

What Ought I To Do, part 2

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[0:00] Acts chapter 10 here this morning. We're going to look at the other part of Acts chapter 10. You know, last week we looked at the salvation of Cornelius along with his friends and family! And how that God brought light to them as they desired and feared and desired for God to know Him and for God to do something in their life. You remember Cornelius was told by an angel that God heard his prayer and he said, send for one Simon that's lodged in the house of the Tanner there at Joppa. And he sends his men to go and he gets Peter that's there. But you know, like many things in life, God doesn't just work singularly.

God was working in the lives of so many with Cornelius, with his friends and family that were ready to hear Peter, what ought they to do? How were they to respond? What were they supposed to do? We find that as Cornelius was there, God was also working in Peter, in Peter's life. Because there was a lot going on in Peter's life. Peter had been faithful to the Lord. Matter of fact, the Bible tells us that he had been there in Joppa and had raised a woman from the dead.

There were some miraculous things happening in Joppa that God was using Peter. And many believed and Peter was actively sharing, but there was still something else that he ought to do. And so this morning as we take a look, if you found Acts chapter 10, let's look here at verse 9, stand together in the honor of the reading of the word of God. And we'll read a few verses here. And we won't read all the texts this morning, but we'll get to it here just for the sake of time.

[1:57] But notice down in verse 9, it says this, On the morrow, as they went on their journey and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up onto the housetop to pray about the sixth hour. And he became very hungry and would have eaten, but while they made ready, he fell into a trance and saw heaven open and a certain vessel descending unto him as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners and let down to earth, wherein all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth and wild beasts and creeping things and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, rise, Peter, kill and eat. But Peter said, not so, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, and God hath cleansed that to call not thou common. And this was done thrice, and the vessel was received up again into heaven. Let's pray. Heavenly Fathers, we come before you once again this morning, Lord. We're just thankful for your word. Lord, I pray that you would just help us to learn, even as Peter learned, Lord, that there's things that we need to pay attention to in your word, Lord, of what you've told us, what you've asked us to obey, things to trust you in.

And Lord, we pray that you'd just stir us today, Lord, that there's one here today that doesn't know you as Savior. That might be settled. But Lord, for your people here today, Lord, that they might be encouraged to say, Lord, I'm willing to do what you say to do, not what I feel or what I've been taught or what I've been brought up in. But Lord, I want to be obedient to you and to your word. And Lord, we just ask it all in your precious name. Amen. May be seated. You know, as we look at Peter here, you know, Peter had witnessed the salvation of thousands of Jews and Samaritans. But he still struggled with something very important because the apostles, especially Peter, had been hindered of going to the Gentiles. And there was a reason because Peter had something fixed in his head, even though Jesus had instructed him otherwise. What was fixed in his head interfered with what he was supposed to do for God. You know, oftentimes I think we find ourselves in that same spot. There's things we've been taught or we think we understand. And we grab a hold of them. And then God brings to light things from his word. And we're Peter. Not so, Lord. You know, Peter oftentimes would do that.

Peter was well known for being a little hard-headed. Because what does God do to get Peter's attention? The scripture tells us that there was a voice after the sheet was let down with all manner of animals upon it. Now remember, Peter's hungry. You know, most guys, especially if you've

learned to prepare and cook something of a game or other things, it's like, hey, you got something there and I'm hungry? Guess what? Something's going to become lunch. You know, let's just face it. You're going to find a way for something to become lunch if you're hungry. Here's Peter. He's hungry. And God lets down this sheet from heaven filled full of all sorts of animals. Some of them were unclean animals in Peter's mind. Now I want you to understand, Peter wasn't totally out of kilter here. Because when you understand that Peter had been brought up and understood Leviticus chapter 20 in verse 25, and it tells him here, you shall therefore put difference between the clean beasts and the unclean, between the unclean and the fowls and the clean. You shall not make your souls abominable by beast or by fowl or by any manner of living thing that creepeth upon the ground, which was separated from you as unclean. Now I want you to understand that Peter's equating, and the Jews did this, they often equated the unclean animals with the dynamic that all other people besides Jews were unclean.

