

Acts 10 – The Conversion of Cornelius

A. Introduction

- **Acts 1-9** - the church is established in Jerusalem and the Samaritans have been converted. But it is still Jewish in culture and practice.
- Does a Gentile have to become a Jew in order to become a Christian?
- *“Mission is crossing barriers in order to tell people about Jesus”*

B. Scene 1 – God calls Cornelius (1-8)

- **10:1**- Caesarea – seat of Roman government - crack Roman cohort.
- **10:2-3** – Cornelius is sincere in his religion and attracted to the monotheism and morality of Judaism. But he is still a Gentile outsider.
- **10:3-8** – God sends him to hear the words of salvation from Peter (11:14).
- **Mission is**
 - ⇒ *From the heart of God* – He takes the initiative. He is a missionary hearted God.
 - ⇒ *Through the heart of the church* – God uses a human messenger to communicate the gospel.
 - ⇒ *Into the heart of the world* – God’s love extends to all cultures and peoples.

C. Scene 2 – God “converts” Peter (9-23)

- Joppa – God teaches Peter that Gentiles do not have to become Jews in order to become Christians.
- **10:9-12** – God shows Peter a vision of all kinds of animals and birds – kosher and non-kosher (Leviticus 11)
- **10:13-14** – Peter is told to eat, but he refuses.
- **10:15-16** – Peter learns that he must not think of anything as unclean – neither animals nor people (10:28).
- God’s plan is to save people from all nations. He chose Abraham and the Jewish nation for this purpose – that all nations may be blessed through his descendant, Jesus (Genesis 12:1-3).
- The biggest barrier to world mission is the prejudice that lies in the hearts of God’s people. Peter had learned that God wanted the gospel to have a universal reach, but later he would forget (Galatians 2:11-16)

D. Scene 3 – God confirms His grace (24-48)

- Caesarea - God brings Cornelius and Peter together
- **10:24-26** – Peter arrives at Cornelius’ house and finds a crowd who are anxious to hear the gospel.
- **10:27-28** – He enters the house of a Gentile because he has come to learn that no person is unclean.
- **10:34-43** - *Universal proclamation*: It is one message of salvation for the whole world. The focus is on Christ – his life (37-39), his death (39), his resurrection and return (40-42) and the call to faith (43). There is only one gospel for all people – even religious people like Cornelius.
- **10:44-48** – *Undeniable confirmation* – God sends the Holy Spirit to these Gentiles and they are baptized. This is evidence that they are true believers and are to be accepted into the church (Ephesians 1:13-14)