

Home Groups | Week 9 | November 5, 2017
Reflecting Jesus to our world | Acts 10

Icebreaker:

Growing up, were you ever told not to go to a certain neighborhood or to lock your car doors when you went? Where was that for you?

Questions:

1. Peter had a distinct vision from God. When have you heard most clearly from God or have seen God?
2. In Acts 10, Peter goes through several steps before he meets with Cornelius. What process do you go through when you have a difficult decision to make?
3. What is one area of your life where you feel God might be leading you but you are reluctant to follow or scared to follow?
4. In Acts 10:34-35, Peter said that God accepts all those who fear God and do what is right. Does this mean Cornelius's good deeds earn him salvation? Why or why not, in context of reading the rest of Peter's speech?
5. Peter says that God does not show favoritism and accepts people from every nation. This was revolutionary for a Jewish man to say and believe. How can we be revolutionary in our thinking and living so we don't show favoritism and accept people from all nations?
6. Peter (a Jewish Christian) shares the gospel with Cornelius (a Roman centurion and a Gentile). In your life, how much contact do you have with people from other ethnic groups or different backgrounds?
7. Why do many of our churches, including ZPC, struggle with integrating people from different races or ethnicities? What might we do differently?

Homework: Pray and consider how God is calling you to give of your time, talent and treasure in 2018.

Prayer:

As you pray for one another, please pray for the following needs in our church family:

- > Prayers of healing for Jim Baldauf, Mark Baugh, Cheri Fuchs, and Becky Furste.

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Info for your group:

> Fill a shoe box for Operation Christmas Child! Return boxes by November 19.

Leader's Notes:

The early days of Christianity were exciting and frightening as people from all different places (on the day of Pentecost) and from different backgrounds (Cornelius in Acts 10) were coming to believe in Jesus as the Messiah and Savior. Cornelius was most likely in difficult spot as he was a Roman soldier, part of a group of despised oppressors, who became a respected believer in God. He is good example of a risk-taker for us today. The Good News includes the fact the "God does not show favoritism" but accepts people from every nation – still exhilarating even today! May we too be willing to share Jesus with anyone without holding anything back.

[Question 1] Peter's vision from God was that nothing is impure that God has made clean. It's a little bit of a strange vision – but God shows Peter that it's not only the fact that Peter can eat food God provides, but also Peter can share Jesus with anyone God sends him. Think if God has shown you anything or spoken to you clearly. Sharing that can confirm its validity and encourages other Christians.

[Question 2] Peter prays, which creates space for God. Peter is in community, staying at the house of Simon the Tanner and then with Cornelius. Peter is willing to take risks – not knowing what will happen next. He follows the lead of the Holy Spirit. He doesn't allow his fear to stop him from following God. He listens well to Cornelius, then shares Jesus. What is your process?

[Question 3] Peter was at first reluctant to eat something impure in the vision. But he saw God repeating to him that it was good. He seemed very willing to go with strangers to visit a Roman soldier. Peter was obedient. Where is God calling you that might be scary and you need to be obedient?

[Question 4] Although God accepts people from all nations, they still need Jesus. Cornelius's gifts to the poor were noticed by God, but he still needed Jesus. Our good deeds, even giving to the poor, do not save us. Jesus saves – the only one who saves (Acts 4:12). I need Jesus, you need Jesus, we need Jesus.

[Question 5] God does not show favoritism and accepts even Roman centurions. We can be revolutionary by thinking out of the box, and getting out of our boxes, to do ministry with new friends from different backgrounds – like urban youth through Str8up Ministries on the north side of Indy. We can start by being kind, learning names, and interacting with people who aren't like us.

[Question 6] For Peter, to share with a Roman centurion was big – against his Jewish law. Romans were the occupying army in the land. Who would be like that for you? What experience does your group have with people from other ethnicities? Share your stories to encourage each other. Even share your struggles here if you need help overcoming them.

[Question 7] Some say the most segregated hour of the week is the hour of worship on Sunday morning. ZPC is not as integrated as we could be. Peter gives some good examples of how to break down those walls. Peter was willing to go into their turf. He went where Cornelius lived and even into his home. This was a risk and drew people together. How can we do the same?

Homework: God is calling each of us to step out – through ZPC – but also outside of ZPC. Ask God to help you see where that next step is for you – just one more step out.