



NG Study Guide: Acts 10:24-48 :: “The Spirit’s Work in Salvation” [11.20.22]

Love God + know the Bible better:

1. Read the passage cited above, and try to answer the questions below before your group meets.
2. *Leader note: Please review the brief instructions for leaders at the bottom.*

The Study

Thesis: God sends forth His Spirit to draw people to Christ. God’s people join in that work, as we receive and are led by the Holy Spirit. Let’s discover Spirit-led evangelism.

Subject: Gentiles receive God’s Spirit

Object: Spirit-led evangelism

Context: God prepared the heart of Gentiles to receive the gospel, and the heart of Peter to engage the Gentiles so they could respond to the gospel (10:1-23). God is working by His Spirit in both to restore people to Himself.

A. Go to people who don’t know Christ (24-33) *And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵ As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. ²⁶ But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I myself am also a man.” ²⁷ And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together. ²⁸ Then he said to them, “You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. ²⁹ Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?” ³⁰ So Cornelius said, “Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, ³¹ and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. ³² Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.’ ³³ So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God.*

Peter had sensed the Spirit’s leading and welcomed the messengers from Cornelius to lodge where he was staying in Joppa. Peter’s hospitality in welcoming Gentiles (non-Jews) to dine and sleep inside where he was staying was atypical. Jews would not invite an unbeliever into their home, because of ceremonial defilement (the sense of something sacred becoming impure). Similarly, Jews did not enter Gentile homes. God had instructed Cornelius to send for Peter and to hear his instruction (23). Peter was requested to enter Cornelius’ home.

When God was prompting Peter by His Spirit to engage Gentiles (unbelievers), how did he respond? What lessons can we glean from Peter’s Spirit-led response?

1. Without delay (24) *And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends. Caesarea was about 30 miles away from*

Joppa where Peter was staying. Peter and those traveling with him would have made an early start, and not delayed to arrive when they did. Peter would present God's message despite obstacles between Jews and Gentiles. When you sense God leading don't delay to go to people. Once in 1871, D.L. Moody encouraged his congregation on a Sunday to consider their standing with God, and be prepared to make a decision the following week. That afternoon a great fire broke out in Chicago killing many. To his dying day, Moody regretted his delay. Encourage people not to experience one more day without Christ.

2. Without prejudice (25-28)

As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. ²⁶ But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself am also a man." ²⁷ And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together. ²⁸ Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

As Peter entered, Cornelius approached, and fell down before Peter's feet as a symbol of reverence and respect (25). This is remarkable, because Roman centurions would generally never bow before a Jewish fisherman, or even a Jewish noble. There is humility displayed by Cornelius. There is also humility on the part of Peter, as he said, "*Stand up; I myself am also a man*" (27). Peter is not only making it clear that he is just a man, and thus unworthy of reverence or worship; but in essence is declaring that he is no better than a Gentile.

Peter enters the home and finds Cornelius' friends and relatives gathered (27), and explained to them how Jews would not eat or lodge with Gentiles (28). Then Peter said, "*But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.*" God revealed to Peter that all people are in need of a Savior. Thus, there is no reason for partiality or prejudice. Rather than approach those who don't yet know God as less than, or greater than, let's ask God to reveal to us that we are all people made in His image who are sinners in need of a Savior.

3. Without objection (29-33) Once Peter understood God's heart, he came *without objection* (29). There are presumably countless objections to engaging those who don't know Jesus: don't want to cram religion down someone's throat, fear of the response, fear of conflict, fear our lifestyle doesn't align with our words, too busy, too awkward... Yet, as the Spirit leads go without objection. Peter asked, *for what reason have you sent for me?* (29). Cornelius explains how he was led by God to send for Peter, and that Peter would have revelation from God for Cornelius (30-32). Cornelius immediately sent for Peter, and notes, *you have done well to come* (33). It is good to go to those who need Jesus. Cornelius concludes, *Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God* (33). Cornelius and those gathered with him wanted to meet with God and hear Him.

B. Proclaim the gospel (34-43)

1. God loves all people (34-35) *Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. ³⁵ But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.* Peter understood the truth that God is impartial (34, Deut. 10:17, Rom. 2:11, Ja. 2:1-8). God loves the world (Jn. 3:16). God loves Jews *and* Gentiles, men *and* women, rich *and* poor, Republican *and* Democrat, Koreans of the South *and* North, sexual sinners (hetero *and* homosexual). God will accept anyone who reveres Him and receives Christ's righteousness (**yields to Jesus**) (35).

2. God offers peace through Christ (36-43) *The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all— ³⁷ that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. ³⁹ And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. ⁴⁰ Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, ⁴¹ not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. ⁴² And He commanded us to preach to the*

people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.”

