

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for November 3, 2013

The Visit By Peter To Cornelius
Acts 10:17-33

In order for the message of Christ to move from the Jews to the Gentiles, the primary barrier that needed to be removed was not geographical but cultural.

God's revelation to Peter to show him that all foods were clean was understood to also mean that all people groups were clean.

1. The messengers visit Peter (10:17-23)

a. The inquiry by the messengers (10:17-18)

The vision that Peter received regarding food was concurrent with the arrival of the messengers in Joppa. God sovereignly worked in the lives of people on both sides of this ministry.

b. The instruction by the Spirit (19-20)

Whether revelation is presented by an angel (10:3), a voice from heaven (10:13-15), or now the Spirit (10:19-20), Luke depicts them all as speaking for God.

c. The invitation by the messengers (10:21-22)

The messengers describe Cornelius in an overly positive light in order to persuade Peter to respond to their request.

d. The invitation by Peter (10:23)

Peter's responsiveness to God's revelation can be seen in his welcome to the Gentile messengers. Hosting these Gentiles overnight is the next significant step in Peter's ministry to the Gentiles.

2. Peter visits Cornelius (10:23-33)

Peter's day-long trip to Caesarea with the three Gentile messengers included six believers from the Joppa church (cf. Acts 11:12). These travelers would serve as eyewitness of the events at Caesarea when they reported to the church in Jerusalem.

Cornelius was so ready for the message from Peter that he gathered his relatives and close friends to wait in expectation. Our desire to learn about Christ should be seen in our concern for others.

Cornelius viewed Peter as God's messenger and treated him with reverence (cf. Acts 14:11-15; Revelation 19:10; 22:8-9). Following Peter's example, Christians ought to avoid all forms of exaltation of men in our service to Christ (cf. Matthew 23:6-12).

The sense of the word translated "unlawful" (ASTHEMITOS) does not connote a simple violation of a rule but more of an emotional wrong, an active disgust.

The Old Testament does not forbid a Jew to associate or visit a foreigner. This became a taboo adopted by the Jews in opposition to the will of God (cf. Matthew 8:5-8; John 18:28).

Since God's plan for His people from the beginning was for all the families of the earth to be blessed (cf. Genesis 12:3), the Gentiles should be related to without objection. It is a fundamental hindrance to our obedience to Christ's commission to make disciples of all nations when we consider certain people groups to be beneath us.

Acts 10:30-33 essentially restates Acts 10:3-8 and Acts 10:22, showing the importance of this event in the history of the church. The Scripture frequently uses repetition for emphasis.