

Bible Stories for Adults

Peter's Ministry

Acts 9:32-11:18

Opening

Gathering: How does God nudge people when they resist doing the work He has for them?

Today's Focus: God used Peter to lead the church in reaching out to those from Jerusalem, from Judea, from Samaria and from the ends of the earth.

Key Verses: *If God gave them the same gift as He gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God? Acts 11:17*

So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life. Acts 11:18

Opening Prayer

Lesson

The Church's Mission (*Acts 1:8*)

What mission did Jesus give to His church before He ascended?

Matthew 28:19

What verse in the Book of Acts summarizes how the early church grew towards this goal?

Acts 1:8

Who was given the responsibility and privilege to lead this church through these doors?

Matthew 16:17-19

Doors Opened (*Acts 8:25*)

How was Peter involved in opening the first door in Jerusalem?

Acts 2:1, 4, 14, 40-41

Acts 3:12, 16; 4:4

How was Peter involved in opening the second door in Judea?

Acts 5:12-16

How was Peter involved in opening the third door in Samaria?

Acts 8:5, 14-17

After his visit with Philip, did Peter rush back to the temple to continue his ministry in Jerusalem?

Acts 8:25

Lydda (*Acts 9:32*)

After he returned to Jerusalem, did he stay and focus his work in the temple as before?

Acts 9:32

Lydda - 25 miles NW of Jerusalem, at the southern end of the coastal Plain of Sharon

Christians there either from persecution (Acts 8:1) or by Philip's witness (Acts 8:40) or ...

A commercial center since at crossroads of Egypt-Syria and Jerusalem-Joppa highways

Now called Lod, location of Israel's international airport

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Aeneas (Acts 9:33-35)

What happened in Lydda that was significant enough for Luke to include in this book?

Acts 9:33-34

But Peter had healed others. Why was this so significant?

Acts 9:35

Was it strange that people became Christians just because they saw Aeneas walking?

John 12:9-11

How else was this healing similar to the raising of Lazarus?

John 11:43-44

Dorcas (Acts 9:36-38)

Who was Dorcas?

Acts 9:36-37

Note: Jews washed bodies, anointed with spices and buried before sundown

What does the death of this Christian have to do with Peter?

Acts 9:38

Joppa - 10 miles from Lydda, 3-4 hour walk, Now part of Tel Aviv-Jaffa

Jonah caught a ship for Spain in Joppa to avoid bringing God's saving word to Gentiles

A profitable port city, only natural harbor between Egypt and Ptolemais (near Tyre)

Where do we see an example of Joppa's role as the seaport for Jerusalem

2 Chronicles 2:16

Tabitha / Talitha (Acts 9:39-41)

What else do we learn about Dorcas?

Acts 9:39

As leader of the church, did Peter try to comfort the mourners?

Acts 9:40-41

What had Peter witnessed that may have led to him asking everyone to leave?

Mark 5:37-40

What is interesting about his words, "Tabitha, cumi" (*Tabitha, get up*)?

Mark 5:41

Preparing for Another Step (Acts 9:42-43)

What happened as a result of this Peter raising the dead to life through the Spirit's power?

Acts 9:42

Ten years after Jesus ascended, what door had Peter left unopened for the church and why?

Ezra 6:21

Peter had been raised to avoid unclean Gentiles. How did God subtly work on him now?

Acts 9:43

How could this prepare Peter for reaching out to unclean Gentiles?

Leviticus 11:35, 39-40

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Another Step Outward (*Acts 10:1*)

What person and place would God use to lead Peter to take this next big step?

Acts 10:1

Caesarea - In center of coastal Plain of Sharon, 65 miles NW of Jerusalem, 30 miles N of Joppa

Roman capital of Judea, home of governor, named after Augustus Caesar

Herod the Great built seaport, fresh water aqueducts, amphitheater, public buildings

Centurion led 80-100 soldiers, 600 men made up a cohort (regiment), 6000 men made a legion

Caesarea had 5 cohorts, Jerusalem had one

Jews were exempt from Roman military since soldiers ate pork and worked on Sabbath

Cornelius (*Acts 10:2-8*)

What else do we learn about Cornelius?

