



## **ORIGINS (Part 4) - "What God's Intention Requires"**

### **Acts 10:9-15 NIV**

9 About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. 10 He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a **trance**. 11 He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. 12 It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. 13 Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

14 "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."

15 The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."

### **Acts 10:19-20 NIV**

19 While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. 20 So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

### **Acts 10:25-29 NIV**

25 As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. 26 But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."

27 While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. 28 He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. 29 So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?"

### **Acts 2:38-39 NIV**

38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

### **Acts 11:15-18 NIV**

15 "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. 16 Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' 17 So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God's way?"

18 When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life."

### **Key Points**

- A redemptive community requires a radical submission to Jesus and a radical devotion to one another.
- We struggle towards Jesus and His Lordship as we learn to struggle towards community and a new unity.
- God orchestrates events in different ways and in different places. God is acting in the world and inviting us to participate.
- Everything starts with an encounter, and out of that encounter is an invitation to trust.

- In almost any encounter we have, we immediately try and find meaning by attempting to fit it into the story we are already familiar with and a category we already know.
- As long as we view the world through the lens of our own self-interest, self-preservation, and defense, we will never see as God sees.
- As we contemplate and begin to perceive Jesus's way, we will likely feel a measure of uncertainty.
- Contemplation helps us get outside ourselves by inviting us to articulate and assess what we see.
- Obedience is relational and a response to knowing and trusting.
- Radical submission requires conflicted contemplation.
- Radical devotion requires uncomfortable compassion.
- If God hates the same people you do, you can be sure you've made God in your own image.

### **READ**

**Open your time together by reading the Scripture passages on Page 1.**

- **How does Peter's vision in Acts 10 challenge his understanding of God's inclusion and acceptance of all people?**
- **How does the Holy Spirit move and guide both Peter and Cornelius, breaking down barriers and initiating a new understanding of community?**
- **How does Peter's willingness to enter Cornelius's home challenge social and cultural norms of the time? What can we learn from Peter's example about crossing cultural boundaries in our own lives?**
- **Peter declares that "God shows no partiality." How can we apply this principle of impartiality to our own interactions with others, both within and outside our faith community?**

### **REFLECT**

- **How can our desires for self-fulfillment hinder our ability to engage in true submission?**
- **Why do we often try to fit new experiences into familiar narratives? How can this tendency impact our spiritual growth?**
- **How can our self-interest and self-preservation hinder our ability to see the world as God does?**
- **Share a time when you felt uncertain about following Jesus's way. How did you navigate this uncertainty?**

### **RESPOND**

- **Is there something that God has asked of you and you are unsure what it means?**
- **Is there something that burdens you and disrupts what you have always thought?**
- **Can you get outside of yourself and your own narrative to consider what God might be saying to you and wants you to see?**

### **PRAY**

**Close your time together with prayer requests. Ask how you can pray, support, and lift one another up. Pray over these requests collectively or by breaking into prayer partners.**