

Power For Living

**** Power To Unify ****

Acts 10:34–43 (NLT) 34 Then Peter replied, “I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. 35 In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right. 36 This is the message of Good News for the people of Israel—that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. 37 You know what happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee, after John began preaching his message of baptism. 38 And you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

39 “And we apostles are witnesses of all he did throughout Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a cross, 40 but God raised him to life on the third day. Then God allowed him to appear, 41 not to the general public, but to us whom God had chosen in advance to be his witnesses. We were those who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42 And he ordered us to preach everywhere and to testify that Jesus is the one appointed by God to be the judge of all—the living and the dead. 43 He is the one all the prophets testified about, saying that everyone who believes in him will have their sins forgiven through his name.”

THE BIG IDEA

The genuine Christian church is both **inclusive & exclusive**.

PROBLEM in EARLY CHURCH: Division

Acts 10:28a (NLT) 28 Peter told them, “You know it is against our laws for a Jewish man to enter a Gentile home like this **or to associate with you...**

Acts 10:28b (NLT) ...But God has shown me that **I should no longer think of anyone as impure or unclean.**

GOD’S SOLUTION FOR PROBLEM: No more favoritism.

Acts 10:34–36 (NLT) 34 Then Peter replied, “I see very clearly that **God shows no favoritism**. 35 In **every nation** he accepts those who **fear him** and **do what is right**.

So what's God revealing about this new power path to unity?

Jesus **exclusively** makes you right w/God by faith alone.

Acts 10:34–36 (NLT) 36 This is the message of Good News for the people of Israel—that **there is peace with God through Jesus** Christ, who is Lord of all.

Evidence of their union with Jesus was the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 10:44–48 (NLT)

44 Even as Peter was saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the message. 45 The Jewish believers who came with Peter were **amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles, too**. 46 For they heard them speaking in other tongues and praising God. Then Peter asked, 47 “Can anyone object to their being baptized, now that they have received the Holy Spirit just as we did?” 48 So he gave orders for them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Afterward Cornelius asked him to stay with them for several days.

Intense **pushback** on Peter comes from the ultra-insiders.

What does Peter say to his critics?

Acts 11:17–18 (NLT): 17 And since God gave these Gentiles the **same gift he gave us** when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to stand in God's way?"

18 When the others heard this, they stopped objecting and began praising God. They said, "**We can see that God has also given the Gentiles the privilege of repenting of their sins and receiving eternal life.**"

What now?

1. Trust the power of the gospel to transform & to transfer into the family.
2. Promote & protect the unity of the church.

3. Resist the pushback against including “**outsiders**” in God’s church.

Continuing The Conversation

1. In your experience, what are some of the things divisions in the Christian church that might be caused by incorrectly labeling them as unacceptable to God ? (AKA “unclean”)
2. Have you ever heard of a church that offers something different (or requires something more) than the Gospel as a means of life transformation?
3. In what ways have you (or might you) had opportunities to promote or protect the unity of your gospel centered church?
4. In what ways do you feel like our church is open (or not) to including “outsiders”? Can you think of any examples?