelius' record.

That in the eyes of God of being considered holy. And I'm going to, I will say Cornelius is a good guy. He's a moral guy. But in terms of holiness, Cornelius is not.

And so you would say, how do you know that? If you turn one page over to the left or to the right, you're going to see in verse 14, Peter is later on recounting this story.

And this is a little bit of a giveaway, but he says in verse 13, Peter's recounting this story of what I'm about to talk about with Cornelius. And he says, and he told us how he had, how Cornelius had seen this angel stand in his house and say, Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter. He will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household. So despite Cornelius' good-looking resume, he's not in the eyes of God forgiven.

[14:08] He's not saved. There's something missing. So that tells us that to be righteous before God requires more than attending a church service. It requires more than being a good person.

It requires more than giving your money away to the poor. It requires more than even just praying to God. That is a huge statement. There's another problem with Cornelius.

Cornelius is a God-fearer, but he is still a Gentile. In that he is unclean according to the Jewish law. So, what do I mean by that?

Surely, if you know anything about Jewish traditions and Jewish customs, you knew that they followed a very strict dietary law. That's kind of the thing, the problem that Jesus keeps running into as he's talking to the Pharisees, is these laws that they have that Moses set up in the Old Testament.

So, for reference, what I'm talking about there is specifically Leviticus 11 when it comes down to food. So, in Leviticus 11, God is laying out this law to Moses, and he's telling him all the foods that you can and cannot eat.

[15:21] He says, hey, like, you can't eat a pig. You can't eat a rock badger. You can't eat the things that are crawling on the ground, swarming bees. He lists off all of these different animals that they cannot eat.

So, they've got dietary laws. The next thing is circumcision. So, Cornelius is neither of those things. So, in the eyes of the Jewish law, Cornelius is not clean.

Now, see, the Jews actually used these verses in Leviticus as justification to put in bigger divide between them and the Gentiles, just to kind of understand what's going on in that culture and what that divide actually looks like.

I found a quote from a rabbi in the Talmud, which is when we're talking about the Old Testament combined with rabbinic law, which is things that they kind of added on to the Old Testament laws. This rabbi said this about a Gentile. He said, When a Jew has a Gentile in his clutches, another Jew may go to the same Gentile, lend him money, and in turn deceive him, so that the Gentile shall be ruined.

[16:32] For the property of a Gentile, according to our law, belongs to no one. And the first Jew that passes it has full right to seize it. So, that's kind of the animosity and the divide that we're talking about here.

And is that from God? No. I want to make that clear. God sets up these dietary laws to set his people apart, and the Jewish people ran with that even further and came up with things like what I just said.

So, what's the point about the food? Have you ever wondered about that? Like, why did God say, You can't eat these foods. You must have your cloth of these different strands.

You can't have tattoos. Like, all those Levitical laws, not the Mosaic law, not the laws of the Ten Commandments. But, have you ever wondered, What was the point of why God did all that?

And are those things still in place today? And a lot of people would say, It's for health reasons, as far as circumcision and food goes. And there might be some legitimacy to that.

[17:34] But the bigger thing that I want you to get is that God was setting his people apart. So, turn with me to Leviticus 11, just so you can kind of see with your own eyes.

And then look down at verse 43.

Okay. So, what's the point of all these laws? What's the point of all these rules? And so, in Leviticus 11, God very clearly points it out. Okay, this is okay. This is not okay.

Here's why this is not okay. Here's this is okay. This is not okay to eat. So, he keeps going. It's very, very specific. And then in verse 43 of Leviticus 11, it says, You shall not make yourselves detestable with any swarming thing that swarms, and you shall not defile yourselves with them and

become unclean through them.

So, here it is. Verse 44. For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves, therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls on the ground.

[18:45] So, you get that 44 at the very beginning where he says, For. So, it's basically like God's saying, For this reason. He just listed off all these animals, and now God's saying, Do you want to know why I'm saying this? This is why.

I'm saying that you can be set apart so that the other nations could look at the nation of God in Israel and see that they dressed differently, that they ate differently, that all their customs were different, but those things were meant to be a shadow of how God was making them holy and set apart as a people.

So, this reflects to us something about the nature of God, that God has a concern for holiness. These strict laws, they point out to God how, they point us out how God has a big concern about his people being set apart and being different.

So, going back to Cornelius, he is not those things. He's not circumcised. It's unlikely that he prescribed to the Jewish dietary law. So, if you are Peter, if you're a Jew, if you're looking at Cornelius, let's just be honest, even though he's got this good record, he's unclean, right?

