



Life Group Sermon Study Notes

“Let’s Talk: Our Challenge”

Pastor James Lowe – February 9, 2020

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- What are your quirks? (i.e. picking out the green M&M’s)
- What really bothers you? (i.e. a slow car in front of you in the far-left lane going slow)

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

Acts 10:1-48 (ESV) ¹ At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, ²a devout man who feared God with all his household...³he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say...⁵And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter...¹⁹And while Peter was pondering the vision (he had received), the Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are looking for you...accompany them without hesitation”...²⁴Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends...²⁵Peter said to them, “...³⁴Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him”...⁴⁴While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. ⁴⁵And the believers...were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles...⁴⁸And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ...

The Mosaic law was purposed by God to set Jewish people apart, influencing the nations by the way they lived and their worship of the one true God. For centuries, the Jewish people went to great lengths to separate things considered holy and clean from uncommon and unclean. Peter didn’t know he was leading with the wrong message until God unfolded his plan for redemption.

In Acts Chapter 10, Luke detailed the event that unfolded God's plan, providentially, for both the Jew and the Gentile:

1. Cornelius was directed by a vision to send for Peter.
2. Peter was directed by a vision to go to Cornelius, a Gentile.
3. Peter shared the good news in the house of Cornelius, to him and to his friends.
4. Cornelius and his friends were baptized with the Holy Spirit and then with water.

It was a difficult truth for Peter and other believers to receive that a man could be saved without becoming a Jew first. What about Cornelius and his friends? They probably only knew of God through Jewish influence up to this point. Imagine their amazement when brought to the fuller revelation of God! How did the believers know that the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit? They heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

God talks to us so he can do work through us, building bridges where none have existed. He gives clarity, power, purpose and mission. It may not be comfortable, especially when it comes to racial, religious, and political differences. However, know that if God is guiding you to a particular action, he works with the others involved and/or puts things in place ahead of you. God works on both ends. By listening and obeying God, regardless of our thoughts or feelings, there is salvation for others and God is glorified. Accept the grace of God to gain a heart for his mission and never forget the most powerful weapon in our possession, the Gospel!

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose one of the points below and discuss how the lesson applies to our lives.

- Our current culture believes the church has nothing to say. How can we be God's voice?
- Has the Holy Spirit confronted you with a learned practice or idea contrary to God's will? How did you respond? How can you be open to further corrections?
- What are situations in our current culture that cause reservation in preaching the gospel?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as other requests you may have.

- Thank God for calling us and for sending his Holy Spirit to transform us into his image.
- Ask God to remove all prejudice, unconscious bias and even false or hurtful generalizations toward others that prevent us from reaching out to all people with the Gospel.
- Ask God to help us reach others even in the light that we have, but with reverence and fear of God, to help us continue to grow in understanding.