

# 10/09/22 - Acts 10:1-35 - "The Reformation of Piety & Prejudice"

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[0:00] The text today is Acts 10, verse 1 to 35, and it reads, At Caesarea, there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian cohort.

A devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people and prayed continually to God. About the ninth hour of the day, he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, Cornelius, and he stared at him in terror and said, What is it, Lord? And he said to him, Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon, who is called Peter.

He is lodging with one Simon, a tentmaker whose house is by the sea. When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him.

And having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa. The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray.

[1:17] And he became hungry and wanted something to eat. But while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heavens opened in something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth.

In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter, kill and eat. But Peter said, By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.

And the voice came to him again, a second time. What God has made clean, do not call common. This happened three times. And the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

Now, while Peter was inwardly perplexed to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made an inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate and called out and asked whether Simon, who was called Peter, was lodging there.

And while Peter was pondering the vision, the spirit said to him, Behold, three men are looking for you. Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation. For I have sent them.

[2:35] And Peter went down to the men and said, I am the one who you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming? And they said, Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house.

And hear to what you have to say. So he invited them in to be his guest. The next day he rose and went with them. And some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him.

And on the following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshipped him.

But Peter lifted him up, saying, Stand up. I too, Peter, lift him up. Wait, sorry. I too am a man. And as he talked with them, he went and found many persons gathered.

And he said to them, You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or visit anyone from another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean.

[3:57] So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I asked them, Why are you sent for me? And Cornelius said, Four days ago, about this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour.

And behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing and said, Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before the Lord. Send therefore to Joppa and ask for

Simon, who is called Peter.

He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner by the sea. So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Now therefore, we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.

So Peter opened his mouth and said, Truly, I understand that God shows no partiality. But in every nation, anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

This is the word of the Lord. Amen. It's quite a passage, isn't it?

[ 5 : 05 ] It's often the challenge every week of how to simplify things like that.

How to draw out of Luke's intention and communicate something to us today.

This is the preacher's challenge. And with God's help, I plan to do that today for us and to take this large chunk of passage and to examine it and to draw from its well of what it means for us today.

And so what I'd like to do is have a word of prayer. We'll take this large chunk of passage section by section. And we're going to see something develop before our eyes.

Let's pray. Father, I come to you today as your servant. Father, guide me, guide my words, guide my heart.

[ 6 : 13 ] Father, to do only what you desire to be done in this pulpit. Father, to speak not my logic, not my opinion.

But Father, let me speak your word to your church. You grow us through your word. You sanctify us through your word.

So Father, we ask you, we plead with you today to do that very thing. We praise in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Church, the moment of Christ's death upon the cross can be likened to a detonation. A detonation of various constructs that have previously been legislated by God and fulfilled solely at the cross.

Detonation. Did I lose you on that? Have you ever seen a building become detonated? It just comes crashing down.

[ 7 : 24 ] If you were alive and had the news on in 2001, 9-11, you saw two of them go on. I don't want to get into conspiracy theories about detonations.

God only knows what truly happened. We'll never know. But the aspect of a construct completely collapsing. This happens at the moment of Christ's death.

The message today is titled, The Reformation of Piety and Prejudice. I guess you could say I stole from Jane Austen, Pride and Prejudice title.

Great movie, by the way. And I got the Reformation on my mind. So here you go. You got the Reformation of Piety and Prejudice. And I'm not adding anything to the sermon title, the least bit.

This is within the text that we hold today. And we're going to draw out what that means. Piety. What is that? Well, piety is basically godliness.

[ 8 : 29 ] It's having reverence for God. A person who shows devotion to God would be considered pious. Prejudice, on the other side, is sort of those preferential bias that we have.

And it can either be favorable or unfavorable. Prejudice usually refers to our negative opinions that we hold. So prejudice is usually expressed in unreasonable and hostile feelings or opinions or attitudes towards ethnic, racial, social, or other religious groups.

Let's talk about that detonation here. That shockwave of the death of Jesus Christ is a blast that we can still feel today in our day and age. And it tests the very foundations of our piety, because piety is not bad.

And it reforms our prejudices that we often have adopted by the world. The passage today provides insight into this chronological demolition project of the Apostle Peter's worldview of piety and prejudice.

And so we can't forget where we're at in this passage. I feel like we're playing this game with all this traveling narrative in the passage. I feel like we're playing, like, where in the world is Peter today?

[ 9 : 55 ] He's just going to churches all along this coastline. The gospel has breached the walls of Jerusalem and is towards the western Mediterranean over there.

And we see that Peter is just being guided by just common everyday occurrences, but truly by the hand of God. And we know that as we've been unfolding this passage.

From revealing the emblematic signs and wonders in Lydda to Joppa, that all testify to the good news of Jesus Christ. That the apostles strengthened the church just as the legs of a man in Lydda were strengthened.

