

Acts 10:1-43 — Go Big For The Gospel.

November 14, 2021

Good morning CrossWinds. Welcome to the final week in the Vision series in which we are covering the elders' vision for CrossWind's future! Before we get into our study, let me take a moment to let you know what will happen after we finish this series and how the rest of the year will unfold.

Next week is youth Sunday. The youth will run the service. They will lead worship. Pastor Kris will teach. The youth will be your ushers and greeters. This is something new. We are excited to have our students involved this way. The week after that, we begin our Christmas series. It is called One on One with Christmas. In the series we will go one on one with the different characters in the Christmas story. We will have a week with the shepherds, a week with the wise men, a week with Mary, and a week with Joseph. Christmas Eve, we will look at Jesus.

In the Christmas series we will rotate different pastors into the pulpit and across campuses. We will have a different pastor each week in the series. I am excited because it will give me a week to be in Spencer. Pastor Jordan is looking forward to visiting the Spirit Lake campus.

When we get to the New Year, we will begin a study in 1 Samuel. It has been a while since we studied an Old Testament book so Jordan and I are looking forward to that study.

Before we get into the final point of the elders' vision, since repetition is the mother of all learning, and I want us to make sure we remember these vision points, I want to take a moment to recap what we have learned.

At CrossWinds, our mission is to reach people with Jesus. We want people's lives to be changed by Jesus. We want them to be saved for eternity and to become new people today. At CrossWinds we are not a country club for the saints. We are a hospital for sinners where sin-sick people can meet Jesus.

The first point of the elders' vision for the next five years focuses on that vision.

1. We are for the one who is lost. That little phrase comes out of Luke 15. In the first week of this series, we looked at Luke 15. In that chapter, Jesus gave us one of his greatest parables. It is his only triple parable. That is one parable made up of three stories that all make the same point. They are the stories of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. Each of the stories show us that God loves lost people. They also show us the joy God has when lost people are found. As Jesus said in the story of the lost sheep, "There is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than 99 righteous people who do not need to repent." In the first week, we learned that for CrossWinds to bring great joy to God we must care about lost people and strengthen our focus on reaching lost people. Over the next five years, we will strategically focus on reaching those in our community who do not know Jesus.

Building off of that, we came to the second week of our series.

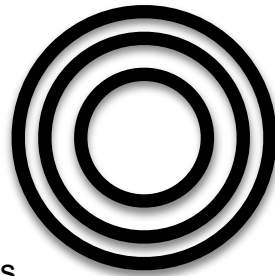
2. We embrace change to reach people with Jesus. The elders' vision is that we would be a church that embraces change. We are not pursuing change to be hip, cool, or trendy. Those may be values for some churches but those are not values for CrossWinds Church. We gladly embrace change that will help us better reach lost people in our culture. It is easy for a church to stay the same. To stay the same, you don't have to do anything. While a church is staying the same, the culture around them is constantly changing. If a church doesn't change to stay relevant to the culture, the church will inadvertently erect barriers that make it distant from the culture. That week, we looked at 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. In that passage we saw that Paul was willing to adopt the Jewish culture, traditions, and practices so he could better share the good news of Jesus with Jews and not have cultural barriers get in the way of the gospel message. When Paul was around the Gentiles, he ditched Jewish culture and adopted their culture so he wouldn't have Jewish cultural barriers that would keep him from effectively sharing the gospel with Gentiles.

If we want an extreme example of this, look at Timothy. He was a Christian, but his father was a Gentile, so Timothy was uncircumcised. When he agreed to travel with Paul and help Paul tell Jews about Jesus, Timothy realized his lack of circumcision would get in the way of the gospel message with Jewish people. Timothy chose to be circumcised as an adult male without Novocaine, not because he had to but only because it would help him better share about Jesus with Jews that didn't know Jesus. If Paul and Timothy thought tearing

down cultural barriers that separated them from lost people was that important, that should be a value for us as well.

Last week, I gave you an example of this issue. At CrossWinds, we are not into social media. It is not my generation. We don't spend time on it. The problem is there are many people in their teens and twenties that are on social media. If we are going to reach them with Jesus, we need to learn social media so we can talk to them in a way they understand. That is a cultural barrier we are working on in the office.

