

Called to Be Inclusive – Teaching Notes

(Acts 10:19-33; 8/27/17)

Introduction: A key idea in today's Sunday School material is that God worked things out for Peter to share the Gospel with the Gentiles. Prayerfully, we will be challenged to let God use us in whatever way He chooses.

Body:

Read Acts 10:19-24

I. Peter Responds. The Spirit told Peter that men were coming as a part of his next ministry assignment. The men came. Hospitality is shown. Cornelius calls for his household to gather to hear what Peter has to say.

Applications –

- **Obeying while still processing.** Notice in vss. 19-21, 29 that Peter obeyed, while he was still trying to figure out what was going on. In like manner, there are times when we know what God wants us to do right now, but we don't understand the bigger picture nor all the details. *Let's learn to trust God enough to do what we know, while we learn the rest of the details along the way.* Think about how this applies to your personal development, relationships, and contributions.

Read Acts 10:25-29

II. Peter Clarifies. Peter helps Cornelius understand that he (i.e., Peter) is a man, not a little god. There is a comment about God's will being more important than Jewish laws. Peter asked "why" he was sent for.

Applications –

- **Respect vs. worship.** Notice in vss. 25-26 that Peter helped Cornelius understand that he (i.e., Peter) was not a little god. In like manner, it is important for us to both understand and help others understand that there are not little gods. "Yes," we should show respect for leaders and messengers. However, there is a such thing as too much respect or unhealthy worship. We should not want anyone to push us up on too high of a platform, because those who push you up there today are subject to try to knock you down tomorrow. *Let's work on having the proper amount of respect for people and their various roles.* Think about how this applies to family, church, and community/government leadership.

- **Obedience over traditions.** Notice in vss. 28-29 that God's will was more important than Jewish laws/traditions. In like manner, it is important that we put God's will over our traditions or preferences. If the Bible doesn't dictate a method then we should be flexible on the methods that we use. If the Bible doesn't dictate a principle, we should be flexible with the principles that we subscribe to. *Let's work on putting God's will over our traditions and preferences.* Think about how this idea relates to helping people get saved and be disciples of Christ today.

Read Acts 10:30-33

III. Cornelius Explains. Cornelius tells Peter about his encounter with a man in shining clothes. Cornelius was told to send for Peter. Cornelius has his household in place to hear what Peter had to say.

Applications –

- **Prayer.** Notice in vs. 31 that God hears and answers the prayers of those He chooses. In our text, Cornelius was not a Jew nor a Christian, but God heard and answered his prayers. First, we should be careful about saying who God will and will not listen to. God is too big for us to put into our boxes of “do’s” and “don’ts.” Second, no matter what others have told us and how we feel, we should pray. God is known for working in mysterious ways. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain by praying. *Let’s work on our prayer lives.*

- **God’s knowledge and plan.** Notice in vs. 32 that God knows about us and is working things out for the good of His people. Just as God knew names, places, and situations in the text, God knows the same and more today. Just as God was working things out for more people to be saved and disciples of Christ in the text, God is doing the same today. *Let’s cooperate with God’s will and trust Him to work things out for the good of His people.*

- **Cornelius’ example.** Notice in vss. 22, 33 that Cornelius had several noteworthy qualities. He was known for being righteous, God-fearing, respected by people, and able to get his household in place to hear the word of God. *Let’s strive to be more like Cornelius.* We are righteous to the extent that we obey God’s word. Our fear of God is shown by our obedience, not just what we say. Being consistent, loving, and respectful can help others respect us. Using our lips and lives as witnesses for the Lord can help us to get our household in place to hear the word of God.

Conclusion: Let’s work on letting God use us in whatever way He chooses. God has much for those who obey His will.