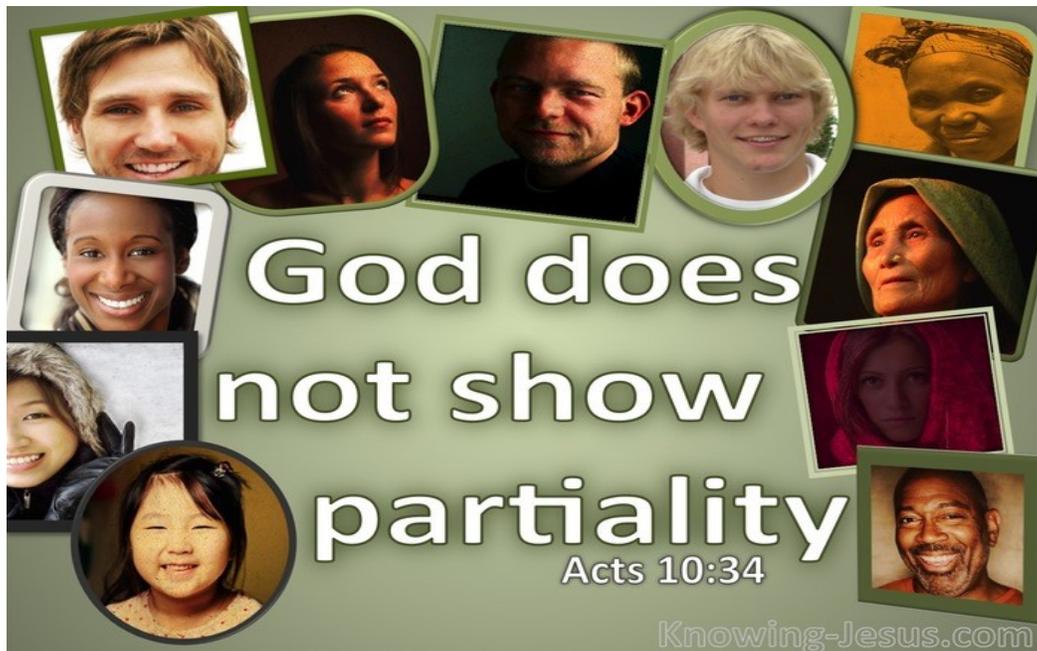


## Worship at Home Guide



**July 26, 2020**

**17<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

This Worship at Home Guide is a supplement to our worship services.

- 8:30 a.m. Zoom based worship service.
- 10:30 a.m. Drive-In Church in the church parking lot.
- 5:30 p.m. Outdoor worship around the fire pit. Lawn chairs suggested. Bring your own dinner.

Join Zoom Meeting (Click link below). You will be prompted to enter the username/password.

[Join our Cloud HD Video Meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 840 5188 5876

Password: 903205

\* If there are technical difficulties, communication will come via email.

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### Gathering Question/Gathering Music

**Opening Sentences**                      **Matthew 9:37-38**

The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

Lord, send us out into your harvest.

### **Prayer of the Day**

Teach us, good Lord, to serve you as you deserve; to give and not to count the cost; to toil and not seek for rest; to labor and not ask for any reward, save that of knowing we do your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Hymn           “Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove”**

#### Prayer of Confession

Almighty God, you poured out your Holy Spirit upon gathered disciples  
Creating bold tongues, open ears, and a new community of faith.  
We confess that we hold back the force of your Spirit among us.  
We do not always faithfully listen for your word of grace or speak your word of love.  
Have mercy on us as we lift our individual prayers to you...  
Have mercy on us. Transform our timid lives by the power of your Spirit,  
and fill us with a flaming desire to be your faithful people. Amen.

### **Hymn           “Spirit Of The Living God”**

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.  
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.  
Melt me; Mold me; Fill me; Use me;  
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

### **Scripture/Meditation**

#### **Acts 10:1-48**

#### *Cornelius Calls for Peter*

In Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian Cohort, as it was called. He was a devout man who feared God with all his household; he gave alms generously to the people and prayed constantly to God. One afternoon at about three o'clock he had a vision in which he clearly saw an angel of God coming in and saying to him, “Cornelius.”

He stared at him in terror and said, “What is it, Lord?”

He answered, “Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. Now send men to Joppa for a certain Simon who is called Peter; he is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the seaside.”

When the angel who spoke to him had left, he called to one of his slaves and a devout soldier from the ranks of those who served him, and after telling them everything, he sent them to Joppa.

#### *Peter's Vision*

About noon the next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. He became hungry and wanted something to eat.; and while it was being

prepared, he fell into a trance. He saw the heaven opened and something like a large sheet coming down, being lowered to the ground by its four corners. In it were all kinds of four-footed creatures and reptiles and birds of the air. Then he heard a voice saying “Get up, Peter; kill and eat.”