Last week, we looked at a third point in the elders' vision. It is about the topic of neighboring. We want to be better neighbors in three key areas. These areas are like three concentric circles. We want to be better neighbors to those that are closest to us and to those that are more distant from us.



The closest circle of neighboring we want to focus on is we want to be better neighbors to those who are closest to us at CrossWinds. Those are the people who are new at CrossWinds. We want to be warm, be welcoming and invite them into Life Groups. When people are enfolded into Life Groups, they feel connected at the church.

The second ring of neighboring we want to focus on as a church is that we want to be good neighbors to those who are right next to us where we live, work, and play. Our neighbors are not our neighbors by accident. God put them there. He put us next to them. Our neighbors at home, work, and play are the mission field God gave us. God placed us next to them to do good works for them. God

placed us next to them to share the good news with them. Just as a missionary in Africa reaches the community by doing good works and sharing the good news with his physical neighbors, we do the same thing here at home.

This brings us to the third ring of neighboring. The elders are challenging us to not just become better neighbors to those next to us in church and those next to us where we live. They also want us to focus on being better neighbors in our community. We want to be a church that is actively involved in seeing and meeting needs in our community. We don't need to do this by ourselves. We want to eagerly partner with other organizations in our community who are meeting those needs. We are eager to work shoulder to shoulder with them.

That brings us to our final point that we will cover this morning. As a shorthand, I titled it, **Go Big For The Gospel**. The official wording in the elders' vision documents says it this way:

7. We ask big things from people, because we expect big things from God.

What does that mean? We do not want to be a church that plays it safe. We want to be a church willing to take risks when it comes to reaching people with Jesus. We want to be a church that asks big things from people, because we expect God will show up in big ways when it comes to reaching people with the gospel. Let me emphasize that the big risks and the big asks I am talking about are not for randomness' sake. They are all for the sake of reaching more people with Jesus. We believe that if we are willing to take risks to reach people with Jesus and we make big asks of God's people to reach people with Jesus, God will show up in a big way.

CrossWinds has a history of making big asks and God showed up in a big way. As I thought about this, what came to mind is how the vision for being a multisite church began. It was a hot summer day, and I was in my office. Across from my desk, leaning on the wall was a large foam-core board. It came back from a graphics artist working on it a few days before. In the center of the board was a map of Spirit Lake. We had little red pins marking where CrossWinds people lived in the community. The purpose of the map was to help us meet our neighbors and demonstrate where CrossWinds people were found in the community.

The artist had drawn a line on the map down from Spirit Lake. At the bottom of the board was a small map of the Spencer community with a number of red pins in the Spencer map. The artist had also drawn a line to the east and put a small map of Estherville on the map along with some red pins in the Estherville community showing where CrossWinds people lived. In a similar way, the artist drew a line to the north and put on the end of it a small map of the Jackson community. He put red pins showing CrossWinds people in that community. To the west was a line to the Sibley-Ocheyedan area. The artist put pins in that map showing where CrossWinds people lived in that community. As I was thinking and praying, I realized we had a lot of people coming from the four towns around us. It was God who put the thought in my head because I was reading about multisite churches at the time. I thought, most multisite churches are in the city. They are multisite because there is not enough space. What if CrossWinds became a multisite church in the country because we have too

much space? What if CrossWinds opened campuses in the communities around us and we worked together to reach people with the gospel rather than trying to work on our own? The idea of CrossWinds becoming a multisite church where campuses worked together to better reach our region began to form in my thoughts.

I still remember the elder meeting when I shared the idea with the elders. It was a warm summer night. I had the elders over to my house for the meeting. We were meeting in my living room when I shared the idea of becoming a multisite church. Let's just say, at that time, the elders were not as excited about it as I was. Some of the elders thought I was nuts. At least they were polite about it. But when God is the one behind an idea, God will continue to carry it out. In the following weeks, God worked in each of the elder's hearts and they embraced the idea. Then they began championing the idea to the church family. It was a big ask. It was a big challenge for the gospel, but with the elders championing the idea, you supported the idea.

I remember the budget meeting prior to the launch of the Spencer Campus. It was a scary meeting. On paper, there was not enough money for two campuses. As I met with our elder board chairman, we planned for a tough meeting that involved deep cuts in all areas to make two campuses work. In the meeting, the Holy Spirit worked in the heart of the elders. The meeting moved from fear of the future to faith. We ended up deciding to budget what we needed for two campuses and trust God would bring in the people and funds to make it possible. We challenged you as a church to help us meet the budget to go

multisite. As a church family, you made it happen. Between the generous giving of God's people and the new people God brought into the new campus, we made the budget and became one church with two campuses.

