

Peter's Kind Explanation (Acts 11:1-8)

It was and is a significant event that Holy Spirit came on gentile Cornelius when Peter spoke the words of God. It shows that God broke a wall - blocked between Israelite and gentiles - to accept the whole world as people of God. However, Jews in Jerusalem was angry when they heard Peter ate with the gentiles and further baptized them.

1. Kindness is humility of one who receives from the Holy Spirit. “The apostles and the believers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him. (Acts 11:1-2) They criticized Peter in their own prejudice that it violated their law, were angry that gentiles being people of God without discrimination. But Peter told the whole story from the beginning to them. He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.” “Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean. The voice spoke to him a second time, **“Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”** This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven. (Acts.10:11-16) While Peter was wondering about these, the three men sent by Cornelius came and invited him, still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him to not hesitate to go with them. While Peter was speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles, and **they** spoke in tongues and praised God. Peter explained whole story in detail. With Holy Spirit, Peter has been changed as persuader from a hot temper character after receiving Holy Spirit.

Changed to accept all things in positive not stand against when receive grace of God. Who is in faith? The one who accepts words of God, makes to show it happen regardless own surroundings or thoughts. **“Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. (John 5:24)** Believers should be positive. The bible shows Joseph as representative of faith. Reason why? He always was positive, even sold as slave but became in charge of Egypt. When famine spread everywhere, his brothers came for help but he told it was God's plan. **“And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. (Genesis 45:5)**

2. No Coincidence in Prayer. God made both Peter and Cornelius pray before they met together. There is no coincidence in prayer but in God's time. If we keep praying, being with God, desperate for righteousness, God will fill us. Both of Peter and Cornelius did not plan or intend for their meeting but prayed instead. **“To humans belong the plans of the heart, but from the Lord comes the proper answer of the tongue (Proverb 16:1)** Nothing happens by accident in God. Come to church today, Worship God, hear the mission through sermon, message... these are destiny in God. (Ruth met Boaz in the grain field to pick up leftover grain... it was God's plan too) Who would experience miracle? The one who seeks God sincerely - hold by God.

3. God's thoughts are not our thoughts. **“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. “As the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)** Generally, we think our own experience is right or biblical, not want to change it even though we believe in Jesus. However, as being deeper our faith, reading bible more, we could realize how foolish we are. Jews thought salvation is only for chosen people, themselves but God's thought is not. God chose Israelites to save gentiles. They were also gentile till God called Abraham in Ur of Chaldea who served idol. God chose, selected him. Our salvation is His Grace. Don't we debate on everything, claim our rights like Israelites?

We should not criticize other with own self level. **“I replied, ‘Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ ‘The voice spoke from heaven a second time, ‘Do not call anything impure that God has made clean. (Acts 11:17-18)** Circumcised believers in Jerusalem criticized Peter though they did not know God's thoughts. We should not criticize even though it is not understandable. The one who admits own limit is held by the grace of God. We could not live without it because we do not know future but only by His Grace. We should accept if it is from Words of God regardless understandable or not. The one with humbleness would accept it.

Lesson from today's verses: Peter changed as persuader when he received the grace of God.

Christian's kindness is modesty. There is no accident - which happens after prayer. In all things God works for good. We should not criticize from our own self level. The one who experienced grace of God would admit own limit. Our future depends on not our hands but God's Hands