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| **SERIES** | ACTS: Church for All People |
| **BIBLE** | ACTS 10:23-48 |
| **TITLE/TOPIC** | Church for Outsiders (Gentiles) |
| **OVERVIEW** | There are certain moments in history that radically change the way people live. The invention of the printing press… The discovery of penicillin to fight bacteria… The harnessing of electricity… The micro computer chip…  The cell phone…  In the same way, what God did in Acts 10 changed the life of the church of Jesus forever. Gentiles who were once considered far from God, outside the covenant, were now welcomed in the same way Jewish people were. God’s drawing and directing, the simple gospel message, and the work of the Holy Spirit were on clear display to tell everyone that Jesus welcomed in former outsiders to be His own. And now ALL PEOPLE, over the face of all the earth, were welcomed into the family of Jesus by grace through faith. |
| **SCRIPTURE BREAKDOWN** | Background: The gospel is spreading out from Jerusalem. All the first disciples were Jewish, and the first mission efforts were toward Jewish people – to receive Jesus as Christ. But God’s plan was always to bless the whole world through the Jewish nation. So God is orchestrating a breakthrough. (May want to retell the story in a summarized way…. Verses 1-23 are retold through Peter and Cornelius later in the chapter)  Cornelius and the vision – Go bring back Simon who is called Peter (1-8)  Peter and the vision – Kill and eat non-Kosher animals… do not call impure what God has made clean. (9-16)  Peter invites Gentiles to be his house guests (17-23)  Acts 10: 23-48  **Vs 23-33 UNEXPECTED MEETING: Peter’s obedience meets Cornelius’ expectant faith.**  Peter comes with a community of obedience and curiosity to Cornelius’ house. Peter confesses newness, perhaps discomfort – you know its against our Mosaic law for me/us to associate with you Gentiles. But God has shown me – through the vision of the sheet with animals - that I should not call anyone unclean. Peter does not allow Cornelius to bow before him – I am only a man myself. Peter asks “Why did you (a Gentile Centurion) send for me?”  Cornelius has gathered a community of expectation and faith. He is obeying his own vision in calling for Peter. He is looking for God to speak, so he gathers a large group of relatives and close friends. He shows Peter great reverence, falling at his feet. He says we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us. Cornelius show us humility, faith, hunger for God’s message.  \*\*God’s servants must be able to obey the difficult assignments so they can meet those whom God is drawing to Himself.  \*\*Cornelius shows us a practical picture of earnestly seeking after God. Hebrews 11:6 **6**And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.  **Vs 34-43. UNCOMPROMISED GOSPEL OF JESUS – God does not show favoritism but offers forgiveness to anyone who believes in life, death, resurrection of Jesus Christ.**  Peter speaks God’s truth without compromise. God does not show favoritism. God accepts from every nation the person who fears Him and does what is right.  Peter shares the simple gospel message – Jesus sent by God, anointed, performed miracles, died and rose again. He was seen by many witnesses. He is the Judge of every human. He is Savior – everyone who believes in Jesus received forgiveness of sin, new life!  \*\*Though culture changes, and situations vary, the message of salvation in Jesus Christ does not change. We can change methods of delivery, find new and better ways of sharing the message. But the content, the truth of what we proclaim about Jesus and repentance and faith never changes.  \*\*The message of salvation in Jesus does not have to be long or complicated. Simply share who Jesus is and what He has done for sinful humanity, and how humans must repent and believe to receive this gift of new life.  **Vs 44-48 INCLUSIVE SALVATION OF JESUS** – In an undeniable way the Holy Spirit came on all the Gentiles who heard the message even while Peter was still speaking, and they were saved! The indwelling of the Spirit was evidenced by speaking in tongues and praising God.  Vs 47-48 Peter witnesses and defends the amazing work of God in sending His Spirit on this group of Gentiles - Who can keep them from being baptized? So Gentiles hear of Jesus, believe, are indwelt with the Spirit, and baptized in Jesus name. Gentiles become equal, fully vested members in the people of God. The gospel is an inclusive invitation to an exclusive Savior. Galatians 3: **26**So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, **27**for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. **28**There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.  \*\*We should never doubt what God can do when the message of the gospel is clearly proclaimed. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation for all who believe. Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.  \*\*God’s plan of redemption never excluded Gentiles. There was always a way for Gentiles to come under the Torah and enter the community. But now in Christ, the law is fulfilled and He is the focus. All, any who put their faith in Jesus will be saved and given new life under His rule of love.  \*\*No one is beyond God’s power to save. We should never consider any person or people group unclean or beyond the kindness and mercy of God. |
| **GOSPEL** | How does this sermon bring people to the Gospel?  God so loved ALL the people of the world that He sent His one and only Son that whoever would believe in Him would not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16 |
| **NEXT**STEPS | Begin | Connect | Engage | Grow | Disciple  BEGIN – no matter how far away from God you feel you are, you can seek Him earnestly today, repent and believe in Jesus, and be saved.  GROW – Our love and witness and service should not be limited to “our people”. As we are led by the Holy Spirit, we can be like Peter and cross into new communities of those God is drawing to Himself. |