

Sermon Notes Sunday 28th June

The Spirit Filled Life – What difference does it make?

Acts 10 represents a seismic shift in the growth of the early church as the Holy Spirit leads Peter to a new understanding of God's purposes. It will challenge his deeply ingrained attitudes and prejudices. The Jewish food laws (clean and unclean) and attitudes towards non-Jews were about to be challenged. The Holy Spirit was leading Peter and the early church to a new place of love and understanding which would embrace people of all backgrounds and races.

Have you ever wondered if you have similarly ingrained prejudices that are part of your upbringing (cultural background) and are so much a part of who you are that you don't even know they exist? Where might your prejudices lie?

Read Acts 10.

- What do you notice about the gentile Roman Centurion, Cornelius and his faith? Where might his faith have come from?
- What does the fact that Peter is staying with Simon the tanner suggest about how the Holy Spirit is already at work, changing his heart?

Notice how Peter was being prepared through a vision to receive gentile guests.

- In what ways do you think God might have prepared you in advance for something significant that was about to happen to you?
- Notice how the Spirit spoke to Peter v19. How does he speak to you?

Peter invited these men into the house 'to be his guests' and in Caesarea he went into the house of Cornelius. How inappropriate was that for a Jewish man?

In the rest of the account of the time Peter spent with Cornelius we see a dismantling of centuries held traditions of disdain and prejudice, opening the way for gentiles to hear of Jesus and his love for all.

- Given recent events in our world that has exposed the ugliness of racism arising from attitudes of superiority, prejudice and discrimination, what might the Holy Spirit be teaching us through this event?
- How might we demonstrate God's love for all to those who experience discrimination on a daily basis, due to the colour of their skin?
- What difference does being filled with the Holy Spirit make in our attitudes towards those who are different to you?

Pray for healing in the brokenness of our world and for justice, equality and dignity to be afforded to all people irrespective of race, class or religion.