Like, he's not clean before God. And that even came down to the fact that, like, a Jew would not touch the glass of a Gentile after he had put it to his mouth because it was then, at that point, considered unclean.

[20:13] So, isn't Cornelius hopeless in the eyes of a law? Like, what hope is there for Cornelius? What hope is there for this man to be saved, to be forgiven? Is there any hope for him?

In the eyes of a law or the Jew, there's no hope for him, right? There is this barrier that's separating Cornelius from being forgiven and being a son of God.

And with that, we need to talk about how we're similar to Cornelius in that same spot. There is a barrier between us and God. The fact that if you are in Christ right now, at one point, you were considered unclean.

You were considered unforgiven. Or if you're not a believer today, you stand in that spot where God looks at us and we're not clean before Him because God's standard is holiness and righteousness. And Cornelius, it doesn't matter how good he is, he falls short of that record because he's not. He's not righteous and he's not holy. And Cornelius, at this point, in his own power, he's hopeless to change.

[21:22] How does the Bible describe an unbeliever? Think about it for a second. Think about those verses that you've thought about where the Bible said, hey, you were this at one point before you were in Christ. How does the Bible describe that?

Surely some of you are thinking about Ephesians 2, right? Where it says, you were dead in your transgressions and sins. in the sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

God describes us as dead. So, a dead man can't get up and change his behavior. A dead man can't get up to take a pill to become healthier. A dead man is dead.

So, what hope is there for a dead man? And maybe that's a state that we need to remind ourselves of is that for the unbeliever, there is no hope in and of yourself to change.

Do you remember that time when you were an unbeliever or if you still are where there was things that you saw about your life and you felt hopeless to change those things entirely? They seem too big.

[22:37] Even as believers right now, we still see some of those things in our lives. It's like, I just can't overcome this sin. I just can't get past this. I've tried and I've tried and I've tried and I can't do it. It makes me think of the story that when I worked, I still worked there, but I worked at a drug and alcohol treatment center.

It's a 30-day treatment center where someone, people fly in all over the country and people that are struggling with different drugs and alcohol come there. They live there for 30 days and then they kind of go through a rehabilitation process and then they leave.

And I remember working there and listening to this story about this one guy who was kind of a little bit of a troublemaker and he wasn't necessarily following all the rules and he was kind of on the line

of whether he was going to be allowed to stay because the administration can make decisions like, hey, this guy's no good for this program.

He needs to come back when he's ready. And I remember talking to him and kind of like thinking, maybe I can get a chance to just talk to this guy and just convince him like, hey man, this program's going to save your life.

Like, you go back out and you could, this addiction could kill you. And me just thinking, all right, maybe I can say something to this guy. And I remember him walking up and I was talking to him and I was asking him how treatment was going and I said, what are you going to do when you leave?

[ 23 : 51 ] Are you going to go to an intensive outpatient? Are you going to go to sober living? Like, what are you going to do? And the guy was like, he looked at me in the eyes and he said, I'm going to go back to drinking. Are you kidding me?

Like, I know I have a problem and I know I'm going to go right back to the bottle as soon as I leave. So I'm just here to do my time and do this program and leave.

And I remember like hearing that and just the hopelessness kind of sank in to my heart and thinking about what hope is for this guy. He's pretty much all but given up on this. So how is God going to relentlessly pursue that attic at Black Bear?

How is God going to relentlessly pursue this guy Cornelius who again, though his best efforts still fall short of God's standard of holiness and righteousness. How is God going to relentlessly pursue you if you might still be living in your sin?

You might be not as bad as the next guy but your best actions still fall short of God's standard. And then an even bigger question is how is Jesus' commandment at the very end?

[ 25 : 06 ] What did he say at the very end of Matthew 28? He says, go and make disciples of just Jews. He says, go and make disciples of all nations. So how is that going to happen when there's this divide when Cornelius is unclean in the eyes of the law and the Jews?

So let's pick it up back in verse 9. The next day as they were on their journey and approaching the city Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray and he became hungry and wanted something to eat but while they were preparing it he fell into a trance and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending being let down by its four corners upon the earth.

In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air and there came a voice to him rise Peter kill and eat. But Peter said by no means Lord for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.

And the voice came to him again a second time what God has made clean do not call common.

This happened three times and the thing was taken up at once to heaven. Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean behold the men who were sent by Cornelius having made inquiry for Simon's house stood at the gate and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there.

