

Beulah Missionary Baptist Church  
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Sunday School Lesson - November 28, 2021  
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## **Lesson – Good News for All**

### **Printed Text • ACTS 10:34-47 | Devotional Reading • ACTS: 15**

#### **I. Aim for Change/ Learning Objectives**

By the end of the lesson, we will...

- A. **EXPLORE** the gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives,
- B. **VALUE** the leadership of Peter in the early church and his relationship with Christ, and
- C. **SPREAD** the Good News that Christ is for all who want to know Him.

#### **Vocabulary Words You Should Know**

- A. **Preach** (Acts 10:42) Gk. *kerusso*—To act as a herald, proclaiming the message of a king or lord
- B. **Baptized** (v. 47) Gk. *baptizo*—A ceremonial ordinance of Christianity; practiced as a public testimony to identify new believers

**Unifying Principle** — Barriers often keep people from becoming part of particular groups. How are barriers removed? God reveals to Peter that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is for all, and the power of the Holy Spirit is God's gift to everyone who accepts Christ.

#### **Key Verses**

*Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. — Acts 10:34-35*

#### **II. People, Places, and Times**

**Cornelius.** With the possible exception of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26–39), Cornelius was the first Gentile cited in Scripture to hear the Gospel, receive salvation, and influence many to believe. Cornelius adhered to Jewish customs but was a Roman centurion, a high-ranking army official. Evidence of his piety was in the conversion of his whole household, giving alms to the poor, and praying to God in accordance with the Jewish ritual. However, because he was not a circumcised Jew, he could not worship in the inner sanctuary of the Jewish synagogue. He worshiped God on the fringes of his religious culture, but he still worshiped God, and God heard his prayers (v. 4).

**Peter's Vision.** In a vision at a time of fasting and prayer, the Lord spoke to Peter. After showing Peter animals given for food of all species, God commands Peter to rise, kill, and eat. However, as a devout Jew, Peter refuses to eat that which his culture has deemed common and unclean. The Lord rebukes Peter, declaring that which God calls clean is no longer subject to being called unclean. Peter did not immediately understand the meaning of the vision; but as he thought about it more, the Spirit of the Lord gave him revelation.

### III. Background

God used Cornelius to minister to Peter, one of Jesus' disciples. Peter was surrounded by the cultural divisions between the Jews and Gentiles. Although he had heard Jesus preach salvation to all nations, Peter struggled to think outside the boundaries of exclusion and inclusion. The contrast between Jew and Gentile was great and buttressed by many barriers—culture, language, prejudicial hatred, and geography.

Through a vision and instructions to join Cornelius's entourage, the Lord helps Peter understand that His gift of salvation is available to the Jews, the Greeks, and all who believe. From this revelation, Peter vows never again to call any man common, unclean, or unworthy of the Gospel.

### IV. The Lesson — *At-A-Glance*

1. The Witnesses (Acts 10:34–39)
2. The Facts (vv. 40–43)
3. The Baptisms (vv. 44–48)

#### **In Depth with More Light on the Text**

**1. The Witnesses (Acts 10:34–39)** Peter declares that God shows no partiality but accepts all people who revere Him and do what is right (vv. 34–35). The same Peter who considered non-Jews, and especially Greeks, as unclean now stands preaching the Gospel to a Greek congregation. He confesses the truth that God does not play cultural favorites, but that He favors people from any nation who reverence Him in righteousness.

Peter preaches the Good News of Christ to the people gathered with Cornelius (vv. 36–39). He tells them of the Gospel, John's water baptism, Jesus' anointing of the Holy Spirit and of the good works, healings, and crucifixion which would follow.

**2. The Facts (vv. 40–43)** But praise God, the crucifixion is not the end of the story. Peter affirms himself as an eyewitness to the truth that Jesus came to life again. Following Christ's command, he preaches that Jesus "was ordained of God to be the Judge" (v. 42). The Good News does not consist of judgment only, though. Peter further affirms that Jesus—in fulfillment of prophecy—takes away the sin of those who believe Him, who submit to His leadership. The simple message, based on then recent historical facts, must have immediately moved the hearers to belief, because the next thing that happens is a sign of such.

**3. The Baptisms (vv. 44–48)** While Peter was preaching, the Holy Spirit came upon the people who heard him (v. 44). As the Word was preached, the hearers believed and were filled with the Holy Spirit. The Jewish believers were amazed as they watched the Gentiles speak in tongues and worship God (vv. 45–46). This evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit being poured out on the Gentiles could not be denied.

The Jewish believers had questioned the possibility of regarding the Gentiles as full members of the Christian church—namely, including them in the ceremony of baptism. Peter settles the questions, saying that any who received baptism in the Holy Spirit could not be denied the baptism by water. The baptism in the Spirit was indicative of an inward conversion; the baptism by water was indicative of an outward inclusion into the family of God. Therefore, Peter commanded that Cornelius, his family, and his friends—the Gentile converts—be baptized with water in the name of Jesus as they had been baptized by the Holy Spirit.

### **Liberating Lesson - see Sunday School book for additional comments**

Like trees in a forest, Christians need to support one another. When we find Christians of dissimilar races, cultures, classes, genders, callings, and expressions of worship, we should become like a forest of trees and link up to nourish one another in the faith. Through our inclusion of all believers, the Church is fortified, and God is glorified. Instead of excluding Christians who do not look like us or worship like us, we must extend our roots of righteousness to give what we have and get what we need to grow as the church until Christ returns.

### **Application for Activation - see Sunday School book for additional comments**

When was the last time you or your church had worship or fellowship with another body of Christian believers that you know has doctrinal differences? A good place to begin to know others in the body of Christ is through neighborly relationships. If someone in your family, workplace, or neighborhood belongs to a different church or denomination, ask them if you might accompany them to a fellowship or worship service, and extend a reciprocal invitation. Resist the temptation to rank or condemn the various styles of expressions of worship; but rather, seek to experience God through the eyes of another.

### **Food for Thought and Questions for Consideration?**

#### ***What Do You Think?***

1. What hinders Christians from viewing people as God does (vv.34-36)?
2. How do we make progress here?
3. What are some hindrances at the level of the individual; one's regional culture; the congregation; or other considerations.
4. The truth is, God does not show favoritism. The question is, are there still improvements to make in Christendom - the worldwide body of Christians; the Christian world; and in the life of the individual Christian?
5. What is the Good News to share to everyone *all*; and how can everyone receive God's gift?

#### **Closing Hymn**

*Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love,  
The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that about.*

#### **Sunday School Slogan**

*To Sunday School, to Sunday School, we all should go.  
We have classes for all ages. Help us to grow!*

#### **Closing Prayer**

**God bless you, Sunday School!**