

ACTS: Struggling with Inclusion

Acts 11:1-18

Peter Encounters Criticism (v. 1-3)

- The news of Cornelius' and others' conversion had reached the Church in Jerusalem
- This should have been a source of joy for the Jewish Church, since it meant that they were doing as Jesus commanded
 - But it became a point of criticism
- The 'Circumcision Party': Jewish Christians that taught that one must first become Jewish to be followers of Jesus
 - Including following dietary laws and being circumcised
 - Works based righteousness
- They criticized Peter for eating with Gentiles
 - A practice *NOT* forbidden in the Law
 - But, avoided by many devote Jews of the 1st Century
 - They were more concerned about human rules than about Gentiles being saved

Peter Answers (11:4-17)

- Peter recounts:
 - His vision in Joppa
 - His visit with Cornelius
 - The Gentiles' response to the Gospel and receiving the Holy Spirit
- He ties this to Jesus' promise of baptizing with the Holy Spirit
- His conclusion: "If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" (v. 17)

The Critics Silenced (v. 18)

- The critics could not argue with what God was doing
 - But they began rejoicing about God's work among the Gentiles

So What?

- What barriers do we place before people coming to Jesus?
- Are we willing to let God change our minds?

Meditation Verse: Acts 11:17