



# Brown Community Group

## Discussion Guide

Acts 9:32-10:48 – May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021

### I. Starter Questions:

- Has God used very difficult or bad situations in your life to further his plan? Were you an active or dissenting party?
- How were you impacted for these life altering results? Could you hear God's quiet small voice through all the turmoil and noise?
- God communicates and work through us in miraculous ways; Do we see situations, different people or backgrounds as impediments or advantages?
- Today we will explore all of these points and see how the power of faith bring about miracles through the working of the Holy Spirit and the furtherance of God's will in our lives

### II. Discussion of Scripture:

#### A. The Healing of Aeneas: Acts 9:32-35

*<sup>32</sup> Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. <sup>33</sup> There he found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed. <sup>34</sup> And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed." And immediately he rose. <sup>35</sup> And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.*

#### Dorcas Restored to Life: Acts 9:36-43

*<sup>36</sup> Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. <sup>4</sup> She was full of good works and acts of charity. <sup>37</sup> In those days she became ill and died, and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. <sup>38</sup> Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, urging him, "Please come to us without delay." <sup>39</sup> So Peter rose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping and showing tunics<sup>5</sup> and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them. <sup>40</sup> But Peter put them all outside, 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. <sup>41</sup> And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then, calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. <sup>42</sup> And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. <sup>43</sup> And he stayed in Joppa for many days with one Simon, a tanner.*

#### Context & Questions:

- As Christians fled for their safety, they began to spread the Gospel just as the Great Commission had commanded them to do. While Saul had just encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus, Christians were still fleeing him and his group of persecutors.
- The same power of God that transformed the life of Saul is now working through Peter in this section of Acts 9. It is no small feat that Peter healed a lame man and raised someone from the dead. God did all the work but used Peter as the outward display of that power. Because of that, many people came to know and believe in the Lord. Whole towns of people came to believe in Christ because of God working through and using Peter.

- God uses all types of people and situations in the spreading of the Gospel, both good situations and difficult situations. A perfect example of this is Saul's persecution spreading the gospel to places all over the region, and Peter healing people also brought whole towns of people to know the Lord.
- Let us note all the Residents of Lydda and Sharon saw and believed in Christ. The importance of this miracle and saving event cannot be over stated.

1. How does God use this difficult situation to spread the gospel? What emotional, spiritual or physical effects encourage people to be drawn to believing in God?
2. God uses people to make life altering changes to other people's life. How should we be receptive to "hearing" or "understanding" if God is quietly calling us to do the same?
3. When Peter first walked into the room with Aeneas, what do you think he was thinking when Peter you are healed, rise? What did this take to actually try to stand and walk?
  - a. Was it the power of God working through Peter or was it the faith that Aeneas had in Christ that healed him?
4. List on the board, the types of tangible ways to have faith like Peter and Aeneas?
5. Let's put ourselves into Peter's shoes for a moment, what is my response when he was instructed to raise someone from the dead? What about his faith?

#### **B. Peter and Cornelius: Acts 10:1-8**

*At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, <sup>2</sup> a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. <sup>3</sup> About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, "Cornelius." <sup>4</sup> And he stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. <sup>5</sup> And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. <sup>6</sup> He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea." <sup>7</sup> When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him, <sup>8</sup> and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.*

#### **Peter's Vision: Acts 10:9-33**

*The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. <sup>10</sup> And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance <sup>11</sup> and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. <sup>12</sup> In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. <sup>13</sup> And there came a voice to him: "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." <sup>14</sup> But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." <sup>15</sup> And the voice came to him again a second time, "What God has made clean, do not call common." <sup>16</sup> This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.*

*<sup>17</sup> Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate <sup>18</sup> and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. <sup>19</sup> And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. <sup>20</sup> Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them." <sup>21</sup> And Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming?" <sup>22</sup> And they said, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say." <sup>23</sup> So he invited them in to be his guests. The next day he rose and went away with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him. <sup>24</sup> And on the following day they*

*entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. <sup>25</sup> When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. <sup>26</sup> But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am a man." <sup>27</sup> And as he talked with him, he went in and found many persons gathered. <sup>28</sup> And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean. <sup>29</sup> So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me." <sup>30</sup> And Cornelius said, "Four days ago, about this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing <sup>31</sup> and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. <sup>32</sup> Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.' <sup>33</sup> So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord."*

#### **Gentiles Hear the Good News: Acts 10:34-43**

*<sup>34</sup> So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, <sup>35</sup> but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. <sup>36</sup> As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), <sup>37</sup> you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: <sup>38</sup> how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. <sup>39</sup> And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, <sup>40</sup> but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, <sup>41</sup> not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. <sup>42</sup> And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. <sup>43</sup> To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."*

#### **The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles: Acts 10:44-48**

*<sup>44</sup> While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. <sup>45</sup> And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. <sup>46</sup> For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, <sup>47</sup> "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" <sup>48</sup> And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.*

#### **Context & Questions:**

- Common & Unclean: Non-Jewish people aka: Gentiles. To the people of Jewish culture, it was always taught that you are not to marry or intermingle with people outside of the Jewish religion/culture. Peter and the men that were traveling with Peter were Jewish and were not intermingling with Gentiles. We can see how this is a problem for the spread of the Gospel to all people.
- Verses 34-35 are extremely important to the people involved in the scripture and also to us today. This passage breaks down any wall of "uncommon vs common" back then and now. Everyone is a sinner in need of a Savior, and the only way to that Savior is through the Gospel. That is the basis for everything. If we used these verses as a filter, a lot of problems in our culture and life would be non-existent.

1. What would be your likely response to seeing a vision in a dream? Would you react like Cornelius's did in this situation?
2. Have you ever been talked to from God in a vision, Angles or dream such as Cornelius?
3. What are some of the types of ways that God could try to communicate to us a message?
4. How did the Jews of the day take to the message of the angel about "there is no common or unclean people"? Are we today allowing certain "messaging, culture or bias" to build walls between groups that affect our ability to spread the gospel?
5. How can we begin to see all people as "God sees them" as opposed to through our tainted "set of glasses"?
6. How do you think Peter felt after his vision and the men coming to get him to take him to Cornelius? Then getting to Cornelius's house and seeing all the Gentiles there? How about the men who were traveling with Peter?