

VILLAGE

CHURCH

Bible Study Notes

Intro Question:

1. What is one food you just won't eat.

Aim/Prayer: for faith to reach out to people who seem far from God.

Read: Acts 9:32-10:48

Questions about the passage:

1. What is happening to who and where in 9:32-43 and why is this significant?
2. What is the meaning of Peter's vision? How does it apply to Cornelius?
3. Why do you think Peter is surprised at God's command?
4. What do you notice about what Peter tells Cornelius?
5. How does this episode connect to Jesus' words in Acts 1:6-8?

Questions for us:

1. Have you ever had God answer your prayers regarding sickness? How should we think/feel about times when he doesn't?
2. Why does it sometimes feel like God is not as active today as he was in Acts?
3. Should we be taking special notice of our dreams? Does God speak through them? How does God draw people today?
4. How does this passage speak to us about our welcoming culture? Are there people you would struggle to eat with or welcome? What cultural barriers do we need to overcome?

Pray: through the passage, for each other, for Village Church and for our local community.

Homework: welcome someone/say hello to someone at Church you don't really know.

Remind: Invite people/buy tickets for Gingerbread events.

Praying to see 10% of the northern suburbs in gospel-centred churches & 250 by 2030 at Village Church who grow, gather, give & go, in love & joy to the glory of God

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The Book of Acts is all about what happened in the few years after the death and resurrection of Jesus. In his final command, Jesus said to his followers, go and make disciples of all nations. So, that's what they do. But not alone. God's Holy Spirit is with them to grow his Church in number and in maturity.

This week is a profound moment in the history of Christianity. God reveals to Peter that his plan is not only for Jews, but for Gentiles to be saved and receive the Holy Spirit.

Questions about the passage:

- What is happening to who and where in 9:32-43 and why is this significant?

The key piece here is the where. This is all taking place in Judea. It's also significant as just another example of Jesus' power and ministry continuing with the Apostles as a testimony to the truth of what they are witnessing to.

- What is the meaning of Peter's vision? How does it apply to Cornelius?

Jews saw Gentiles as unclean. They ate unclean foods, they didn't wash their hands and neither were they purified by the sacrifices of the temple. God has revealed that his plan is not just to save Jews, but all people. Therefore Gentiles are not unclean when it comes to salvation.

- Why do you think Peter is surprised at God's command?

It's captured in 10:28. He really shouldn't have been surprised though. God's plan has always been to save people from the Gentiles. See Genesis 12:1-3 or Isaiah 49:1-6.

- What do you notice about what Peter tells Cornelius?

Encourage your group to focus on the content of his testimony. What does he emphasize? What doesn't he? How does this help us consider what we should include in our testimony about Jesus?

- How does this episode connect to Jesus' words in Acts 1:6-8?

The witness testimony about Jesus' as the risen Messiah is spreading and strengthening his people. From Jerusalem, to Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth.

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Questions for us:

- *Have you ever had God answer your prayers regarding sickness? How should we think/feel about times when he doesn't?*

Village people will have a variety of beliefs on this and it's ok to differ. It's important to recognise that we can pray to God for our daily needs including healthiness. We also need to trust God that he may use hard times to help us persevere and trust him. Perfect health will only come in the new creation.

- *Why does it sometimes feel like God is not as active today as he was in Acts?*

Acts, like the gospels, is a particular moment in history where God is testifying to the authenticity of Jesus and then in Acts, his Apostles witness about Jesus. We aren't meant to replicate the Apostolic witness, but to point people to it. We need to remember that faith comes by hearing and in another sense nothing has changed in that the Holy Spirit continues to testify to peoples hearts that what they hear about Jesus in the gospel is true.

- *Should we be taking special notice of our dreams? Does God speak through them? How does God draw people today?*

There is some reports that God still works through dreams today, particularly in people groups that do not have easy access to the Scriptures or to other Christians. However, I think we should be careful about reading too much into our dreams. The Scriptures are sufficient for knowing God and how to live for him.

- *How does this passage speak to us about our welcoming culture? Are there people you would struggle to eat with or welcome? What cultural barriers do we need to overcome?*

Many of us struggle to welcome or show hospitality to people that aren't exactly like us. Acts reminds us that God is drawing all kinds of people to himself and we need to be willing to welcome those who we might consider different or uncomfortable.