

Kinds of People that Jesus Saves, Part 4: The Unclean

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Acts 9:32 - 11:18

Jews were taught early in life about the rules and laws concerning uncleanness. Leviticus details how Jews were to handle worship of God and the uncleanness that occurred in daily life. Uncleanness separated someone from Temple worship and fellowship with their community. Death, sickness, animals, and leprosy (Lev. 13:45-46) were issues that a Jew would have to deal with. Uncleanness was remedied by sacrifice and offering. Blood was required to be shed to cover uncleanness. ****Our condition is worse than we realize.** Ez. 36:25 ("will cleanse you from all your filthiness), Isa. 6:5 ("I am a man of unclean lips").

How the Jews would describe the Gentiles: 1) As Outsiders: of God's covenant. 2) As Fruitless: as a wild vine that bore no fruit. 3) As Dangerous: the surrounding nations would seek to pollute their way of life. 4) As Unclean: couldn't enjoy God's presence.

- These barriers kept Jews from interacting with Gentiles, leaving Gentiles outside of blessing.
- In Acts 10:1-23, the Gospel is **Announced** to Cornelius by the Lord, for him to send for Peter in Joppa. In a vision, Peter is shown what God has called clean must not be called unclean. Peter is summoned by the men sent from Cornelius to come to Cornelius who had been told by the Lord where Peter was. Peter stayed with the Gentile men that night.
- In Acts 10:24-48, the Gospel is **Accomplished** in the Gentiles as Peter preaches to Cornelius' house and the Holy Spirit falls (V44) like it did at Pentecost (Acts 2).
- In Acts 11:1-18, the Gospel is **Argued for Afterwards** as Peter defends what he had witnessed in the Gentiles in Caesarea and the grace given by the Holy Spirit.

How does God save the Gentiles? The same way He saves the Jews, through Jesus!!

- Both Jew and Gentile, as are we, are in need of a Savior.
- Both Jew and Gentile, as are we, are enemies of God.
- Both Jew and Gentile, as are we, are unclean and need God's grace to be clean.

Three Ways that the Grace of God Reaches Jew and Gentile Alike:

1. **God Saves Through the Same Sovereign Preparation:** It is God's right to do as He pleases. Providence is God's wisdom displayed in bringing about His plan in our lives. Evil is used for our benefit to humble us and for us to find our strength in Christ and His word.
 - a. In Acts 9:32-35, Peter heals Aeneas in Lydda. He comes closer to Cornelius who is in Caesarea after raising Tabitha from the dead in Joppa. Caesarea is a Roman city, but Cornelius is a believer in Yahweh, he gave generously to the people, and prayed to God always (10:1-2).
 - b. In Acts 10:15-16, God removes the barriers of fellowship with Gentiles.
 - c. In Acts 10:19-23, Peter lodged overnight with the Gentiles sent from Cornelius.
 - d. The Changes: 1) Peter **received** God's commands in 10:14-16. 2) Peter **remembered** what Jesus did, proclaiming Christ crucified to Cornelius' house, 10:34-43. 3) Peter recognized man-made tradition versus what Scripture teaches, Israel was to be a light to the nations. Peter was to be a witness to the nations for Christ (Acts 10:39-43).
 - e. In Acts Chapter 2 and 10, God prepared Jew and Gentile to hear and receive the Gospel.
2. **God Saves by the Same Gospel Message as Well:** Acts 11:14, Cornelius needed to hear the words by which he and his household could be saved. That Christ is Lord of all (Acts 10:36). Jesus was hanged on a tree, killed by sinful men, (10:39). Jesus was raised from the dead (10:40). Jesus is judge of all (10:42). The prophets spoke of Jesus (10:43). Those who believe in Him will have remission of sins (10:43, 2:38).

3. **God Saves with the Same Confirming Attestation:** The Holy Spirit seals those who believe in Christ, Eph. 1:13. Every spiritual blessing is found in Christ Jesus, Eph. 1:3. The Holy Spirit is at work at the preaching of Jesus. Promises are communicated by the proclamation of the Gospel, 2 Pet. 2:2-4.
- The tongues described in Acts 2:4 and 10:46 are the same gift referred in Acts 11:17.
 - They are human languages that could be understood.
 - The Holy Spirit dwelling in Jew and Gentile the same, Acts 10:47, 11:17.
 - The Jews glorified God that repentance to life had come to the Gentiles, Acts 11:18.

What should we imprint on the minds of new Christians?

1. God's Spirit means God's Power, Acts 10:38, Rom. 8:11, 13. The Spirit gives power over sin, Gal. 5:16.
2. God's Spirit purifies the believer, We have positional purification: Titus 3:5, He regenerates us. John 3:5-6, we are born again by the Spirit. We are declared righteous and are alive by the Spirit, Rom.8:9-11. We have progressive purification: Heb. 10:14, He has perfected forever those being sanctified. It is a finished, ongoing process.
3. God's Spirit means the Presence of God: The Spirit dwells in you, Rom. 8:9, 11, 16. The Spirit cleanses and washes me, Tit. 3:5. He is making me into the image of Christ, Rom. 8:29.
 - a. We ask the new believer, "Is Jesus Lord of your life?" Do you have a love for God that trumps a love for self? Is there repentance and a separation from the world? Is there humble obedience? Is holiness seen in my life?
 - b. What is imprinted on the Christian mind to share with others? Instead of "unclean, unclean" as the unclean one of Leviticus 13:45 is commanded to tell everyone, we declare, "clean, clean" because of the blood of Christ that cleanses us, declaring the goodness of God to save us from our sin to others.

Further Discussion and Application

What is the message of the Gospel that we can share with others who wonder who can be saved? What is Paul's testimony in 1 Tim. 1:12-17? Why does Paul call himself the chief of sinners? Why does Paul call himself a "pattern to those who are going to believe?" Why does God deserve all the glory and honor for what He has done through Christ?

How do we encourage a new believer to bear fruits of righteousness? How can we disciple them and help them grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord? Why is mentorship and relationship the steady means of helping one another to grow in love and unity within the body of Christ? What are the fruits of righteousness?