**MOVING FROM BLIND SPOTS TO AWARENESS**

**Acts 10:1-29**

**THE BIG IDEA: True Gospel Community can only be achieved through sharing the Gospel and deepening relationships with all people, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, or gender, and God has commissioned us to go to them where they are.**

**A COMMITMENT TO \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ BEHAVIOR CANNOT HEAL WHAT ONLY THE GOSPEL CAN FIX**

* *“There was a man in Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment. 2 He was a devout man and feared God along with his whole household. He did many charitable deeds for the Jewish people and always prayed to God.”* (Acts 10:1-2)
* **No amount of religious behavior can save us from the consequences of our sin; trusting in Jesus’ atoning work on the cross is the only sufficient means of salvation.**
* *“For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift— 9 not from works, so that no one can boast.”* (Ephesians 2:8-9)
* **Acknowledging our need for complete redemption in and through Christ alone positions us to overcome our “Blind Spots.”**

**A COMMITMENT TO PRAYER POSITIONS US TO HEAR FROM GOD**

* *“About three in the afternoon he distinctly saw in a vision an angel of God who came in and said to him, ‘Cornelius.’ 4Staring at him in awe, he said, ‘What is it, Lord?’ The angel told him, ‘Your prayers and your acts of charity have ascended as a memorial offering before God. 5 Now send men to Joppa and call for Simon, who is also named Peter. 6 He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea.’”* (Acts 10:3-6)
* **God answers those who are committed to prayer, even those who are still seeking to actually know Him personally.**
* *“The next day, as they were traveling and nearing the city, Peter went up to pray on the roof about noon…13 A voice said to him, “Get up, Peter; kill and eat.”* (Acts 10:9-13)
* **When we truly grasp the grace and mercy of God poured out on us as Christians, it should drive us into a deeper commitment to prayer.**

**OUR LACK OF UNDERSTANDING CAN BE SO PERVASIVE THAT WE DISPUTE EVEN THE LORD’S WORDS**

* *“’No, Lord!’ Peter said. ‘For I have never eaten anything impure and ritually unclean.’”* (Acts 10:14)
* **Peter’s rejection of the Lord’s words regarding crossing cultural barriers was a result of a lifetime of being taught exclusivism and separation.**
* **The vision God gave Peter in Acts 10 was to show that God’s Church was designed for Jews and Gentiles (all other ethnic groups) to worship the Lord collectively in unity.**
* **As Christians we should be intentional about reaching across cultural lines to build relationships with those who are different from us.**

**GOD IS AT WORK EVEN IN OUR \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

* *“While Peter was deeply perplexed about what the vision he had seen might mean, right away the men who had been sent by Cornelius, having asked directions to Simon’s house, stood at the gate. 18 They called out, asking if Simon, who was also named Peter, was lodging there.”* (Acts 10:17-18)
* **Our “Blind Spots” (Ignorance) do not keep God from accomplishing His plans and purposes.**
* *“Remember what happened long ago, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and no one is like me. 10 I declare the end from the beginning, and from long ago what is not yet done, saying: my plan will take place, and I will do all my will..”* (Isaiah 46:9-10)
* **We cannot walk rightly before the Lord if we are unwilling to identify our blind spots, and then seek to overcome them through intentional growth and understanding.**

**THE PEOPLE OF GOD ARE LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD.**

* *While Peter was thinking about the vision, the Spirit told him, “Three men are here looking for you. 20 Get up, go downstairs, and go with them with no doubts at all, because I have sent them.” 21 Then Peter went down to the men and said, “Here I am, the one you’re looking for. What is the reason you’re here?” (*Acts 10:19-21)
* **The Disciples were given a promise from Jesus regarding the Holy Spirit in their lives.**
* *“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.”* (John 14:26)
* **Obedience to Christ and His word will lead to a deeper awareness and challenge our personal prejudices and biases.**
* *“I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”* (Galatians 2:20)

**THE PEOPLE OF GOD \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ AND REMOVE HUMAN BARRIERS**

* *“They said, “Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who has a good reputation with the whole Jewish nation, was divinely directed by a holy angel to call you to his house and to hear a message from you.” 23 Peter then invited them in and gave them lodging. The next day he got up and set out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went with him.”* (Acts 10:22-23)
* **As believers we must shine the light on any barriers that would hinder us from proclaiming the Gospel message.**
* **If we are caught up on human distinctions, political fractions, and prejudices our own, we are hindering the work God has called us to.**
* *“How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher? 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent?”*(Romans 10:14-15)

**THE PEOPLE OF GOD ARE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ OF FELLOW IMAGE BEARERS**

* *The following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. 25 When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, fell at his feet, and worshiped him. 26 But Peter lifted him up and said, “Stand up. I myself am also a man.” 27 While talking with him, he went in and found a large gathering of people (*Acts 10:24-26)
* **We are all human, made in the image and likeness of God.**
* **An image bearer that holds on to prejudice views over another image bearer has forgotten who holds their very existence in their hands.**

**THE PEOPLE OF GOD ARE AWARE OF THE PLAN OF GOD**

* *Peter said to them, “You know it’s forbidden for a Jewish man to associate with or visit a foreigner, but God has shown me that I must not call any person impure or unclean. 29 That’s why I came without any objection when I was sent for. So may I ask why you sent for me?”* (Acts 10:27-29)
* **The spirit led believer, obedient to Christ and his word, will be challenged in their prejudices and biases the more they continue to grow in obedience to Him.**
* **Our God has always been a God for every people group, every nationality.**
* *“I will also make you a light for the nations, to be my salvation to the ends of the earth.”* (Isaiah 49:6)
* *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.”* (Matthew 28:19)
* **We are one race (human) Created by God with Multiple ethnicities. Each in need of the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.**
* *“But now in Christ Jesus, you who were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who made both groups one and tore down the dividing wall of hostility.”* (Ephesians 2:13-14)

**CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION**

**ICE-BREAKER:** What is something unique about you that others may not know?

**START THINKING (Observation):**

* What does Acts 10:1-29 teach us about God?
* Why wasn’t Cornelius a Christian if he prayed to and feared God?
* What was God revealing to Peter in his vision in verses 9-13?
* What did this encounter between Peter and Cornelius’ household mean for the Gospel?

**DIGGING DEEPER (Understanding and Application):**

* How has Scripture shaped your view on race and reconciliation?.
* Since there will be ethnic identity in heaven, how should that impact our relationships across ethnic lines now?
* How do you handle someone pointing out an area you are “unaware” in regarding race? How are you currently allowing others to speak to your blind spots?
* When God made Peter aware of his sin, Peter immediately demonstrated his repentance by welcoming other ethnicities into his home (v. 23). When it comes to our racial divide, what should the evidence of repentance be?
* What are some ways you can show honor when disagreeing?

**LOVING OUTWARD**

* Who in your life needs to hear the truth of the Gospel? How has this message/text affected and/or inspired you to reach them?
* Who are you inviting to Church next Sunday?