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Pride and Prejudice
Acts 9:32-10:23

In the spring of 1992 the city of Los Angeles erupted in violence and flames of riots and damage and looting and beatings. By the time police and armed forces finally were able to put the lid back down, an estimated 5,200 buildings were destroyed or damaged. The financial losses tallied close 1 billion dollars. 17,000 people had been arrested, 2,383 people were injured and the families and friends of 54 people grieved at their funerals.

What was it that fueled such a destructive rampage of hate and anger? The pundits speculated over the many possible causes, but as they sifted through the rubble of problems, it was the thorn of prejudice that kept sticking out sharply. Prejudice. Asian against blacks and whites against the Hispanics. Differences in culture and work practices ignited a misunderstanding that sparked antagonism and hatred and anger that boiled into revenge. It all resulted in 36 hours of venom unleashed.

We shake our heads and can't believe the horrific behavior we watched on the television...and yet if we are honest within ourselves we too have some of the same smoldering embers of prejudice writhing deep down inside of us. Webster's dictionary defines prejudice as a "preconceived judgment" of others. Do you ever pre-judge people you meet? Do you decide whether or not to read a book simply by the way its cover looks? What comes to your mind when you see a Hispanic or Asians or black or white walking alongside the road late at night? Someone comes into our church and is obviously poor? Or someone drives into our church parking lot with a high-dollar luxury car? What if a group of tattooed biker come rumbling into the lot? Would you be quick

to invite them over for Sunday dinner? Do you put people in boxes by the style and fashions they wear? The number of rings on the ears or noses? By their political persuasion. Republican or democrat? What about those people who have failed? Do you put a scarlet "D" on those who have a failed marriage in their past? What about those people who worship differently than you do? What about those who have a slightly different theology? They are biblical but they interpret certain passages differently than you. Do you exclude and belittle? Do you pull back and shut off? What about those who have a different list of do's and don'ts than you do? How do you view those people that are different than you are? It can be painful to face our own prejudices, our prejudging of others. It can be like driving over the hill down Garner road in the fog. Coming around a corner you are suddenly confronted with a large yellow bus you didn't see. Oh I didn't see that one coming! Time to slam on the brakes and hope you stop in time. We are not the only ones that need to confront our blind spots and prejudice. Peter too was trapped in the fog of prejudice and for years he didn't even know it. But God rescued him and he can rescue us as well.

Turn with me in your Bibles to Acts chapter 9. This chapter begins with an amazing conversion by the man most unlikely to come to Christ, a guy named Saul of Tarsus. He is converted and commissioned with a mission and then God sets him on the back burner of ministry for 13 years. Saul is a talented new believer that still has plenty that he needs to learn before being placed into the thick of ministry. So Saul is sent back home, back to Tarsus to learn some lessons. And when he leaves the church flourishes.

We expect the author to pick up the story with Saul, but he doesn't. The author of Acts makes an abrupt change in 9:32 and starts talking about Peter. Lets pick up reading the story in v.32 (READ to v.43)

Peter the apostle is traveling around visiting some of the churches. He arrives at a place called Lydda. If you have ever traveled to visit Israel

chances are that you landed in this town at the international airport east of Tel Aviv in a town now called Lod. It was at modern day Lod or Lydda that Peter runs into a man who had been paralyzed for 8 years. Not just a short term numbing. He had been bedridden for a long time. No movement, no change for years. Peter comes along and says, "Its time to get up and start walking. Jesus Christ has healed you. Get up and then make your bed." Some of you moms tell your kids to do that every morning. Get up and make your bed. They have been paralyzed asleep for 8 hours and its time to get back into life and start moving. This guy has been down for 8 years and Jesus Christ heals this man.

Peter is no faith healer. Peter doesn't heal anyone, v.34 he makes it clear that it's Jesus Christ alone that heals. It's important for us to know that the physical healings in the New Testament are a picture for us, an illustration, of what God wants to do for us spiritually. Just as he has the ability to physically heal, God wants to spiritually heal us. And God still heals physically in modern times. Only its important to remember that he heals selectively just like he did in the New Testament. Jesus did not heal everyone that he walked by in Galilee and Jerusalem. And everybody He did heal their body physically it was always a temporary healing at best. Everyone that Jesus touched and physically healed eventually died later on. The physical healing was a temporary picture of what God wanted to do for us in healing us spiritually in a permanent way. God will heal some of us physically and that will remind us that God wants to heal all of us spiritually.