Today, God has continued the story. Spencer is a healthy and growing campus. We just paid \$300,000 cash for a permanent home for the Spencer campus in the north side of the north mall in Spencer. We are in a capital campaign to supply the funds for Spencer campus renovations. We have \$210,000 of a \$640,000 renovation goal that has already come in from your generosity.

The Spencer Campus was a big ask but God has shown up in a big way.

As we go into the future, we will make bold asks to reach more people. I don't know when, but we hope to open additional campuses to reach more people with Jesus.

This brings us to the second half of this morning's study. In all honesty, Jordan and I were not sure what text to put with this final point. As we talked about reaching people with Jesus, the book of the Bible that came to mind was the book of Acts. That is a book about the growth of the church. As we talked about making big asks of people and expecting God to show up in a big way, the part of the book of Acts that came to mind was Acts 10.

I would like to spend the balance of our time looking at that chapter. To understand Acts 10, we need to begin with a little background. The theme of the book of Acts is found in Acts 1:8. There it says, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts is the progress of

the gospel spreading to these different people groups starting in Jerusalem, then to Judea, which is the countryside around Jerusalem. Next the gospel went to Samaria, which is a half-Jewish, half-pagan people. Lastly, the gospel went to the Gentiles in the rest of the earth.

In the first half of Acts, the main person was Peter. He was the key for the gospel message breaking into these different people groups. In the second half of Acts, the key person was Paul. He was the one who was instrumental in spreading the gospel message to Gentiles in the known world.

When we go to the Gospel of Matthew, we see Jesus gave Peter a special job.

[I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Matthew 16:19 \(ESV\)](#)

Some people who are Catholic see this as Peter being the first pope. I don't agree with that conclusion. I do believe Jesus gave Peter keys. The keys he gave Peter were that he was the one who unlocked the gospel message, expanding it to different cultures around the world.

For example, on the day of Pentecost, Peter preached in Jerusalem and the church began. Three thousand were saved. That was step one in the church. Peter was the key to it happening. Most of the new Christians stayed in Jerusalem, so God allowed them to experience persecution so they would scatter out of the city. Some scattered north into the area of Samaria.

As I said earlier, the Jews did not like the Samaritans. The Samaritans were originally Jews from the northern kingdom taken into captivity by the Assyrians. Those the Assyrians left behind and those who were eventually able

to return intermarried with the people the Assyrians had resettled in the land. That was a group of people called the Cushites. So the Jews living in Samaria were an intermarried half-Jewish, half-pagan people. Since the Samaritans were not pure Jews, they were despised. For the Samaritans, it was not just their race that was corrupted, but their faith was also corrupted. To show you the level of animosity between Jews and Samaritans, let me quote a Rabbi of that day.

Let no man, no Jew, eat of the bread of the Cushite, the Samaritans, for he who eats of their bread is as if he was eating the swine's flesh. — Jewish Rabbi

As Christians were persecuted, they went into Samaria, and Samaritans became Christians. We read about it in Acts 8.

Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. Acts 8:4–6 (ESV)

Even though the Samaritans became Christians, they were not added to the church until Peter and John arrived. Remember, Peter was the key to the expansion of the church. It was only when Peter arrived and laid his hands on the Samaritans that they received the Holy Spirit. Remember, Peter was the guy that was the key to the expansion of church through cultural barriers.

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:14–17 (ESV)

So Peter was the key to the birth of the church in Jerusalem with the Jews. Peter was the key to the birth of the church in Samaria with the Samaritans, who were half-Jews. There was one more key in Peter's hand. Peter needed to unlock the gospel to the Gentile world. This would be harder for Peter.

As a Jew, Peter was raised in a lifetime of Jewish traditions and legalism, all designed to keep Jews separate from the Gentile world around them. To bring the gospel to the Samaritans was hard to accept, but at least they were half-Jews. To bring the gospel to the Gentiles felt like it was over the top.

