

Fearless Acts – Re-tribing the Gospel

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Acts 10

August 25, 2019

Reflection & Discussion Questions

The first believers were incredibly brave as they engaged their world

Looking to their example helps us identify and see ourselves as fearlessly brave Christ-followers.

*How can examples and stories call out braveness in you?

*Where do you see the need for Christians to live out our faith in brave ways in our culture and time?

Read and discuss Acts 10:9-35 (NIV)

⁹ About noon the next day, while they were on their way and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted to eat, but while they were preparing the meal, a trance came over him. ¹¹ He saw heaven opened and an object something like a large sheet descending, being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹² In it were all kinds of four-footed animals and reptiles of the earth and wild birds. ¹³ Then a voice said to him, "Get up, Peter; slaughter and eat!" ¹⁴ But Peter said, "Certainly not, Lord, for I have never eaten anything defiled and ritually unclean!" ¹⁵ The voice spoke to him again, a second time, "What God has made clean, you must not consider ritually unclean!" ¹⁶ This happened three times, and immediately the object was taken up into heaven.

¹⁷ Now while Peter was puzzling over what the vision he had seen could signify, the men sent by Cornelius had learned where Simon's house was and approached the gate. ¹⁸ They called out to ask if Simon, known as Peter, was staying there as a guest. ¹⁹ While Peter was still thinking seriously about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Look! Three men are looking for you. ²⁰ But get up, go down, and accompany them without hesitation, because I have sent them." ²¹ So Peter went down to the men and said, "Here I am, the person you're looking for. Why have you come?" ²² They said, "Cornelius the centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man, well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to summon you to his house and to hear a message from you." ²³ So Peter invited them in and entertained them as guests.

On the next day he got up and set out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him. ²⁴ The following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting anxiously for them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵ So when Peter came in, Cornelius met him, fell at his feet, and worshiped him. ²⁶ But Peter helped him up, saying, "Stand up. I too am a mere mortal." ²⁷ Peter continued talking with him as he went in, and he found many people gathered together. ²⁸ He said to them, "You know that it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile, yet God has shown me that I should call no person defiled or ritually unclean. ²⁹ Therefore when you sent for me, I came without any objection. Now may I ask why you sent for me?" ³⁰ Cornelius replied, "Four days ago at this very hour, at three o'clock in the afternoon, I was praying in my house, and suddenly a man in shining clothing stood before me ³¹ and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your acts of charity have been remembered before God. ³² Therefore send to Joppa and summon Simon, who is called Peter. This man is staying as a guest in the house of Simon the tanner, by the sea.' ³³ Therefore I sent for you at once, and you were kind enough to come. So now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to say to us."

³⁴ Then Peter started speaking: "I now truly understand that God does not show favoritism in dealing with people, ³⁵ but in every nation the person who fears him and does what is right is welcomed before him.

*What is this passage saying to you?

*What does it show an example of bravery?

Tribalism we are taught can be a powerful thing in our lives

What we learn from our traditions can keep the good news of God's kingdom from being announced to others.

*What do tribal barriers look like in your life?

*What lessons or traditions have had to be broken down?

*How have these divisions kept you from announcing the Good News?

The gospel is for all people, especially those outside our Christian tribe

It's hard to convince people that a God they can't see loves them when a church they can see doesn't seem to like them.

*What tribes of people are out there that we need to sit down with? Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to invite someone to your table?

*What acts of bravery or courage will it take?