While Peter is still at Lydda there is an emergency in Joppa 12 miles away toward the coast. A very loved woman named Dorcus has died. The name Tabitha or in Greek is Dorcus means Gazelle and like a gazelle her life was demonstrated by grace and charm. She is a woman who everyone liked and continually did good deeds for others. She sewed clothes for people in need, took over meals to those who were sick. She was loved by people in the prime of helping people but then died. V.38

They heard that Peter was nearby in Lydda so they sent two men to ask them to come. Peter comes and much like Jesus when he raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead. Peter sent the mourners from the room, knelt down and prayed. Then called to the body “Tabitha cumi” Tabitha arise, much like Jesus said to the daughter of Jairus who had died,. “Talitha cumi” Little girl arise. The only difference being that Jesus took hold of the girls hand before she was raised. Peter waited until she had opened her eyes and say up. The healing became know all over Joppa and many believed in the Lord. Peter ended up staying a long time in Joppa and while he was there, he stayed at the home of a guy whose occupation was to tan hides. He was a tanner. Hang onto that it will be important later when I pull all of this together.

Peter is involved in two healings. The first healing was a paralysis for eight years. The second healing was for a good, compassionate woman who physically died and in need of life. I’m certain that Peter was involved with many different miracles during his lifetime. Why these two miracles? And why were they placed here in the story of Acts?

Let me go back to the premise that physical healings and miracles that come from the power of Jesus are done to give us a reminder picture of what Jesus wants to do spiritually in our lives. Some of us have been spiritually paralyzed for years in some area of our life due to sin and we are in need of a healing. Due to blind spots that we cannot see. We have made no movement toward righteousness in certain areas. They may be socially comfortable arenas. They may even be areas that our government says is legal. They may be areas that the rest of the world thinks as a no brainer, don’t sweat it, its no big deal. You may have become very comfortable in rationalizing it, compromising it, but its an area that needs straightening out and you know it. It’s a blind spot that desperately needs exposure. The paralysis no longer works, its time to get up and start walking and become spiritually thawed out, and unparalyzed. We need that miracle of God transformation and change in

the areas that have left us paralyzed and rendered us dead and ineffective in our ability to minister to certain types of people.

For some of us, it is down inside so deep, that we are in need of a major spiritual break through. We are in need of resurrection power to transform death into life. We can be still doing many good deeds, compassionate acts of ministry. We can still be very effective in serving in God's kingdom...and yet....and yet...all of us have things we can learn to move closer to the kind of righteousness that God wants from us so we can be far more effective.

That death has many different forms. I have heard people say they are "bored to death" hopefully not in these sermons. Sometimes despair and disappointment and discouragement, embarrassment feels like death. "I could just die". Fear and worry and bitterness can all cause us to die on the spiritual insides. The heart can grow cold with the winds of doubt and indifference and it can seize our life and render us paralyzed and kill part of our spirit robbing us of all the joy there is in knowing Jesus. The good news is that Jesus Christ has come to abolish death, death in every form. For he came to bring us life and not just regular life, but life in abundance. Life abundantly.

Now here is where we begin to see the third miracle of this section. It's not a physical healing, it is a spiritual healing. And its not in someone who you first off would think they are in need of spiritual help. It's in the life of the great apostle, leader of the early church, spokesman at Pentecost, the Rock. Peter. Yes, the spiritual powerhouse Peter is in need of a spiritual healing from a blind spot of sin that has paralyzed him from a huge ministry opportunity for far too long. Just as Saul a talented but new believer has some things he needs to learn before landed in the thick of ministry, Peter a mature believer still has plenty to learn even while in the midst of an effective ministry. Point is that we all have things God wants to teach us at every stage of our spiritual life. None of us every arrive, we are all still traveling, all still moving. No one

ever sits down this side of heaven having got it all together, it's a constant walk. So we best all keep a teachable heart. Because our blind spots can keep us from having a more effective ministry and a joy filled life.