And while Peter was pondering the vision the spirit said to him behold three men are looking for you rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation for I have sent them.

[ 26 : 41 ] And Peter went down to the men and said I'm the one you are looking for what is the reason for your coming? And they said Cornelius a centurion an upright and God-fearing man who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and hear what you have to say.

So he invited them to be his guests. The next day he rose and went away with them and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him and on the following day they entered Caesarea.

Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. When Peter entered Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshipped him. But Peter lifted him up saying stand up I too am a man and as he talked with him he went in and found many persons gathered and he said to them you yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean so when I was sent for I came without objection I asked them why you sent for me and Cornelius said four days ago about this hour I was praying in my house at the ninth hour and behold a man stood before me in bright clothing and said Cornelius your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon who is called Peter he is lodging in the house of Simon a tanner by the sea so I sent for you at once and you have been kind enough to come now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all

that you have been commanded by the Lord okay so real quick let's look at Peter's first response what does he say he says so he has this vision these sheets come down all animals of every kind come down and it says rise kill and eat Peter and his first response is by no means Lord so let's not jump on Peter too quickly and say like hey how dare you respond to God like that Peter's response is actually really similar to the prophet Daniel if you think about it he objected to the dietary he objected to the food that he was being served and said no I have to observe my customs because this food that you're feeding me here in Babylon is unclean but it's interesting though like you and I have read the rest of the story we know what's coming we know that God's not just talking about food right we know that God wasn't just taking bacon off the list of things not to eat but Peter if you think so Peter had been with Jesus he had been with the resurrected Jesus he had seen

Pentecost come he had been preaching to Samaritans he had probably heard the story about the Ethiopian eunuch right like he's probably heard all these things but he still doesn't get it he still doesn't get that that through Christ's work that divide is gone that now the only thing that makes us clean or unclean in God's sight is whether we have believing faith in Jesus he still doesn't get it isn't that interesting like this is a thick-headed dude but everyone else is probably like that in that same spot we see that because of all the other responses Peter had been with the resurrected Jesus but he still didn't get it so what changed why is it that God is saying hey you can eat all these foods now doesn't that seem a little bit like God is flip-flopping right doesn't it seem a little bit like that doesn't it seem like God's changing his mind so I would say no and here's why you know he said yes and that's the end of the sermon but no so so what changed obviously something changed so let me just as a little example so let's say there is a father who has a five-year-old son and his son is standing on a cross from the street and it's a busy intersection and his son is about to cross the street and his father says don't know don't cross why because he's five years old and that would be irresponsible of his dad to just let his son cross this really busy intersection okay so then let's go forward ten years and now his son is 15 and he's standing across the other side of the street and his son and his dad says hey like come on over to me now and so then the son crosses the busy intersection did the father flip flop no you would just say the situation changed the son grew up things have changed things are different now and so now it is appropriate for his son to cross the street in a similar way

[ 31 : 16 ] God is not changing his mind but the fulfillment of the law has come and things have changed so if you have your ESV Bible look at verse 15 so it says and the voice came to him a second time what God has made clean do not call common so we're actually kind of at a loss for our ESV translation the NASB renders this what God has cleansed no longer call unclean so God is changing things did he change it right at that moment no the truth is that he changed it with Jesus and the thing is that we can if you're really thinking about it Jesus was saying this the whole time flip over to Mark starting in chapter 2 chapter 2 okay so the point that I'm getting at in this text is that I'm saying that it kind of appears a little bit like

Jesus is disregarding a lot of laws like that's kind of what is the friction between him and the Pharisees a lot of the times so we're not going to read all these verses but I'm just going to have you follow me here so this in chapter 2 at the very end of 23 he's going through and his disciples are walking through a grain field and they're picking grain and they're eating it and the Pharisees have an issue with that and they're like why are you guys eating on the Sabbath they had very strict rules about what you could and could not do on the Sabbath how far you could walk what kind of work you could do in order to keep the Sabbath day holy and Jesus gives them this example of don't you know the story of when David did this when David ate the bread of the priest and then the verse that I want to draw your attention to is verse 27 and he says for the Sabbath so the son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath and then keep looking at verse chapter 3 there's this situation where this guy has this withered hand and

