

United with Families

May 1, 2022

Spirit of Solidarity

Acts 11:1-18

Bible Verse: "When the others heard this, they stopped objecting and began praising God. They said, "We can see that God has also given the Gentiles the privilege of repenting of their sins and receiving eternal life." Acts 11:18

The Story: Peter returned to Jerusalem. Some of the apostles and other believers criticized him because he had been visiting and eating with the Gentiles. Peter explained it to them. "When I was in Joppa, while I was praying, I fell into a trance and had a vision. Something like a sheet came down from heaven by its four corners. The sheet reached the ground near me. On the sheet I saw all sorts of animals and wild beasts, reptiles, and birds. Then I heard a voice saying 'Peter, kill and eat'. But I replied, 'Oh no Lord, I have never eaten those foods that our Jewish laws say are unclean or impure'. The voice from heaven spoke again saying 'Do not call anything unclean that God has declared clean'. This happened three times and then everything was pulled back to heaven. Just then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea arrived at the house where we were staying. The Holy Spirit told me to go with them. Six believers from Joppa came with me and we went to Cornelius's house in Caesarea.

Cornelius said how he had seen an angel who told him to send someone to Joppa for a man whose full name is Simon Peter. He will tell you how you and all your family will be saved. Then Peter said as I was talking to Cornelius family the Holy Spirit fell on them just as it fell on us. I remembered that the Lord had said John had baptized with water, but with the Holy Spirit. It was clear that God gave those Gentiles the same thing that he gave us, and who was I to stand in God's way?"

When those in Jerusalem heard this, they stopped criticizing and praised God saying "God has given the Gentiles the opportunity to become part of the Christian Church.

Story Video: <https://youtu.be/HeEUuzU9MQg> Peter's Revelation to Take the Gospel to the Gentiles Jul 25, 2013

Talk about: In today's Bible story, God showed Peter that everyone should learn about the Good News of Jesus, both Jews and non-Jews. Some of the believers in Jerusalem still thought that anyone who wanted to be a Christian needed to become a Jew first. Jews had been taught that they were the chosen people, so they were separate from others. Are there people that you see yourself as being better than? How can you become friends with those who are different from you?

Music Videos: <https://youtu.be/IMmPOxANDbq> Jesus Loves Everyone Jan 30, 2014
<https://youtu.be/UEvJzOxm6zs> Big Family Of God (Official Lyric Video) - Nick & Becky Drake // Worship For Everyone May 25, 2018

God Sightings: Think of all the wonderful things you can see; things created by God- our families you, me, stars, sun, moon, animals, birds, and everything! We are looking at ways we see what God is doing or has done all around you. A God Sighting might be a hug or a beautiful sunrise or sunset. **You can be a God Sighting by being kind to others. My God Sighting:**

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Faith and Prayer: Gracious God, thank you that we are beloved by you absolutely and always. Help us to show your kindness and generosity to everyone this week. Amen

For Youth (grade 6 and up)

Talk about: The vision about the sheet with the unclean animals is so important to Luke that he records it three times, once as it happens in Acts 10, again when Peter gets to Cornelius's home, and yet again when Peter reports it to those in Jerusalem in Acts 11. It one of the central stories that change Christianity from being a sect of Judaism to being a world-wide religion. Imagine yourself as Peter in this story. How eager would you be to accept such a radical change in thinking? When do you see division within and separation in your family, church, community, nation? How does Peter's experience inform your faith and your response to division and separation?

Music Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9V0qJmZ7z8> All are Welcome": Hymn by Marty Haugen Jun 28, 2020

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRWs3-MvFnQ> Zealand Worship - Your Love is Wild (Official Video) May 23, 2016