

UNSTOPPABLE MISSION

The Transformation for Adult LifeGroups

We live beyond ourselves.

OCTOBER 28, 2018

TODAY'S TEXT

Text: Acts 10:1-36

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. ² He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. ³ One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!" ⁴ Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. ⁵ Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. ⁶ He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea." ⁷ When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. ⁸ He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa. ⁹ About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹ He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹² It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. ¹³ Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat." ¹⁴ "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean." ¹⁵ The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." ¹⁶ This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven. ¹⁷ While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. ¹⁸ They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there. ¹⁹ While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. ²⁰ So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them." ²¹ Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?" ²² The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say." ²³ Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests. The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the believers from Joppa went along. ²⁴ The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵ As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. ²⁶ But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself." ²⁷ While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. ²⁸ He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. ²⁹ So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?" ³⁰ Cornelius answered: "Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me ³¹ and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. ³² Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' ³³ So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us." ³⁴ Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism ³⁵ but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. ³⁶ You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.

FIRST THOUGHTS

Rate your own comfort zones:

Strangers:

I don't make eye contact-----Polite conversation-----A stranger is just a friend I haven't met yet.

Food:

I know what I like and I like what I know-----I'll try one bite-----I don't care what's in it, let's eat!

Experiences:

I'm a creature of habit-----I'll try new things, sometimes-----I love trying new things

Watch the Video

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

The Book of Acts is a continuation of the Book of Luke by the same author (Acts 1). It full title is "The Acts of the Apostles" and continues the story of Jesus' followers after his return to heaven. Originally the early church is confined to Jerusalem but as the disciples (now called "Apostles" which means "sent ones") flee persecution (Acts 8), the good news travels to other people groups. First the Samaritans (half-Jews), then the Gentiles (non-Jews). Of course this causes division in the first church. God uses Peter, then Paul, and then James to reveal His eternal plan is salvation for all people. After one of the first "Church Council" meetings in Jerusalem (Acts 15), the rest of the book of Acts details the expansion of the gospel across national, ethnic, and economic barriers. Acts 10 is a pivotal chapter where Peter (the clear leader of the early church) receives a vision from God and in response, he shares the gospel with some of the first Gentile believers.

DISCUSS THE VIDEO

> Read Acts 10:1-8

- Do you know anyone who is “devout and God-fearing” like Cornelius, but not a Christian? What keeps them from receiving Christ? Can we be a “good person” apart from Christ?

> Read Acts 10:9-16

- Why did Peter not want to follow God’s command to “kill and eat”? Have you ever struggled with giving up a tradition in order to follow God’s leading?
- How was Peter being asked to “live beyond himself?”

> Read Acts 10:26-36

- How do you think Peter was feeling as he stood in Cornelius house? What struggles was he still dealing with? How did he move past his hesitations?
- What changes were going to happen in Peter’s life as a result of this meeting?
- Have you ever become friends with someone who was very different from you culturally, racially, religiously, etc.? What was your first meeting with them like? How did you develop a friendship with them? What helped you to live beyond yourself to befriend this person?

> Read Acts 10:44-48

- How did God confirm He was at work in the hearts of Cornelius and the people gathered in his home?
- God’s unstoppable mission was from the very beginning to bring us back into relationship with Him. Jesus told his disciples when he left that they were to “go into all the world” and to reach those in “in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.” God will not let nationality or ethnicity or race or language or anything else stand in the way of His mission. We live beyond ourselves when we join God in His mission of reaching the world.

Take 20 . . .

Choose one or more of these Take 20 Challenges to complete this week:

- Take 20 minutes to learn about another culture and pray for the gospel to reach them each day for a week. The website www.operationworld.org is a comprehensive prayer guide to all the nations of the world.
- Make a list of 20 people you can serve that will stretch you. They could be people who are very different from you. Ask God to show you a concrete way you can serve them. Then begin working down your list looking for ways to live beyond yourself.
- Fasting—what’s something you can give up for 20 days? Is it eating lunch out? A cup of coffee? Social Media? Fast from something for 20 days. Use the time/resources you would normally spend in that area to focus on God and His mission. You will definitely be stretched outside of your comfort zone by practicing fasting. Here’s a great guide to get you started: <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/fasting-for-beginners>

UPCOMING LESSONS

Focus more on the idea of Unstoppable Mission by reading in your Personal Devotional Guide.

11/4-12/16 Group Choice (come back next week as we start our 6 week group choice series—your LifeGroup leader will share with you what you have chosen to study).

READ THROUGH THE BIBLE

29th – Job 20; Mark 3-4 | **30th** – Job 21; Mark 5-6 | **31st** – Job 22; Mark 7-8 | **1st** – Psalm 121; Mark 9-10 | **2nd** – Job 23-24; Mark 11-12 | **3rd** – Job 25; Mark 13-14 | **4th** – Job 26-27; Mark 15-16