What was Peter blind spot? What was the miracle of spiritual healing that God wanted to do in Peter? Lets take a look at chapter 10. God has already started to soften his heart in this area. And it is so very important as it leads to fulfilling all of the great commission that Jesus commanded back in Acts 1:8 Not only were they to be witnesses to Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria, but even to the remote parts of the earth and even witnesses to the culturally hated Gentiles. READ chapter 10:1-8

Peter was staying where in Joppa? With a man named Simon who was a tanner. A tanners house probably wasn't the nicest smelling home in Joppa. Hunter and butchers and herdsmen brought him dead animal skins and he would scrape the skin and fat off and tan the hides. The Jewish rabbi's declared tanners unclean because they were always working with dead animals. Acts notes that Peter was staying with a tanner. That was a first step. Now the story in Acts tells how God providently has been preparing one who has been excluded, a gentile, a Roman Centurion named Cornelius. This was a captain over 100 men. Usually rough and tough rugged individuals, but this man is different. He is a devout, man that knows there is a God and is seeking him. He respects God and even gives money to the church. He is a generous man. That is admirable, but he still is not yet saved. This morning you may be religious, sincere, devout, generous, well thought of and live a good clean moral life. That may indicate that you have a heart that is hungry and open to Christ, but you if you have not received Christ as your Savior, you are not born again. You need a new life that only comes from Jesus. And this is what Cornelius needs. He asks God and God sends him an answer. Now God does not send an angel to preach the gospel to him;

angels don't preach the gospel. But the angel does tell him where he can go to find a man who will tell him the truth about Jesus Christ. That's Peter.

So now God is going to prepare Peter. To do that he must override and healing the blind spot of prejudice in his life. That's not an easy thing to do because his whole life he has been taught that the gentiles are tainted goods. Avoid them at all costs. The Jewish Mishna went even so far as to forbid any aid to a Gentile mother in the hour of her need so as not to bring up a child for idolatry. They were forbidden to leave gentiles in charge of their cattle, walk in their company. Everything they touched was considered unclean. Any food they may have touched during preparation. Even if a gentile were to touch their whole cask of wine it was all deemed polluted. That is the kind of background that Peter was brought up with and it clung to his mind like a foul odor. Only a fresh breath of God's grace could clear the air and open up the incredible ministry to the wide world of the gentiles. That came when God did a spiritual healing in the life of Peter and his pride and prejudice.

It's getting close to lunch time and the preparation is taking longer than his stomach can handle. He is tired and a bit hungry, so he goes up on the roof. Probably to catch a cool breeze off the ocean. There may well have been a place to rest up there under the shade of an awning. He falls asleep and starts to dream very vividly. A Sheet comes down with animals in it, clean and unclean all together. A voice from heaven says Peter get up, kill and eat. Now I'm sure God used his hunger to drive the metaphor, but his reaction comes from his past. V.14 "No Lord, I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean" Voice replies, "What God has made clean, no longer consider unholy." This happens three times and Peter starts to get the point.

This story may be an encouragement to those here who have had a trouble past. Or maybe there is someone in your life that has really

messed up badly and involved in some evil that can brand them for the rest of their lives. Even though they become a Christian and are forgiven of God, other people still treat them strangely because of their background. Don't do that. That is what Peter was doing. That is calling unclean what God has forgiven and called clean. I think we do this to ourselves sometimes. People say "I just can't forgive myself" You don't know the bad things I've done. I know that Jesus has forgiven me, but I just can't come to accept myself. It constantly haunts me. If that is you then you are in effect calling God a liar. You are calling unclean what God has called clean. How dare you call unclean what God has cleansed. Stop it. Accept the fact that God has the right to call holy whatever he deems is clean. And he has told us if we ask forgiveness for our sin He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Peter walks downstairs and who should be at the gate but the men that Cornelius sent. Perfect example of God's providential timing. Gentile servants of Cornelius are looking for a guy named Peter. V.21 Peter says "I'm the guy your looking for, God has already clued me into His plan and I'm ready to be apart of it. He has opened my eyes up to where I had really been missing it.

v.23 The walls are coming down as he invites them into his home. And gave them lodging. Not a small point to be missed due the cultural prejudice that surrounded Gentiles in the home of a Jews. We will see in the next chapter that move was quite scandalous and caused no small stir among the other Jewish believers.

