



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Realizing the Body of Christ
Speaker: Helen Kim Nowalk - Executive Pastor of Ministry Development
Scriptures: Acts 10:1-15

Cornelius Calls for Peter

¹⁰ At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. ² He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. ³ One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!"

⁴ Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked.

The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. ⁵ Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. ⁶ He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea."

⁷ When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. ⁸ He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

Peter's Vision

⁹ About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹ He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹² It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. ¹³ Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

¹⁴ "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."

¹⁵ The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."

Sermon Summary:

A pivotal moment in the early church sets a powerful trajectory that continues to shape and challenge followers of Jesus today. As we continue our journey through the book of Acts, we'll discover how God expands His people's understanding of who belongs in His family and calls us to remember what is truly central to following Jesus.

Sermon Questions:

1. After rereading Acts 10:1-15, what do you think making the radical shift in understanding from things being unclean to clean was like for Peter?
2. Human tendency is to want to create categories like clean/unclean:
 - Republican/Democrat
 - Liberal/Conservative
 - Married/Single
 - White Collar/Blue Collar
 - State of Mental Health
 - Boomer/Gen X/Millennial/Gen Z

What categories do you find yourself making? Who do you struggle to see as your brother and sister in Christ?

3. Pastor Helen shared a quote from her husband Pastor Nick Nowalk, "Our horizontal welcome has to rhyme and reflect the vertical welcome we receive from God." She shared that we need to take more time to see and experience the radical welcome of God in order to be able to extend that welcome horizontally to others. In what ways have you been encouraged by the radical welcome of God and/or struggled to receive it?
4. Who do you sense God is inviting you to extend a hand of fellowship and welcome to that is different from you? Whether you are clear or unclear on who it is, take time to pray and ask for wisdom and courage to reach out to others who are different from you.