

## **No Boundaries on Gospel Proclamation Acts 11:1-18**

Last week, we looked at the conversion of Peter. It took two visions and a miraculous intervention to get him into the home of a Gentile and hear his story. Peter then led that man to faith in Christ. In doing so, Peter crossed some huge cultural and personal boundaries. Today, we look at the Church's reaction to Peter's experience.

What the first Christians struggled to embrace with all of their hearts is that there are no boundaries beyond which the gospel cannot go. There are no boundaries that are to keep Christians from sharing the gospel with people.

Just looking at the layout of Acts in this section of chapters 9-11, there is something very surprising and yet very important. There is something here that is intentional and it shouts of importance.

Acts 9 – The conversion of Saul

Acts 10 – The story of Peter and Cornelius is told to us by Luke as narrator

Acts 11 – The story of Peter and Cornelius is repeated by Peter in the first person

### **In Scripture, repetition = importance**

Why repeat the same account in consecutive chapters? Luke is cupping his hands and he's shouting...

*"Don't miss this!"*

The proclamation of the gospel to Gentiles was hard for a Jewish Believer such as Peter. It was even harder for the early Church.

What we need to learn: The salvation of souls should never provoke criticism from the Church. The length of Peter's response gives you a clue as to how serious this criticism was. This is not a casual reply from Peter given in response to a casual question. This is more like an interrogation. The leaders in the Jerusalem Church are angry. What were you thinking when you preached the gospel to those people? Why did you think it was okay to visit them and eat with them?

This story contains an important piece of theology that's easy to miss – notice Peter's defense. Peter's explanation that the Gentiles can be Christians every bit as much as Jews can be Christians rests on one thing: The Holy Spirit. The way Peter says it is this: The HS came upon Gentiles who responded to the gospel in the same way the Holy Spirit came upon Jews who responded to the gospel on the day of Pentecost when the Church was born.

Acts 11:15-17. Peter's recollection: The Holy Spirit came on them just as He had upon us.

Acts 10:44-48. Luke's narration: The Holy Spirit was evidenced by speaking in languages.

Acts 2:1-8. The Day of Pentecost marked the arrival of the Holy Spirit and this was evidenced by speaking in languages.

The common denominator with regard to the arrival of the Holy Spirit is faith in Jesus.

Jewish Believers received the Holy Spirit.

Gentile Believers received the Holy Spirit.

Same sign. Same gift. Same Holy Spirit.

The Gentile Christians are every bit as Christian as the Jewish Christians.  
Therefore, the proclamation of the gospel has no boundaries.

### **Home Group Questions:**

1. Who are you praying for to receive the gospel?
2. In what ways do you think our sin nature affects how we view people? In what ways does the Holy Spirit impact how we view people?
3. Respond to Pastor Karl's story about the young man who asked him ... "Don't you think righteousness should look the same on different people?"
4. You may have heard Pastor Karl say, "This story is not only about condemning legalism but affirming evangelism." How does this story affirm evangelism?