To let you know how much the Jews despised the Gentiles, let me give you some illustrations of how they kept themselves separate. If a Jew walked in Gentile land, as they were returning to Jewish land they needed to stop and shake the dust off their feet so they didn't bring inadvertently bring any Gentile dirt onto Jewish soil. If they were given a glass of milk, a Jew had to make sure it wasn't a Gentile hand that milked the cow or he or she couldn't drink the milk. If a Gentile touched a cooking utensil, Jews had to wash it and run it through the fire before using it again to cook their food. This gives you an idea how strong the separation was between Jew and Gentile. This is why telling Gentiles about Jesus was so hard for Peter.

Let's begin reading in Acts 10. This sermon will be a little different. As we read through Acts 10, I will simply stop and share the points of application that came to mind as I was studying these verses. They are all about reaching people with Jesus.

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort... Acts 10:1 (ESV)

1. God chooses who will receive the gospel.

The first thing we see is God chooses who will receive the gospel. God singled out a Gentile guy named Cornelius to be the first Gentile to hear the gospel and become a Christian. There were a lot of Gentiles around. Many

others could have been the first Gentile Christian, but God chose Cornelius. This principle is always true. If you are a Christian today, it is because in eternity past, God chose you. Reaching people with Jesus is part of God's story as he draws people to himself and saves them by Jesus. We do not save anybody. All we do is tell people about Jesus. God is the one who draws people to himself so they are born again. We see this theme in Acts.

And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. Acts 13:48 (ESV)

Not everybody who hears the good news of Jesus will believe. It is only those God chose in eternity past who will hear the gospel and combine it with faith. While I am on this point, I should say that while God is the one who chooses who will receive the gospel, he doesn't do this against anyone's will. So we have the sovereignty of God who chooses who will hear and respond to the gospel. We also have the choice of man. Both are true. In a moment Cornelius will choose to follow Jesus but that is only because God chose to draw Cornelius to himself. How does this go together where God chooses us but we also choose him? I don't know. My brain is not as smart as God's. I just know it is true. As we continue, we learn a bit more about Cornelius.

...a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. Acts 10:2 (ESV)

Cornelius was not just any man. He was a devout and God-fearing man. He gave alms to the poor. That means he gave generously to the poor. He prayed continually. Cornelius was a good guy.

There were three kinds of Gentiles in the ancient world. One was a regular Gentile who wanted nothing to do with the Jewish faith. The other was known as a God-fearer. These were Gentiles that gave up on their old religion. They were following the Jewish faith but they weren't following it all the way. They were not circumcised. For obvious reasons, they were not excited about circumcision. Then there were proselyte Jews. They also gave up on their old pagan ways. They were following the Jewish faith but they were circumcised. They fully identified with Israel. Many people were stuck in the middle position. They were God-fearers. They ditched their old pagan worship. They believed in the God of Israel but were not ready to be circumcised. That was Cornelius. He was in this middle group. He was a good man. He was a religious man. He was a praying man. He was a generous man, but he was still a Gentile man.

But it is worth noting that while he had all these good things going on the outside, he was not saved. He did not know Jesus.

2. Good people are not saved people.

There are many good people out there like Cornelius. There are people who give to charities. There are people who do good works, but they are not saved. When you look at other religions, you will run across many good and moral people. The problem is it doesn't matter how good we are. We are never good enough. The only way to be made right with God is by trusting Jesus and his death on the cross to pay for our sin. That was Cornelius. He was a good person but he was not a saved person. He needed to hear about Jesus.

3. God shows mercy to searching hearts.

While I say that, I also think it is worth noting that Cornelius was not just a good guy but he was also a seeking guy. He really wanted to know God better. Perhaps that is why out of all the good Gentiles out there, God chose him to be the first one to hear become a Christian.

So first we see God chose Cornelius. Only people that God chooses will come to Christ. Secondly, we see Cornelius was not a Christian guy but he had a searching heart.

4. God prepares hearts to hear the gospel.

Next, we see God needed to break down cultural barriers. He needed to prepare Cornelius' heart to hear about Jesus. God will do that with a vision. God prepares people's hearts to hear about Jesus in a variety of ways. Sometimes people go through hard times. They come to the end of their ropes and in desperation they call out to God for help. Sometimes God prepares people's hearts in a different way. Here, it was by a vision.

About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, "Cornelius." Acts 10:3 (ESV)

The ninth hour of the day is 3 p.m. That was the normal time for Jews to have their evening prayers. I think it is worth noting that God worked in Cornelius' life when he prayed. The same is true for us. God often works most powerfully in our lives when we take the time to pray.

