



Discussion Notes

The Same Gift: Cornelius & Peter, Part 3 • Acts 11:1–18

October 18, 2026 • Dave Solmes

Part 1: Engage

- Read: Acts 11:1–18
- At your initial reading, what stands out to you? (key themes, words, phrases, people?)
- What questions do you have about the text?

Main Theme:

In Acts, we discover that the primary strategist and power behind the growth of the church is the Holy Spirit. Nowhere is this more evident than in Acts 10–11, where we see the Spirit speaking through visions and moving in power to show Peter that both Jew and Gentile are welcome in the family of God. As God moves among them all, everyone is sorting out who belongs to God, and what behavior accompanies those who belong to God. After hearing Peter's account of what God had done, the circumcised Jews glorified God, and share the gospel of repentance that leads to life for Jews and Gentiles.

Peter returns to Jerusalem (Verses 1–3)

- Circumcised Jews, Jerusalem question Peter's decision to go to the house of uncircumcised men and eat with them in Caesarea.

Peter's response to their criticism (Verses 4–17)

- He doesn't defend himself and His decisions.
- He tells them what God had done. Starting with Peter's vision of the table setting coming down in front of him and about the voice from heaven saying, "What God has made clean, do not call unclean."
- Cornelius' angelic vision to send his men to get Peter (Joppa) to come to His house and teach (Caesarea).
- Peter's visit from Cornelius' men.
- Peter's trip from Joppa to Caesarea.
- Peter highlights that when meeting all the people in Caesarea and teaching them, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon all the people which included many Gentiles.

- Peter says, "If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"

The Circumcised Jews response (Verse 18)

- When they heard these things, they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."

Part 2: Observation

- The two Big Questions being asked in Acts 10 and Acts 11 are:
 - Who belongs to God?
 - What does behaviour look like now that both Jew and Gentile belong to God?
- Example: Cornelius, as a Gentile outsider, by faith, had to embrace Jesus and accept the promise that repentance leads to life.
- Example: Peter had to let go of the law, by faith, and had to embrace Jesus and accept the promise that repentance leads to life.

Behaviours that change because we belong to Jesus:

We repent instead of defending ourselves.

"Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out." — Acts 3:19

We stop protecting our sin and start bringing it into the light. We become people who are willing to admit when we are wrong, turn around, and allow God to change us.

We love people we once avoided.

We begin to see people through the eyes of Jesus. No longer determine someone's worth by their background, reputation, ethnicity, social standing, or past.

"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you." — Romans 15:7

We obey Jesus rather than simply agree with Him.

"If you love me, keep my commands." — John 14:15

Following Jesus means allowing His words to direct our decisions, relationships, priorities, and habits. We move beyond admiration to obedience.

We forgive instead of keeping score.

"Forgive as the Lord forgave you." — Colossians 3:13

Because we have received mercy, we become people who extend mercy. We don't pretend that wrongs don't matter, but we refuse to let bitterness have the final word.

We serve instead of demanding to be served.

We stop making life exclusively about our comfort, recognition, and success. We become willing to take the lower place, meet practical needs, and serve without needing applause.

"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve." — Mark 10:45

We pursue holiness instead of accommodating sin.

Grace doesn't make sin irrelevant; it gives us a new reason and power to turn from it. We begin to care about what we watch, what we say, how we treat people, and what we do when nobody is watching.

"Just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do." — 1 Peter 1:15

We tell the truth instead of managing appearances.

We become people of integrity. Our private lives increasingly align with our public professions. We can confess our failures because our identity rests in Christ, not in appearing perfect.

"Each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbour." — Ephesians 4:25

We become witnesses instead of keeping Jesus to ourselves.

We begin to see the people around us as people God loves. We share the good news, welcome outsiders, and participate in God's mission.

"You will be my witnesses." — Acts 1:8

These are not ways to earn belonging. Rather, they are places where our belonging becomes visible.

Part 3: Application Questions

- What is your key takeaway from this passage?
 - Do you belong to God?
 - If you do not belong to God, join Cornelius, by repenting and receiving the new life Jesus is offering right now (verse 18).
- Anything that you feel is important for you to understand or believe?
- Anything that God wants you to desire or do in response to this passage?
- In what ways does belonging to God affect all your behaviour?
 - Habits, Relationships, Priorities, Lifestyle, Finances

Part 4: Pray for each other.