**Sermon Notes May 23, 2021**

**Title – The Disruptive Gospel**

**Acts 10:1 – 11:18**

Review:

Opening chapters of Acts – the explosion of the Church – 1000’s coming to faith in Christ:

 Pentecost

 Healing of the crippled man and Peter’s explanation

After the stoning of Stephen and the dispersion of the believers, the narrative moves to God’s unique work in the lives of individuals:

 Simon the sorcerer

 Saul (aka Paul) the persecutor of the “Way”

Question:

**What would it take for you to change what you believe God and how you can have a relationship with Him?**

Unpack Saul’s 180 – upbringing, Pharisee, zealous for the Law i.e. for God and His commands, accepted and excelling beyond his peers – Saul believed himself to be doing the work of God on earth!

Then it all changed – why? God revealed Himself to Saul! Jesus is the Messiah – Mind Blown!

**The Disruptive Gospel – turned everything upside down – No – RIGHTSIDE UP!**

 **From Advice (Religion) to Announcement (Grace)**

Example – Systems Theory and change – think of the change brought about by one man’s new understanding of the Gospel.

 Ethiopian Eunuch – God-fearer/ seeker – God’s faithfulness to reveal Himself to those

 who seek Him/ desire to know the truth.

Now, today – Cornelius the centurion – another God-fearer

Questions: Who is beyond God’s reach? Who is unworthy to be saved?

**Who should be saved?**

**The Story of Cornelius in 4 Scenes**

**Scene 1 – Cornelius’ Vision**

**Acts 10:1-8 (NIV)**

Cornelius (Centurion) – devout, God-fearer, generously gave to the poor/needy, prayed to God regularly

Recap God’s promise to those who fear Him, seek after Him…

An angel of God speaks – Cornelius “stares” in fear – What is it Lord?

 Your prayers/gifts – have been noticed

 Send men to Joppa (modern-day Tel-Aviv)

 Bring back Simon aka Peter who is staying in the home of Simon the tanner

Note: 11:14 adds “He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.”

**God is personally revealing Himself to the Gentiles!**

**Scene 2 – Peter’s Vision**

**Acts 10:9-16 (NIV)**

Meanwhile, while Cornelius’ men are on their way…

Peter – trance/state of mind God used to communicate with Peter–a type of “out of body” exp.

Sheet – all kinds of 4 footed animals, reptiles, and birds… command “Kill and eat.”

No distinction is given between animals that were “clean” (acceptable – chewed the cud, cloven hooves) and “unclean” (unacceptable)

Peter’s SHOCK! This is an UNHOLY MIXTURE – Scandalous! – “NEVER!”

(Point of emphasis – 3X!)

**“Don’t call unclean what God has made clean”**

 **The Disruptive Gospel!**

Background – Jesus had introduced this in his teaching against the religious leaders – context for Mk. 7:1ff – traditions of men, ceremonial washing of hands, miss the true commands of God in order to observe their own traditions…

**Mk 7:18-23 “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him ‘unclean’? For it doesn’t go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods to be ‘clean’). He went on: “What comes out of a man is what makes him ‘unclean.’ For from within, out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man ‘unclean.’”**

The Gospel explained – inside not outside…

Segway – While Peter is processing this… Spirit says to him, “Simon, three men are looking for you. So, get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I HAVE SENT THEM.”

Men from Joppa explain Cornelius’ vision and request…

Note: God is using Peter to open the door for the Gentiles to come into the Church – not Saul/Paul – who would later be the primary evangelist to the Gentiles.

In order for Peter to “get it” – it took this special REVELATION.

Set up for Scene 3:

Peter arrives at Cornelius’ house

Cornelius is expecting him and has invited all his relatives and close friends

Peter - seeing the group – explains – THIS IS NOT NORMAL! Jewish laws regarding the associating with Gentiles… explains the vision God gave him… “Why have you sent for me?”

Cornelius explains the vision he received from the angel of God…

“Now we are here IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.”

**Scene 3 – Peter at Cornelius’ House**

**Acts 10:34-48 (NIV)**

Peter’s expanded view of the Gospel – “God accepts people from every nation who fear him and do what is right.” – not a work’s salvation – explain…

Peter’s Message:

Jesus’ earthly ministry – teaching the “good news of peace” i.e. salvation cf. Rom. 5:1 “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Jesus’ mighty works – sent to the Jews – but meant for all mankind – Anointed with the Holy Spirit – taking on the forces of evil - Peter and the apostles were WITNESSES of all of this:

 Killed by the Jews

 God raised Him from the dead

 Jesus appearances – primarily the apostles, but also to 500 of the brothers, James, Saul

Peter’s mandate – commissioned to preach that “EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

Believes – Unpack – Climbing wall example

Full and complete trust in Christ as the only acceptable payment for sin

Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message – assumes full understanding of repentance that was not included in text

Spoke in other languages – parallel to Pentecost – interesting that God used the same confirmation for the Gentiles as he did for the Jews.

Peter’s companions – ASTONISHED! THIS IS NOT NORMAL!

**God’s Spirit poured out on Gentiles!**

 **The Disruptive Gospel**

They are baptized in the name of Jesus – Peter remains a few days…

**Scene 4 – Peter Questioned**

Peter – you’ve got some ‘splanning to do!

 In the home of Gentiles

 Eating with them

Peter recounts the ENTIRE story – clarifies any wrong information they may have heard…

**Acts 11:17-18 (NIV)**

“If God gave them the same gift, who am I to oppose God?”

They all agreed!

Who would have thunk it!

**God has granted even the Gentiles to repentance unto life!**

 **The Disruptive Gospel!**

Implications:

Full members in the family of God, keeping the law not necessary for salvation, no ‘clean’ or ‘unclean’ food or people.

This is an EARTH-SHATTERING IDEA for the Jews.

God’s great plan in Christ:

**Eph. 2:11-18 “Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth…were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far away have been brought near though the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility…For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.”**

**As you go... Ponder:**

**God is a revealing God – personal, unique, intentional**

**God is at work, even when we don’t see it, revealing Himself and His intentions**

**God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance**

**The Gospel disrupts our biases, exposes our hearts and calls us to repent**