Jesus is about to heal this man with withered hand but he knows what the Pharisees are thinking they don't want him to heal it because they think that that's something blasphemous that he's doing but instead he does heal and they get mad and then flip over a couple pages to chapter 7 now this is the kicker that's so important to get look at chapter 7 verse 14 so Jesus says and he called the people to him again and said to them hear me all of you and understand there is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him but the things that come out of a person are what defile him whoa that's so not in line with what we just looked at in Leviticus right like that's Jesus don't you

don't you know your Old Testament don't you know that yes it is what defiles a person like no no no you're wrong like you eat these meats you eat these different types of animals and that defiles you that makes you unclean in the eyes of the law so is

Jesus seemingly disregarding these laws it seems like it right like if you look at it first glance and you really look at Leviticus and you look at to now it seems like Jesus is disregarding this so how is he not how is it that Jesus is right in what he does what is the point of these laws what is the point of these Leviticus laws what is the point of all these laws it's really made pretty clear the disciples seem to get it in Acts you can flip back over to Acts 10 where we're going to kind of pick back up there but earlier in Acts 3 they quote Moses from Deuteronomy and they said Moses even said this at one point Moses even said that the Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers you shall listen to him in whatever he tells you it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people so Moses is actually talking about Jesus he's talking about how Jesus is going to be the fulfillment of all these laws so they're pointing to Jesus so I guess that begs another question of what's the point of the law Romans 7 Paul talks about the law being kind of like a mirror to you to show you how filthy you are Paul says if I didn't have the law I wouldn't know that I was in sin if someone didn't say hey you can't rob a store I wouldn't know that it's wrong to not rob a store so the law acts as a mirror the most the big point here is that Moses and the prophets they all are pointing to an event they're all pointing to Jesus is coming so when Jesus shows up on the scene it's like the Pharisees like they're missing it they're missing the thing that the law was supposed to point them towards Jesus is the fulfillment of all these things if you've heard it said that a huge point of the law was to show us how we couldn't keep it that that's a huge purpose of the

[ 37 : 00 ] Leviticus law all these rules isn't that why Jesus says hey unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees the guys that kept all these rules that kept all the dietary laws down to the minute details and Jesus is saying you have to are hopeless just like Cornelius okay so what's Peter's second response so Peter hears this he soon realized this is about more than food that God's doing here and his response is complete obedience he understands that this vision is more than about food we see that in verse 28 he says you yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean which is a little weird because that vision was about foods but

Peter is smart enough to make the connection oh you're not just talking about food right now you're talking about all people so what does he do he does two things that would be in violation of Jewish law verse 23 so he invited them in to be his guests these are Gentiles and Jews are not supposed to house Gentiles inside their home the next thing that we see is that he walks with them from Joppa where Peter is to Caesarea which is about 40 miles and that's not something a Jewish person is supposed to do with a Gentile so Peter gets that he has to be completely obedient to this he understands that his way of doing things is subservient to what God says his traditions the things that he holds close he lets those go to be obedient to God that's his response to outsiders Peter he allows his reputation to be tarnished in the eyes of other people because he's being seen with Gentiles he's hosting them in his home but his response is complete obedience what is our response to in a similar way to those what we would consider taboos what would be our response to outsiders college students what is your response towards those that have a different lifestyle than you and choose to party and drink and what about what's your response towards those that are socially awkward that aren't inside your friend group we see God relentlessly pursuing Cornelius and even more so relentlessly pursuing Peter to get him to understand God's greater purpose here and Peter submits that to God are you submitting your preferences your taboos the people that you most easily jive with like are you submitting those to God for the sake of pursuing those for the kingdom what about parents what about those who choose to raise their children differently than you are you letting go of your preferences for the kingdom and glory of God are you pursuing those that choose to raise their children differently than you that have a different household than you that come from broken homes and you're not used to that in the midst of a really divided political season what's your response to those that are on the opposite end of the political spectrum than you when you read the news articles and you start to get frustrated and your blood starts to boil are you praying for those people when you encounter someone are you seeing the bigger purpose here that

God's desire is that all nations and all peoples would be sons and daughters the list could go on and on and on okay I'm going to wrap it up I promise let's look at verse 34 so Peter opened his mouth and said truly I understand that God shows no partiality but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him as for the word that he sent to Israel preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ he is Lord of all you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea beginning from Galilee after the baptism that God that John proclaimed how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed!

[ 41 : 45 ] by the devil for God is with him and we are witnesses! of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem they put him to death by hanging him on a tree but God raised him up on the third day and made him to appear not to all the people but to us who have been chosen by God as witnesses who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead and he commanded us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one!

appointed! Is it Peter's personal testimony?