That for the Christian, you are raised from the dead as Tabitha was raised from the dead. All emblematic of the gospel. And Peter is now about to meet up with a man named Cornelius. Just as was read today in Caesarea. This is 37 miles north of Joppa. And here, at Caesarea, God will reveal His mission of salvation is not bound to prejudices or dependent upon piety, but supremely found upon and within the person and work of Jesus Christ.

[ 11 : 19 ] It reforms true piety and impartiality to all. It turns everything upon its head. So let's pick up where we were last week.

Where we left off last week. We're going to see three sections today. And the first section is God's reformation of piety to Cornelius.

Luke, being the writer of the book of Acts, he stops at Cornelius first, before getting to Peter. And we'll get back to Cornelius towards the end.

Verse 1 says, At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian cohort. He was devout, he feared God, with all his household.

He gave alms generously to the people and prayed continually to God. We meet a man named Cornelius. If there's any contrast that's apparent in the passage today, it's sort of like Cornelius is what Peter is to the Christian army, we'll say.

[ 12 : 30 ] This Cornelius is the general of his army, the Roman army. The apostle Peter is the general of the apostolic army, the Christians from Jerusalem, Judeo-Christians.

And so we see that Cornelius is distinguished because of his piety. The text, Luke says, he was a God-fearer, which is normally the term that's attributed to Gentiles, people who are outside the walls of Jerusalem, that adhere to Judaism, that are devout as Jews.

From the outside, they would appear as if they are God's people as well. And this is also found, his piety is also found in the alms, in the prayer.

He was generous, he was devoted to God. This is Cornelius. And God reveals himself. He says, Cornelius. And look at what this God-fearer, look how he responds.

And in terror, he stared at him. What is it, Lord? And he said, your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God.

[ 13 : 53 ] And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon, who is called Peter, who is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. And the angel left.

He sent men out. And so God reveals himself. In verse 30, Cornelius brings a little bit more detail of what he saw. It was a brightly shining man, clothed.

And he wasn't hallucinating. He wasn't dreaming. This isn't something that maybe he had one of those nightmares, or one of those dreams that we often are privy to.

This happened at three o'clock in the afternoon. His devotion, though, was seen by God. But it seems as if there's something missing.

He's got all the devotion. He's got all the piety. But something's missing. Send for a man. One man named Peter.

[ 14 : 59 ] Because from outside, Cornelius, he looked like he was devout, but from within, he's devoid. He's un-regenerate, as we will see, as the text between this week and next week will unfold.

Salvation is not a consequence of piety, but piety is a consequence of salvation. And we must not get the two mixed up. You see, church, devotion to the law and all these rules and legislation does not save.

It does not save. We will, in turn, also have something missing in our lives. You can do the dance of God's people. You can do the Judaistic jig.

All you want. But you will not, apart from the faith of their Messiah, you will not be assured that anything is sufficient to save you in your life, apart from the blood of Jesus Christ.

Not even alms that are recognized by God. Not even charitability that is recognized to God. And this made me think of, like, Bill Gates.

[ 16 : 12 ] You got Warren Buffet. You got George Soros. The big donors. These guys give billions. I think Bill Gates is, like, the top of, like, 27 billion in charitable donations.

And to think that if he is basing his salvation upon his wallet, he's going to be rudely woken up when the time comes for him to stand before his Maker.

God went to the trouble of revealing the missing element for Cornelius. the missing element of his piety.

And church, what was true for Cornelius then is true for us today. We can be a top charitable donor. We can be the hardest laborer.

We can be the most righteous person upon earth. But apart from faith in the revelation of Jesus Christ, we are without hope. The greatest charitable donor was Jesus Christ who gave himself for us on the cross.

[17:21] The hardest laborer was Jesus Christ who fulfilled the law. And the most righteous person was Jesus Christ who rose from the dead. We can count all as a complete loss apart from faith in Jesus Christ, regardless of its significant impact in this life.

This is the reality that will soon be known to Cornelius. And God is revealing the gospel to him. And we'll get into more of what happens to Cornelius next week. But before we get into that, Luke finds it important to create this cinematic overlap.

You got Cornelius and you got Peter. 37 miles apart. And Luke is highlighting this cinematic overlap, these two roads colliding.

And we see that the details within the passage not only state the struggle of piety with Cornelius, but a struggle with prejudice with Peter.

And this will be the dominating scene from this point in the sermon forward is Peter. And so, the second section, we see God's reformation of prejudice to Peter.

[18:37] Peter. And so, after we meet Cornelius, the scene one, we go 37 miles south the next day as they were on their journey.

These men are sent. You see these two scenes playing out. It's a picture-in-picture motion going on right now. The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, at the same time, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray.

And he became hungry and wanted something to eat. But while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heavens open and something like a great sheet descended, being let down by its four corners upon the earth.

and in it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. And there came a voice, Rise, Peter.