God told them to be separated from them because what the other people believed would draw them away. It wasn't that God didn't love them. Matter of fact, if you read through the scripture, you read through the Old Testament, you know what the Jews are supposed to be? They were to be a light to the rest of the world that there's a God in heaven. They were to be a testimony, but you know, they lost sight of that many times. They lost sight of what God had intended for them to be.

They got caught up in one thing and then applied it into another area that God did not intend, and it became a problem in their mind. But Peter, I want you to understand, Peter's much like us because we do the same thing. I want you to understand this morning, I'm not beating up on Peter because you know what? I'm a Peter, you're a Peter, we all can be Peter. None of us are exempt from what we're talking about here this morning. It might be different things for different people, but you know what? All of us could be guilty of it. Because we're going to look at Peter here this morning, we find that he was very clearly wanting to serve God. Matter of fact, he'd been there in Joppa, and he'd been testifying to the things of God. He had raised a widow that was dead from the grave, and she came alive by the power of God, and we see God worked in that, and many believed. I mean, Peter was really on a spiritual high. I mean, anytime you see a bunch of people saved, that's, I mean, that's a spiritual high.

[7 : 51] To see a soul snatched from hell. But you know what? God told Peter, there's still some things you need to work on. There's an area here that's very important because it's causing a stumbling block, not only in your life, but in the lives of others. And we see here with Peter, Peter was one who would very quickly denounce the things of God when he didn't agree with it. You know, he loved God, wanted to serve God, but he would quickly tell. You know, look over to Matthew chapter 26 for a moment. You know, this is just a good example. This is one of many examples of Peter. You know, it tells us that Jesus saith then to them, all ye shall be offended because of me this night, for it is written, I have smitten the shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. Now think about that for a moment.

Peter says, I believe God's word. And Jesus says, here's what God's word says is going to happen. Think about that dynamic for a moment. This is not introducing some new information.

This is already established information, but he says this, but after I'm arisen again, I will go before you into Galilee. Now notice Peter. Peter answered and said unto him, though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. You know what he told Jesus? That may be true for everybody else, but not me. As we read this account in Acts 10, you know what Peter's telling the Lord?

Lord, I've never eaten anything unclean. Not me, Lord. You know, oftentimes we grab a hold of those things in our life, and here we find we become like Peter, where God's word tells us something, and we get the opinion that God, you must be wrong, and I have to be right.

You know, oftentimes we forget that's a hard pill for us to swallow because you know what? It's telling us that our pride doesn't supersede God's truth. And Peter needed to learn something very important because I want you to understand that God is not finished with any of us.

[10 : 04] Throughout your life, he tells us that for a moment of salvation, you're in a process of sanctification becoming more like Christ. You know, when people think, try to treat Peter today, you know, here's the saints. It's like, you know, Peter was a saint, yes. If you're saved, you're a saint.

That's what the Bible says. But I want you to understand, just because you're a saint doesn't mean that you don't have issues in this life, sin, and things that need to be dealt with. You're redeemed and going to heaven. He's transforming you into his image.

He's working on you as an individual. Here he's working on Peter as he's there. And to understand this dynamic, you think about even Paul. You know, some people build Paul up, but you know what Paul said? I have not attained. He says, God has used me in a mighty way because I'm willing to humble myself and understand that even though God is using me, there is still a lot of broken pieces in me.

Think about what he said. He writes to the church at Philippi there in Philippians chapter three. He says, not as though I had already attained, neither already perfect, but I follow after that I may apprehend for that which I am. I also, I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Think about what he's saying. He says, I'm not perfect, but I'm following the one that is.

Getting my eyes on the right things, he says, because there's going to be struggles along the way because God wants to transform you. You know, Ephesians tells us that he wants you to put off the old man and put on the new man. That's a process. In our life, a practical sanctification.

