**Transformed: A Survey of the Book of Acts**

**Week 8 (February 27, 2019)**

**Acts 10:1-48 (For context, please read Acts 9:32-43 & 10 prior to teaching time)**

**Helpful Background**

1. In the history of the early Church, the saving actions of the Holy Spirit had been mainly reserved for those with a Jewish background. But God directly led Cornelius to call for Peter. Now, God’s eternal plan for all to be offered salvation, in Christ alone, begins to be revealed.

2. Caesarea was the capital of the Roman province of Judea, and an important strategic city. It was located 32 miles north of Joppa, and had a large Gentile population. It was the first city to have a major group of Gentile Christians, who formed the first non-Jewish Church. A Roman garrison was always stationed in the city, but the regiments rotated in and out of such a strategic location.

3. Cornelius was a Centurion, (non-commissioned officer) who led a unit of 100 soldiers. He was part of “the Italian regiment,” which had been temporarily stationed in Caesarea. Cornelius, although a Gentile and a Roman military officer, was also a God-fearing man, who lived out his spiritual commitments. He was a sincere seeker of God, and lived out his growing Faith. (He was generous, prayerful, and serious about his search for God.) His faithful efforts to share the love of God, and to find the truth about God, would be richly rewarded in a specific, powerful, way. The time reference noted for the prayer time of Cornelius indicates that he had a regular, faithful, prayer life, modeled on that of a traditional Jew.

4. The term “God-fearing” was a technical term, for a Gentile, who sought to worship the one True God, respected many of the Jewish laws, but who had not been circumcised. The God-fearing Gentile, was not a convert to Judaism, but one who was searching faithfully and seeking to honor God.

5. Cornelius responded immediately, because both as a military man, and as a man of Faith, he understood obedience to a higher authority. He sent three trusted men; two servants and another soldier, who also was a faithful seeker of the truth about God. (See the interaction of Jesus with another Centurion, Luke 7:8) Cornelius sent his trusted men to Joppa, but also gave them a full explanation of what had happened, and the reason for their journey.

6. The events that took place before Peter’s lunch, one day in Joppa, were more than hunger hallucinations. God was communicating to Pete that just as life in Christ was free from the Jewish food laws, so would the Church be free from divisions of Jew and Gentile. God, through Christ, had opened the way for ALL to be saved, and had removed the barriers of the law. No longer would the Jews and Gentiles be separated by dietary laws or religious rituals.

7. Peter had found a quiet, out of the way place to pray. Peter, like Cornelius, had a consistent, vital prayer life, through which God was able to speak. Peter took the time, and kept the priority on prayer.

8. Jews were forbidden from eating many “unclean” animals. (Lev. 11) This made it especially difficult, and socially impossible, for Jews to eat with Gentiles. God needed to remove this barrier, as well as get across to Peter, that the way was now open for ALL to come through Faith in Christ alone. Jesus had already taught that Faith was the path to salvation, not religious duty.

9. Peter continued to put his Faith into action by removing barriers, as God would have him do. He stayed at the house of some one that was consistently “unclean,” and compounded his “danger” by inviting Gentiles to stay with him. He also ate, walked, and would stay with Gentiles further in the future. He took six brothers with him from Joppa, to be witnesses of the great events he may have expected were going to happen at the house of Cornelius.

10. The opening words of Peter to the crowd of Gentiles gathered at the house of Cornelius are amazing to consider; “no favorites, every nation, anyone, everyone,” through faith in Christ Jesus. The way has been opened for all to believe, regardless of nationality, race, or external factors. The Gentiles, are able to be included in God’s salvation plan, and receive the Holy Spirit, through Christ.

**Review Questions**

11. (10:1-2) Who/what was Cornelius? Where did he live? How did he live? How about the household that he was overseeing? What did he do regularly that prepared him?

12. (10:3-6) What happened? What did the angel say? What was Cornelius’ first reaction? What were the reasons the angel gave? Why? What specific directions were given?

13. (10:7-8) What did Cornelius do? When did he do it? Who did he send? What did he tell them? Where was Joppa anyway?

14. (10:9-10) Where was Peter staying in Joppa? Why is this already significant? Where did he go before lunch and why? What happened?

15. (10:11-16) What was the vision God gave Peter? What instructions were given to Peter? What was Pete’s response? What correction/clarification was then made? Why was it significant?

16. (10:17-20) What puzzled Peter after the vision? Why was this such a big deal? What happened as Pete pondered? What did the Holy Spirit do/say to Peter?

17. (10:21-23) What did Peter find when he came down from the roof? How did the men explain? What surprising action did Peter take after agreeing to go with them? Who also did Pete take with them the next day?

18. (10:24-29) What did they find when they arrived in Caesarea? What was the initial response of Cornelius? How did Peter respond to it? What then happened, and why is it surprising? How did Peter explain?

19. (10:30-33) How did Cornelius explain? Why all of the specifics about when/what the angel communicated to Cornelius? What did Cornelius do after his angelic instruction encounter? What else has Cornelius done while waiting?

20. (10:34-35) What shocking statement does Peter use to begin his teaching time? What is he saying? From “every” nation?

21. (10:36-39a) What’s the “good news” for the Jews? How does it apply to everyone? How did Peter describe the ministry of John the Baptist and then the ministry of Jesus? What was accomplished?

22. (10:39b-43) What happened to Jesus? But then what did God do? To whom did Jesus appear after His resurrection? What did the Apostles “get” to do, and then what did Jesus command them to do? How was Jesus connected to the OT?

23. (10:44-48) What happened? What was the response to Pete’s sermon, even before the “Amen?” How did God show that the Gentiles were included? What was the response of the Jewish Christians? What did Pete initiate, after checking for objections, and what happened?

**So What?**

24. Both Cornelius & Peter received direction from God during regular, consistent, prayer times. What role does prayer play in your life? How have you received direction from God through prayer, or through His Word? How can you strengthen this area?

25. Obedience is the key to the Christian who remains in grace. How were Cornelius & Peter examples of obedience? How can we grow in our personal obedience to Christ? Who can help?

26. Unity is key in the Church, both in NT times and today. How might disunity have come into the early Church, because of differences in background or style of worship? How might the same thing happen today? How are you actively guarding the unity of our Church?