

Acts - Everyone can be part of God's family



The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. But Peter made him get up.

“Stand up,” he said, “I am only a man myself.”

While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. 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. So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?”

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 and said, ‘Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. 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.’ 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.”

Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. 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. You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— 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.

“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, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. 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. 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. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles.

For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

Then Peter said, “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” 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.

~ Acts 10:24-48 ~

God’s special family started off as Abraham and his family. But God had always wanted everyone everywhere to be part of his forever family.

However, after Jesus returned to heave, his followers thought that it was only the descendants of Abraham could be part of God’s forever family.

So God had to do something big to show that everyone everywhere is invited to be part of God’s forever family.

God gave one of Jesus’ followers, a man named Peter, a special vision to teach him that God doesn’t show favouritism when it comes to what country people come from. Then God arranged someone from another a background, Cornelius, invited Peter to come and talk to him about Jesus.

As Peter was telling Cornelius and his family and friends about Jesus, Cornelius and those with him who believed in Jesus received God’s Holy Spirit. This was a sign to Peter, and to everyone, that they too were now part of God’s forever family.

In this way God was showing that everyone everywhere can be part of his forever family. What makes some one part of God’s forever family isn’t what country they and their family come from, but whether or not they trust that Jesus died and came alive again to forgive them from their sins.

This is fantastic news! God has really made a way for everyone everywhere to be part of his forever family, if they trust in Jesus!

Some questions to think about:

1. Why did God need to send Peter a special vision?
2. Why could Cornelius become part of God's forever family?
3. How do you feel knowing that everyone everywhere can be part of God's forever family if they trust in Jesus?
4. If God wants everyone everywhere to be part of his forever family when they trust in Jesus, what can you do to help people hear about Jesus?

Prayer

Dear God,

Thank you that you want everyone everywhere to be part of your forever family. Thank you that Jesus died and rose again so that everyone who trusts in him can be part of your forever family.

Amen.