[11:55] Afterwards, Peter ponders the meaning of this heavenly vision. You know, as I was reading and studying this, something dawned on me. You know, scripture always comes back. You know, think about something. Go over to John chapter 16 for a moment because John chapter 16, Jesus is getting ready to depart. He's getting ready to go to the cross and he's telling his disciples some important information.

I mean, if you read John 13 through 18, you'll find that Jesus did a massive data dump on him. He's like, I'm getting ready to go to the cross. I need to remind you of this. I need to remind you of that. I need to remind you of this over here. I imagine the disciples' minds were going, but Jesus was telling them a lot of information they needed to know. And you know what he told them? He says, guys, you don't have to remember every detail right now. Because he gives them a promise. He says this. He says, how be it when he, the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will show you things to come. I want you to understand the spirit of God came on the day of Pentecost.

They were empowered with the power of God. You know what happened also? The spirit in their life began to guide them into truth. Not truth that they made up, truth that was already established. But yet they had to learn to understand and apply it in their life. To understand how does this work through, how does this work out in our life? Peter already had the truth of the gospel, but he had been a preacher of the gospel, seen thousands say, but he was still reluctant to obey in other areas of his life. Because Peter didn't want to go to Gentiles. I think when you read through this, the implication is, is Peter was like, I know what Jesus said, but you know, I'm so busy here, I'm just going to ignore that. And you see, Peter still struggled with this later on in his life, and Paul had to get after him. You know, sometimes things beset us.

We get caught up on something. The Bible talks about sins that so easily beset us. I want you to understand, I'm not, like I said, I'm not beating up on Peter, but I'm using Peter as an example for my life and your life of the essentials that we need to grab a hold of. Because God's working to him. He reveals the truth of scripture. Notice what he tells Peter here.

[14:40] He tells him here, look at verse 14. And Peter said, not so, Lord, for I have not never eaten anything that is common nor unclean. You know, now notice verse 14, a voice spake unto him again the second time, what God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. You know, the Lord here was working in Peter's life. While all this is happening, the spirit of God speaking to Peter says, okay, Peter, while you're thinking on that, three guys are at the door and they're seeking for you.

Because I think when this event initially happened, Peter didn't understand the point that God was making to him. But when the three guys show up and say, hey, Cornelius sent us because God told him to come get you and you would tell us what we ought to do. You know, the reality is, is Peter was supposed to tell them what he ought to do. And God's telling Peter what he ought to do.

The question is, was Peter going to be obedient? You know what? Peter was obedient. I don't think he was confident, but he was obedient. I'm not sure Peter knew what was going to happen when he went to the house of Cornelius. As you read through the rest of this chapter, you'll find that Peter wasn't sure until after he saw what happened. And then God affirmed the reality of that truth in his life. When you understand how God was working in Peter's life, he was taking him from a good Jew that was raised that would not have anything to do with the unclean Gentiles. He takes him to the house of Cornelius. I want you to understand to us in society today, we're like asking, what's the big deal? To a Jew and all the Jews that came with Peter that day, it was a big deal. They broke all the

society rules. They were outside the box. What would other people think? You know, sometimes when it comes to obeying God, we're more worried about what somebody else thinks than what God thinks.

We need to be careful that we don't get caught up in things and want to be obedient to the things of God. You know, we understand, you know, we looked at this last week as you turn to the end of the chapter here, in chapter 10. It tells us this in verse 43, that this is Peter, to him give all the prophets witness that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive the remission of sins. While Peter yet spake on these words, the Holy Ghost fell on them, which heard the word. You know, Acts chapter 15, Peter's recounting this. And he says this, and after they'd been much disputing, because Paul came and they had this dispute over the Gentiles being saved and all that was going on. And Peter makes this statement. He says, men and brethren, you know that how a good while ago God made a choice among us that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe. He said, God knows the hearts. He says, it's not our job. And then he goes on, he says, he put no difference between us and them purifying their hearts by faith. The difference is real.

