SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Acts 10

What God Has Cleansed — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-10 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God prepares a praying Gentile and a reluctant apostle at the same time, teaches Peter that He has cleansed what Peter called unholy, and brings them under one roof. Peter preaches Jesus — anointed, crucified, raised, Judge and Savior — and the Holy Spirit falls on the Gentiles just as on the Jews.

00 The Text

ACTS 10 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort,

2 a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually.

3 About the ninth hour of the day he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had just come in and said to him, "Cornelius!"

4 And fixing his gaze on him and being much alarmed, he said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God.

5 "Now dispatch some men to Joppa and send for a man named Simon, who is also called Peter;

6 he is staying with a tanner named Simon, whose house is by the sea."

7 When the angel who was speaking to him had left, he summoned two of his servants and a devout soldier of those who were his personal attendants,

8 and after he had explained everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

9 On the next day, as they were on their way and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray.

10 But he became hungry and was desiring to eat; but while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance;

11 and he saw the sky opened up, and an object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground,

12 and there were in it all kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air.

13 A voice came to him, "Get up, Peter, kill and eat!"

14 But Peter said, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean."

15 Again a voice came to him a second time, "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy."

16 This happened three times, and immediately the object was taken up into the sky.

17 Now while Peter was greatly perplexed in mind as to what the vision which he had seen might be, behold, the

men who had been sent by Cornelius, having asked directions for Simon's house, appeared at the gate;

18 and calling out, they were asking whether Simon, who was also called Peter, was staying there.

19 While Peter was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you.

20 "But get up, go downstairs and accompany them without misgivings, for I have sent them Myself."

21 Peter went down to the men and said, "Behold, I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for which you have come?"

22 They said, "Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews, was divinely directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and hear a message from you."

23 So he invited them in and gave them lodging. And on the next day he got up and went away with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

24 On the following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his relatives and close friends.

25 When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell at his feet and worshiped him.

26 But Peter raised him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am just a man."

27 As he talked with him, he entered and found many people assembled.

28 And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and yet God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean.

29 "That is why I came without even raising any objection when I was sent for. So I ask for what reason you have sent for me."

30 Cornelius said, "Four days ago to this hour, I was praying in my house during the ninth hour; and behold, a man stood before me in shining garments,

31 and he said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God.

32 'Therefore send to Joppa and invite Simon, who is also called Peter, to come to you; he is staying at the house of Simon the tanner by the sea.'

33 "So I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord."

34 Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality,

35 but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.

36 "The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)—

37 you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed.

38 "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

39 "We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem.
They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross.

40 "God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible,

41 not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.

42 "And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.

43 "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins."

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.

45 All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

46 For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered,

47 “Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit ☆ just as we did, can he?”

48 And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

Marked in the text

- **v1** “a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort” — Time / place / contrast
- **v2** “a devout man and one who feared God with all his household” — Promise / blessing
- **v3** “About the ninth hour of the day” — Time / place / contrast
- **v4** “Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God” — God — His character & actions
- **v5** “send for a man named Simon, who is also called Peter” — Command / instruction
- **v9** “Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray” — Time / place / contrast
- **v13** “Get up, Peter, kill and eat” — Command / instruction
- **v14** “By no means, Lord” — Sin / warning
- **v15** “What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy” — God — His character & actions
- **v16** “This happened three times” — Time / place / contrast
- **v20** “accompany them without misgivings, for I have sent them Myself” — Command / instruction
- **v25** “fell at his feet and worshiped him” — Sin / warning
- **v26** “Stand up; I too am just a man” — Command / instruction
- **v28** “God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean” — God — His character & actions
- **v33** “we are all here present before God” — Promise / blessing
- **v34** “God is not one to show partiality” — God — His character & actions
- **v35** “in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him” — Promise / blessing
- **v36** “He is Lord of all” — God — His character & actions
- **v38** “God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power” — God — His character & actions
- **v38** “He went about doing good” — God — His character & actions
- **v39** “They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross” — Sin / warning
- **v40** “God raised Him up on the third day” — God — His character & actions
- **v42** “Judge of the living and the dead” — Time / place / contrast
- **v43** “everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins” — Promise / blessing
- **v44** “the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message” — Promise / blessing
- **v45** “the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also” — Promise / blessing
- **v47** “just as we did” — Promise / blessing
- **v48** “he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ” — Command / instruction
- **v14** “unholy” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v14** “unclean” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v5** “Joppa” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