And he stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God." Acts 10:4 (ESV)

God knew his prayers. God sees and reads the heart of every single one of us. God also noticed his alms. Alms are the gifts Cornelius gave to the poor. God noticed Cornelius' generosity and his prayers. That seems to be why God choose Cornelius to be the first Gentile to hear about Jesus.

"And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea." When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him, and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa. Acts 10:5–8 (ESV)

5. God uses us to share the gospel.

Here is also another lesson when it comes to reaching people with Jesus. God uses human beings to share the gospel. He doesn't use angelic beings to share the gospel. Here is Cornelius talking to an angel. That angel could have zapped him with gospel information and simplified the process. That is not what happened. The angel helped connect Peter to Cornelius. The angel didn't replace Peter meeting with Cornelius. God had chosen that the gospel would be spread from our mouths, not angelic mouths.

Today, we hear of Muslims in countries hostile to the gospel having dreams and visions of Christ. If you notice, those dreams and visions do not replace sharing the gospel. They only soften hearts then guide and direct people to Christians where they can hear the gospel. God has chosen to share the gospel through human beings, not angelic beings!

When we come to verse 9, the focus shifts from Cornelius to Peter.

The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. Acts 10:9 (ESV)

6. Just as God chooses who will receive the gospel, he chooses who will share the gospel.

Peter was praying on the roof at the sixth hour. That is noon. Just as God needed to prepare Cornelius by giving him a vision to go see Peter. God needed to prepare Peter by giving him a vision so he would drop his cultural separation and talk with Cornelius. There is another lesson for us in this when it comes to reaching people with the gospel.

Just as God chooses who will receive the gospel, God chooses which of us will share the gospel. Just as significant as God choosing who will respond to the good news is that God also chooses which one of us will share the good news. Neither happen by chance. This is encouraging! God has scheduled appointments for us to tell people about Jesus. God promises to give us those opportunities.

And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. Acts 10:10–12 (ESV)

What is important for us to know is there were clean and unclean animals on this sheet. As a Jew, Peter was not allowed to eat unclean animals. Leviticus 11 gives us details of what kind of food falls into the unclean category for Jews. They couldn't eat camel, rock badger, rabbit, pig, shrimp, lobster and many other meats. In this vision, God told Peter to eat unclean animals. What was happening?

Why did God make some animals clean and others unclean for the Jews? One reason the Jews were to have a strict diet and a different diet was to keep them socially separate from other people. Eating meals together bonds you

together. The strict Jewish dietary laws kept the Jews apart from Gentiles in society.

You shall therefore separate the clean beast from the unclean, and the unclean bird from the clean. You shall not make yourselves detestable by beast or by bird or by anything with which the ground crawls, which I have set apart for you to hold unclean. You shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine. Leviticus 20:25–26 (ESV)

7. Jesus wants us to give up cultural distinctives that keep us from sharing the gospel message with people who need to hear.

In this passage, God intentionally abolished the Jewish food laws. They are the very things that were originally created to keep Jewish people away from lost Gentile people. Now God wants Jewish Christians to reach lost people.

So Peter saw this sheet with clean and unclean animals on it. Look what happened next.

And there came a voice to him: “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.” And the voice came to him again a second time, “What God has made clean, do not call common.” This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven. Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon’s house, stood at the gate and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. Acts 10:13–18 (ESV)

What is the probability of this happening by chance?

8. God orders events in our lives to steer us where we should go and direct us to people we need to meet.

This was God’s timing.

Here we see another lesson on reaching people with Jesus. God not only prepares the one who is to hear the good news. God also prepares us to share the good news. Now we see God ordains the timing of the events so God steers us into the people who need to hear about Jesus. God has us moving around

and bumping into people he wants us to meet. Nobody you meet is by chance. God has everyone in your life for a reason. God orders our lives and our relationships for a reason.

Folks, when the car won't start in the morning, that is not a disaster. That is God steering you to meet a mechanic that either needs to experience good works from Christians or to hear the good news.

And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them." And Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming?" And they said, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say." So he invited them in to be his guests. The next day he rose and went away with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him. Acts 10:19–23 (ESV)

Here we see the barriers are starting to come down. As a Jew, Peter would not normally have invited these Gentile men into the house to be his guests. Peter was beginning to understand the vision God gave him. "Do not call anything unclean that I have made clean."