[18:00] That Peter finally understood and grasped what God was teaching him. So I want to just take a few moments here today to look at five things that Peter learned. And you're going, man, that's a big list.

Well, we'll cover them quickly. Because I want you to think on these later. Because there's probably areas in your life where you know what God's word says. You know what you ought to do, but there's things of culture, things that you've grabbed a hold of, things that you think that you've known and understood how to apply them in scripture. And God is working on you to say, hey, this needs to be different. This needs to be corrected. This needs to get in line. And the only way it's going to happen, if you're willing to obey me by faith. Peter didn't go to Cornelius' house and say, hey, well, come on, guys, we're going to go over here and win all these Gentiles to the Lord. He had no idea what was going to happen. But you know what made the difference? He trusted God and was obedient to the things of God.

Because I want you to understand, what did Peter learn? Well, very quickly, he learned that God wants everyone to be saved. You know, that's an important element for us today. There's nobody exempt from God wanting to save them. There is nobody so lost in sin that they cannot turn to God and be saved. Peter later writes this. He says, the Lord is not slack concerning his promises. Some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us who are not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Paul writes to Timothy and reminds him, there he says, who will have all men to be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth. You know, I want you to understand the second thing that he teaches him here, something very important. God's not a respecter of persons.

God is not a respecter of persons. Now, what does that mean? Because that's important to understand. What is he talking about? Simply this, it's in the term, there is no difference. Every person is in the same place before God until the moment of salvation, and that's what changes everything.

But you know what? Once you're saved, you're just as saved as the next person. You have security in Christ. There is no difference. If you grow up in church, you know what? If you call upon the Lord to save you, you're just as saved as the drunk or some other wicked individual who turns to God and says, Lord, I know I'm a sinner and I need a Savior. We all get the same thing. The question is, what are you going to do with it? You know, whoever you are or wherever you come from, God isn't holding anything back. You know, Peter just said there in Acts 15, 9, and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. You know, when Christ died, he didn't just do it for the Jews.

[21:10] He didn't just do it for the Gentiles. He did it for everybody. The Bible says for the whole world. Ephesians chapter 2 talks about those that Christ that were sometimes afar off were drawn nigh unto him. When we understand that he has slain that entity between us and him, he has broken down the middle wall of partition between us. Jews and Gentiles, those are designators that are irrelevant.

You know, today, the designator, those that have believed and those who are still rejecting, that's the difference today. Question, which are you? Have you believed God? Number three, this is important. Salvation is obtained the same way for everybody. The leader brought the gospel to

them. He described what happened to Christ and who Christ is, that he died for their sin, that he rose again the third day in victory. And he says, you know what, guys? I ate with him afterwards. I know he's alive. And Cornelius and those with him there that day believed. He got to say, by faith, the same way that Peter got it, by faith. Nobody gets a shortcut. You know, if you grow up in church, doesn't give you a shortcut to God. Still trust him by faith. You know, the Bible makes it clear. Paul uses the example of Abraham from Genesis 15. And he says this in Romans chapter 4. He says, so what sayeth the scripture? Abraham believed God. It was counted unto him for righteousness.

When Peter preached to

Cornelius, his friends and his family, you know, look here at verse 33 back in our text. He tells him this, immediately I sent to thee, and had thou done well that thou art come. Now, therefore, all we, we all here are present before God to hear all things that are commanded of thee of God.

And Peter opened his mouth and said, I, truth, I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons, but in every nation. He that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him. And the word which God sent unto the children of Israel preached peace by Jesus Christ, he is Lord of all. That word, I say, ye know, from the publishing throughout all Judea and began from Galilee after the baptism of John, which John preached. Now God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devils. For God was with him, and we are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews in Jerusalem, whom they slew and hang on a tree, whom God raised up the third day and showed him openly.

