

May 20, 2018 (Pentecost Sunday)

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Acts 2:1-4; Acts 10:34-36

Emerge "Journey: The Places We Will Go"

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Today is Pentecost Sunday, the celebration that comes 50 days after the resurrection of Christ. . . This day is an important day that links the church to Christ. . . There is an undeniable connection between the ministry of Christ and the Mission of the Church. . . Everything that happens in the gospels is just the beginning. . Christ death is the end of chapter one in a book of endless chapters. . in the same way that back in Genesis God crafted and molded Adam from the earth . . . Jesus came and molded the disciples in his image. . yet Adam was not alive until God breathed his spirit or his [rauch] into him. . the church was not quite empowered and alive until the Holy Spirit came. . .

In the first Scripture Kathy read that is what happened... apostle received the spirit and began to tell of the wonderful acts of God in languages that were foreign to them. . . but where I'd like to focus this morning is on the second scripture.. Acts chapter 10 verses 34-36. . .

In my opinion . . . one of the greatest dictators of whether or not a person will be successful in life. . . one of the biggest factors that determines whether or not a person will be happy and satisfied with life is perspective. . . I would suggest to you that is not the circumstances under which a person is born. . it is not what type of parents a person has. . it is not whether the person has money . . . but it is perspective. . . while all of those others things can certainly make life easier. . it is the individual perspective that each person possess that will be the ultimate determinate. . .

Your perspective on life allows you to see the glass as half empty or half full. . . your perspective on life allows you to believe that unlikely things are still possible. . . a perspective based on hope will keep your spirits up while pessimistic perspective will have you in a constant state of gloom and doom. . .

Few people in churches across the globe today will be surprised to hear that it is Pentecost Sunday. . . but most people will want to know what that claim means from the perspective of their own lives. . . They are looking not for doctrinal statements or rote storytelling but for a message that tells how and why Pentecost matters for their particular experiences- - their understanding of their selves, their lives, their children's lives, their neighbors and their world. . .

In this chapter of acts, the apostle Peter has his perspective on salvation destroyed and then rebuilt. . .

He says I truly understand that God shows no partiality . . . I was raised Baptist and so I'm used to hearing the King James version of this text that would read that God is no respecter of persons . . . in other words. . God doesn't play favorites . . . Peter's perspective on how God sees the world and the person in it has just shifted in a radical way . . .

To understand why this is life changing you must first understand the severity of the situation. . . when Peter utters the words of chapter 10 verse 34-36 he is standing in the midst of a place that would make him unclean and unholy. . .

One of the severities of first-century Judaism was the law, rule or an understanding that Jews were not to enter the homes of Gentiles nor were they to eat with Gentiles. I can't claim to be knowledgeable about exactly where this rule or law came from but in ***John 18:28, Acts 10:28*** and ***Galatians 2:11-15***.

When we look back through the Ten Commandments and the Hebrew scriptures we find no such law that says this to be true. So I make the assentation that there is not a biblical law forbidding Jews from socializing with or eating with Gentiles. We have all types of laws and documentation in the Hebrew Scriptures about eating idol sacrifices, but God never once does it say that Jews are forbidden from entering a Gentile home or eating with a Gentile.

More than anything I would suggest that the those laws and traditions were put in place as a means of protection.. .they were guardrail used to keep Jews from possibly committing ritual contamination or falling prey to cultural assimilation.

For Peter prior to this vision Peter's would have operated with the understanding that as a Jew, he was not to associate with Gentiles, enter their homes, or eat with them. So the Gentiles were socially isolated from the Jews. . .

Yet even worse, this law that all Jews operated by even though it had no basis in the Torah had theological ramifications. If Gentiles were unclean and therefore not to be dealt with on this earth . . .does that not leave them outside of the Kingdom of God. . .

Thanks be to God that Peter's assumption was in inaccurate. Those prohibitions did not arise from the Bible, but only from the stringencies of men's interpretations. God had never designated Gentiles unclean, nor had He declared their homes or foods defiling. Yet if invited to eat of a meal at a Gentile home, the first-century Jew would be required to decline on the basis that the food was (theoretically) rendered unclean through contact with Gentiles, even if the meat they served was in line with ***Leviticus 11***. So too, if invited into a Gentile's home, the first-century Jew would place himself into a state of assumed ritual impurity.

For these reasons, if not for the vision of the sheet, Peter would have refused the invitation to enter the home of Cornelius the Roman centurion. He also would have refused the notion that Gentiles could participate in the Kingdom of Heaven. The vision of the sheet is offered as corrections on both of these points.

#### You know sometimes our religion gets in the way of our faith

Some may be thinking, boy I'm glad Peter cleared that up. . I'm cool with the Jews. . .i understand that no thing or person can make me unclean. . . but are there ways that we are still allowing the rules of our religion to keep people from the kingdom of God . . .

Are there any barriers that we have placed in our minds or hearts about who is and isn't acceptable to be in the presence of God. . . .

What have we declared unclean or unsaveable because of our unwillingness to travel and take new journeys.

People develop “favorites” to distinguish themselves from others. It gives them a sense of individuality. They can claim something as uniquely theirs, never mind the fact that a color or a food or a place belongs to no one. By invoking ownership in this way, we build our identity. It is our human nature and perspective that makes us choose favorites. . we have favorite sports teams, favorite ice creams. . . favorite vacation places. . which are fine when they are surface level favorites as I just listed but. . . then we have our more dangerous favorites. . .favorite ethnicities. . . favorite \_\_\_\_\_. . like favorite children. .

Few things are as devastating to a child as the realization that their parents love a sibling more than them. Children are not stupid. They can sense when this type of inequity exists. They can sense it even when the parent does not. Desperately they attempt to figure out what is wrong with them and what they need to do in order to become the favorite. . .

We take our own desire and need to feel special and we place the same thought pattern on God. . we assume that God loves one group of people more than another but God does not practice discrimination with people, favoring one above another. All of us have equal opportunity to receive God's help and blessing. God loves everyone, but allows us to choose whether to seek Him, or not.

Multiple time throughout the Bible we learn that God does not show partiality or favoritism.

2 CHRONICLES 19:7 <sup>7</sup>Now, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take care what you do, for there is no perversion of justice with the LORD our God, or partiality, or taking of bribes.”

ROMANS 2:11 For God does not show partiality.

EPHESIANS 6:9 NLT 9 Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Don't threaten them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no favorites.

1 PETER 1:17 If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile.

God does not favor one person over another. Everyone has an equal opportunity to receive God's blessing. No one is excluded. The choice is ours. What God has done for others, He will also do for you.

But it is not until this point in his life. .after having walked and talked with Jesus that Peter realized that God is no respecter of persons. . .

. .We are all one and can all be together in ministry. . .Peter put aside the tradition that he had been raised in and embraced the new thing God was doing through him. . he was obedient to the Holy Spirit

Purpose of the holy spirit coming The holy spirit works and manifests itself differently in each of us but each gift and way that its manifested is for a purpose. .different types of butterfly, from different places but all butterflies none the less. . they look different as caterpillars but all go through the same process

to become butterflies. . .There are amazing places and people that God is calling us to but we are unable to interact with them because of our bias . . .God is not respecter of persons.

I must let go of my assumptions about God. . about who God is capable of saving. . (Jonah and Nineveh) . . .i must realize that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nations the one who fears him and does what is right. . . Upon this rock, the Spirit builds a church a that offers hope to the hopeless, strength for the weary and new life to those who think theirs is over. . Upon these things this church will continue this mission to a world that so desperately needs a people who know power of transformation!