

Come Follow Me  
Elo Viz production  
Week 30  
Acts 10-15

Last week I mentioned that God was going to teach Peter a very important lesson. But the lesson was not just for Peter it was also for us. In Acts chapter ten we have two men from very different backgrounds. And God is going to make their paths collide in a beautiful way.

Before we dive into the story there is an important back story or history that we must understand in order to fully understand what is going on. In the times of the Bible there were only two kinds of people, the Jews or the Gentiles. If you were not a Jew you were a Gentile. The term "Jew" was defined as anyone that was born in the family of Abraham. This was God's chosen seed. So if you were born a Jew you had this immediate sense of importance, or responsibility. Because you were of the house of Israel, whose name was Jacob who was the son of Abraham. And because they were chosen they had to be a people that were different from the heathens that were all around them. So they had special dietary restrictions, special laws, and a whole host of traditions. The bad part was their view of the rest of the world. Because they were chosen, the rest of the world (The Gentiles) were unworthy dogs. They literally believed that God created the Gentiles to be fuel for the fires of hell. What is sad; is that we can still find this belief system in some cultures today.

The Samaritans that we spoke about last week were hated by the Jews, not because they were Gentiles but because they were only half Jews. Which made it easy to despise this group who were actually decent people.

But this is where it all changes. God takes Simon Peter and teaches him and us a great lesson. A lesson that will change the course of history if we let it.

In Acts Chapter ten we are introduced to a man by the name of Cornelius of Caesarea. He was one hundred percent Gentile. There was not an ounce of Jewish blood in his veins. But, he was a good man. It says he was "A devout man, one that feared God, he gave much alms to the people, and He prayed to God always" (Acts 10:2)

We could say that Cornelius was like a large percentage of people that are living around us today. Good people that try mostly to do the right thing. They believe that they will go to heaven because they have not done anything terribly bad, and they try to treat people they associate with respectfully, paying their dues when dues are required. We read that and we say: yeah, I like this guy. He sounds nice and pleasant, someone I could be friends with. But what does God think of Cornelius? When God looks down on him, or people like him God says: That's wonderful....but it is not enough. It is not enough to just be good. God said: "There is none righteous, no, not one!" (Romans 3:10)

God has looked on the human race and judged us all. We were all doomed to complete condemnation.... At least until Christ came along and saved our souls from everlasting

damnation. God has told us again and again. That being good or being a decent person is not enough. We all need Jesus. He is the only way back. And this is exactly what He is teaching Cornelius.

**3** He saw in a [vision evidently](#) about the ninth hour of the day an [angel](#) of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.

**4** And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

**5** And now send men to Joppa, and call for *one* Simon, whose surname is Peter. (Acts 10:3-5)

Now I know what you must be asking, because I asked the same thing; Why is God telling him to go get Peter. The Angel of the Lord is standing right there, why didn't He just tell him what he must do? Wouldn't that have been a whole lot easier?

That is an excellent question. The answer is that: This is not the roll of Angles. They are not sent to earth to be seen by humans to preach Christ. With one exception: At the last days an angel will fly through to the heavens "having the [everlasting gospel](#) to [preach](#) unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every [nation](#), and kindred, and tongue, and people." (Revelation 14:6)

Besides that the task of spreading the gospel on the earth has been given to us. Gods converted loyal children that understand the saving grace of Lord and Savior. It is our job to spread the gospel to all the earth.

So why Peter? We know that Peter was not the closest disciple to Caesarea. Peter was over 30 miles away, which is several days journey in that day.