Down in verse 42, he says, he commanded us to preach unto the people and to testify that which was ordained of God, to be the judge of the quick and the dead, and to give him all the prophets witness that through his name, whosoever believes on him shall receive the remissions of sin, and verse 44 says, while Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on them, which heard the word. That's number four. You know, everybody gets the same dose of the Holy Spirit.

[24 : 29] Peter learned that there is no difference. There's not elements where Peter didn't get a special blessing greater than anybody else. All can live in the power of the Spirit of God once you're saved, because you all have the same power of the Spirit of God dwelling within you.

Peter learned a very important lesson that day, that dynamic that was critical. He says this in Acts 15, verse 8, And God, which knoweth the hearts, bear them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us.

Very importantly, when you believe, you get the Holy Spirit. The Spirit comes and dwells within you. Matter of fact, if you don't have the Spirit of God, you're none of his.

Because the Spirit of God in your life is the seal that God puts upon you that says, you are mine. 2 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 22 says, Ephesians chapter 1 tells us this, And whom you also trusted after that you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the inheritance, or the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession under the praise of his glory.

The gospel is preached. people receive it by faith and the Spirit of God comes. Peter had to understand that reality. Ready to number five. Five is simply this, it's critical that our thinking align with the Word of God. Even though he had walked with Jesus, tells us that we need to be careful and always know that we look back to the Scripture to make sure our life is aligning with what God told him.

[26 : 15] You say, preacher, what do you mean? You know what? Jesus had told them to go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. By being selective, you know what he did? He was ignoring part of the mandate God gave to him. What he knew he ought to do and said, not that part, Lord.

About culture and the thinking of the day to supersede the Word of God. Peter learned very clearly, it's critical that our thinking align with the Word of God.

This morning we need to learn, just like Peter, to be obedient to the Lord. You know, obedience starts, you know, the Bible tells us we ought to be obedient to believe the gospel. That's where it starts. You know, there's people that understand that Jesus Christ came and died on the cross for them. The perfect man, the man of that God who became flesh, came and died for you.

All the sin upon himself, buried. That's not the end of the story. The end of the story is he rose again in victory over death. The Bible says the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life.

I want you to understand that Jesus revealed that he is victorious over the penalty of sin. Know that, but if you don't do something with it, it's ineffectual.

[27:47] Oh, you can know things in your head and do nothing about it. God can be speaking to you and you can be Peter saying, not so, Lord. I'll ask you a simple question. What's God asking you today?

God's asking you to be obedient about something. Obedient in the gospel for salvation. Is it obedient to do the things that you ought to do? Is there an area of your life where you say, well, Lord, I'm just not comfortable with that.

My pride's in the way is really, we don't say that, but that's what it is. Tells us he hath knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin. If you know what God's word says and God's spirit's prompting you, don't be Peter.

The Peter at the beginning. Be the Peter at the end of the story that said, okay, Lord, I'll go. I'll obey. I'll do what you want me to do.

Where are you this morning? As heads are bowed and eyes are closed, I want you to consider that reality in your life today.

[28:56] Is there an area in your life that you're being like Peter was at the beginning? Lord, I know what your word says, but not so, Lord. You're holding on to that hinders your obedience to the Lord.

I want you to say, Lord, I'm going to trust your word over what everything else is. No matter what the world thinks or somebody else thinks, Lord, I'm going to trust you above all.

Maybe you're here today and not sure to stand with God. There's no greater day than today than to call upon him for salvation to you.

Heavenly fathers, we just close the service here today, Lord, with an invitation, an opportunity to respond. Lord, you never leave us because, Lord, you always expect a response.

And, Lord, we know today there's going to be a response. Lord, because whenever you ask us something, Lord, there's always a response. A response. Yes, Lord. No, Lord.

[30:00] Your response today. Heavenly fathers, we just come before you today, Lord. You know each heart, each life. Lord, you might work. Lord, we might go away knowing that we've said yes to you.

And not let things hinder us in our life. And, Lord, we just ask these things in your precious name. Amen.