

Continued Paradigm Shift - Gospel Has Spread to Gentiles

Acts 10 Mykel walked us through God's revelation to Peter that Salvation is available for all who will accept Jesus as Lord & Savior.

Mykel referred to this as a "paradigm shift".

A paradigm shift describes a transition from one way of thinking to a new way or new understanding. It doesn't mean the facts have changed, but it DOES mean viewing the facts through a new lens or filter.

Illustration: Cultured Stone Vs. Real Stone

Scientist Thomas Kuhn proposed that paradigm shifts happen in 4 stages.

1. Stage 1: The Generally Accepted Paradigm

- For 1st Century Jews the accepted paradigm was that gentiles were unclean.
- Included in this view was that fellowship with Gentiles was unlawful (which God never commanded)
- We might say Jews believed that Gentiles carried cooties.

2. Stage 2: The Accepted Paradigm is Challenged

- This occurs when the Angel visits Cornelius, Cornelius sends for Peter, & Peter visits a house full of Gentiles.
- Peter would have been considered breaking the law. & Defiled.

3. Stage 3: Establishment of a New Paradigm

- This occurred when God revealed to Peter in a vision that Gentiles are not to be seen as unclean.
- God said "do not call unclean what I have cleaned."

4. Stage 4: Kuhn calls The Aftermath

- The new paradigm is accepted as the dominant viewpoint.
- The aftermath for the Jews would include the Holy Spirit being poured out upon the Gentiles as confirmation of the New Paradigm

This Morning We'll continue this theme of paradigm shift because one of the key dynamics during a paradigm shift is that there is always resistance to accepting the new paradigm.

We will see this in Acts 11 this morning when many of the Jewish Christians challenged what Peter experienced at Cornelius's house.

I. Jewish Believers Initially Reject the New Paradigm Vs. 1-3

Read **Acts 11:1-3**

Luke tells us that after this Gentile salvation experience at Cornelius's house, the news traveled quickly and not everyone believed or agreed.

But.....We know Peter Embraced the Reality of the Gentile Salvation Because

- **10:28** Peter said *"God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean."*
- **10:34** Peter said *"I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcome to Him."*
- **10:47** Peter said *"Surely, no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did" and then orders them to be baptized."*

We can also assume the other Apostles & Brethren who WERE with Peter also believed.

- **10:45** *"All the circumcised believers who were with Peter were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also."*
 - These guys saw this miraculous event that looked a lot like Pentacost right before their eyes.
 - Later we'll see that Peter compares it to their own salvation experience at the beginning.
- **Vs. 1 Apostles & brethren throughout the region of Judea heard.....**
 - This is obviously those apostles who were not traveling with Peter
 - **Vs. 2 "Those who were circumcised took issue with him.."**
 - **The Greek text is a little stronger worded.**
 - NIV / ESV "they **criticized** him"
 - ASV / King James "they **contended** with him"
 - CEV "arguing with him"

Vs. 3 Tells Us What Their Issue with Peter Really Was - It's Twofold

(First he spent time with unvaccinated people, then he ate with unvaccinated people)

- **Firstly** *"you went to uncircumcised men"*
- **Secondly** *"you ate with them."*
- Their issue isn't one of high theological and spiritual reflection. It's a legal issue for them.
- Peter associated with those who were considered to be unclean
- Then he ate with them potentially violating dietary restrictions of the Law.

This Seems Pretty Extreme By The Jewish Believers, But We Might Extend Some Grace

1. **The dietary laws had been given for their own protection.** It was a matter of properly cleaning their food. They had been steeped in this from birth for centuries.
2. **Old Testament associating with Gentiles had fencing & rules so they would not adopt the pagan cultures of the nations around them.**
 - A Gentile was not forbidden from becoming part of God's people, but it had to happen in a prescribed way.
3. We Should also consider the fact that **they weren't present with Peter** to witness the miracle.

II. Peter Defends the New Paradigm Vs. 4-17

Vs. 4 *“Peter began speaking and proceeded to explain to them in orderly sequence..”*

- I love this! **Isn't this classic Peter** from what we have seen in Acts
- Peter initiated a replacement for Judas by standing up among the 120 in Chapter 1
- Peter stood up as the spokesperson and gave an explanation at Pentacost
- Peter gave a second sermon explaining the healing of the lame man
- Peter methodically refuted the empty charges in the Sanhedrin court

Luke tells here that Peter began to explain to them in a very **“orderly sequence”** what had happened.

There are 4 Parts to Peter's Defense

Part 1 - Peter Reveals The Revelation & Vision He Received Is from God. Vs. 5-10

Vs. 5 Peter says he was praying in Joppa and God gave him a vision.

Vs. 7 He hears an audible voice

Vs. 8 He recognizes that it is clearly the Lord

Vs. 9 The response is that what God has cleansed do not call unclean

- So we see that this new “paradigm” **didn't originate with Peter** himself but with God.
- There was first a vision and then an audible voice from Heaven.

Part 2 - Peter Reveals the Command He Received From the Holy Spirit Vs. 11-14

Vs. 11 Three men came to summon him on behalf of Cornelius

Vs. 12 The Spirit told Peter to go without discriminating toward these Gentiles

Vs. 13 These guys explained that Cornelius had an encounter with an angel about Peter preaching the Gospel to them.

- So we see that this new paradigm now includes an **assignment from God**.
- We see that God was also working in the lives of **others simultaneously**.
- This command was necessary to facilitate a **divine event or appointment** by God.

Part 3 - Peter Reveals the Fulfillment of Jesus' Promise of The Holy Spirit Vs15-16

Vs. 15 Holy Spirit fell upon them

Vs. 16 Jesus said you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit

- Luke records that Peter's recollection of this event **looked a lot like Pentacost**.
- Peter says the Spirit fell on those Gentiles **just like He did upon us** at the beginning.
- The inference here is that the Holy Spirit enabling **tongues was not necessarily normative**.
- What Peter witnessed during this Gentile conversion caused him to recall the similarity to the Apostles' own salvation experience.

Part 4 - Peter Reveals that Rejecting This New Paradigm Is to Stand In God's Way Vs 17

Vs. 17 If God is doing the same thing in the lives of the Gentiles that He has done in our lives, how can we possibly stand in the way of what God is doing.

III. The Jewish Believers Embraced the New Paradigm Vs. 18

- Just like their initial objection was two-fold Peter met with and ate with Gentiles
- Similarly, we see their response is two-fold as well
 1. **“they quieted down”** more literal translation = **they became silent**
 - This means they stopped contending and arguing with Peter.
 - They stopped judging him for spending time with the Gentiles.
 2. **“they glorified God”** by embracing the new paradigm.
 - They understood that God had also granted to the Gentiles repentance that leads to life.
 - This is a key statement. They clearly understood what salvation in Jesus requires.
 - It requires repentance. That all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

***This is exactly how Peter Responded to the Crowds at Pentacost When their Hearts were pierced. They asked *“What must we do to be saved? Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

Conclusion:

Mykel described the processing of embracing paradigms like looking through a certain lens.

We can be guilty of operating in a singular paradigm and resisting a new paradigm God might be revealing. This may not happen so much at a universal or global level for the Body of Christ now, but it does happen individually.

Sometimes when we have been exposed to a new paradigm, we may still hold onto practices and habits of the past that are leftover.

Maybe there's a truth or principle in the Bible that you have always read, but recently God has shown you a more accurate understanding. It might feel like an inconvenience to walk that out. We may even say outright that we don't want to accept that new understanding.

Praise God that He is patient for us to come to understanding. Holy Spirit works inside us to transform our minds and thinking to match a Heavenly or Kingdom minded perspective.