Acts 10:2

Cornelius was 30 miles away from Peter and didn't know him. How did he enter this story?

Acts 10:3-6

Besides serving as a vehicle for Peter to take the next step, why would God call Cornelius?

John 7:17

What did Cornelius think about this strange vision telling him to send for some stranger?

Acts 10:7-8

Peter Prepared (*Acts 10:9-16*)

How urgently did these men go for Peter?

Acts 10:9

How did God prepare Peter for going with and ministering to unclean Gentiles?

Acts 10:10-13

How does this relate to Peter's upcoming encounter with Gentiles?

Leviticus 11:46-47 (1-47)

How did Peter respond to this tempting meal, and was God pleased?

Acts 10:14-16

What was wrong about Peter's response?

Amos 4:4-5 (1 Samuel 15:22; Isaiah 1:11)

What had happened years before when Peter thought he was being wise in rejecting God's will?

Matthew 16:21-23

Go Where the Spirit Leads (*Acts 10:17-29*)

Did Peter remember his past experience and understand what God was trying to tell him?

Acts 10:17-21

Why did the Spirit specifically tell Peter to go with the men (v. 20)?

Acts 10:22-23

What did Cornelius think when Peter actually showed up?

Acts 10:24-26

Having had two days of walking and thinking, did Peter finally understand what was going on?

Acts 10:27-29

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The Purpose Revealed (Acts 10:30-43)

What was the purpose of this confusing experience?

Acts 10:30-33

Did this click on any light bulbs in Peter's mind?

Acts 10:34-35

How do we see that Peter began to realize God's intent for the Gospel to be taken to all people?

Acts 10:36-43

The Purpose Realized (Acts 10:44-48)

How did Peter wrap up his message of the gospel?

Acts 10:44, 46

Why was the Spirit so visible? Does this mean the Spirit is only in us if we speak in tongues?

Acts 10:45

Was this enough for Peter and the others to accept these Gentiles into the church?

Acts 10:47-48

Great News! (Acts 11:1-18)

How excited was the central church with Peter's success in taking the Gospel out another step?

Acts 11:1-3

How did Peter respond to this attack?

Acts 11:4-14

Note: If seven witnesses agreed on something, it was taken as completely proven (v12)

What did Peter have to say about the fact that he had baptized them into the Christian church?

Acts 11:15-17

What was the critical and final outcome of this entire story?

Acts 11:18

That Jesus came for all seems pretty clear to us. Why was it a mystery to the early Christians?

Ephesians 3:4-6

Homework - Read the story of Peter and Herod in Acts 12

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. To whom and when have I shared the keys to God's kingdom in my Jerusalem (family, friends)?
(Acts 1:8; 2:14, 32, 38-41; 3:12, 16; 4:4; 9:26-28, 31; John 1:40-42; 1 Corinthians 7:16; 1 Peter 3:1)
2. To whom and when have I shared the keys to God's kingdom in my Judea (neighbors, coworkers)?
(Acts 1:8; 5:12-16; 8:1, 4, 40; 9:31-35, 42; John 1:43-46; 1 Timothy 6:12)
3. To whom and when have I shared the keys to God's kingdom in my Samaria (acquaintances)?
(Acts 1:8; 8:1, 4-5, 14-17, 25; 20:21; Isaiah 6:8; John 15:26-27)
4. To whom and when have I shared the keys to God's kingdom in my ends of the earth (strangers)?
(Acts 1:8; 8:26-27, 36-40; 9:15, 19b-22; 10:27-29, 44-48; 11:19-21; 13:2-3; 15:12-14, 36; 18:24-28; 23:11; Matthew 10:18; 24:14; Luke 24:45-48)
5. What have I allowed to interfere with fulfilling God's calling to me to be a witness for the Gospel?
(Acts 5:29-32; 10:9-16, 27-29, 44-48; 11:1-3, 15-18; 20:24; Jeremiah 1:4-9; Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 9:57-62; 21:13-15; 1 Timothy 4:12-16)