But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is profane or unclean.”

The voice said to him again, a second time, “What God has made clean, you must not call profane.” This happened three times, and the thing was suddenly taken up to heaven.

Now while Peter was greatly puzzled about what to make of the vision that he had seen, suddenly the men sent by Cornelius appeared. They were asking for Simon’s house and were standing by the gate. They called out to ask whether Simon, who was called Peter, was staying there. While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Look, three men are searching for you. Now get up, go down, and go with them without hesitation; for I have sent them.”

So Peter went down to the men and said, “I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for your coming?” They answered, Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say.” So Peter invited them in and gave them lodging.

The next day he got up and went with them, and some of the believers from Joppa accompanied him. The following day they came to Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. On Peter’s arrival Cornelius met him, and falling at his feet, worshiped him. But Peter made him get up, saying, “Stand up; I am only a mortal.” And as he talked with him, he went in and found that many had assembled; and he said to them, “You yourselves know that it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or to visit a Gentile; but God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without objection. Now may I ask why you sent for me?”

Cornelius replied, “Four days ago at this very hour, at three o’clock, I was praying in my house when suddenly a man in dazzling clothes stood before me. He said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon, who is called Peter; he is staying in the home of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.’ Therefore I sent for you immediately and you have been kind enough to come. So now all of us are here in the presence of God to listen to all that the Lord has commanded you to say.”

Then Peter began to speak to them: “I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. WE are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

### **The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles**

While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God.

Then Peter said, “Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

### **Questions for Reflection and Discernment**

1. What questions do you have for Luke as the storyteller?
2. For Cornelius and Peter as the ones who live the story?
3. What word or phrase catches your eye/ear in this story?
4. What do you make of this story? What seems plausible? What is challenging?
5. Do you remember this as one of the stories shared with you in Sunday School?
6. Peter is violating Jewish law by staying with a tanner, a person considered unclean, and is challenged by God regarding food laws. What food laws were you raised with?

### **Interpretation of Acts 10:1-48**

The story of Cornelius, which ends with Peter’s speech to the assembly at Jerusalem, is the longest narrative in Acts, a seven-act drama of sixty-six verses. We are dealing with a crucial concern of Acts; a pivot, a turning point in the long drama of redemption.

How did the church arrive at a turning point where insiders were willing to include outsiders? The good news has been taken into Samaria and then, with the Ethiopian, to the very “ends of the earth” (1.8). What is more, Saul, a vile persecutor of the community, has now become Paul, God’s chosen instrument. Where will the gospel go next? To Cornelius.

from *Acts, A Bible Commentary For Teaching and Preaching*, William H. Willimon

Anthem

### **Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession**

Lord, hear; Lord, forgive; Lord, do.

Hear what we speak not; Forgive what we speak amiss; Do what we leave undone;

That not according to our words or our deeds,

But according to your mercy and truth,

All may work for your glory, and the good of your kingdom.

Hear now our individual and collective prayers of thanksgiving and intercession...

Mighty God, whose Word we trust, whose Spirit equips us to pray, we pray saying:

**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.**

### **Hymn            God, Be The Love To Search and Keep Me**

**Sharing of the Peace:** Sharing Jesus' invitation to his disciples:

Peace be with you.

**As the Father has sent me, so I send you!**

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### **Hymn “Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove”**

Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove, with all thy quickening powers;

Kindle a flame of sacred love in these cold hearts of ours.

Dear Lord, and shall we ever live at this poor dying rate?

Our love so faint, so cold to thee, and thine to us so great!

Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove, with all thy quickening powers;

Come shed abroad a Savior's love, and that shall kindle ours.

### **Hymn “Spirit Of The Living God”**

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Melt me; Mold me; Fill me; Use me;

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

## **Hymn “God, Be The Love To Search and Keep Me”**

God, be the love to search and keep me; God be the prayer to move my voice;  
God, be the strength to now uphold me: O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.

Resources from the *Book of Common Worship and Glory to God Hymnal*, PCUSA

## **Meditation on Acts 10:1-48**

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! Blessings in God’s name on this eighth Sunday after Pentecost, or the 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time. We have entered the most extended time in the church year, the time referred to as Ordinary Time, so named not because it is a time of low expectations but because it is a time that does not have a holiday, like Christmas or Easter, or the context of a specifically devoted season, such as Advent or Lent. It is a season of growth and the liturgical color is green. This year as we grow into the new ordinary brought on by Covid-19 and the societal unrest in our land, we are focusing on stories from the Acts of the Apostles, overhearing how the early Church found her voice witnessing to what God was doing in Jesus’ name through the Spirit.

