

Crossway Life Group, Week of February 24

See sermon notes on [CMC's webpage](#) for background information

Community

Take time to share and pray for each other's concerns and joys.

Scripture: Acts 10:9-23. "One Step to God"

Reading & Discussing Scripture

- We are constantly grading or ranking things into categories, such as 'good', 'bad', 'maybe/ok'
 - Can you give examples of things people rank and what criteria they use?
 - How does this happen in the church?
- The book of Acts describes how early Christians were puzzling about ranking people. In the first century, the Jewish people had developed a system for ranking people. For example:
 - Definitely good = religious / practicing Jews
 - Okay / maybe = non-Jews who fully embraced Judaism
 - Definitely bad = non-Jews who followed false gods; Jews who disobeyed God's laws; anyone who sided with the Romans
- **Read Acts 10:1-16.** List the characters in Acts 10. Which Jewish categories do they seem to fit into? Why is this important for story?
- As background, in many ways Jews based their ranking on the Old Testament commands about cleanliness: Nothing unclean must ever approach God, and certain foods (and the people who ate them) were categorized as being unclean. (see Leviticus 15:31; 11:46-47.) On the other hand, Jesus said that, with His coming, the 'unclean' category for food no longer apply (see Matthew 15:10-11).
- **Read Acts 10:17-23.**
 - Whose idea is it to build a church of all nations?
 - What do we learn about how the Spirit works? How much information does he reveal? Through whom does he work?
 - What are the characteristics of people through whom God works?
- Read 1 Timothy 2:4-6 – what does it mean to be one step away from God? What are other steps that people (especially people in the church) create?
- Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-17 – what does it mean to view people for a worldly point of view? As Christians, how should we view people? How would these two different ways of 'ranking' people actually look different in practical terms? Give some examples.
- Do you have any other questions about the sermon or the passage?

The Big Idea

**Making the Church into the Church of many nations
is God's idea and God's work
that He initiated (and continues to build)
through a devout outsider and a reluctant insider
(through enthusiastic and hesitant Christians)
who both followed (and who keep following)
the leading and empowering of God**

Application & Reflection Questions

1. How have you seen this brokenness in the church?
2. We ALL have explicit and implicit criteria for ranking people. Where are you tempted to see people from a worldly point of view? For example:
 - Intelligence / Emotional intelligence / Cultural intelligence

- Family situation: married/single/divorced/widowed/remarried, kids (any/number/“ideal”), ...
 - Socio-economic status: education/wealth/job
 - Race/ethnicity/nationality, or Gender
 - Physical (dis)abilities/appearance, or Age
 - Public failures / Getting caught / Societal shame
 - Other categories or criteria?
3. What does it mean to build a “humble bridge” to dismantle brokenness? What actions are helpful for ‘building humble bridges’? Where or with who is God leading you to build a bridge this week? How can your group encourage you in this important and often challenging work?

Serving beyond ourselves

What are ways that your group can be for the benefit of people beyond yourselves? One specific strategy may be to pray for another group of people. And perhaps you could reach out to people in that group and ask them how you might pray.

Acts 10:9-23 - New International Version *Read Acts 10:1-8 for introduction*

⁹About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹²It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. ¹³Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.” ¹⁴“Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.” ¹⁵The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.” ¹⁶This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

¹⁷While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon’s house was and stopped at the gate. ¹⁸They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

¹⁹While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three men are looking for you. ²⁰So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.”

²¹Peter went down and said to the men, “I’m the one you’re looking for. Why have you come?”

²²The men replied, “We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say.”²³Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

1 Timothy 2:4-6 - New International Version

[God our Savior] wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. ⁵For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all people.

2 Corinthians 5:16-17 - New International Version

¹⁶So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!