And on the following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am a man." Acts 10:24–26 (ESV)

9. God uses ordinary people to tell others about Jesus.

I like how Peter refused to let Cornelius worship him. Peter didn't see himself as a pope. He was just an ordinary guy who loves Jesus. He was a blue collar fisherman. What made Peter special was the message, not the man. The same is true for us. God loves to use ordinary people to share the gospel. What makes us special is that we have the life-changing message of Jesus we get to

share. We are not special. We cannot change lives. The message of the gospel is special. The gospel is what changes lives.

And as he talked with him, he went in and found many persons gathered. And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me." Acts 10:27–29 (ESV)

Here we have Cornelius and Peter, finally together. God has prepared both of them with visions. God chose the one who would receive the good news of Jesus and God chose the one who would share the good news of Jesus. Now Peter just needed to tell Cornelius about Jesus. Before he did, Peter acknowledged how unlawful it was for a Jew to visit a Gentile. In other words, Peter should not have even been in Cornelius' house. Why were Gentile houses off limits to Jewish people? The rabbis thought it was ritual defilement for a Jew to go into the home of a Gentile. It was a seven-day defilement. It was the same defilement as coming in contact with a dead body. Why was entering a Gentile house the same degree of defilement as coming in contact with a dead body? The Jews believed Gentiles put their aborted children down the drains in their homes. I read that and had to stop and take it in. This is why the Jews treated any contact with a Gentile house like it was contacting a dead body. The cultural walls were coming down or Peter wouldn't have been in Cornelius' home!

And Cornelius said, "Four days ago, about this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.' So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord." Acts 10:30–33 (ESV)

By the time we get to verse 44, the Holy Spirit came on Cornelius and the other Gentiles in his home in a powerful way. As we will see, all it took was for Peter to make a simple presentation of the gospel. Let's see the simple presentation Peter used that was enough to change Cornelius' life.

10. Sharing the gospel begins with a simple presentation on the facts of Jesus' life.

So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him." Acts 10:34–38 (ESV)

"Cornelius, you heard about Jesus. You heard about the way Jesus healed the sick and all who were oppressed by the devil. The point is that Jesus was a real historical flesh-and-blood person. He was not a spirit. He was not an idea. He is the man who was God."

11. Sharing the gospel includes the significance of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

"And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead." Acts 10:39–41 (ESV)

Peter gave Cornelius the facts of the gospel. Jesus died. Jesus rose from the dead on the third day. He appeared not to everyone but to those people God chose as witnesses. Jesus died in your place for your sin. Jesus rose to new life.

12. Sharing the gospel includes the future of Jesus as our judge and an invitation for him to be your Savior.

"And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." Acts 10:42–43 (ESV)

Here is the message. Jesus is coming back. When he comes back, he will be the judge of the living and the dead when he returns. Everyone will stand before Jesus and be judged by Jesus. Here is the good news. Everyone who believes in Jesus receives forgiveness of their sins through Jesus' name. Everyone who has asked Jesus' death on the cross to pay for their sin will be forgiven of their sin. "Cornelius, will you trust in Jesus?" Cornelius as well as his guests trusted in Jesus and became the first Gentile Christians. Peter was the key to the gospel coming to the Gentile world. He was the key to us being Christians today!

When it comes to reaching people with Jesus, this chapter has many lessons.

1. God is working ahead of us when we tell people about Jesus. He has already selected who will respond to the good news of Jesus. God is also preparing hearts. He is softening hearts to hear and respond to the good news of Jesus. Our only job is to share the good news with people. We do not make anyone a Christian.
2. God is steering our lives. Just as God directed Peter to Cornelius to share the gospel, God is directing our lives to the people he wants us to meet to share the gospel.

3. God wants us to tear down the cultural barriers that are keeping us from people who need to hear the good news.
4. Lastly, all that is needed for anyone to be born again is a very simple presentation of the gospel. Jesus is a real person who lived. He is the man that was God. He died on the cross, in your place for your sin. He rose to life. Jesus will one day return and be the judge of the living and the dead. Right now he offers to forgive us if we would trust in him to save us from our sin.

That is the simple message that we share that God is still using to change lives so they are born again.



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