01 Observation

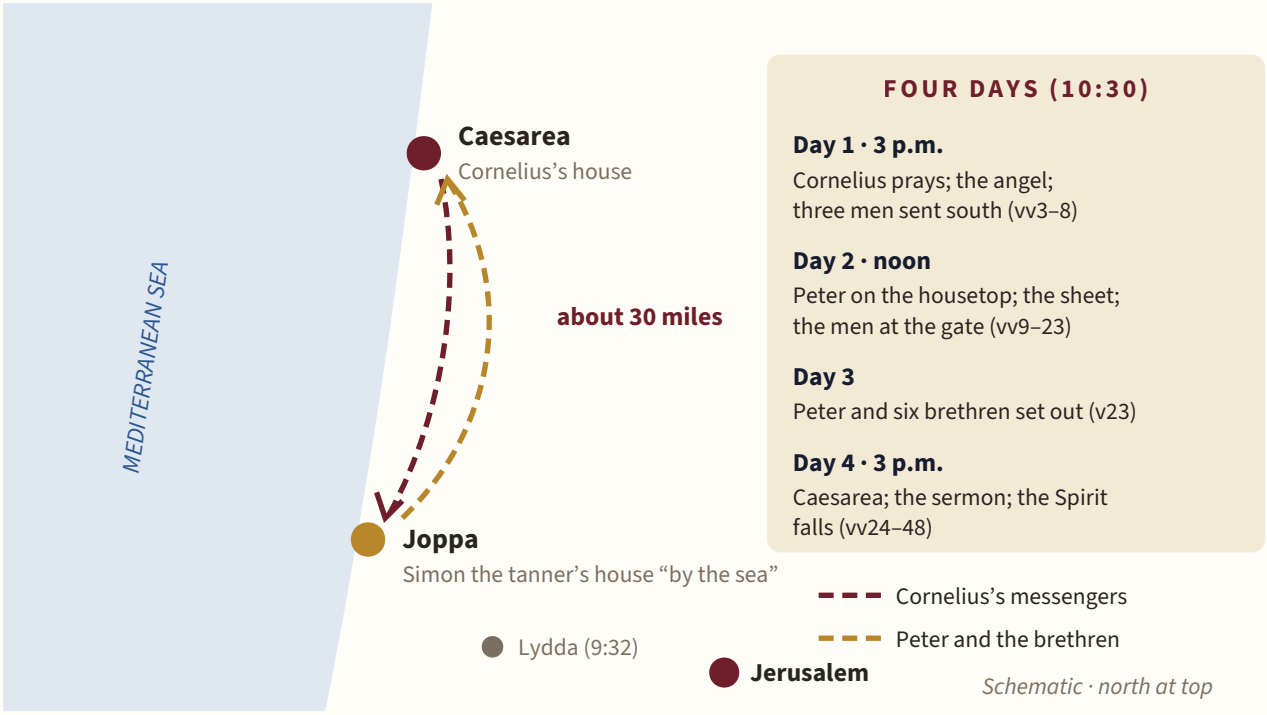
WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · ACTS 10:15

"Again a voice came to him a second time,

"△What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.""

FIGURE · CAESAREA AND JOPPA



Trace the two dashed routes along the coast and read the four days at right: Cornelius's men go south to Joppa, and Peter comes north with them to Caesarea.

Setting. Caesarea, the Roman capital on the coast, where Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian cohort, prays at the ninth hour (vv1–3). Joppa, about thirty miles south, where Peter is staying with Simon the tanner by the sea and prays on the housetop at the sixth hour (vv5–6, 9). The story covers four days (v30) and ends back in Cornelius's house, full of relatives and close friends (vv24, 27).

Structure:

- vv1–8 — **Cornelius:** a devout, God-fearing centurion who gives alms and prays (vv1–2); an angel at the ninth hour — "Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial" (vv3–4); "send for a man named Simon" (vv5–6); two servants and a devout soldier sent to Joppa (vv7–8).
- vv9–23 — **the sheet:** Peter on the housetop, hungry, in a trance (vv9–10); the sheet with all kinds of animals (vv11–12); "Get up, Peter, kill and eat!" — "By no means, Lord" (vv13–14); "What God has cleansed, no longer

consider unholy" — three times (vv15–16); the men at the gate; the Spirit: "I have sent them Myself" (vv17–20); Peter lodges them and goes (vv21–23).

