

## **READ**

Acts 11:1-18

## **CONSIDER**

I am always amazed at the power of story. Stories and testimonies are able to break through our doubts and rigid mindset by revealing to us how God's Spirit is at work transforming lives. When the Jews in Judea were upset with Paul for breaking a long-held Jewish custom, Paul shares a testimony about what God's Spirit was doing. This simple testimony of the power of the Spirit helped those fellow believers in Jerusalem accept how God was working even among the Gentiles.

As we come to church this Sunday, I hope we will see the power of sharing what God has done in our lives with others and how the Spirit works through us to usher in the hope of the gospel that breaks down barriers and heals relationships.

Pastor Tim Sreedharan

## **PRAY**

Lord, thank you for your Good News. Thank you that the gospel is our hope "because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith.'" - Romans 1:16-17

Father, help us to experience the transformative power of the Gospel, share that story with others, so that more may be encouraged and strengthened to continue to walk in step with you. In Jesus Christ's name, I pray. Amen.

## **DIVING DEEPER**

It is easy to mistake our preferences (singing hymns, what clothes we wear on Sunday) as the only/best way to follow Christ. Can you give examples of when people make their preferences to be the only way to do church or follow Jesus?

Look back at Acts 10, specifically v44 onward. What is happening here?

In 11:4, why is it important for Peter to tell the whole story? What are the implications of his vision? Why would it have been seen as a threat to some Jewish believers?

Look over Deut 14:2-21. The Jewish people were not allowed to eat specific animals. How does this add to our understanding of why Peter tells the whole story?

What moment from Acts does v15 connect to (see 2:3-4)? What is its significance in regard to the purpose of this book (seen in Acts 1:8)?

Why is v18 a watershed moment for the church? (the church, which at this time is predominantly Jewish, begins to make greater distinctions between what is cultural and what is the gospel, making it easier for non-Jewish believers to walk in the way of Jesus.)

What are some of our cultural preferences that need to be examined through the lens of the gospel? How will this change the way we operate as a church (i.e. a deeper understanding of the gospel and a greater welcome for others)?

Click [HERE](#) for a good way to approach preferences.