The gospel message, that peace with God is available through faith in Jesus, came first to the Jewish people (36, Rom. 5:1). The message spread as John the Baptist proclaimed that Jesus of Nazareth was truly the Christ. At Jesus’ baptism the Holy Spirit came upon Him and He then began His ministry in the power of the Spirit. Jesus’ reputation spread further through miraculous healings and spiritual restoration (37-38).

Peter, the apostles, and others were witnesses to Jesus’ miracles, teaching, death and resurrection (39-41, 1Cor.15:1-8). Peter saw Jesus’ first miracle when He turned water to wine, he saw Jesus miraculously restore physical and spiritual health to countless people, witnessed Jesus walking on water, restore life to Jairus’ daughter, saw God’s glory revealed in Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration, and ate and drank with Jesus after His resurrection (41).

3. God forgives those who receive Christ (42-43) Peter affirms the commandment to proclaim Jesus and His gospel (42, Matt. 28:18-20). God loves all people, but is also holy and just. Sin separates us from God. All sin is an offense against God and shall be judged (42). The good news is that Jesus took the penalty for humanity on the cross (Heb. 7:26). *Whoever believes in Jesus will receive remission or forgiveness of sins* (43). To believe in Jesus means that you put faith in Him as your Savior and yield to Him as Lord (Rom. 3:22). Salvation is by grace, a gift from God, through faith in Jesus (Eph. 2:8). As soon as you choose to follow Jesus, you receive forgiveness of sin, and the Holy Spirit imparts spiritual life restoring you to God. This truth is not only affirmed by Peter and the apostles as eye witnesses, but also confirmed by the Old Testament prophets (43).

C. Proof of salvation (44-48) *While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. ⁴⁵ And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, ⁴⁷ “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” ⁴⁸ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.*

1. The transformation of the Holy Spirit (44-46) While Peter was speaking, the *Holy Spirit fell upon* the Gentiles (44) who heard the gospel, just like the Jews at Pentecost (Ac. 2). The Jewish Christians were *astonished* (45) because the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit, salvation, and forgiveness by grace through faith in Christ without first seeking to follow God’s commandments (Mosaic law). The transformation of the Holy Spirit was evident, *they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God* (46). Tongues is not *the* sign that someone has been saved (1 Cor. 12:30), but transformation producing Christlike attitudes and actions is the fruit of the Holy Spirit and is evidence of salvation.

2. Obedience and identity in Christ (47-48) Peter recognized that the Gentile believers should be baptized just like the Jewish believers at Pentecost (Ac. 2:41). The Gentiles were baptized in obedience to Christ’s command (Matt. 28:18-20), and as a symbol of identity in Christ (Rom. 6). Obedience to Jesus, and identity in Christ are evidence you’re saved.

Study Guide Qs

Q1. God’s people are to go to people who don’t know Jesus without delay, prejudice or objection. Why might that be challenging? How can the Holy Spirit help?

Q2. What are some of the elements of the gospel (good news of Jesus)?

Q3. What experiences (transformation, obedience, and identity in Christ) have helped you know you’re saved?

Q4. Who are some of the people that you feel led to share the gospel with?

“Disciples Who Dig Deeper” (optional or alternative study)

- 1. Spend time praying for God’s Spirit to help you share your faith with those you are feeling led to share with.**
- 2. Practice sharing the gospel with others in your NG. Learn from one another and your experience together to be better equipped to share your faith.**

Love your neighbors (inside + outside the group) better:

- 1. Who would like to share how they sought to befriend or build relationship with their neighbors inside or outside the group?**
- 2. Are there some needs that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbors inside or outside the group?**

Disciples who make disciples:

- 1. Who would like to share how they recently sought to make disciples?**
- 2. Here is a disciple making idea to consider for the weeks ahead:
[Look to share your faith with those you felt the Holy Spirit has led you to share with, and plan to invite them to join you at church or in your NG.](#)**

Prayer [Loving God and Neighbors better]:

Close the NG meeting with a time of group prayer. Encourage each participant to pray, but don’t force anyone to pray. Encourage the group to keep their prayers brief so that each person can pray.

Leader Notes:

- 1. Seek to involve as many group participants as possible.** A good group discussion time allows people to get to know the passage and one another better.
- 2. Feel free to pre-select the discussion questions that you want to focus on** in case there isn’t enough time to answer them all.
- 3. The “Disciples Who Dig Deeper” section provides some optional or alternative study and discussion activities.** As a group leader, you can choose to focus on the “Disciples Who Dig Deeper” section, include part of that section in your group meeting, or not use it at all. Try to give the group sufficient notice so they can be prepared for the meeting.
- 4. Every time you meet consider asking:**
 - a. What about this passage is particularly exciting, challenging, or confusing?** If a leader is uncertain about a question of doctrine or theology don’t hesitate to follow-up with your coach during the week. Then revisit the issue(s) when the group gathers next time.