- vv24–33 — **the house:** Cornelius has gathered his household (v24); he falls at Peter's feet — "Stand up; I too am just a man" (vv25–26); "God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean" (vv27–29); Cornelius retells the vision — "we are all here present before God" (vv30–33).
- vv34–43 — **the sermon:** God shows no partiality (vv34–35); peace through Jesus Christ, Lord of all (v36); anointed, doing good, healing (vv37–38); witnesses of His death on a cross and His resurrection the third day (vv39–41); appointed Judge of the living and the dead (v42); forgiveness through His name for everyone who believes (v43).
- vv44–48 — **the Spirit falls:** the Holy Spirit falls on all who hear (v44); the circumcised believers amazed (v45); tongues and exalting God (v46); "no one can refuse the water" (v47); baptized in the name of Jesus Christ; Peter stays a few days (v48).

Repeated words, with counts:

- "God" ×16 — vv2 (×2), 3, 4, 15, 22, 28, 31, 33, 34, 38 (×2), 40, 41, 42, 46.
- "Peter" ×15 — vv5, 9, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 21, 25, 26, 32, 34, 44, 45, 46.
- "all / every / everyone" ×13 — vv2, 12, 33 (×2), 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 43 (×2), 44.
- "send / sent / dispatch" ×11 — vv5 (×2), 8, 17, 20, 22, 29 (×2), 32, 33, 36.
- "Cornelius" ×8 — vv1, 3, 17, 22, 24, 25, 30, 31.
- "house / household / housetop" ×7 — vv2, 6, 9, 17, 22, 30, 32.
- "Simon" ×6 — vv5, 6, 17, 18, 32 (×2).
- "unholy / unclean" ×5 — vv14 (×2), 15, 28 (×2).
- "pray / prayed / praying / prayers" ×5 — vv2, 4, 9, 30, 31; "Spirit" ×5 — vv19, 38, 44, 45, 47.
- "hour" ×4 — vv3, 9, 30 (×2); "Joppa" ×4 — vv5, 8, 23, 32.
- "witness(es) / testify" ×4 — vv39, 41, 42, 43; "Lord" ×4 — vv4, 14, 33, 36.
- "vision" ×3 — vv3, 17, 19; "alms" ×3 — vv2, 4, 31; "angel" ×3 — vv3, 7, 22.
- "feared / God-fearing / fears" ×3 — vv2, 22, 35; "baptism / baptized" ×3 — vv37, 47, 48.

Contrasts: Caesarea ⟷ Joppa; a Gentile soldier ⟷ a Jewish fisherman (vv1, 5). The ninth hour ⟷ the sixth hour (vv3, 9). "Get up, Peter, kill and eat!" ⟷ "By no means, Lord" (vv13–14). Unholy and unclean ⟷ what God has cleansed (vv14–15). Fell at his feet ⟷ "Stand up; I too am just a man" (vv25–26). Unlawful to associate ⟷ "God has shown me" (v28). Partiality ⟷ every nation welcome (vv34–35). Put to death on a cross ⟷ raised on the third day (vv39–40). Judge ⟷ forgiveness (vv42–43). The circumcised ⟷ the Gentiles also (v45). Water ⟷ the Spirit (v47).

Shape of the chapter: two scenes in two cities that God brings together. The first half (1–23) cuts back and forth between Caesarea and Joppa; the second half (24–48) is one room, where Peter speaks and then God speaks louder.

Chapter theme (my words): God shows no partiality. He seeks out a Gentile who is seeking Him, breaks down the wall in His own apostle's heart, and pours out His Spirit on anyone who believes in Jesus — the Lord of all, the Judge of all, and the Savior of whoever believes.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ACTS 10:43

"Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name ☆everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins."

FIGURE · TWO VISIONS, ONE PLAN

TWO VISIONS, ONE PLAN · GOD WORKS BOTH ENDS

CORNELIUS · CAESAREA	PETER · JOPPA
praying at the ninth hour (v3, 30)	praying at the sixth hour (v9)
an angel: "Cornelius!" (v3)	a trance: the sky opened (vv10–11)
"send for a man named Simon" (v5)	"kill and eat!" — "By no means, Lord" (vv13–14)
he obeys at once (vv7–8)	the Spirit: "I have sent them" (v20)
"we are all here present before God" (v33)	"God has shown me … any man" (v28)

The men knock at the gate "while Peter was greatly perplexed" (v17) — God's timing on both sides.

Read across each row: God prepared the Gentile and the apostle at the same time, so that each man's vision explained the other's.