Peter leaves Joppa to go visit the home of Cornelius 35 miles north in Caesarea. Remember there was another famous prophet in the Old Testament who left from Joppa. God had told him to go to preach to the Gentile Ninevites. But he didn't want to. He knew how merciful God was and that they would probably turn to God and repent of their ways and he didn't like the Ninevites, they had always been the enemy. So Jonah

got on a boat to take him the opposite direction Tarshish. God of course had his way of bringing him back around to obedience. It is a whale of a story. Here in Acts, Peter goes in obedience to share the truth about Jesus to the gentile Cornelius and this opens a huge opportunity to the whole world.

This is a big stepping stone in the life of the early church. They had been witnesses to Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria but now it had been 8 years and still no witness to the gentiles or rest of the world. Their prejudice had kept them from sharing the good news with the majority of the rest of the world. Peter goes to the house of Cornelius and shares the gospel. V.28 Peter has listened and understands what God is doing “You know its unlawful for me a Jew to even associate with a gentile let alone stand inside your house. But God has revealed to me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean. That’s why I came here and didn’t even object. So Peter told how God had providently prepared him and how God had done a miracle of healing in his own heart, a heart that needed to be healed of pride and prejudice. Peter began to lay out the simple gospel message that Jesus was God’s son and died and was raised again on the third day and Peter didn’t even get through the message and the Holy Spirit fell down in power and people responded in faith and they were baptized.

Maybe there was some areas in our lives this morning that we need to be healed from, repent of, cleaned up from. In may be some lie that we have been believing for a long time about God, about us that has kept us in a state of spiritual paralysis for far too long. There may be areas in our life that are dead and in need of transformational work of healing. There may be blind spots that need revealing. One of those blind spots may be the sin of prejudice. You have excluded certain people. You have already predecided that kind of person won’t be on your short list of friends. You would not want that person to come to your church. That person is not someone you could ever tell about the good news that Jesus loves them

and has a fantastic plan for their life. Maybe we need to start looking past the color of peoples skin, the black goth look. The earrings in various body parts, the tattoos. But some of us are prejudice against the popular, beauty queen and smart and athletic and successful. I could never go tell them about Jesus. They would never even listen to me. Maybe its that druggy, the stoner, the construction tough guy who every other word is a swear word. Maybe from your past wounds and rejections you assume they must all dislike you and you have excluded them.

This morning I'd like us to ask ourselves what does God want me to be? Does He want me to carry on with my pride and prejudice? Am I going to be a healer or a divider? Am I going to harmonize or separate? Am I going to break down barriers or separate people into little cliques and groups?

Healing may be a process. For Peter God took him to Joppa, then he stayed at an unclean tanners house, then came the dream of unclean animals coming down, then he invited some gentiles to come stay at his house and then went to visit there home. Maybe for us we need to start taking some baby steps toward those people that we have labeled in our minds "unclean". Do you have mental list of those nationalities you really don't like very much? Maybe its personality types? Do you right people off that you just don't understand? Maybe they don't do the outdoor stuff that you like to do. Maybe they Do the outdoor stuff and you find it repulsive. Maybe they are on a different economic scale then you. Maybe they are a whole lot less or a whole lot more intelligent then you. For some reason you have written them off as "unclean" someone you wouldn't want to have over for dinner or be friends with. I want you to write a list of those people you have labeled as unclean. From that list I want you to choose one person. Take a few baby steps here to break down the walls. Take it on a spiritual level before God. Ask God to gvei you the strength to love and reach out even if it rebuffed. Pray that God would even prepare that other person, as He prepared Cornelius. Commit

to praying for this person. Write a note maybe a card. Look for an opportunity to ask that person out to have a cup of coffee with. Maybe invite them over for dinner. Get to know them and ask God to open your heart to love that person for Gods kingdom has no part of our pride and prejudice. Whether you are a new believer or mature in the faith, there are always lessons we can learn.

Peter by Jesus power; Two healings;
Paralysis for 8 years
Raised from the dead one who did good works.

These two were obviously in need of help. One can't move and the other not only can't move, but she can't breathe. She is dead.
By Jesus power they were healed and many more responded in faith when they saw the miracle of the change.