Kill and eat. But Peter said, By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.

[20:00] Cornelius isn't the only one who is pious, is he? And the voice came to him again a second time, What God has made clean do not call common.

This happened three times and the thing was taken up at once to heaven. We learn something about God through this cinematic overlap, don't we?

God is not bound to space. He's not bound to time. He's not bound to our calendar year. He's got his own.

And it's infinite. And we are finite. And he works a similar, simultaneous revelation in Peter's life as well with a similar vision.

And this was around lunchtime. Now, I want you all to see Peter right now sitting on the rooftop of Flat Plateau.

[21:01] And he's in the western part of this land where you could imagine just overseeing this Mediterranean ocean. And, I mean, what a view.

Spectacular scene. That would be a great retirement right there. And so, he's up there at lunchtime. praying by the sea.

In Peter's hunger, he received this similar revelation from God. But that of a sheet covering the four corners of the earth, marking the entirety of the earth, the four corners of the earth.

And specifically, this sheet within this sheet covering the earth, there were all these animals. Think about what he saw.

All these animals that were deemed unclean according to Leviticus 11. The things that he was supposed to not eat, not touch, the things that those Gentiles handle without much caution.

[22:11] And so, within this blanket and within Peter's worldview, he has been raised in Judaism. And everything is given these categorical aspects and borders of people, animals, and objects.

You'd have things that are holy, you'd have things that are pure, you'd have things that are profane. So, the things that are holy are literally set, they're divine, they're set apart for God.

The things that are pure is things that God makes clean, and those things that are profane are known as common. Those are the unclean things. And so, they're basic divisions of people.

You would have the priests who were set apart as holy, you'd have Israel who is declared clean, and you would have mankind, all the other folks that are profane. With that, you have animal divisions. You would have sacrifices that are set aside to be holy. You had food that you can eat that had to be clean.

[ 23 : 17 ] And then you had all the other animals that those Gentiles eat, right? Like all those reptiles that God has commanded are unclean in Leviticus 11.

This is what Peter is confused about. for a voice to command him to rise and kill that which God had previously declared as unclean or common, even to associate with that would be a giant error for any Jew.

And as I would imagine, Peter's prejudice led him probably to the rooftop as that tanner, that leather guy who deals with dead animals, all these unclean impurities, and he probably washes his hands not according to the ceremonial rituals of the Jewish people, but probably just like a little quick little dab of water there and we're good to eat some lunch, right?

And that Gentile downstairs, he's preparing this, he didn't do any of those rituals, he's not clean. What am I doing here? I could imagine Peter saying upon this rooftop, praying, no wonder he was up there praying, he was segregating himself from that which was unclean.

And just as the international student ministry can attest, these meals within this culture was significant. Having and sharing a meal, if I were to share a meal with Shanika, it would be basically me making a covenant, covenant, it's a covenantal binding, it's something significant, it's not just getting a full belly of food, it's something relational which unites that person to the other.

[ 25 : 15 ] And so Peter removes himself from that, he's up on a rooftop praying, and God uses this moment to detonate something by the power of the cross.

God uses, in the progressive revelation of his word, a detonation to dietary restriction for the Jewish people. You see, God has declared all animals to be clean.

It's an abolishment of dietary laws and restrictions. Peter, eat up. because just as the Jewish people were declared clean, as I have declared them clean, meaning that God has the authorization to set legislation, I'm rhyming, that's good.

This is something that's designated only to God, and so significant. Eat up, Peter, you only have to tell me once. Alligator, that's good. Turtle?

Unclean in Leviticus 11, but clean here. The problem though, Peter has separated himself from this tanner, an unclean person, eating unclean food, and probably dealing with some remorse of why he chose a tanner to stay with, why he didn't choose the receptionist for the local dentist next door.

[ 26 : 50 ] Why the tanner? Look where I'm at now. I'm in a pickle. Here we remember Peter's humanity, don't we? It's not the first time we've seen things in threes with him.

The man who denied Jesus three times of being a follower, here, denies God's revelation three times. This is the echoing of Jonah, his reluctance to travel to Nineveh, and actually all the geographical aspects of the story of Jonah align here.

The gospel breaks down piety. Cornelius, Peter, who both segregate themselves according to Jewish customs, and Peter specifically from Gentile meals and trades hunger for prayer, but now a new development, the gospel not only breaks down piety, it breaks down prejudice.

We all have prejudice, don't we? Those preferential biases, the people that we don't want to talk to or the Jonah not wanting to go to Nineveh according to God's plan.

You don't want to go to that neighbor. You don't want to go to that location. You don't want to talk to that person with all these holes and tattoos upon their body.

[ 28 : 29 ] We all have prejudices, discriminating against people and places, usually fueled by piety, like Peter on the rooftop.

