

Converting the Church - discussion guide

based on **Acts 10.1 to 11.18** (Linked to sermon of 11/6/16)

which can be accessed at <http://www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series>

This was the second part of our 'The church: God's mission agency to the world' series.

Intro: If you could change one thing about the church, what would it be?

This is a long story. Skim through it quickly:

Scene 1 (10.1-8 God is preparing Gentile Cornelius)

Scene 2 (10.9-23 God is preparing the Jewish apostle Peter)

Scene 3a (10.23-33 Peter and Cornelius meet together)

Scene 3b (10.34-43 Peter preaches)

Scene 3c (10.44-48 the Holy Spirit confirms the Gentiles' response)

Scene 4 (11.1-18 Peter explains his actions to the other Jewish leaders in Jerusalem)

Read Acts 10:34-48

Peter has changed his mind (repented) about who and why God accepts people (verses 34-35). What brought him to this change of heart? Has God ever prompted you to review a long or deeply held prejudice? What has been the result?

Peter's friends also had their prejudices confronted by these events. How? see verses 44-47

In the sermon it was noted that Peter and his Jewish companions had a set of built-in biases that prevented them from hearing that God's message of hope was for Gentiles as well as Jews. What in the passage suggests that all are in need of the gospel and need to be "converted":

Peter (verses 1-34)

The Jews with him (verses 34-48 especially v39b)

The Jerusalem Church (Chapter 11 verses 1-18)

The Gentiles (11:18)

Everyone - see 10:36, 38, 42, 43 and 11:14, 18

Read Luke 24:45-47 which sums up what God has done through Jesus and what he is doing now through the church. With this and the Acts passage in mind:

Up: Praise God for his provision of this wonderful salvation and thank him for the ways in which this has come to us via the apostles, the church, people who have borne personal witness to us etc.

In: Confess to one another any prejudices or problems that may prevent you fully participating in God's mission for his church (Luke 24:47). Pray for one another; for the Lord's forgiveness, healing and equipping

Out: What can you change as a group to make you more effective in your outreach? Think about what you might have to give up or change in order to achieve this? What might we need to change as a whole church to be more effective in outreach?