NÃO CHAME DE IMPURO — PARTE I

Acts 10:1-16 · Kaká Monteiro · September 27, 2026

The centurion God already saw, the angel who gives an address, the apostle who still resisted

THE CENTRAL IDEA

“God's reach does not stop at the border, and sometimes the border is in us.”

Up to this point, all of God's reach in Acts has happened inside Israel. Acts 10 asks how far it goes, and answers by knocking on the door of an officer of the occupying Roman army. God prepares both sides at the same time: a Gentile who seeks and an apostle who resists. And the text shows that the hardest heart to change was not the Roman soldier's, it was Peter's.

THE MESSAGE IN 3 MOVEMENTS

01 Sincere religion is not the same thing as conversion.

Cornelius prayed, gave and led his household, and still needed to hear the gospel of Jesus. Conversion, as Lloyd-Jones reminds us, is not a change of behavior, it is a birth: repentance and faith, together. And whoever is born again takes the next public step, baptism.

02 Before you seek God, God was already moving toward you.

"Memorial offering" is altar language: God received the seeking of a Gentile who never set foot in the temple. And he prepared both sides at once, Cornelius in Caesarea and Peter in Joppa. Grace arrives first, with a name and an address.

03 The obstacle is not always outside, sometimes it is in us.

Peter, filled with the Spirit since Pentecost, said "no" to the Lord himself. The word "impure" (koinos) shares its root with koinonia, fellowship: the issue was never food, it is who sits with whom at the table. God insisted three times, like the three denials and the three questions "do you love me?".

READING THE TEXT · ACTS 10:1-16

Acts 10:1-2 · A man God already saw

In Caesarea, the seat of Roman government in Judea, lives Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian Regiment. He and all his household fear God: he gives generously to the people and prays continually. A devout, generous Gentile and the spiritual leader of his own family, but still a seeker, not a convert.

Acts 10:3-8 · A God who was already at work

At three in the afternoon, the hour of prayer, an angel calls him by name: his prayers and gifts have come up as a memorial offering before God. The instruction is concrete, with a name, a house and an address: send for Simon Peter, staying with Simon the tanner, by the sea, in Joppa. Cornelius doesn't wait: he tells everything to two servants and a soldier and sends them at once.

Acts 10:9-16 · An apostle who still resisted

The next day, at noon, Peter goes up on the roof to pray. Hungry, he falls into a trance and sees a large sheet coming down from heaven, full of all kinds of animals. A voice commands: "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat." Peter answers: "Surely not, Lord!" And the voice corrects him: "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." This happens three times.

QUESTIONS FOR THE GROUP

To open: think of a kind of person you would find it hard to share a table with, because of social class, politics, past, church or lifestyle. Choose three or four of the questions below, you don't need to answer them all.

1. Cornelius was devout, generous and prayerful, and still not converted. What is the difference between being religious and being converted? Can you point to when that happened to you, even without knowing the exact date?
2. God prepared Cornelius and Peter at the same time, in different cities. Looking back, how was God already at work in your life before you sought him: a person, an invitation, something that seemed like chance?
3. Cornelius obeyed right away; Peter answered, "Surely not, Lord!" When God asks for something that goes against your habits or convictions, are you more like which of the two? Why?
4. Who do you still treat as too "unclean" for the table God has already opened? What would be a concrete step toward that person?

KEY PASSAGES

John 21:17, "The third time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?'" The same Lord who restored Peter with three questions now corrects him with three visions. God is patient, and persistent, with the blind spots of his people.

Ephesians 2:14, "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility." What the sheet announced, the cross accomplished: in Christ, Jew and Gentile sit at the same table.

2 Corinthians 6:2, "I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation." Cornelius sought sincerely, but religion saves no one. The invitation to respond to Jesus is for today.

TO CLOSE

A step for this week. Think of one person you have been treating as "common" and make a concrete gesture: an invitation for coffee, a meal, a message. If you already believe but have not been baptized, talk to your group leader about taking that step.

Prayer. Thank God that his grace comes first. Ask him to reveal each person's blind spots and to open the group's heart to those who are still outside the table.

Watch the message again: point your phone camera here.