



A Guide for Spiritual Formation

Text for the Week: Acts 11:1-18

Message for the Week: Inconveniently
Uncomfortable

Sunday, March 2

Opening:

What is one low (a bad thing) and one high (a good thing) that happened to you this past week? Write them down and take turns sharing them with the others in your group.

Where have you seen the work of the Holy Spirit in your life this past week?

What is the strangest food that you've ever eaten?

Preparation:

Spend 1-2 minutes in silence with God to center and prepare yourself for your time with God today.

Read:

Read / Have two people in your group read [Acts 11:1-18](#) out loud. We encourage you to also read the larger context of this story beginning at [Acts 10](#).

(Clicking the link will bring you to multiple translations.)

As you read and/or listen to the text being read, circle, highlight, or underline what words, phrases, or ideas grabbed your attention and heart in these verses?

Write them down below and/or share them with those who are with you.

Respond / Reflect:

In your own words, how would you describe what God and the Holy Spirit wanted to make clear to Peter through the vision and encounter with Cornelius? Did Peter receive the message? Why or why not?

What things did Peter have to unlearn and let go of? What new things did Peter have to learn and embrace?

What do God and the Holy Spirit want to make clear to us through Peter's vision and encounter with Cornelius?

What is God and the Holy Spirit doing in this story?

Who is the salvation that God offers through Jesus for?

What gift did God give to Peter? To Cornelius? To Cornelius' household? To you? To us?

What or who are you conforming to? What or who do you want others to conform to?

What things does the Holy Spirit want us and the church today to unlearn and let go of? What things does the Holy Spirit want us and the church today to learn and embrace?

Take Away:

What is a main point or key message that you learned, understood, observed, or experienced that you are taking away with you from your group's reflections on the bible passage or your group's conversations today?

Prayer:

Spend time in prayer with/for the other people who are with you. Who in your group needs prayer today? Who in your group will you pray for?

Pray this prayer together:

Father, we come today with our ideas of who should and shouldn't belong to the church. We make demands of an unbelieving world that you never made on us. Give us the eyes to see the people you created as your image bearers. Help us to extend the love and grace of Jesus Christ to them.
AMEN

"Try It" - Putting our Faith into Action:

Where has the Holy Spirit been calling/nudging you to go and you are avoiding it because you don't want to be inconvenienced or uncomfortable? Be inconveniently uncomfortable.

Acts 11:1-18 - New International Version

11 The apostles and the believers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. ² So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him ³ and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them."

⁴ Starting from the beginning, Peter told them the whole story: ⁵ "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. ⁶ I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles and birds. ⁷ Then I heard a voice telling me, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.'

⁸ "I replied, 'Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.'

⁹ "The voice spoke from heaven a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.' ¹⁰ This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again.

¹¹ "Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. ¹² The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man's house. ¹³ He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. ¹⁴ He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.'

¹⁵ "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. ¹⁶ Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with^[a] water, but you will be baptized with^[b] the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁷ So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God's way?"

¹⁸ When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life."

Footnotes

a. [Acts 11:16](#) Or *in*

b. [Acts 11:16](#) Or *in*

Acts 11:1-18 – The Message

11 ¹⁻³ The news traveled fast and in no time the leaders and friends back in Jerusalem heard about it—heard that the non-Jewish "outsiders" were now "in." When Peter got back to Jerusalem, some of his old associates, concerned about circumcision, called him on the carpet: "What do you think you're doing rubbing shoulders with that crowd, eating what is prohibited and ruining our good name?"

⁴⁻⁶ So Peter, starting from the beginning, laid it out for them step-by-step: "Recently I was in the town of Joppa praying. I fell into a trance and saw a vision: Something like a huge blanket, lowered by ropes at its four corners, came down out of heaven and settled on the ground in front of me. Milling around on the blanket were farm animals, wild animals, reptiles, birds—you name it, it was there. Fascinated, I took it all in.

⁷⁻¹⁰ "Then I heard a voice: 'Go to it, Peter—kill and eat.' I said, 'Oh, no, Master. I've never so much as tasted food that wasn't kosher.' The voice spoke again: 'If God says it's okay, it's okay.' This happened three times, and then the blanket was pulled back up into the sky.

¹¹⁻¹⁴ "Just then three men showed up at the house where I was staying, sent from Caesarea to get me. The Spirit told me to go with them, no questions asked. So, I went with them, I and six friends, to the man who had sent for me. He told us how he had seen an angel right in his own house, real as his next-door neighbor, saying, 'Send to Joppa and get Simon, the one they call Peter. He'll tell you something that will save your life—in fact, you and everyone you care for.'

¹⁵⁻¹⁷ "So I started in, talking. Before I'd spoken half a dozen sentences, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as he did on us the first time. I remembered Jesus' words: 'John baptized with water; you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' So I ask you: If God gave the same exact gift to them as to us when we believed in the Master Jesus Christ, how could I object to God?"

¹⁸ Hearing it all laid out like that, they quieted down. And then, as it sank in, they started praising God. "It's really happened! God has broken through to the other nations, opened them up to Life!"