Was Cornelius saved before Peter came? He was devout, God-fearing, generous and prayerful (v2), and his prayers rose "as a memorial before God" (v4). Guzik: "we see a man who obviously had a real relationship with God." Sproul only says, "God recognizes you. God notices you." Henry: God "never did, nor ever will, reject or refuse an honest Gentile." But the angel sends for Peter, and Peter later reports the angel's words: "he will speak words to you by which you will be saved" (11:14). I take it that Cornelius was a genuine seeker whom God was drawing, and that he was saved when he heard and believed the message about Jesus (v43). Good works prepared the ground; they did not save him.

Did God abolish the food laws? Sproul: "God changed the rules in the middle of the game, so to speak." Jesus had already taught that food does not defile a man (Mark 7:18–19), and Paul treats food as a matter of conscience (Rom 14). But Peter himself gives the main point in verse 28: the vision was about people. Sproul: "But you see this was not about food or animals. It was about people."

Why three times? "This happened three times" (v16). Henry notes it; Peter, who denied Jesus three times and was restored three times (John 21:15–17), needed it said more than once. The repetition sealed the lesson.

Was Simon the tanner a Gentile? Sproul thinks so: "In all probability, the Simon with whom Peter stayed in Joppa was a gentile." Guzik treats the tanner's trade, which handled dead animals, as the shocking detail. Either way, Peter was already lodging where a strict Jew would not.

What does "no partiality" mean? *Prosōpolēmptēs* is a "face-receiver." Verse 35 does not mean every sincere person is saved without Christ; the sermon goes straight to Jesus and ends with "everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins" (v43). It means nationality is no barrier. Guzik: "We often think God sees color; He only sees the heart."

What is the gospel Peter preached? Jesus' anointing and ministry, His death on a cross, His resurrection on the third day, His appearance to chosen witnesses, His appointment as Judge, and forgiveness through His name (vv37–43). Sproul: "if it does not include the cross, it is not evangelism, it is not the gospel." Spurgeon: the Judge is also the Savior.

Was this a "Gentile Pentecost," and are tongues normal for all? Sproul calls it "the gentile Pentecost" and places it with Samaria and Ephesus; he rejects the view that tongues are "the indispensable sign" and insists, "If you have Jesus, you have the Holy Ghost." Guzik sees the outward signs as necessary "on this occasion," to convince the Jewish believers. Spurgeon does not take up tongues in this sermon. Christians differ here; I read Acts 10 as a once-for-all marker that the Gentiles are in — "just as we did" (v47) — not as a pattern every believer must repeat.

Why baptism after the Spirit? The order differs from Acts 2:38, and our teachers see the reason: God settled the question before anyone could argue. Henry: "can we deny the sign to those who have received the thing signified?" Sproul makes the same argument.

Word study (Greek):

- **righteous — *dikaios* (G1342):** upright, just; of Cornelius (v22; Luke 1:6; 2:25).
- **unholy / common — *koinos* (G2839):** ceremonially profane; vv14, 15, 28; Mark 7:2.
- **worshiped — *proskyneō* (G4352):** to bow down; refused by Peter (vv25–26; Rev 19:10).
- **partiality — *prosōpolēmptēs* (G4381):** "face-receiver"; only Acts 10:34.
- **Lord of all — *kyrios pantōn* (G2962):** v36; Rom 10:12.
- **Holy Spirit — *pneuma hagion* (G4151):** fell, poured out, received (vv44–47; Joel 2:28).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **God notices the seeker** (v4; Sproul).
2. **A good man still needs the gospel** (11:14).
3. **Hunger on the housetop** — God uses the ordinary (Guzik).
4. **"By no means, Lord" is a contradiction** (Sproul).
5. **Not about food — about people** (*koinos*; v28).
6. **God works both ends** — two visions, one plan (vv17, 20).
7. **"I too am just a man"** (v26; Guzik).
8. **God is no face-receiver** (v34).
9. **No cross, no gospel** (Sproul; Spurgeon).
10. **The Spirit falls on the preacher first** (Spurgeon).

Cross-references: Lev 11; 20:24–26; Isa 49:6; 56:7; Joel 2:28; Jonah 1:3; Mark 7:2, 19; Luke 6:46; John 21:15–17; Acts 1:8; 2:4, 38–39; 8:14–17; 11:1–18; 15:7–9; 19:1–7; Rom 2:11; 10:12; Gal 2:11–14; 3:28; Eph 2:11–22; James 2:1; Rev 19:10.