Peter. A lot of miracles going the other way. But God still needs to work his miracle power in us, to change us.

There are things in our life that paralyze us and render us dead in our ability to minister. We need God's miracle of transformation and change.

Some of us are paralyzed by our prejudice. Our culturally defined circles have baracaded us off from certain people. It renders our ability to speak the words of life into them as dead. If had been 10 years since the Holy Spirit had fallen down at Pentecost and the gospel had gone out strong in Jerusalem. With the stoning of Stephen the gospel went out into Judea and Samaria, but still the remote parts of the earth had only been

approached as long as there were Jewish people. The group that had not even come on the radar scene for Peter to reach was the biggest group around them...the deep seated prejudice of the Gentiles. (How deep)

Peter was in need of a personal miracle in order to break down such prejudice.

Stays with a tanner

Meanwhile, God is preparing the other side, Cornelius.

Peter sees a vision

Invites Gentiles into the home and gave them lodging

v.28 You know the taboo's about Jews associating with gentiles

God has shown me a truth.

v.34 Now I get it. God is nto one to show partiality.

Our ministry can be unthawed from paralysis when we get over our prejudices, cliques, barriers, people we have excluded and written off.

People we have decided could bring little to the community.

James 2 "sit here in this good place"

Acts 9:32-10:23

Peter's preparation for greater ministry.

Pride and Prejudice

Swindall p.1 prejudice fueled the riots in the 1992 LA. What about our own prejudices, views about those who...

How engrained was this prejudice? Swindall p3 from Edersheim.

Prejudice toward Ghandi P.149. While student days in England.

v.32 One would expect to here the next verse line say "Now Paul... and go on to how he grew an effective and spirit empowered ministry to Tarsus as part of the growth of the church throughout the world. But instead we

read “Now Peter...” He is the one who has again left Jerusalem and traveling through “all those parts” came Lydda=25 miles west of Jerusalem toward Joppa on the coast. Now modern day Lod is the site of Isreal international airport. A man names Aeneas=bedridden for 8 years, paralyzed. Not from birth but a long time. Possibly from an accident. No hope of change after 8 years. Real people in real places. Joni Eareckson has been paralyzed since 1967 from the neck down as a result of a diving accident. She knows what its like to hear the words “you will never walk again” She understands the frustrations, self-hatred, helplessness and anger that must also have tormented aeneas.

Then the severed nerves joined together, legs tingled once more with feeling and the atrophied muscles awakened from their deep sleep. He stretch and for the first time in 8 years stood up.

v.34 Peter said “Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you arise and make your bed. Isn’t that what moms tell kids each morning. Get up and don’t forget to make your bed. Not Peter heals. Jesus does. So stop laying in bed. Get up and then do the common things you are supposed to be doing. Immediately he got up. Doesn’t’ say whether he made his bed or not.

v.35 All those in the small towns around saw him. They turned to the Lord because of this miracle of healing.

v.36 Story turns tragic in Joppa about 12 miles away. There is a certain disciples, a woman named Tabitha. Or Greek name would be Dorcus
She abounded in deeds of kindness and love. Mrs. Deeds
She continually did them.
(implied everybody loved her. She was a great servant of other people and loved them well. No one had a bad word to say about Dorcus.

v.37 She fell sick and died;
They washed her body and laid it down in the upper room. She was prepared for burial and was and lain down in an upper room, ready for the funeral grieving and march to the cemetery.

The disciples from Joppa (modern Jaffa a suburb of Tel Aviv. Herod the Great captured the city in 37 Bc. And because of their continued hatred of him he built a magnificent new port at Caesarea 40 miles to the north in competition of them.) heard that Peter was near. About 15 miles away and so they sent two men to ask if Peter would come and not delay to Joppa. (Do not delay to come to us)

v.39 So Peter arose and went with them.

They took him to the upper room where Tabitha was lying. It was a bit of a circus up there as all the widows were crowded around the room making quite a bit of grieving noise. Weeping and wailing. They were crying on a showing everything that Dorcus had made for them and telling about all the kind things she had done.

v.40 Peter sent them all out. Too much noise can make it difficult to hear God's voice clearly.

v.40 Sent them out. Kneeled down and prayed faith that said arise. She opens eyes, Saw Peter. He offers her a hand. (note that to avoid unclean defilement, he did not touch here until she was alive.) She stands up Peter calls the widows and praying friends who were saints and says, "Here she is"

Many people in Joppa hear about this and believe in the Lord. Simple. No fancy contortions of trying to get almighty God to listen to him.

v.43 Peter ends up staying for "many days" in Joppa. Was that as long as the three years "many days" that Saul was in Arabia?

