

## Foundations of the Church - a study of Acts

### Samaria - Breaking down Racial Divisions

#### Acts 10-11

#### What kinds of people are you happy to avoid?

We are all prejudice toward some. It can be based on racial, ethnic, societal, criminal, behavioral or even religious backgrounds.

**Where does it come from?** Fear is the most notable reason but it can also come from envy, resentment, ignorance or arrogance.

**How is it seen?** It is seen in hatred, rejection or avoidance of that group - anyone we withhold sympathy from or refuse to show compassion. Once it is in our lives we see all of the people of that group with the same negative perception

#### For the Jews it was the Samaritans. Who were the Samaritans?

Historically they were the left behind remnant of the Northern Tribes who were carried away by Assyria in 734 BC. Other tribes were moved in to replace the ones removed and they intermarried with the Jews there. *(2 Kings 17:5-6)*

They opposed the rebuilding of the Temple

They built their own temple at Mount Gerizim

They welcomed all the outlaws of Judea

They recognized only the books of Moses - not the prophets.

Later the term was applied to all who were despised by the Jews.

#### Jesus did his part to teach not just tolerance but love toward the Samaritans

The parable of the good Samaritan **Luke 10**

The account of the thankful Samaritan **Luke 17**

The encounter with the Samaritan woman **John 4**

The Samaritans were the first to identify Jesus as *"the Savior of the world"* **John 4:42**

#### Acts 10-11

#### The Word of God to Cornelius **10:1-8**

Roman, devout, feared God, gave alms to Jews

Prayed continually and his prayers were answered

Angel sent to give him directions to call Peter

#### The Word of God to Peter **10:9-16**

At a regular time of prayer

Hungry and saw vision of unclean animals

Ordered to kill and eat but refused 3 times

Given word *"what God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy?"*

#### Messengers accepted **10:17-23**

Received them "without misgivings" - no doubt

Listened to their request

Offered them lodging

#### Peter at Caesarea **10:24-43**

When into Cornelius' house

Announced *"God has shown me that I should not call any man unclean"* **10:28 and 10:34-35**

Taught about Jesus' resurrection and the forgiveness of sin

#### God demonstrated the truth **10:44-48**

The Holy Spirit fell on those listening

They spoke in tongues praising God *"just as we did"* -

Identified full in **Acts 15:8-9**

They were baptised as believers

#### Truths we need to acknowledge

##### 1. Prejudice is a sin

*But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. James 2:9 and 1 John 2:11*

##### 2. God is not prejudice toward any **Deuteronomy 10:17-19**

*As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:11-13*

#### How to overcome racial prejudice

##### 1. Understand your own position in Christ

*We were separated from Christ but He reached us remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Ephesians 2:12-13*

##### 2. See others as divinely crafted

*God created all in His own image So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27*

##### 3. Accept the view of God

*God looks on the heart Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7*