

ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# FLAWED MASTERPIECE



wisdom from  
ancient voices

WEEK 12



# FLAWED MASTERPIECE WEEK TWELVE

This week, the flawed masterpiece we are looking at is Cornelius and how the gospel moving from Jews to include gentiles as well! Scott Cody dives "into the unknown" with an invitation to sit with and converse with you and your community on what step God is inviting you to take to expand the Kingdom of God? Where is God working in you to overcome the fear of the unknown, uncertain nature of our lives to trust him more deeply, that he is working in you and in those around you.

- What is happening in the text?
- Acts 10:44-45 - why is this happening in the text and what does it mean?
- What stands out to you about Cornelius?



## Cornelius and Peter

Despite being a Roman, Cornelius was a worshiper of God, a Jewish proselyte known and respected by the Jewish community (Acts 10:22). Cornelius was a devout man who regularly prayed and gave to charity (verse 2). One afternoon, while Cornelius was praying, he saw a vision of an angel of God, who told him that God had heard his prayers (Acts 10:30-31). The angel told Cornelius to find Peter, who was staying in Joppa at the house of Simon, a tanner (verse 32). Cornelius immediately sent two of his servants and a devout soldier to Joppa to find Peter and bring him back.

Meanwhile, God was preparing Peter's heart (verses 9-16)

Peter then reminded Cornelius that it was against Jewish law for Peter to be associating with Gentiles. However, Peter explained, God had shown him in a vision not to call any person common or unclean. Peter understood that the animals in his vision were symbolic of the Gentiles, to whom God was preparing to give the gospel (Acts 10:28-29). Cornelius then told Peter about the angel who had told him to seek out Peter. Both Peter and Cornelius saw that God had acted to bring them together.

Thus we see the movement of the gospel expanding beyonds its "boarders" to all people both Jew and Gentile!



# **INVITATION INTO A NEW PERSPECTIVE**

**The story introduces us to a Gentile man named Cornelius, a middle-ranking officer, with 100 men under him, described as a 'devout' man who 'revered God'. In other words, he worshiped Yahweh, but had not gone through the ritual of circumcision to identify himself as 'fully Jewish'. He is directed to summon Peter who lived in Joppa, some 33 miles away. Peter reluctantly agrees, as we see in the story!**

**The whole story shows how dedicated Peter is to his 'worldview', which is one of being thoroughly 'Jewish' as he understands it. But Peter's vision from God ends up reforming the lens through which he sees his 'Jewish' world with the 'pagans' who are not to be interacted with unless absolutely necessary. As Prof. Wright puts it in his Acts for Everyone commentary:**

**At this point we must remind ourselves of one of the basic points about the Jewish food laws. It wasn't just that the Jews weren't allowed to eat pork. There was a whole range of meat which they were forbidden; they are listed (for example) in Leviticus 11, and were much discussed by later generations. And these food laws, whatever their origin, served to mark out the Jewish people from their non-Jewish neighbours, a rule reinforced by the prohibition on Jews eating with non-Jews, sharing table fellowship. The reasoning was clear: the people you sit down and eat with are 'family', but the Jewish 'family' has been called by God to be separate, to bear witness to his special love and grace to the world, and must not therefore compromise with the world.**

**-- NT Wright**



# ***DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP***

- Where is God working in you to overcome the fear of the unknown, uncertain nature of our lives to trust him more deeply, that he is working in you and in those around you?
- In looking at NT wright: What is happening to Peter's worldview in the story? What is happening to Cornelius's worldview?
- Where is the Holy Spirit inviting you to step into the unknown?
- Why does this text matter or how does it relate to your life?

"What step is God inviting you to take to expand the Kingdom? It may be uncomfortable, but your role is to trust him and that even when you cannot see it, he is still working"  
- Scott Cody

