

Acts 9:32-10:48

When God Stirs the Pot

How open are you to change?

Blessed are the flexible.....NOT BROKEN

A) I don't like Change – like my routines – Order the same thing

B) I like when things make sense – I like my life that way and I like my God that way!

1) I like it when **God is predictable** – when He acts a certain way and I sense a Pattern

C) **But God is rarely predictable** – He rarely responds in the same way in the same situation
In fact there are times when He completely stirs the Pot!

D) God would say to us: Don't try to put me in a Box!

In our last study our focus had been on Saul of Tarsus who becomes Paul the Apostle

A) Tonight focus shifts back to Peter.

B) We are going to see how the Lord uses Peter in a whole new way

1) God is going to start doing a whole new thing – reaching a new group of people

C) But in order to do that the Lord is going to have to break through some old traditions/ prejudices

1) In Peter's heart

Tonight we will see Peter Resist – Argue –Wrestle w/ God but ultimately surrender

A) And 2,000 yrs later the events of Acts 10 will have a huge impact on our lives!

B) The closing events of Chapter 9 are the set up for **this monumental event in Chapter 10**

C) In this study we will learn some principles for being the kind of people that God can use.

³² Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all parts of the country, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda. ³³ There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. ³⁴ And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed." Then he arose immediately. ³⁵ So all

who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

#1 It is easier to use a moving object

A) The Lord is eventually going to get Peter to Caesarea where he is going to meet Cornelius

B) But the first thing the Lord does is get Peter moving

1) Easier to steer a moving car – true of people too

C) Sometimes people sit back and say – you know my phone # address – let me know if you need me

1) Sometimes the best thing to do is be praying about opportunities – don't be afraid to try things

Peter has gone out to encourage the Churches /

A) comes to Lydda – 23 miles from Jerusalem – location of airport in Tele Viv

B) This is going to be the first step in taking Peter to Joppa – chain of events takes place

C) Starts with a Healing: In Lydda there is a man named Aeneas (I/NAY/US)

1) He is paralyzed and has been bedridden for 8 yrs

God uses Peter to heal this guy!

A) (I/NAY/US) Jesus heals you – arise and make your bed. (not like mom)

B) Like Jesus who said to the lame man at the pool of Bethesda – Arise take up bed ... walk

C) Now when the news gets out in Lydda about (I/NAY/US) healing

1) Many come to faith in Christ – bigger miracle

D) Really – someone getting saved bigger than a paralyzed man being healed! – YES

1) It cost more

E) MARK 2 guy lowered through the roof – Sins are forgiven? Which is easier – sins forgiven / rise..walk

1) Rise and walk – Sins forgiven – Jesus had to go to the Cross – Die – Cost was his blood

So the healing in V.33 led to the greater miracle in V.35 ³⁵ So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

A) And it all started because Peter was a moving vessel – he was on the go!

B) What happened in Lydda paved the way for another miracle in Joppa

36 At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas.

A) I think I would have stuck with Tabitha, - We hear Dorcas – think – female version of Dork

B) Tabitha is Aramaic – Gazelle – Dorcas is the Greek rendering of the same word – Gazelle

This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. 37 But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. 38 And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to them. 39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.

Tabitha was a Proverbs 31 lady.

A) She extends her hands to the poor and she spreads out her arms to the needy, it says in Proverbs.

B) She was that kind of a person.

1) She saw the need that people had and she went to minister to that need.

C) And so when you have a person like that in a church who dies, who goes to be with the Lord.

1) She is going to be missed!

There were many widows in Joppa – port city – seaman

A) Many Wives with their Children saw their husbands sail off and never return.

B) Dorcas decided her mission field was right in front of her!

**C) Which is where most of our mission fields are at
1) Because most of us will not go off to Africa, Russia, NZ or a foreign country**

D) Main ministry we are told is she carried for Widows and orphans.

1) She might have been an widow herself – nothing is mentioned of her husband.

E) The fact that her house had an upper room signifies that she had some wealth – not normal

1) She uses what she has to bless others

She dies – all the widows were there mourning – weeping convulsively – audibly.

A) Showing each other the coats and garments that Dorcas had made for them.

B) In those days most pp only had one or two sets of clothes – not like today – closet full

C) It was huge in a sea port town like that where it could get cold to have a coat!

