



Sermon Series Notes

“Pride and Prejudice” (Acts 10:1-11:18)

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Chapter 10

vv.1-2 Cornelius had been exposed to the Roman gods – Jupiter, Mars, Venus, etc., but they were not the answer for him. While stationed in Israel, he became devoutly monotheistic. He came to believe in the God of Israel. As a result, he gave generously to benefit the needy Jewish people.

v.13 This is a Jewish nightmare! (KJV includes “creeping things”)

See Lev.11:7, 9, 12, 20-23 (katydid: large green American long horned grasshoppers), 29-30, 41.

v.14 Peter has grown up basing his purity/righteousness on things like a kosher diet. Even though he knows he is a sinner, he is not the kind of sinner that eats unclean foods! And Peter is proud of the fact that he has maintained a kosher diet his entire life. But the result of Peter’s pride is prejudice.

Prejudice: Partiality; bigotry, bias (synonyms);

Bias: A predisposition; Partiality

Bigotry: Excessive prejudice

Partiality: Inclination to favor one over the other

Not only did Peter grow up under the kosher diet of the Mosaic Law, but all kinds of religious traditions as well (See Mark 7:3-4).

Gentiles (unless converts to Judaism) did not follow any of these religious observances that Peter had grown up believing & practicing. So there was great animosity by the Jews toward Gentiles. And there was certainly no fellowship with Gentiles, because to do so would defile you. That’s why Jesus and the disciple came under such criticism, because Jesus broke all the religious rules of the day.

v.15 God has made clean what was considered unclean. This is radical for Peter to hear, and even more radical for Peter to accept as truth!

If Peter does not get the message the Lord is trying to teach him, then Christianity for him would be solely on homogenous lines (homogenous = of the same kind). He would continue to believe that Gentiles, apart from a strict conversion to Judaism, could not be saved.

Note: What is especially interesting here is that Peter is generally in fellowship with the Lord, yet he has this problem of prejudice in his heart. He has a great attitude toward God, yet a lousy attitude toward the Gentile world!

v.16 Why three times? Because Peter is dull! See Matt.15:10-20; Mark 7:17-19.

What is the message of the vision? The four corners of the sheet represent the four corners of the earth, and all the different animals represent the multitudes of various people groups all over the world, all of whom Peter considers unclean because they do not practice the religious observances of the Jews.

vv.44-46a This is a Gentile Pentecost! The same Holy Spirit that had come upon the circumcised believers at Pentecost had now come upon these uncircumcised believers in a Gentile home! They are saved and baptized with the Holy Spirit without being circumcised or following any Jewish tradition. WOW!

vv.46b-48

Chapter 11

vv.1-3 That's quite a sting after such a fantastic experience of seeing God save and fill with the Holy Spirit a house full of Gentiles. This criticism sounds like something the Pharisees would do. But these aren't Pharisees, these are disciples of Jesus. But they still have some leaven of the Pharisees in them, and God wants to purge it from their hearts and lives.

v.4 Jump to verse 15?

vv.15-18 These Jewish followers of Jesus are learning a very hard lesson for them to really digest, and issues related to the truths God is trying to teach them will come up again and again.

LESSONS FROM THE TEXT

- Overcoming Religious Beliefs Not Based On Truth.
 - I grew up believing it was a sin to go fishing on Sunday; Dean Dobson in one of his first pastorates and people having a problem with him playing soccer on Sunday; Being taught that my drums would cause people to want to dance, etc. (Frank Garlock & syncopation); My problem with our Youth Aflame program and what I considered dancing. What do we believe at CCSP? (Some can, some can't!).
 - Religious observances, kosher diet (See I Tim.4:1-5).
 - Col.2:16-17 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.
 - I Cor.8: 8 But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.
 - Peter had grown up believing that God loved Israel more than the Gentiles, and it was based on their commitment to religious observances and traditions, as well as being descendants of Abraham. But Abraham was an idolater before following the call of God in his life. And how was Abraham made righteous? By faith (See Rom.4:1-3).

- The Basis For The Empowering Of The Holy Spirit
 - Gal.3: 5 Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?