Saul has been sent away to Tarsus, his home, and soon he will reappear and with him the second half of Acts of the Apostles will begin, the stories framed by (now) Paul’s missionary journeys. Such stories are familiar to us who were raised in the church and in our Sunday School (Have you ever wondered why it is so often referred to as Sunday “School”? It became so known because originally classes on Sundays offered by churches were designed to be literacy opportunities, often for children who did not have the opportunity to attend school during the week.) classrooms there were the maps that, like with regular school, pulled down to reveal continents outlined and, in this case, colored lines showing Paul’s travels in and around the Mediterranean region, eventually into Europe.

But before we get there, we have today’s amazing story. I do not remember it being shared in any of the many Sunday school classrooms I inhabited at the Lakeside Presbyterian Church. It was not until I got to seminary as a 29-year-old that I could claim any awareness of it. And that is sad, for this is one of the most challenging and change-agent stories in all of Scripture. This is the longest narrative in Acts. The length itself says that it was not only important to Luke as the storyteller but to the early church. Saul/Paul having stepped aside in the narrative, Peter returns to center stage. In fact, that is the best way to read, hear, and reflect on this text, to understand it as a drama in seven scenes. Like last week, the story involves Peter not only changing his mind but having his mind and life changed by the Lord as he is invited into a new way living and thinking. It is mindful of the statement that we do not think our way into a new way of living but we live our way into a new way of thinking. And in the process, we cannot help but be changed.

Cornelius is a God-fearing Roman officer based in Caesarea with persons under his command. He is not openly Jewish because he could not be while having the position and power that he enjoys as a Roman soldier, but he honors the God of Israel by praying, by giving alms, and being generous. One afternoon while at prayer time he is visited by an angel of the Lord who acknowledges his prayers have been heard. He is directed to send for a man named Simon, also called Peter, who is staying with another Simon, a tanner, in Joppa. Cornelius dispatches three persons to go and invite Simon Peter to come for a visit.

While they are in transit the next day, Simon Peter himself has a vision. We have come to know that when it comes to Peter, he is certain of his certainty. He is a loyal Jew, one who follows the food laws but also “social distancing” when it comes to interacting with Gentiles as he has been taught. Peter receives a vision while in a trance and the message is for him to understand that these practices he has obediently embraced are no longer essential because the voice in the vision (whom Peter understands to be the Lord) dramatically states “what God has made clean, you must not call profane.”

Peter has heard this before. You and I also have heard of this teaching before. In Mark’s Gospel, Chapter 7, Jesus is engaged by Pharisees and some scribes in a dispute as the latter notice that some of Jesus’ disciples do not wash their hands before they ate. The story shares much about Jewish food laws and other traditions having to do with health. Jesus shares that while these pious persons are keeping their religious traditions, they in fact reject God. Jesus, turning his attention to the crowd, is quoted as saying that there is nothing that can defile a person from the outside in. It is the person’s actions of any kind that defile. The next scene has the disciples wanting to know more of what Jesus meant and he restates “Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile, since it enters, not the heart but the stomach, and goes out into the sewer?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.)” Jesus seeks to get his message through to Peter again.

Jesus can do this, can help Peter change his mind, because Jesus himself has experienced having his mind changed. The story that follows in Mark 7 is one of the most remarkable stories in all the Gospels, a story that Matthew as well as Mark relates. Jesus is encountered by a gentile woman (described in Mark as a Syrophenician Woman) whose daughter is possessed by an unclean spirit. She approaches him and begs him to cast the demon out of her daughter. Jesus responds by saying that his mission is to the Jewish “children” not the gentile “children”, using an analogy of feeding and how wrong it is to take “food” away from the Jews to share with the gentiles. The woman will not give up. She reminds Jesus that even the dogs (an illustration even more clear in Matthew’s version of the story) eat the scraps from the tables of Jewish children. Jesus commends her for her astuteness and declares that her daughter has been relieved of the demon.

Jesus is confronted by a woman who loves her daughter so much she will not give up on her and risks much, including Jesus' condemnation, to help her. Jesus, here pictured as sharing the prejudices Jews had towards gentiles, puts the woman off only to find the woman not easily off-put. She reminds him of an even greater truth, and as she does, he agrees to the woman's request to heal her daughter. Because Jesus knows what it is like to have his mind changed, he is equally intent in giving Peter the opportunity to change his mind. Peter comes to know that it is every person that God treasures, no matter what their origin. He visits Cornelius, preaches the Gospel, and experiences the gift of the Holy Spirit shared with a gentile as it had been with him. And he rejoices. Thanks Be To God!

Amen.