

Wednesday

Read: Acts 11:11-14 *Peter and the Gentiles*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *How do you think the Gentiles felt when they received a message from God's angel?*
2. *What would you say is the connection between Peter's vision and the vision of the Gentile man?*

Prayer Focus: Jesus, you were criticized when you ate at the table with people who were reviled by others. Remind me that you came as the means to save not only me and my entire household, but the whole of humanity.

Thursday

Read: Acts 11:15-17 *The coming of the Holy Spirit*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Why is baptism important in this event? What does baptism mean to you?*
2. *What does Peter mean when he says "who was I that I could hinder God?"*

Prayer Focus: Oh, God, I know I sometimes love to serve as a judge against those with whom I disagree. I see that every time I do so, I get in the way of your plan for your creation. Bear with me, God, while I turn back to you and let you do the judging. Let me remember my baptism.

Friday

Read: Acts 11:18 *God's gift of salvation for all*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *What if God appeared to you and spoke as he did to Peter? What would you have done in response?*
2. *Is there anyone or anything you see as unclean or too different to be included in the life of the church? Could you do more to embrace them as members of the family of God?*

Prayer Focus: Holy Spirit, lift me up today. Help me listen to the stories of others and see them as worthy of all you have to offer. Make me a part of your plan to expand the table and to extend hospitality, even to those I once judged. Surprise me with a new heart.

An Unexpected Change of Menu

Acts 11:1-18 *Peter's attention to menu was a matter of faithfulness to God and God's commands. To eat the things lowered on the sheet in his dream would be life changing. Just as astounding as Peter's announcement of what is OK to eat is his announcement that the Spirit told him to eat with Gentiles, for Jews and Gentiles did not eat together. Additionally, his new Gentile friends are filled with the Spirit of God. How then are they to say they are unclean or unworthy, for Gentiles are on God's menu of acceptable converts?*

Message Notes:

Small Group Format

Welcome

- Introductions/getting acquainted
- Mutual Invitation question: *Have you ever been surprised when you heard “the rest of the story?” Did it change you?*

Opening Prayer

Song (optional)

Reflection on Scripture

- Have someone read **Acts 11:1-18**. Discuss observations about the text.
 - *What word or phrase strikes you the most?*
 - *What do you think is the most important point of the text?*

Application of Scripture (The central transformative questions)

- What did you hear God say to you through this week's Scriptures?
- What are you doing about it?
- How can we support you?

Share your faith (in groups of 3)

- *How have you experienced God recently in your life?* (This is a weekly question - it may be difficult to answer at first, but if you ask it each week you may start to notice God more in your life.)

Pray for each other

Refreshments (optional)

May 19, 2019
Surprise!



Monday

Read: Acts 11:1-3 *The believers challenge Peter*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Why were the disciples at Joppa critical of Peter?*
2. *Why are they shocked that Peter would eat with people who were not of his own faith?*

Prayer Focus:

Gracious God, show me the truth about the rules and limits I place on my faith in you and my love of others. Open my heart to hear and listen to where you wish me to embrace mercy and compassion over being right.

Tuesday

Read: Acts 11:4-10 *Peter's vision at Joppa*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *What was the meaning of all the animals in Peter's vision?*
2. *Why do you think the Jewish dietary laws were so important to Peter's people?*

Prayer Focus:

Creator of all things, giver of all gifts, I bless you today for the abundance of your creation. Thank you for teaching me to look carefully at my rules for being part of your family. Let me have the eyes of Jesus to see truth as he lived it.