



Repentance Tabernacle Church

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Grace That Is (Always) Greater!

Focus Verse: Acts 10:34 -Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.

Lesson Text: Acts 2:39; 10:9-16, 28-29, 34; Galatians 2:11-16

Truth About God: God's grace reaches further than we can imagine.

Truth For My Life: I will ask God to help me grow in my exercise of His grace.

The Jews and Gentiles of the Bible's first century beef with one another was not just over theft, romance, or land: their hatred for each other was over identity. To the Jews, they were God's covenant people, the Gentiles were not. The last place Peter or any Jewish preacher would want to preach the gospel of Jesus was in a Gentile's home to a Gentile family. But by the time we come to Acts 10, God has been reaching for a Gentile (Cornelius), he had been reaching out to God, and God was planning to send a Jewish preacher to preach the gospel to erase the bold, long-drawn line between the Jews and Gentiles.

While Peter did receive a revelation from God and tremendous insight into Jesus' significance and identity, Peter failed to grasp what it meant for Jesus to be the world's Messiah. Peter's story serves as a cautionary tale that illumination can easily become blended with our fallible, often faulty, human thinking. Jesus promised they would receive power in the form of the Holy Ghost, equipping them to be witnesses beginning in Jerusalem and extending to the uttermost part of the earth. Which includes other groups, the dreaded Samaritans and Gentiles.

The gospel is the most inclusive message in the world because it is good news for everyone: the rich, the poor, the bond, the free, male, female, the well-known, the unknown. While Peter did not understand it then, he would learn in time that there are really only two groups of people in the world: those in covenant with God and those God wants to call into covenant.

With one divine act of Holy Ghost outpouring, God erased the line that society had drawn in bold permanent marker that separated Jews from Gentiles, especially from Romans (Acts 10). Acts 11, Peter testified that the Gentiles received the Holy Ghost just like the Jews did. Acts 15:11 Peter affirmed: "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." We are no better than them; they are no better than us. **God erased the line; let's not draw it again.** Peter's process of realization demonstrates that God reveals biases over time, indicating that being a faithful disciple is a process, not a task.

The effects of prejudice and racism are often so pervasive, they become difficult to remove from the human mind, soul, and spirit. Just like when we try to remove sand from our bodies after leaving the beach, just when we think it is all gone, we spot another irritating grain of sand. Sin affects us this way, and God's grace and the power of His Spirit are necessary to pull up sin by the root finally.

We must be careful not to allow our biases or prejudices to override the truth that God is for the whole world. We must learn how to break free of this pattern through God's Word and interaction with fellow Christian believers. Moreover, we must allow God's Spirit to search our hearts and reveal to us what part of ourselves is contrary to His mission so we might continue to carry the gospel of Jesus across the earth and across town. Therefore, we must allow Him to minister to us through His grace and His Spirit and teach us about ourselves. So, that we might be courageous to venture on when the Spirit leads us to a place within our own hearts where we do not wish to go. Finally, we must embrace each other as full members of God's church by acknowledging we are all people for whom Christ died. When we experience Christ's perfect love that casts out fear, we can truly begin to love others (1 John 4:18-21).

Stories like we read in Acts 10 and others we read in our history books teach us that God's grace reaches further than we can imagine. One day, by that selfsame grace, we will kneel before Jesus on His throne, and we will sing the song of the redeemed. On that glorious day, take a good, long look around you. In front of you, behind you, beside you. You will see people from every kindred, tongue, and nation. **Every skin tone, every dialect, every continent, everyone from everywhere because every one of us was created in His image, called by His name, filled with His Spirit, and redeemed by His blood.** May the vision of that day fill our hearts and mouths with the same testimony now that Peter had then: *"of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons."*