

Small Group Questions

Week of Sunday, March 17th, 2024

Launch

What are you most excited about as Spring weather starts coming?

Read Acts 10:1-16

Observe: Why did the men come to visit Peter? What was their mission?

Discuss: Read Mark 7:14-19 and consider the quote: “Uncleanness was not sin, but it was a picture of sin. As it was almost impossible to get through a day in ancient Israel without contracting some sort of uncleanness, the Lord by these laws was showing how thoroughly sin had corrupted human life. There was really no escaping it. In reality, their hope was not to avoid uncleanness. Instead, their hope was to be delivered from it.” How did the purity laws (Leviticus 11-15) point to Jesus? What need did they demonstrate? Why are they no longer necessary?

Respond: Have you ever had a knee-jerk reaction against something God was calling you to like Peter did? Why might things like this still happen to committed followers of Jesus? How should we proceed when it does?

Read Acts 10:17-29

Observe: What does Cornelius do and how does Peter respond? How does Peter apply his vision to this situation?

Discuss: Zak mentioned people’s tendencies to dump people into categories of “clean” or “unclean”. Why do people do this? What sorts of cultural, racial, or social barriers do Christians today deal with in sharing the gospel?

Respond: Jews were forbidden from visiting or associating with foreigners. However, these lines were drawn in the traditions of men, not the law given by God. Have you or

anyone you know ever drawn boundary lines that shouldn't be there? How should you respond differently?

Read Acts 10:34-38, 43-45

Observe: What was it that surprised the Jews that were with Peter?

Discuss: Read Numbers 15:14-16 and Isaiah 56:7. In the few centuries leading up to Jesus, Gentiles were only allowed to use the outer "Gentile Court" at the temple. What was God's original intention? Why would seeing the Holy Spirit fall on the Gentiles be such a surprise?

Respond: The chapter ends with the radical inclusion of Gentiles with them receiving the Holy Spirit. The church has struggled historically to live this inclusion out practically with people who are different, despite sharing in the same Holy Spirit. How can God's people do this better? How can we as a church do this better?

Close: What comments or questions have gone unspoken?