He stayed with a man who received animal hides from hunters, butchers, cow and goat herders. Used the brains of the animal to tan the hides. For a devout Jew this in itself is scandalous with all the dead animals around. Tanners were considered unclean by the Jewish rabbis. Unclean. He was a tanner with the same former name as Peter...Simon. Same name as in chapter 8 that was a magician who had false faith.

God was preparing Peter for his experience with Cornelius and ministry to the gentiles. According to Peter God did not save Gentiles as gentiles he felt they must first become Jews.

Luke records this event 3 times. It must be important to his story. Here in 9, then again in 10 and then again in 15.

Chapter 10 is pivotal in the book of acts because we see salvation coming to the gentiles. This event happened about 10 years after Pentecost. Why did it take so long? Progression. Message to the Jews first. Marked the climax by the stoning of Stephen. Then to the Samaritans. Then the conversion of God's embassy to the Gentiles Paul. The transition was a gradual one. Now was the time to open the door to the gentiles and bring them into the family of God.

10:1 30 miles to the north of Joppa along the coast in Caesarea was a man named Cornelius. He was a centurion. A non-commissioned officer in charge of 100 men. A cohort is comprised of 6 centuries. 10 cohorts in a

legion. So 6000 men to a legion. The cohort and legion officers were usually aristocrats who served for a couple of years on their way to public office, but the centurians were the backbone of the army and chosen for fighting ability and character. He was part of an elite group called the Italian (cohort originally recruited from Italy) He was a “god fearer” about as close as you could get to Judaism without becoming a proselyte.

He was a man in the army of enemy occupation forces. A part of the group that people had been longing for Jesus to kick them out due to their oppression. The holy spirit makes no distinction in those He draws to himself.

v.2 not a Jewish man. Nor even a Jewish proselyte but a gentile “god Fearer” What a perfect man to represent what God was about to do to demonstrate that the Gentiles had a part in Christianity and that there was no prerequisite that you had to be Jewish first before coming to Christ.

Devout

Feared God (with all his household)

Gave many alms to Jewish people

Prayed to God continually.

3pm in the afternoon. A vision of an angel. (remember in chpt 8 Philip sees a vision from an angel) Angel comes in and says his name.

v.4 Fixing his eyes on angel. He is MUCH ALARMed. Read sore afraid. He responds, “What is it Lord?” Good military man doesn’t ask questions but just obeys. (I’m ready to listen. I’m all ears.)

Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God.

Command to do: Dispatch men to Joppa (40miles south) send for a man named simon people call him Peter. He is currently staying at the house of another man named simon, (his house is by the sea)

(why does he get the detailed instructions from the angel and all Phillip got was “get up and go south a road...” I’ll let you know what to do next. All Saul got was “Head into the city and it shall be told you what you must do”

Here specific instructions were given because Simon wasn’t the one to go. He was to send someone to bring Peter to Ceasarea.

v.8 Two servants and devout soldier are summons and sent to Joppa. Immediate obedience.

v.9 On the next day as they were approaching the city of Joppa. Peter about noon goes to the top of the house to pray. Midday on the roof?

He was hungry. He wanted something to eat; The folks were making preparations for lunch, but weren't quite ready. So while praying up on the roof, with his stomach rumbling, he saw a vision.

Visions: Sky opens up and a great sheet comes lowering down by all four corners. So all four corners had to be held up by something. Inside the cup of the sheet were all kinds of animals with 4 feet, crawling creatures, birds.

4 corners of the sheet may refer to the four points of the compass west, east, north and south. And all the millions of people most of whom were not Jewish needed to experience the freeing gospel of Jesus. All bound up together in one big sheet.

