

ASSIGNMENT FOR CLASS #6: ST. PETER'S MINISTRY IN THE TOWNS (ACTS 9:32-11:18)

SESSION #1: St. Peter in Joppa and Lydda (Acts 9:32-43)

- If you can, find Lydda, Sharon and Joppa on an ancient map on the Internet. It is on the coast of the Mediterranean not far from Jerusalem.
- Review Luke 5:17-32. Are there similarities? What does Peter say to heal the paralytic? Have you ever seen a miracle that built up your faith? Have you forgotten what those miracles are? Remind yourself again!
- Meditation: In what aspect of your life do you feel like the paralytic that has been waiting for 8 years to be healed?

SESSION #2: Peter and Cornelius the Centurion (Acts 10:1-33)

- Keep in mind that Cornelius was a devout *Jewish* observer. Being uncircumcised and also a pagan, he was not invited fully into Jewish communion. This did not stop him from being a prayerful, devout man.
- The angel told Cornelius, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God (10:4)." See also Revelation 8:4 & James 5:16. God heard Cornelius because of his patience and devotedness. How do we feel about the power of prayer?
 - Jesus uses the word for "Memorial" only in one other instance. See Matthew 26:13. What do you think about the similarities?
- In verse 10:19 the Holy Spirit (NOT Jesus!) clearly says something to him. Do you know what the Holy Spirit sounds like? Have you ever considered this?
- HINT!! Please relate Peter's strange vision to verse 10:28 - it is the key to understanding this whole section.
- Meditation: How could you be more like the faithful Cornelius who was heard by God because of his mercy and his prayers?

SESSION #3: Peter's Sermon to the Gentiles (Acts 10:34-48)

- What does it mean to you that "God shows no partiality"? (10:34)
- Peter summarizes Jesus's ministry. What do you think about *how* he summarizes it?
- The Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit *before* they are baptized. What do you make of this? (See 10:44-48)
- Meditation: Place yourself prayerfully in that group that receives the Holy Spirit! Can you? What is it like?

SESSION #4: Peter Reports to the Jerusalem Church (Acts 11:1-18)

- Why is Peter criticized in 11:2-3? Have you ever been criticized for doing something you felt God was asking you to do? Are you afraid of being criticized for standing up for your beliefs?
 - Please note that this faction - the strictly Jewish faction - caused great dissension in the church. St. Paul deals with them as well (See Galatians 2:12).
 - What factions exist in our church or even in our own community that are causing dissension? Sometimes this dissension is healthy insofar as it is an occasion for us

to clarify our beliefs, and sometimes it is unhealthy. What do you think about this?