D) This woman with a needle and thread had tied this entire community together

So she dies and they did what was customary to do.

A) You take the dead body. You usually take it to a room.

B) You wash the body and you anoint the body, and then you quickly bury the body.

1) So they had already followed the custom of washing the corpse, anointing the corpse with all that was needed for burial.

C) And they were about to bury her. When somebody says, well, hold on just a minute.

1) I know we've washed the body and I know we've anointed the corpse,

2) but before we actually stick her in the ground, I hear Peter's in the area.

D) We've got nothing to lose. She's dead.

1) So let's ask Peter to come!

E) So they call for Peter and he came. -

40 But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. 41 Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. 42 And it became

known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord. 43 So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with Simon, a tanner.

A) I love how simple this is – Tabitha Arise – no hoopla or drama – just a simple command

B) Notice also this miracle had the same result as the healing of the man in Lydda – many believed

C) We also see principle #2 in being used by the Lord - Don't be afraid of the impossible

D) Will you come – she is dead – Peter could have thought – too late – what is the use?

1) must be God's will –

E) I think he could have been tempted to come up with a number of excuses

1) Sometimes faith has to supersede our logical rationale

What did Peter have to lose? A little time – some travel.

A) But what if the Lord did the impossible! Jesus did it why not me

B) He said we would do greater things – GO FOR IT

C) Don't be afraid to step out on that which might see to be impossible.

D) The Lord uses all of this to get Peter to Joppa and at the home of Simon the tanner –

1) The setting for the next thing the Lord wants to do both in Peter and through Peter

There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, ² a devout *man* and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. ³ About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius!"

⁴ And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?"

So he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. ⁵ Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. ⁶ He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose

house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do." ⁷ And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. ⁸ So when he had explained all *these* things to them, he sent them to Joppa.

The Story starts with a man named CORNELIUS

A) Cornelius was a noncommissioned officer of the Roman army. A Centurion.

B) The Roman army was divided into legions of six thousand men.

1) The legions were divided into cohorts of six hundred men.

C) The cohorts were divided into six groups of one hundred men—each overseen by a centurion.

1) Centurions were the "master sergeants" of the Roman army.

D) They were brave of heart, sound of mind, and strong in discipline.

E) Three quick things I want us who are men to take note of here about Cornelius

#1 He was Devout man who feared God!

A) As a Roman – Cornelius would have been exposed to the Roman Pantheistic ways – many gods

B) But being stationed in Palestine – God began to do something in his heart

C) He Became intrigued with the God of Judaism Monotheistic - pursuer of One God – Jehovah.

The more he learned of Jehovah the God of Israel the more in awe he was!

A) Fear God = To Revere Him

B) It was a potential career ending move for a Roman to become a follower of Judaism.

C) The Fear of man is a snare – The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.

#2 Cornelius was a Generous man!

A) He gave alms generously to the people.

#3 Cornelius was a man of Prayer!

A) He had set his heart toward seeking God!

There are those who say, “Even though a person doesn’t know Jesus Christ, as long as he loves God and does good to his fellow man, he’ll be okay.”

A) But this account tells me they are wrong, for if all it took for a man to get into heaven was that he loved God and his fellow man,

B) Cornelius would have been the Poster Person of that type of theology.

C) God would have said, “There’s Cornelius down there.

1) He’s a man of prayer. He’s a God-fearer. He’s a giver. **That is good enough!**

D) That’s not what God said.

1) Instead, Acts 10 is the story of a seeking Savior searching out a seeking sinner.

God sends an Angel to Corn. In a vision - who tells him to send men to Joppa to get Peter!

A) Why didn’t the Angel share JESUS with Him?

B) Because it is not the job of angels to share the gospel.

1) It’s ours. Chosen pp to REACH PP

Daniel 12:3 says “those who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever.”

C) If you’re a soul-winner, a Good News-sharer, you’re going to shine—

1) not only in heaven, but here on earth as well.

D) God uses pp to REACH PP!

E) Exception in the book of Revelation during the Tribulations – 4 corners

1) Just to make sure everyone hears the gospel

God is going to do a work in Cornelius life and the life of his family – friends – servants

A) And God is going to use Peter to do it – this has as much if not more to do with Peter than Cornelius

Peter was heir to a strong tradition of prejudice that went clear back to Abraham

A) A prejudice that was exemplified in men like Jonah, who resisted bearing witness to the Gentiles

B) and then was actually angry with God when the Ninevites repented and escaped judgment.