Is it about Peter saying I denied Jesus and he restored me? Is it about how I once was a drunkard and then I came to Jesus because he healed me?

Or is it that I got a better life from Jesus and I found my happiness in Jesus? That's not the message that Peter preaches. I'm not saying that those are bad messages.! But when Peter's given the shot by Cornelius he says hey we're all here my whole household is here my neighbors are here my co-workers are here we hear there's a message you got to preach Peter understands it's go time and he doesn't preach his testimony he doesn't preach how God has given him a better life though some of those things may or may not be true but he preaches the life the death and the resurrection of Jesus that is crucial to understand so when you're given that moment when someone's asking you what's the hope that you have what makes you different what is it that you fall back on again personal experience is great I'm not saying that's a bad thing but I'm saying Peter sees this as an opportunity to preach the gospel so that's what he does we see that in verse 38 he talks about how God anointed Jesus we see him talking about his life how he was perfect how he healed people from diseases we see him talk about his death we see him talk about his resurrection in verse 40 and then there's this purpose that's big for us to understand in verse 42 it says and he commanded!

That's a whole other sermon right there the message that we're preaching is of his life his death and his resurrection and for what purpose because he's coming to judge the living and the dead every single person that's ever existed on the earth God will be the judge and that everyone who believes in his name would receive forgiveness of sins Christians like that's our message that's the gospel message that we're sharing that we're carrying to our co-workers and to our friends and our family okay and then finishing up in verse 44 while Peter was still saying these things the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word and the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles for they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling

[ 44 : 59 ] God then Peter declared can anyone withhold water from baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have and he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ then they asked him to remain for some days which is really interesting because the Holy Spirit interrupts Peter's message!

it seems a little rude and does it remind you of any event that's happened maybe a few chapters ago does it remind you of Pentecost so specifically in this text that's opening up the can of the Holy Spirit being poured out on unbelievers and speaking in tongues that's a whole other conversation but in this text specifically what is the point of the Holy Spirit being poured out on this way on the Gentiles doesn't it confirm something to the Jews who think that salvation can't come to the Gentiles unless they're circumcised it reveals to them the Holy Spirit was poured out on them after what after they just heard the message and received it so it's undeniable to these witnessing Jews that the Holy Spirit is poured out that it's for all people that they don't need to clean up their life that God invites them exactly where they are you've heard it said that God accepts you just as you are that's not true

God invites you exactly where you are and that's what he does here so in summary what does this tell us about the heart of God we've talked about how God is relentlessly pursuing sinners of all kinds we're seeing here that God relentlessly pursues sinners of all nations gosh this is where I said

earlier that I feel like you could have six different sermons talking about God has this heart for the nations not just one group of people not just the Jewish people not just Americans not just people that align with western thought but all peoples does your heart ache to see different cultures and people saved gosh it's I just like you and me

God crosses these social taboos Peter crosses these social taboos it's some people will try to compare this divide between Jews and Gentiles to maybe some of the segregation stuff that happened here in the United States in the 1960s and 70s and it's not comparable I get that there's prejudice there but this was something that was established by God early in the Old Testament and then God abolishes it with the coming of Jesus so yes there's prejudice that's what's common with that movement or that line of thought but this is not comparable and I say that to say if God removed the divide between the Jews and the Gentiles what divide are you putting up right now between you and another people group someone who's of a different culture someone who's of different traditions are you putting that if God hasn't are you doing it right now and I'm asking do we mirror this God has this relentless pursuit of sinners do you see that in your own life if you do praise God and ask him to give you more of that if you don't fall on your face as you go home and ask God to give you a heart for that a heart that that relentlessly proactively pursues that doesn't wait for them to come to us but that goes out are we doing that in Gainesville in Dählonega are you guys doing that in your community groups are you guys asking those questions how can we relentlessly pursue the lost around us just like God do we mirror that what about even here this morning do you fall back into your clique of people that you feel!

[ 49 : 38 ] comfortable talking to there's going to be a time when we're going to be in heaven we're going to have all the fellowship in the world to talk to each other and I loved how Jerry mentioned that a month ago about one of the beautiful things about Christians is the fellowship and how he just likes to sit back and watch that happen and that needs to happen but we also need to have this point where we are relentlessly pursuing those who are even in our midst today so I pray that for us I pray that for us as a church that we would be marked by that kind of relentless pursuit let's pray