

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

Acts 11:1-18

I. BEING CHOSEN

- A. *So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, "Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?"*
- B. The Best Gift.
 - 1. There is no gift like being chosen. There is no pain like rejection.
 - 2. In our fallen world, to be chosen means to be better than or superior to or to be the favorite.
 - 3. Groucho Marx once said he would never join a club whose standards were so low they would accept him as a member.
- C. Who Can Eat at the Lord's Table?
 - 1. *"The Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction."*
 - 2. *"The church's silence shows that it realizes a bold (and perhaps frightening) chapter has opened in the story of the People of God."*
(William Willimon)

II. ALL ARE CREATED EQUAL

- A. *"What God has cleansed you must not call common."* (Acts 11:9)
- B. The Gettysburg Address.
 - 1. *"Our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."* (Abraham Lincoln)
 - 2. Lincoln went on to say that the best way to honor those who had died in those battles was to *"continue the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced."*
- C. It's Up to Us.
 - 1. We are all part of God's creation and all of God's creation is holy; and all of God's creation is good.
 - 2. *"That we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain."* (Lincoln)
 - 3. Let us resolve that Jesus Christ did not die in vain.

III. BY THE GRACE OF GOD

- A. *"If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?"* (11:17)
- B. You Can't Get This Anywhere Else.
 - 1. What's the one thing that the church has to offer that the world can't get anywhere else? *Grace.*
 - 2. We don't live in a grace-filled world. In this world, you get what you pay for. No free lunch. *Quid pro quo.*
- C. The Most Important Thing to Remember.
 - 1. The most important thing to remember is not only that you are saved by grace, but that you are loved by grace today and every day.
 - 2. The Whisper Test.

Prayer Concerns: Members – Virginia Baker, Burney Biesel, Sarah Clark, Patty Gibson, Jim Green, Jean Holcomb, Diane Mallard, Anne Miller, Mary Jo Moore, Carol Webb ... **Friends** – Pat Bryan, **Tina Gatlin**, Penny Guthrie, Jim Hayes, Seth & Reece Jenson, Ellen Kaplan, **Lesli Kaplan**, Dillon LaRue, Bill MacArthur, **Moody Palmer**, Andy Schumacher, **Peggy Shipman**, Shirley Waldron, Cindy Waldron

PASTORAL PRAYER

Our Father, when we focus our attention on the cross of Christ and think about the cost of our salvation, we are filled with gratitude and amazement. We are like the criminal hanging next to your Son on the cross.

We realize that we are the ones who deserve to die.

We are the ones who have broken our promises over and over again.

We are the ones who stand condemned before your perfect love.

But the miracle above all miracles is the fact that your perfect love covered our sins and died in our place. We now stand before your throne of grace in confidence, not because of our worthiness, but because of your love.

Like the Prodigal Son, we say, “I am no longer worthy to be called your son.”

Like the centurion we say, “I am not worthy to have you come under my roof.”

Like the penitent thief, we plead humbly, “Please remember me!”

We long to hear you say, “Father, forgive them... Friend, you will be with me in Paradise... I have prepared a place just for you.”

Fill us with your love now as we continue our worship in spirit and in truth. This we lift to you through Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray ...

THE LORD’S PRAYER: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

ACTS 11:1-18

Now the apostles and the brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, “Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?” But Peter began and explained to them in order: “I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, something descending, like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came down to me. Looking at it closely I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the air. And I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ But I said, ‘No, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’” But the voice answered a second time from heaven, ‘What God has cleansed you must not call common.’ This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into heaven. At that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brethren also accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house. And he told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, ‘Send to Joppa and bring Simon called Peter; he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.’ As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?” When they heard this they were silenced. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life.”

SERMON SCHEDULE

In the Sanctuary:

May 13 *This Isn’t Your Grandmother’s Family* Deut. 6:4-15

May 20 *If You Get Where You’re Going, Where Will You Be?* Matthew 7:24-27

On the Radio (1450 AM):

May 13 *Gut-check Christianity* James 1:1-12

May 20 *How to Handle Temptation* James 1:13-18