C) During Peter’s time, Jewish midwives were forbidden to aid a Gentile woman in childbirth, 1) to avoid helping propagate Gentile scum.

D) Jews viewed Gentiles as kindling for the fires of hell! -

Never GOD’S HEART

A) The prophets—like Isaiah—proclaimed very clearly that Israel was to be a light to the Gentiles

B) and that God would bless the people of Israel 1) in order that Gentiles might see the benefits of walking with Him (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6).

C) But Through all their traditions and prejudice the Jewish people lost sight of that!

This attitude was still prevalent even in the Hebrew-Christian community.

A) Ten years prior to the events of this chapter, Jesus told His disciples to go into all the world and preach the

Gospel to every creature! Matthew 28:19-20

B) The Apostles must have wondered – did ALL REALLY MEAN ALL - even the Gentiles.

1) It took a long time and persecution to move them out of Jerusalem – to Samaria – Samaritans

C) But they had not yet ventured into the lands of the Gentiles

D) That was all about to change here

1) Cornelius sends men to find Peter

⁹The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. ¹⁰Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance ¹¹and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. ¹²In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth,

wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air.
13 And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."

14 But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean."

15 And a voice *spoke* to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common." 16 This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.

17 Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate. 18 And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there.

19 While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you. 20 Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."

So Peter is in the seaside town of Joppa.

A) It's a pretty day. A gentle breeze is blowing in off the ocean. He goes on the roof top to Pray!

B) #3 Put yourself in a place to hear the voice of the Lord clearly

C) **Quiet place, quiet time, quiet heart** – often key to hearing the Lord.

1) Beach early in the morning or late in the day early evening – cabin in the MTs

D) Unplug – Devices –

God begins by speaking to Peter in a Vision!

A) #4 Be open to God speaking to you in new ways through new people

B) Primary way that the Lord speaks to us is through scripture

1) Also use dreams, visions, our desires – delight yourself....heart

C) Sometimes he speaks through open doors, sometimes he speaks through people

1) Sometimes he speaks through burdens

D) Now note this: When God speaks in a different way it will never contradict scripture.

1) Scripture is always the guide

But the key to being used by the Lord or being used in a greater capacity –

A) Is being open to the Lord leading and his voice

B) At first Peter isn't – Vision of animals coming down –

C) All kinds of incredible edibles are on the menu. "*Wild beasts, creepy things, birds of the air*" are the featured entrees.

D) But all these tasty entrees fly in the face of everything Peter was taught by his religion he could consume.

1) And then Peter is really confused when he hears God say: "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."

E) Background to understand the significance of this:

Jewish dietary laws were the epitome of their religion.

In the first century, Jews and Gentiles were separated by pedigree, circumcision, Sabbath worship – but above all, they were defined by diet.

A) A kosher Jew was religiously superior to a non-kosher Gentile.

B) And that kosher Jew would never in a million years pull up to a table-full of God-forbidden food.

1) Nor would he eat with folks who occupied the table.

C) But kosher laws were part of a bigger picture.

1) God had conditioned Israel to approach life in a certain manner.

All of life was to be DIVIDED as *clean and unclean – holy and unholy - pure and impure – acceptable to God and unacceptable to God.*

A) This distinction was a grid that went over every dimension of life - food, sacrifice, washing, houses, even people.

B) The Jewish Law provided them a means to differentiate, good from bad.

C) And Kosher Jews were reminded at every single mealtime that there was such a thing as right vs wrong – holy vs unholy.

1) Good guys ate “clean” foods. Bad guys ate the “dirty birds.”

So it is understandable why Peter at first found the VISION revolting—and the command to kill and eat shocked him even more!

A) Nothing un Kosher had ever touched his lips that is why he balked at such an unholy smorgasbord!

B) His protest was understandable in the light of his upbringing.

1) Any serious Jew would have reacted in the same way.

C) When God told Peter to eat these non-kosher foods it was as if 1500 years of tradition, and the Law of Moses, 1) and a thousand rabbis, and his entire Jewish family was screaming in Peter’s ear to ask for another menu.

