

**CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE** (Read the passages and review the sermon outline. Then select the best questions or customize the questions for your group)

- Read Acts 11:1-18.
- Read the main points from the sermon outline.
- Read the previous chapter (Acts 10) and discuss why you think Acts 10 and Acts 11 tell the story of Peter and Cornelius in two different ways?
- How did the early followers understand their relationship to the Gentiles prior to this passage?
- How might we imagine Peter's vision in new ways today?
- What part of Peter's testimony seemed to satisfy the objections of the people (v.18) and why?
- In a single sentence, what is this story of Peter and Cornelius about?

**CONNECT WITH GOD'S MISSION IN THE WORLD** (select one question for discussion)

- How can I show God's love to those who are unlike me?
- How might the Holy Spirit be expanding your own expectations of God's redemptive work in the world (and our own communities)?
- What are our personal and cultural strongholds that keep us from taking risks to share Christ with others?

### PRAYER

Before you pray, take a few minutes to share in one or two words how the Holy Spirit is using the stories of the early church in Acts to transform you. Pray for openness to the Holy Spirit's invitations. Pray for each other with humility as you continue to learn what God's Spirit is up to in the world in ways that may be uncomfortable or unfamiliar.

## MESSAGE OUTLINE

May 15, 2022

*Empowering the Church  
Open Eyes*

Pastor Mike McClenahan



### Acts 11:1–18 (NIV)

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

<sup>4</sup> Starting from the beginning, Peter told them the whole story: <sup>5</sup> "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. <sup>6</sup> I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles and birds. <sup>7</sup> Then I heard a voice telling me, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.'

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

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

<sup>11</sup> "Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. <sup>14</sup> He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.'

<sup>15</sup> "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. <sup>16</sup> Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

<sup>17</sup> 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?"

<sup>18</sup> 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."

(Message Outline continued on the next page)

## MESSAGE OUTLINE CONTINUED

The Holy Spirit empowers the church to see with new eyes...

### 1. God's purposes.

*This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again.*

### 2. God's people.

*"So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life."*

### 3. God's power.

*...the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning.*

## SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS—May 15, 2022

*Mosaic: Empowering the Church—Open Eyes*

**CONNECT WITH GOD** (choose one of these practices that best suits your group or use another practice from a previous week)

**Breath Prayer:** Breath Prayer is an ancient practice that invites us to slow down and awaken ourselves—even our breath—to the presence of God. It is an invitation to remember that God is closer to us than even our own breath! This week you are invited to use the phrase: Come, Holy Spirit. As you focus on breathing in and out, allow the words to flow out from inward breath to outward breath. Spend 3-5 minutes.

- **Inhale:** Come
- **Exhale:** Holy Spirit

Continue on for a few minutes at a slowed pace, making space for a growing awareness of God's Holy Spirit.

### **The Practice of Remembering:**

**Explain:** The practice of remembering invites us to be attentive to God's movement in our lives over time. During these next 5 minutes, consider a few of the ways that God has been faithful, even when you had no idea where you were going. Begin this practice now, but continue it throughout the week. In your journals, your iPhone, or even on sticky notes: continue this invitation to remember. Write down the ways that God has been present in your unknowing. Let it be a gift to remember God's presence.

**Lectio Divina:** Use the guide from last week (week of 5/8/22) to engage for at least 7 minutes in the ancient spiritual practice of Lectio Divina.

## CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

**Journaling:** Write the word RISK at the top of your journal page and then begin to spend time journaling by writing or drawing about risks you have faced or embraced in your own life through the years. Pay attention to times when you have had positive and life-giving experiences with risk and also pay attention to the times that risk has given you pause, added to your anxiety, or caused you discomfort.

**Share together:** After five minutes, share some of your reflections and specifically consider these questions:

- When have you been surprised by God's unexpected invitation to **risk** and how did you respond?
- In your life, how has the Holy Spirit invited you to imagine a different way of being or doing?

(Small Group Questions continued on the back panel)