



The Unlimited Gospel: Next Level Grace
Acts 10:23-48

Intro: So far in our series we have not talked about or tied in the inspired writer. The inspired author of the Book of Acts is Luke the doctor, the gentile doctor the same person who with the Holy Spirit wrote the Gospel of Luke. The Gospel of Luke was originally written as a careful investigation of the life of Jesus from his birth to his death to his rising from the dead. This careful investigation was written originally to a man named Theophilus. Theophilus, like Luke was a Gentile. Luke wrote down his careful investigation of the person of Jesus Christ. The Book of Acts in kind of like Luke 2. He begins it in a similar way. Whereas the Gospel of Luke was written to Theophilus to cover the birth through the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Book of Acts covers Jesus after his ascension back to Heaven where He is ruling all things for the good of his church.

In is through Luke we read in Chapter 2 that Jesus would be a **“light for revelation to the Gentiles”** ([Luke 2:32](#)).

Quoting from Isaiah the prophet, Luke repeats the promise that through Jesus **“all people will see God’s salvation”** ([Luke 3:6](#)).

Luke and Theophilus were living proofs that the unconditional gospel of Jesus was as much for Gentiles as it was for the Jews.

Our text before us today was **incredibly significant** to Dr Luke and it is to be **incredibly significant** for us as well. The event we are covering today as we continue with Going Next Level **is the most talked about and written event in the entire Book of Acts. It’s a big deal.**

This event is the conversion of the Gentile Cornelius and his family and friends to faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

So in Going Next Level we see the Unlimited Gospel: Next Level Grace.

You see, for all intense and purposes Cornelius and his family and friends are the first Gentile converts to Christianity outside of Jerusalem.

Keep in mind again that five years earlier Jesus told the eleven disciples “All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit and teaching them everything I taught you.”

As stated in previous messages, the going into all the world and bringing the gospel to all nations hadn’t really happened yet.

Why not???

- The Jerusalem church was very successful!
- From a 120 to 10’s of thousands of members.
- Hard to keep up.
- Jesus did say start in Jerusalem.

- Maybe they thought “Our time in Jerusalem is not over yet. Our work is not done.”
- But we are going to see in our text today, that there was another reason. Whether they realized it or not they were in their minds limiting God and therefore limiting the Gospel to Jews or those who had already converted to the Jewish faith as proselytes of righteousness.

How might I be limiting God in my thinking?

As far as the Book of Acts is concerned Peter is for the first time venturing out to share the gospel with others living outside of Jerusalem.

God had been getting him out of this comfort zone. He is staying with Simon the Tanner. It is here that Peter has the vision of the clean and unclean animals together and God saying “Kill and eat.”

We begin with a little bit of overlap from last week.

Vs 17-23

¹⁷ While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon’s house was and stopped at the gate. ¹⁸ They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

¹⁹ While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three^[a] men are looking for you. ²⁰ So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.”

²¹ Peter went down and said to the men, “I’m the one you’re looking for. Why have you come?”

²² The men replied, “We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say.” ²³ Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

Peter at Cornelius’s House

The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the believers from Joppa went along. ²⁴ The following day he arrived in Caesarea.

- So, I said before that Caesarea was about 35 miles north along the coastline of the Mediterranean.
- This route had been a major ancient highway for a long time.
- It takes them two days to walk it.
- I pointed out last week that there were probably more gentiles than Jews living in Caesarea at this time. Most were

Roman soldiers from the Italian Regiment, Cornelius the Centurion (commander of 100 men) was one of them.

- Re: I pointed out last week when you think Caesarea think San Diego.

Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends.

- Not only did Cornelius not hesitate to do what God directed him to do (as we said last week) Cornelius was ready for Peter and had called together his relatives and close friends.
- This is called friendship evangelism and to this day is still the most effective form of evangelism. Friendship evangelism is caring about the message of God so much that you invite family and friends to hear it with you.
- Cornelius knew and believed that Peter was going to share information that was very important.

²⁵ As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. ²⁶ But Peter made him get up. “Stand up,” he said, “I am only a man myself.”

- I am glad Peter said this!

- For whatever reason, part of our sinful condition is to treat ordinary people like gods. Don’t think we don’t do it in our society. Celebrities are treated like gods and goddesses.
- Ironically, Peter was and is still venerated in an unhealthy way.

➔ Show video in Vatican.

But the real-life Peter did not allow this! It may have been a little embarrassing for Cornelius. But Peter knew that for Cornelius to go next level, Jesus must be at the center.

God meets us where we are and directs us where we should go

always keeping Jesus (not us) at the center.

²⁷ While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. ²⁸ He said to them: “You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. ²⁹ So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection.

- So it was TABU for a Jew to eat with a Gentile are fellowship with a Gentile.
- There is no clear written law of Moses that says this, but there was a strong oral law and tradition.

- The written law says a lot about not being defiled. Eating non-Kosher food with a Gentile would make you defiled.
- As we said last week, Christ has already fulfilled the Law of God in our place.
- The dietary laws of the Old Testament no longer apply to us. We are free to eat bacon.
- Men do not need to be circumcised for the same reason.

May I ask why you sent for me?"

³⁰ Cornelius answered: "Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me ³¹ and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. ³² Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' ³³ So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

- Cornelius knew that Peter had information that he needed concerning salvation.
- Cornelius knew that Peter had important information concerning the salvation that His neighbors and friends needed

Hearing about their salvation in Christ is the greatest news anyone can ever hear.

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism ³⁵ but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.

- Literally, God not **"an acceptor of a face"** meaning showing partisanship based on looks or other indications of status (wealth, politics, race).
 - God does not discriminate.
- ➔ Could you imagine if God did?
- ➔ Could you imagine if Peter and the other disciples were allowed to discriminate based on race?
- No Caucasians would be saved.
 - Cornelius was Italian. He probably had white skin like most of us.
 - Peter probably had darker skin and a darker complexion than Cornelius.
 - We sometimes forget this. The world is often mistaken on this when it comes to

Christianity. The assumption is that Christianity is associated with white Europeans.

- Not true.
- The original Christians were Jewish which means they were middle Eastern.

Christ lived and died for all. God does not pick favorite colors or races of people. He is the exclusive Savior of the human race.

³⁶ You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing **the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all**. ³⁷ You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

Just because the gospel was first preached to the Jews doesn't mean that it was limited to them.

³⁹ “We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, ⁴⁰ but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. ⁴¹ He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about

him that everyone who believes in **him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.**”

God does not show favorites. His grace is not limited. Everyone and anyone who believes in him no matter what their race, receives forgiveness of sins.

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speaking in tongues^[b] and praising God.

Then Peter said, ⁴⁷ “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” ⁴⁸ So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

God does not show favorites. God shows his unlimited grace through His gifting to all believers by the Holy Spirit and through the cleansing waters of Christian baptism.

Next Steps

1. Contemplate how you might be limiting God in your mind. Then pray that God to reveal to you exactly how you are trying to limit Him. Empowered by God, Like Peter change your thinking.

2. Think of people who in your mind are beyond God's reach. These may be people you know or don't know. Pray for them this week.

3. God wants to connect more people to Jesus and the salvation he brings. Tell God you are willing to be a conduit for these connections.

We live in a world full of limitations. Gravity limits us. Our ages limit us. Our lack of funds limits us. We have self-imposed limitations. Yet we worship an infinite, limitless God who displays limitless grace