D) But the truth was the Jewish leaders had complicated God’s law

1) Took God’s standards and suggestions and added to them – 1,000’s 1,000’s of variations

E) Created a religion that was all about rules and regulations and had missed the heart of God

Jesus said that he had come to establish a new covenant

A) Religion would be replaced by relationship

B) Rules and regulations would be replaced by learning to respond to the Holy Spirit

C) The gospel declares that we are all bad guys/girls

1) All unholy – no matter how hard we try – all in need of a SAVIOR

D) JESUS is the Savior for both Jews and gentiles or non Jewish people it is the same

1) That is what makes what happens here in Acts 10 so significant

E) God is doing something new!

At Frist Peter is not on board! Peter responds to God’s command to , “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.”

A) With the ultimate oxymoron, NOT SO LORD?

B) Not so pal – not so Son – Not so Dude – Not so Lord! - THAT DOESN’T COMPUTE

C) Peter was wrestling with his tradition, his training and with HIS CONSCIENCE.

D) From birth, Peter’s conscience had been drilled to keep kosher.

1) This wasn’t a simple preference - but a deeply-held matter of conscience.

Dd) Our conscience is an organ we train to act on cue. The conscience is taught by truth or tradition.

1) It can fight against the Holy Spirit, or be His ally.

E) Peter needs to surrender his conscience to the Lordship of Jesus.

A sovereign God is stepping out of the box, and he’s recruiting Peter to step out with Him.

A) Initially Peter protest but eventually he surrenders

B) #5 When we surrender to God’s will and way – opens the door for God to use us in new ways

V.21

²¹ Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, “Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?”

²² And they said, “Cornelius *the* centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you.” ²³ Then he invited them in and lodged *them*.

God was about to do a whole new thing in the Church.

A) But in order for Peter to be a part of this new fresh outpouring of God’s Spirit.

B) He had to be willing to say YES LORD!

1) Same thing is true for us!

C) We have to be willing to tell God – Lord you can shake me out of my comfort zone.

1) You can challenge my previous prejudice

D) You can break up my routine – you can do something fresh.

E)That might mean stepping out in faith – Ministry, Mission field, Job Change – what ever.

But the result will be you experiencing a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit ! –

A)Exactly what happens next

V.23

On the next day Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

²⁴ And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius **was waiting for them**, {Expectation and had called together his relatives and close friends. {excitement ²⁵ As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped *him*. ²⁶ But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I myself am also a man.”

²⁷ And as he talked with him, he went in and **found many** who had come together. ²⁸ Then he said to them, “You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. **But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.** {Standing on the word of the Lord

²⁹ Therefore I came **without objection** ☺ as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?”

³⁰ So Cornelius said, “Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, ³¹ and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God.

³² Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.’ ³³ So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God.”

³⁴ Then Peter opened *his* mouth and said: **“In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.**

³⁵ But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. ³⁶ The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all—³⁷ **that word**

you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. ³⁹ And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. ⁴⁰ Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, ⁴¹ **not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.** ⁴² And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God *to be* Judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.”

#6 Peter preaches the Gospel – He gives them JESUS!

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. ⁴⁵ And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. ⁴⁶ **For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.**

Now the Bible says that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word – they heard – faith happened - They believed – Salvation & Empowering

A)Indwelt and Empowered with HS - all at once

B)Saved HS indwells –

1)Baptism of HS – Immersed

C)All at once.

D)Seen Disciples saved and then baptized HS

1)Samaria – saved – then Baptized in the HS

E)Baptism of the Holy Spirit – not you getting more but the Holy Spirit getting more of you.

V.45 Those Jewish brothers with Peter were astonished

A)to throw out of position, displace, to amaze, to astonish, throw into wonderment

B) Their whole position and thinking was displaced

1) Gentiles - recipients of God's Grace

Then Peter answered, ⁴⁷“Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *have*?” ⁴⁸And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

C) The beginning of a new work that stretches all the way into this place tonight

1) Gentile? – The starting point right here

Principles for being the kind of person God can use!

- 1. It is easier to use a moving object**
- 2. Don't be afraid of the impossible.**
- 3. Put yourself in a place to hear the voice of the Lord clearly**
- 4. Be open to God speaking to you in new ways through new people.**
- 5. Surrender to God's will and way!**
- 6. Preach Jesus – give them the gospel**