Lesson 8 * October 26, 2025

"Trusting The Spirit"

Bible Basis: Acts 11:1-18

BIBLE TRUTH: Peter's testimony to the power of the Holy spirit converting Gentiles increased the Jerusalem's church support of Peter.

MEMORY VERSE: "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? (Acts 11:17)

TRUSTING THE SPIRIT:

Background

- **Jewish purity laws**: Eating with Gentiles was seen as defiling.
- Cornelius: A Roman centurion, symbolizing Gentile inclusion.
- Pentecost parallel: The Spirit's outpouring on Gentiles mirrors Acts 2.
- Peter has just returned from Caesarea, where he witnessed the Holy Spirit fall on Gentile believers (Acts 10).
- Jewish believers in Jerusalem are concerned that Peter ate with uncircumcised Gentiles, violating traditional purity laws.

& Lesson Aim

- Understand Peter's vision and its implications for the early church.
- Recognize the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding believers beyond cultural boundaries.
- Reflect on how they can embrace God's inclusive love in their own lives.

THE TEXT (NKJV)

1. Peter is Challenged (vv. 1-3)

- ¹ Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.
- ² And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him,
- ³ saying, "You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!"

WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE?

- Jewish believers criticize Peter for eating with Gentiles.
- Reflects tension between tradition and the Spirit's new work.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- 1. Why were the Jewish believers upset with Peter?
- 2. What does Peter's vision teach us about God's view of people?
- 3. How can we make sure we're not standing in God's way today?

PETER SHARES HIS VISION (v.4-10)

- ⁴But Peter explained *it* to them in order from the beginning, saying:
- ⁵ "I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me.
- ⁶When I observed it intently and considered, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air.
- ⁷And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.'
- ⁸ But I said, 'Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.'
- ⁹ But the voice answered me again from heaven, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common.'
- ¹⁰ Now this was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven.

WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE?

- Peter Recounts his vision of the sheet and unclean animals.
- Emphasizes God's command: "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."
- Describes Cornelius' vision and the Spirit's instruction to go without hesitation.
- God promised throughout scripture that He would reach the nations. This began
 with His promise to Abraham in (Gen. 12:3, 18,8) and became very specific in
 Malachi 1:11 "My name shall be great among the Gentiles.
- The promises of God are Yea and Amen. (2 Cor. 1:20)

Peter Journey to Caesarea (vs 11-14)

¹¹ At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea.

¹²Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man's house.

¹³ And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, 'Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter,

¹⁴who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.

What's Happening Here?

- Peter continues to recount what took place at Cornelius' house.
- This portion of Acts 11:11–14 is Peter recounting the divine orchestration that led him to Cornelius, a Gentile centurion.

Witnesses and Accountability

• Peter brings six Jewish believers with him. This detail highlights transparency and communal discernment and witnesses.

The Power of the Word

- "Words by which you and all your household will be saved." Salvation comes through the message of Christ, not through ritual or heritage.
- This sets the stage for Peter's sermon and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Gentiles.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- 1. How important is it to have witnesses of God's greatness where there is doubt?
- 2. What does the power of the Holy Spirit say about the power that lies within us?

PETER'S CHALLENGERS ARE CONVINCED (VS. 15-18)

- ¹⁵ And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning.
- ¹⁶Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'
- ¹⁷ If therefore God gave them the same gift as *He gave* us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?"
- ¹⁸When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.

WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE?

- The Holy Spirit fall on Gentiles just as it did on Jews at Pentecost in Acts 2.
- Peter recalls Jesus' promise: "You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit."
- Peter declares: "Who was I to think that I could stand in God's way?"
- The Jewish believers fall silent, then glorify God: "So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life".
- **Unity through revelation**: The church moves from criticism to worship when they recognize God's hand.
- This closing section of **Acts 11:15–18** is the climax of Peter's defense and a turning point in the early church's understanding of God's plan for salvation.
- This marks a theological breakthrough: salvation is for all who believe, not just Jews.

What's New For Me?

Key Takeaways

- Inclusivity of the Gospel: Salvation is for all people, not just Jews.
 - **Divine Initiative**: God orchestrates the events through visions and the Spirit.
 - Breaking Barriers: Cultural and religious boundaries are redefined by God's grace.

Fill-in-the-Blank Handout Ideas
"The Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the _____."
"John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the _____."
"Who was I that I could _____ God?"
"God has granted to the Gentiles _____ to life."
"Peter said, 'Who was I to think that I could _____ in God's way?"

• Unity in the Spirit: The same Spirit confirms the legitimacy of Gentile believers.