03 Application

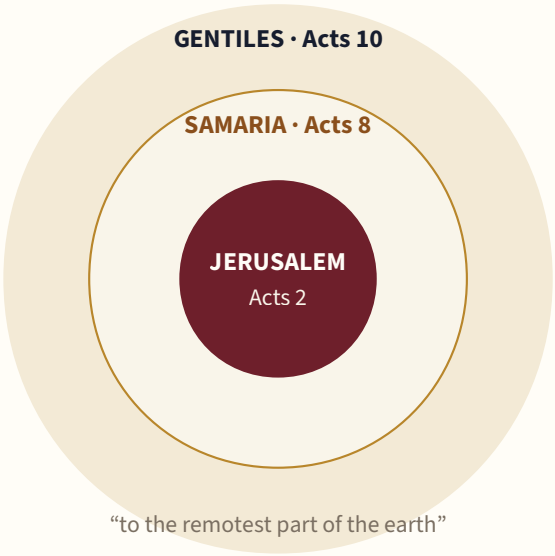
HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · ACTS 10:28

"And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and yet God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean."

FIGURE · THE SPIRIT, RING BY RING

THE SPIRIT POURED OUT, RING BY RING · ACTS 1:8



Acts 2:4 · Jews in Jerusalem
"filled with the Holy Spirit … other tongues"

Acts 8:17 · Samaritans
apostles lay on hands; they receive the Spirit

Acts 10:44–46 · Gentiles at Caesarea
Spirit falls during the sermon; tongues

Acts 19:6 · John's disciples, Ephesus
hands laid on; tongues and prophesying

Peter: "just as we did" (10:47) — the same gift, one body.

The rings follow Acts 1:8; the panels list each time Acts describes the Spirit coming on a new group, with Caesarea as the first Gentile household.

Sin to confess — calling unclean what God has cleansed. I have my list of people I don't expect God to save: a certain kind of man, a certain neighborhood, a certain record. Peter had his list too. God told him three times, "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy." I confess my prejudice by name, and I ask God to change how I see the men He sends me.

Command to obey — get up and go without misgivings. The Spirit said, "get up, go downstairs and accompany them without misgivings, for I have sent them Myself" (v20). When someone unexpected shows up at my gate asking about God, I will not make excuses. I will go.

Truth to face — "By no means, Lord." I cannot keep saying "Lord" and "no" at the same time. Where I have told God no — about forgiving someone, about a habit, about a person He wants me to love — I will say yes today.

Example to follow — Cornelius and his household. He gathered his relatives and close friends and said, "we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord" (v33). I want to come to the Word like that, and bring my family and the men I serve with me.

Promise to trust — everyone who believes receives forgiveness. "through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins" (v43). Everyone — the Roman soldier, the Jewish fisherman, the man in the cell, me. Spurgeon said, "I am one of the "whoevers," for I believe in Jesus with all my heart!" So am I.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Cornelius was devout, generous and prayerful — and still needed to hear about Jesus. Who do I know who is "a good person" but has never heard the gospel clearly from me? (10:1–6; 11:14) *He will speak words to you by which you will be saved (11:14).*
2. Peter said, "By no means, Lord." Where am I telling God "no" while still calling Him Lord? (10:13–16; Luke 6:46) *No, not me, I'm not going to do it (Sproul).*
3. God told Peter not to call any man unholy or unclean. What kind of person do I secretly write off — and what would change if I believed God could cleanse him? (10:15, 28) *It was about people (Sproul).*
4. Cornelius said, "we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord." How do I come to church or to our table — ready to hear, or ready to judge? (10:24, 33) *A whole household waiting for the word.*
5. Peter preached Jesus as both Judge and Savior. Which one do I tend to leave out — and why do I need both? (10:42–43) *If you do not believe in Christ as your Judge, you will never accept Him as your Savior (Spurgeon).*
6. The Holy Spirit interrupted Peter's sermon. Where do I need to stop talking and let God do what only He can do? (10:44–48; 11:15–17) *Peter allowed the Holy Spirit to interrupt his sermon (Guzik).*

Worship. The Lord of all heard a Gentile's prayers in Caesarea and a Jew's prayers in Joppa, and wove them into one answer. He is not one to show partiality. He anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and with power, raised Him on the third day, appointed Him Judge of the living and the dead, and pours out His Spirit on everyone who believes.

Prayer. Lord of all, forgive me for every time I have called someone unholy whom You have cleansed. Break down the walls in my heart the way You broke them in Peter's. When You send someone to my gate, help me go without misgivings. Thank You that through Jesus' name everyone who believes receives forgiveness — and that I am one of them. Pour out Your Spirit on our group while the Word is being spoken, and let us be amazed again at Your grace. Amen.

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