

I Have a Dream (part 2)

(Acts 10:24-43)

Introduction

1. Theme: Jesus accelerates us by the Holy Spirit to grow deeper through His family, wider in our impact for the gospel.
2. Big Idea: Jesus welcomes all to receive forgiveness by faith because God shows no partiality.

Jesus prompts us to next steps [Acts 10:24-33]

1. [24-27] Peter & Cornelius' supernatural dreams/visions cross paths
 - a. [24] Cornelius invites all his close friends & family to meet Peter, when he arrives.
 - i. *Application*: Do you excitedly share with friends/family what God is teaching or doing in your life?
 - b. [25] Cornelius worships Peter: He's learning to love/worship God, but is not quite there yet (Roman mindset).
 - c. [26] Peter's response: I'm only a man (like you), i.e., only God is worthy of worship.
 - d. [27] They compare notes in front of Cornelius' gathering.
2. [28-29] Peter shares about his vision from Jesus.
 - a. [28] Jewish culture/custom: Don't eat that which is unclean, nor with people who do, because they're unclean.
 - i. Jews are commanded not to eat Biblically unclean foods (Lev. 11).
 - ii. According to additional man-made rules, regulations and religion (not in the Bible), it was also illegal to associate with non-Jewish Gentiles (e.g., Romans).
 - iii. Jesus says: Don't call unclean/common that which He has made clean, purified, redeemed & holy.
 - b. [29] Peter obeyed, without any reservation/objection.
3. [30-33] Cornelius shares about his vision from Jesus
 - a. [30-31] Cornelius told by an angel: God appreciates his constant prayer & generous giving as honest worship.
 - b. [32-33a] He was given instructions, and obeyed immediately.
 - c. [33b] He is receptive to hearing more from God through Peter.
4. Like Peter & Cornelius, Jesus prompts us to take the next step of obedience to experience growth with Him.
 - a. Not only internal change of attitude, also movement into action; not just talk about following Jesus, but live it.
 - b. Challenge: The next step of obedience with Jesus often requires us to move outside our comfort zone.
 - i. Comfort zones: Culture, traditions/customs, security; what I'm used to; way we've always done things.
 - c. Peter had to move outside of his comfort zone to interact with a once-considered "unclean" Gentile.
 - i. But it will lead to an explosion of the gospel to the ends of the earth.
 - d. Cornelius had to move out of his comfort zone to find a Jewish man he's never met, in a town 31 miles away.
 - i. But it will change his life to learn about God's Son, Jesus.
5. *Application*: What are some little next steps of obedience that Jesus has laid out for you today?
 - a. Spiritual influence at work through character/integrity; forgiveness; dealing with secret sin; family/marriage life
 - b. We don't we experience more of Jesus when we don't obey His prompting to our next step.
 - c. [Matt 25:23] When we are faithful in the little things, Jesus will entrust us with even greater things.

God shows no partiality [Acts 10:34-36]

1. All are welcome into the life & family of Jesus by faith.
 - a. [Acts 9:31] Despite persecution, the gospel & church spread out from Jerusalem to Judea/Samaria.
 - i. Partially fulfilling Jesus' prophetic command [Acts 1:8]
 - ii. The Kingdom gospel must now move to the ends of the earth (outside of Jewish-influenced culture).

- b. [10:34] Game changer: “God shows no partiality.”
 - i. No partiality: God doesn’t reject/refuse anyone based on outward appearance (ethnicity, disability, dress, etc) or external circumstances (wealth, social status, etc).
 - c. [35] People from every language, color, culture who fear God & do right in His sight are acceptable/welcome.
 - i. We’re not saved by doing good, but those in whom Jesus is at work to seek Him & live in His ways, though not Jewish, are welcome to join God’s family through faith.
 - d. [36] Faith in what? All are welcomed specifically through faith in Jesus.
 - i. The good news is sent to Israel: Not as chosen people, but chosen messengers.
 - ii. Good news: You can have peace with God through faith in Jesus.
 - iii. Why Jesus? Because He is “Lord over all”; all people, every kind, who by faith believe/follow Him.
2. IF Jesus is Lord over all who want to come to Him, can’t reject, prefer, ignore based on appearance/circumstance.
- a. *Application*: God shows no partiality, but do you?
 - b. Who do you make effort to talk to or hang out with at church? Who do you not? Why not?
 - c. What negative stereotypes/assumptions do you make based on someone’s dress, skin color, language?
 - d. Who do you avoid based on their personality (too loud/obnoxious, too quiet/socially awkward)?
 - e. Would you welcome someone different (culturally/socioeconomically) into your home or family?

Jesus is good news for everybody [Acts 10:37-43]

1. [37-41] Good news for non-Jews & outsiders
- a. [37-38] Evidence that Jesus is Savior & Lord over all through His miraculous earthly ministry.
 - i. He overcomes the prince of this world, Satan’s oppression & power.
 - b. [39-41] Evidence that Jesus is Savior & Lord over all through His ministry at the cross.
 - i. Jesus was executed on a tree (cf. Deut 21:23; cursed for sin, punishable by death; our sin, not His).
 - ii. God raised Him from the dead on the 3rd day; the disciples are eyewitnesses of this truth.
 - c. There is plenty of evidence in Jesus’ ministry, death & resurrection that He is indeed Savior & God.
2. [42-43] Why Jesus gave Peter & Cornelius wacky dreams:
- a. Jesus commands Peter & all disciples to preach to all, including “outsiders”:
 - b. [42] Jesus will return, appointed by His Father, to judge the living & dead for sin.
 - i. Bad news: We are all sinners, deserving of judgment, condemnation & separation from God in Hell.
 - c. [43] Good news: Instead of judgment, everyone (regardless of external circumstance/appearance) who believe in Jesus as Savior, Lord & God (an internal change), receives forgiveness of sin through Him.
 - i. All the prophets of old testified to this truth over hundreds/thousands of years in Scripture.
 - d. Good news for us: Though we are sinners by nature/choice, Jesus forgives & saves.
3. *Application*: Are you Cornelius or Peter this morning?
- a. Like Cornelius, some have not received Jesus as Savior & Lord.
 - i. You did not know the evidence about Jesus.
 - ii. You did not know that He accepts you regardless of external appearance or internal sin condition.
 - iii. He prompts you out of your comfort zone to take the next step of obedience by faith to believe He is Lord & God, & receive Him as Savior & King.
 - b. Like Peter, some need to take the next step of obedience to bring good news, to be good news.
 - i. Particularly to those who are different or “outside.”
 - ii. By sharing the message of good news.
 - iii. By loving, welcoming, accepting others without partiality into the family of Christ.

Conclusion

1. God has a dream.
- a. Everything changes, as Peter’s dream & Cornelius’ dream join God’s dream for their lives.
 - b. The doors of God’s Kingdom, His family, His church swing wide open.
2. Jesus has an amazing dream for your life, as part of His family, much bigger than anything you could imagine.
- a. Transformed daily by encountering Jesus, & responding with steps of worship/obedience.
 - b. Relational: Give & receive love/acceptance, do life together in His family, regardless of outward appearance, circumstances or personalities (instead of patterns of individualistic, non-committal isolation).
 - c. Missional: (Instead of building our own kingdom) bring God’s Kingdom & presence to dwell in our homes, work/school to all kinds of people.