Well, this is where the story gets really good. A couple of days after Cornelious has this vision. Peter is on the roof at lunch time and praying. And he also has a vision. It is described like this:

**11** [He] saw [heaven](#) opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet [knit](#) at the four corners, and let down to the earth:

**12** Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

**13** And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. (Acts 10:11-13)

All of these animals that God shows Peter and what they referred to as non-kosher, or in other words forbidden. This was the strict dietary restrictions that those of the Jewish faith did and some still do live by. So Peter responds "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean" (Acts 10:14)

Wow, just a word of advice. It is probably not a good idea to use the words "no so" and "Lord" in the same sentence. It is very oxy moronic. It's a pretty good rule of thumb to assume that

everything God says is true. And to tell Him “Not so” may not be the best response during a grand vision.

And this is the lesson for Peter and us that should be preached in every school, church, synagoge, riot, or protest.

God says:

“What God hath **cleansed**, [do not] call thou **common**.” (Acts 10:15)

This happened three times and then Peter finally got the message. When he finally gets to Cornelious’s house one the first things he says to him and all that were gathered there:

“Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man **common** or **unclean**.” (Acts 10:28)

This is a powerful message that gets to the center of all that we face today as a society. The more we pull God out of our schools or the government or even pulling Him out of our daily conversations with others, the further we get away from this very important teaching that: God loves every single one of His children no matter what their race is, or their gender, or their political affiliation. We have so much hate and division around us that it is almost unbearable. At times it feels like we are on the edge of a catastrophic collapse of humanity, and it is all because we have forgotten this very important teaching. That God loves all of His children and as his children we must also love one another. You can not love God and hate what He has created. To do that is to not love God.

And I speak from experience. I used to be one of those people. I was the guy that did not like anyone. I was so prideful that I believed I was the crowning jewel of God's creation. I used to catch birds in my nose because it stuck so far up in the air. That was back when I was a teenager and when I knew everything about everything. But as I grew older I learned more and more, and the more I realized how little I actually knew. And how little others actually knew me or even wanted to know me because of who I was.

Pride is a fascinating thing. It is literally odorless to the person that has it, but to those around them it is the worst stench that exists on the earth.

My Kids and I used to watch those reality contest shows. With the kids that sing or dance. It was so funny to me that my children would say the most awful things about the contestants that were prideful. The ones that would talk about how great they are. My kids would literally cheer when they got voted off. But on the opposite side were those contestants that were humble and kind to others, they instantly became their favorites and they would rejoice when they had success.

I always found myself having very meaningful discussions with them after we watched a show like that, pointing out to them why they liked one person and why they hated another. It was easy for them to see the pride and humility in others but they couldn't see it in themselves.

It seems like everytime I turn on the news there is some controversy about race and discrimination. Why is that? In the words of Rodney King "Can't we all just get along". Do we have to wait for some grand vision from heaven and the voice of God coming down to tell us "Just love one another" Do you know how many times Jesus said that just in His earthly ministry? A quick google search told me it was over 30 times.

One thing that helped me overcome my pride and to try and see others the way God sees them was when I started to understand empathy. And I realized that when I tried to see the world from the perspective of others, that they had just as much pain as I did. They had just as much heart ache, and trial. That they had vices and temptations just like I did. And then it hit me. My job on this earth is not to judge my sins against theirs, my accomplishments against another's. My weaknesses to my brothers. My job was to put my arm around them, and say: I know what you're going through, it hurts, I've been there. Hang in there brother or sister. I'm here by your side the whole way. We will get through this because we both have Jesus that is holding us both up. Let's keep walking with Him. The sun is brighter just over this hill.

That is what we are all called here to do. So when you feel like you are better than someone else, and those feelings from the adversary start bubbling up that you should judge or condemn another. Remember the words of Him who is the actual judge of the world:

**43 ¶** Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt **love** thy **neighbour**, and hate thine enemy.

**44** But I say unto you, **Love** your **enemies**, **bless** them that **curse** you, do **good** to them that **hate** you, and **pray** for them which despitefully use you, and **persecute** you.”  
(Matthew 5:43-44)

He Also said:

**34** A new commandment I give unto you, That ye **love** one another; as I have loved you, that ye also **love** one another.

**35** By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have **love** one to another.”  
(John 13:34-35)