

**The 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost ~ Sunday, August 23, 2026**  
**“Marks of the Early Church ~ A Church Without Borders”**  
**Psalm 100 Acts 10:34-48 John 10:14-18**

As we come to the end of this series, we arrive at one of the most important \_\_\_\_\_ points in the book of Acts, and one of the most \_\_\_\_\_ moments in the history of the early church.

The story recorded in Acts 10 centres on an unexpected \_\_\_\_\_ between two very different men: Peter, a Jewish apostle and one of Jesus’ closest disciples, and Cornelius, a Roman centurion living in Caesarea.

At first glance, these two men seem to have very little in \_\_\_\_\_—they come from different cultures, different backgrounds, and very different worlds. This shouldn’t be a surprise, since in the first century, Jews and Gentiles lived with deep religious, cultural, and social divisions that often kept them \_\_\_\_\_ from one another.

God was about to challenge long-held \_\_\_\_\_ and reveal something that would forever change the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Church.

Acts 10 reminds us that the \_\_\_\_\_ was never meant to be \_\_\_\_\_ by national borders, cultural traditions, social status, or human expectations. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, came to seek and save all the lost, and His \_\_\_\_\_ extends to people from every background—to everyone who will hear His voice and follow Him.

**THREE IMPORTANT TRUTHS**

**Truth #1:** \_\_\_\_\_.

One of the most encouraging truths in this passage is that God is always at \_\_\_\_\_, even when we can’t see it.

Long before Peter ever set foot in Caesarea, God had already begun preparing Cornelius’s \_\_\_\_\_.

“...a devout man who feared God with all his household; he gave alms generously to the people and .” (Acts 10:2)

Even though Cornelius didn’t yet fully \_\_\_\_\_ the gospel, he was searching, seeking, and responding to the \_\_\_\_\_ that God had already given him. At the same, Luke tells us that God was also \_\_\_\_\_ Peter.

Like many faithful Jews of his day, Peter had been shaped by generations of

cultural and religious \_\_\_\_\_—until God gave him a \_\_\_\_\_.

“Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.” (Acts 10:15)

Only later would Peter understand that the vision had never been about food, but about \_\_\_\_\_. God was teaching him that no one should be considered beyond the reach of His \_\_\_\_\_.

What I find so remarkable about this story is that God was \_\_\_\_\_ on both sides of the conversation at the exact same time. He was preparing Cornelius to receive the message, and He was preparing Peter to deliver it.

Sometimes, we assume that sharing our faith depends entirely on our own efforts; and we imagine that the \_\_\_\_\_ rests solely upon our shoulders.

“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them.” (John 6:44)

“I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow.” (1 Corinthians 3:6)

It should \_\_\_\_\_ us because we’re not responsible for changing people’s hearts—that’s God’s job! But it should also \_\_\_\_\_ us because we never know what God may already be doing in someone’s life.

We should never assume that anyone is beyond God’s \_\_\_\_\_. We should never look at a person’s age, background, past mistakes, social status, or life circumstances and conclude that God could never \_\_\_\_\_ them to Himself.

Our calling is not to \_\_\_\_\_ opportunities for God; it’s to \_\_\_\_\_ the opportunities that God has already created.

**Truth #2:** \_\_\_\_\_.

When Peter finally begins to speak, his first words reveal that something profound has \_\_\_\_\_ within him.

“I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.” (Acts 10:34-35)

Peter was \_\_\_\_\_. This seasoned apostle who’d walked with Jesus for three years, witnessed the resurrection, and preached at Pentecost, was still growing in his understanding of God’s \_\_\_\_\_.

It is important that we understand that Peter’s statement that God doesn’t show

favouritism was \_\_\_\_\_. For centuries, the Jews had understood themselves to be God's \_\_\_\_\_ people.

Being chosen was never intended to mean being \_\_\_\_\_. From the very beginning, God's plan had always included the \_\_\_\_\_.

"I have other sheep that are not of this sheepfold. I must bring them also..." (John 10:16)

Acts 10 wasn't a change in God's plan; it was the \_\_\_\_\_ of God's plan.

However, when Peter said that God shows no partiality and accepts people from every nation, he wasn't suggesting that all religions \_\_\_\_\_ to God. In fact, after making his initial statement, he immediately turns his attention to \_\_\_\_\_.

"Everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." (Acts 10:43)

"There is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him." (Romans 10:12)

At the foot of the cross, all the distinctions that often \_\_\_\_\_ us begin to disappear. Sadly, human beings have always been skilled at building walls and experts at \_\_\_\_\_.

However, the Gospel clearly shows us that Jesus spent His earthly ministry \_\_\_\_\_ walls.

Over and over again, Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ well-established boundaries as He lived out His mission to "seek and save the lost."

One of the great \_\_\_\_\_ of the church is that it brings together people who might otherwise never have crossed paths.

As Christians, we need to be careful never to place \_\_\_\_\_ on God's grace. The gospel doesn't belong to us, nor does the Church. Salvation is God's free gift, extended to all who will receive it through \_\_\_\_\_ in His Son.

**Truth #3:** \_\_\_\_\_.

If Peter's declaration in verses 34-43 challenged long-held \_\_\_\_\_, what happened next completely removed any remaining \_\_\_\_\_.

"While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message." (Acts 10:44)

Peter hadn't even finished his sermon—there was no invitation, no formal response, no carefully planned ceremony or altar call—and the \_\_\_\_\_ came. The Gentiles began \_\_\_\_\_ God, and the Jewish believers who'd accompanied Peter were astonished.

These new believers didn't belong on the outside looking in; they belonged to the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.

"Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." (Acts 10:47)

Throughout the New Testament, baptism is so much more than just a religious ceremony. It's a visible sign of our \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ and our \_\_\_\_\_ in the community of faith.

"For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:13)

Paul would develop this truth even further in Ephesians 2 when he describes how Christ had broken down the dividing wall of \_\_\_\_\_ that separated Jews and Gentiles; and through His death and resurrection, created one new \_\_\_\_\_.

One of the greatest testimonies to the truth of the gospel is the \_\_\_\_\_ itself.

The church is made up of \_\_\_\_\_ people who are learning what it means to follow Jesus. Yet, despite our differences, God calls us \_\_\_\_\_. He creates a family from people who'd otherwise never have met.

This kind of unity in diversity can't be manufactured; it's 100% the work of the \_\_\_\_\_.

This means we should be \_\_\_\_\_ about welcoming newcomers. We should be willing to build relationships across generations. We should resist the temptation to remain within our familiar circles. And we should always keep an empty chair in our \_\_\_\_\_ for the people God is still calling into His kingdom.



Peter learned that God's \_\_\_\_\_ was greater than his assumptions. Cornelius discovered that the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ extended to everyone—even to him. And the Holy Spirit demonstrated that there was no longer a \_\_\_\_\_ separating those who believed in Christ. The gospel crossed every \_\_\_\_\_.