- The Basis For Our Righteousness
 - Eph.2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.
 - Saul of Tarsus, though faultless regarding legalistic righteousness, discovered that his only real righteousness was found in Christ (Phil.3:9).
 - Phil.3:9...not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ – the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.
 - See Isaiah 6:1-7; Romans 4:7-12; 3:21-24

- The Basis For Fellowship
 - In Biblical times, there was no greater nor more unrelenting barrier between people than the one between Jew and Gentile. The Jews believed the Gentiles were created to fuel the fires of hell!
 - In Herod's Temple, there was a wall that separated the Court of the Gentiles from the rest of the Temple, and on this wall were inscriptions in Latin and Greek forbidding Gentiles to enter. Josephus spoke of these inscriptions, and excavations in 1871 and 1934 discovered two of these inscriptions. They read: "No foreigner may enter within the barricade which surrounds the sanctuary and enclosure. Anyone who is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death." See Acts 21: 29-31.
 - They would actually kill people because of religious prejudice, partiality, bigotry, bias.
 - Video? Map of hate groups in America; There were 1,007 groups in 2012 and 939 last year, but those numbers are still substantially higher than in 1999, when there were only 457 such groups; Muslims view of non-Muslims (infidels); In the view of the [U.S. Human Rights Network](#), a network of scores of U.S. civil rights and human rights organizations, "[Discrimination](#) permeates all aspects of life in the United States, and extends to all [communities of color](#)." While the nature of the views held by average Americans have changed much over the past several decades, surveys by organizations such as [ABC News](#) have found that, even recently, large sections of Americans self-admit to holding discriminatory viewpoints.
 - The ultimate answer to vertical and horizontal alienation is not intellectual, political or social, but spiritual. My closest friend after I became A Christian was Steve Lintner, and we had nothing in common except Jesus.
 - Isa.9: 6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace**.
 - See Isa.57:19b "...Peace, peace to those far and near," says the Lord. "And I will heal them."; 55:7-9Peace, peace, to those far and near," says the LORD...(note context).
 - Eph.2:13-14 But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.
 - Jews like Peter had a hard time accepting the truth that one could be saved without being circumcised, etc. (See Acts 15). But even after accepting this truth, they still had a hard time having fellowship with those saved apart from circumcision & observance to Mosaic Law, who did not maintain a kosher diet or practice Jewish religious traditions. But thank the

Lord that, even though He had to repeatedly pound the truth into Peter's heart & head, Peter finally got it. And now that he knows and understands this truth (and has applied it) he will never have to learn this lesson again. Right? WRONG! Years later, Peter went back to his old ways. See Galatians 2:11-16.

- God Is Not Proud or Prejudice
 - Rom.2: 11...God does not show favoritism.
 - I Tim.5: 21 I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.
 - James 2:1 My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism.
 - Jonah had a problem with pride and prejudice; The Pharisees had a problem with pride and prejudice (See Luke 18:9-14); Some Americans have a problem with pride and prejudice. I've talked to some people that seem to believe that God is an American. God is not American (or Caucasian).

- Great Diversity In God's Family
 - Rev.5:9...You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.
 - Rev.7:9 After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.
 - Despite such great diversity in heaven, there will be complete harmony. May God make this church fellowship more & more diverse, and yet grant us the kind of peace and harmony between one another that only the cross of Christ can produce. Amen?

CONCLUSION

- Mahatma Gandhi shares in his autobiography that in his student days in England he was deeply touched by reading the gospels and seriously considered becoming a Christian. Christianity seemed to offer a real solution to the caste system that divided people the people of India. One Sunday he attended church services and decided to ask the minister for enlightenment on salvation and other doctrines. But when Gandhi entered the sanctuary, the ushers refused to give him a seat and suggested that he go elsewhere to worship with his own people. He left and never came back. He thought, "If Christians have caste systems too, I might as well remain a Hindu." Gandhi later said, "I like the New Testament, I like your Christianity, but I do not like your Christians."

- What religious beliefs does God want to challenge/change in your life? Is there any pride or prejudice that needs to be purged from your heart?