We too write off whole groups of people just because of what we have heard about them. We write off whole cultures of people just because of one or two bad experiences. We scorn and make jokes of ethnic groups because of some of their personality traits or tendencies that seem different than ours. We write off whole churches just by what we have heard. We seek to win only our kind. You wouldn't fit in here. We exclude. We draw lines. We clam up. We shut down and shut out. God need to totally and radically change Peter's attitude in order for his plan to reach the world. Needed desperately.

Voice: Get up Peter. Kill and eat. (why do they always say arise when they want them to do something?)

v.14 Oh but I can't do that Lord. I have never eaten anything unholy. No matter how good that bacon smelled I've never had porkchops. Nothing that was unholy unclean.

Voice: What God has cleansed no longer is considered unholy. Things are holy or unholy because God calls them holy or unholy. It is possible for God to cleanse that which was formally called unholy.

God's grace had flung open the tightly closed doors of legalism. Christ's atonement had cleansed the unholy so that all people could be accepted by him.

Just so Peter gets it, this happens in his vision 3 times. Then poof it's gone. God's lesson applies not only to food but to men as well. The gospel in for all people not just Jews.

Lessons:

1. the root of prejudice is pride. Pride struts around and says its my way is the only way.

2. Resistance in prejudice is driven by tradition, not scripture. Our parents, peers, culture are often our mentors in prejudice.

P16 swindall examples of prejudice: Tatoood bikers roar into your parking lot on Sunday. God prompts you to invite them in. A neighbor of yours who is a heavy smoker is having some repair done to their home. Lord prompts you to invite them to stay with you. A new family moves in next door. They have a teenager with a spiked hairdo, lip-rings and army boots. God prompts you offer to take them to youth group. (your kids go there. You want it to be a nice place to grow spiritually)

Application: write a list of all the “unclean” people on a sheet of paper. Read the list. Does your prejudice look ugly to you? Can you accept these people for whom Christ died? Pray that God would erase your scorn of these specific names.

Next time you hear a racial joke. Imagine the hurt and pain if you were the brunt of the joke. Instead look for good in those who you once made fun of. Try their foods. Listen to their music. Get to know them

v.17 Peter is greatly perplexed. What was this all about? He is just about ready to go downstairs Simon what he had just seen ...and there is a knock at the door. The Spirit tells Peter, there are three men looking for you downstairs. Go on downstairs and go with them. Don't worry about it, I have sent them myself. Sure enough at the gate are the two men and soldier sent their from Cornelius. There were at the gate wanting to know if Simon also called Peter was staying there.

Divine Appointment:

Peter goes downstairs. Before they can speak, he says, “I'm the one you are looking for. Why have you come?”

Connections between two stories linked by phrase “a certain man”

Aeneus is paralyzed and can't walk. Cornelious can't walk with God and send someone to go bring help to him

Tabitha has good works and in need of a new physical life. Cornelious has good works and is in need of a new spirtual life. A gentile.

Cornelious is about a good as a gentile could get and yet he too still needs the gospel.

As we allow God to move us. He will use us to move many.

God will bring us out of a lifetime of prejudice and fear as we follow him in radical cultural breaking obedience.

There will be people in your ministry that will exchange God's glory for your own glory when people are moved deeply by God's great things.

Don't just stand there and take it. Lift them up off the carpet of adoration and point them back to God.

The primary problem was not his preaching to the gentiles, but his eating with them. Eating with someone was a mark of acceptance and fellowship and this problem could have caused a serious break in the church.

Jonah went to Joppa to avoid going to preach to the gentiles in Ninevah. Peter received his call from Joppa to go preach to the Gentiles. Because Jonah disobeyed, God caused the storm to come that caused the gentile sailors to fear. Because Peter obeyed, God caused the gentle wind of the holy spirit to blow into the lives of the gentiles bringing joy and peace.

The raising of Tabitha is similar to Jesus raising of Jairus daughter. In both cases the mourning people were asked to leave the room. Jesus spoke the words Talitha cumi (little girl arise) here Peter said Tabitha cumi) Tabitha arise. Jesus took the girls hand before she came to life. Unafraid of being ceremonially unclean. Peter however, waits until after Tabitha has come to life before taking her hand. In both instances it was not the faith of the individual that saved for they were dead. They were both raised by the power of God.

v.44 Peter never got to finish his sermon before the HS fell on all those who were listening

v.47 Evidence that it is not necessary to be baptized in order to be saved.