But if you don't think that you have a prejudice, that you're a perfect person, you're better than me. Because we all have these prejudices culturally bound within us.

And so it's better for us to identify those and allow God to realign those. And so this is exactly what happens in the passage. So let's see how God begins to confirm his plan and mission as these two scenes unite with the arrival of these men.

As Peter is praying, these men arrive. And we see the third section and final section of the passage today. God's revelation of reformation.

We see verse 17. Now, while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house,

stood at the gates and called out to ask whether Simon, who was called Peter, was lodging there.  
[ 29 : 55 ] All the while, God is just amazing, church, how he guides us as his church. 19, verse 19, and while Peter was pondering the vision, inwardly perplexed, pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, behold, three men are looking for you, rise and go.

Good thing he didn't say rise and kill as he did previously. Rise and go and accompany them without hesitation for I have sent them. So, they make introductions and off they will be going here. And so, we receive insight to Peter's mental state. He's perplexed. He's quite in a tizzy over this whole thing.

He denied the revelation three times. God has showed him that three times and three denials. And he's sitting there pondering the vision on this rooftop.

God. Imagine questioning your entire worldview of what you thought was honoring God now being reformed.

[ 31 : 09 ] Truly, we are all works in progress. After all, making progress in this life without excuse. And Luke indicates Peter's inward perplexity in pondering the vision.

And you see, God interrupts the confusion in order to bring about instant confirmation. It's not just like a confirmation that once the guys get there, it's literally like two things happening at one time. He's pondering, God's bringing confirmation of what's going on. And there's a knock at the door. And the Spirit said to him, Behold, there are three men looking for you. Rise and go.

And look how this ends. It's like the rigid shell of piety that's formed within Peter's worldview is softening at the revelation of God's mission to the world.

God has detonated the constructs of the Mosaic dietary legislation to inaugurate the legislation of faith in Jesus Christ.

[ 32 : 08 ] And for Peter, it's like this debris. How do you know you demoed a building? Because you're covered in ash, you're covered in soot. And we see that Peter experiences that debris falling.

And a huge leap of faith is taken by this Peter, this denier. I would imagine taking the benefit of the doubt he invites them in.

He doesn't say, just stay outside the gates, I'll be with you shortly once I come to grips with what in the heck is going on in my life right now. This may be a midlife crisis, but it seems like God is doing something here that I don't like.

Because it seems almost rebellious. So he invites them in, and not only that, they spend the night. This is monumental for Peter. And so the next day, they arise, and they left. Cornelius calls his relatives, he's preparing all these people at his house, all his relatives and close friends to gather around.

[ 33 : 24 ] Peter's coming. This devout Gentile, this Roman commander of an army, has gathered and assembled a house party for Peter's arrival.

And when Peter entered, Cornelius just being a wonderful guest, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshipped him.

And Peter lifted him up saying, stand up. I too am a man. You can see that debris falling from that detonation.

Additional evidence of Peter's faith coming through as we see the level playing field of human dignity that he receives. Cornelius, just a man like him.

nobody special. This is huge. And 27, as he talked with him, he went in and found many persons gathered.

[ 34 : 33 ] He didn't just stand in the entryway kind of twiddle in his thumbs like, alright, I'm here. God, I'm here. Alright? Just like Jonah and Nineveh, I'm here. Alright, I'm doing it.

I don't like it. No, he went from the entryway into the parlor and lo and behold, he arrives at this house party.

Peter continues in this curiosity and enters into the dreadfully Roman home filled with Cornelius' friends and family.

What is the meaning of all of this? it's almost like you can share the humor of this whole thing.

Peter has no idea what's going on. Cornelius has no idea what's going on. And so they meet in this home. It's almost laughable as this cinematic overlap finds their intersect.

[ 35 : 33 ] They share their visions. Well, Peter says, you know, I was praying and then I saw this sheet. And I was told to come to you. So here I am.

And then Cornelius says, well, four days ago I was praying about this hour and we see that God had told me to send for you.

So now therefore, Cornelius says in verse 33, we're all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.

Lord, and something, as Peter is covered in this debris from that detonation of taking these leaps of faith, all of a sudden, it clicks.

The moment he says, to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord. At this very instance, church, the very spark that ignited the detonation of Peter's religious worldview similarly ignited the connections of the very mission that he has been commanded of by the Lord.

[ 36 : 45 ] Which takes us nine chapters back to Acts 1, starting in verse 6, where the apostles gathered around Jesus Christ in the resurrected state.

They asked, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And he said to them, it is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.

And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight. Cornelius is inquiring of that very thing.

What are you witness to? In other words, what was spoken then is coming to fulfillment now in Christ.

All nations, all tribes, all tongues are able to be saved. God will be saved. We've been watching a lot of minions at my house.

[ 38 : 07 ] And it's like the green line, light bulb goes off. At this moment, a light bulb. And so Peter opened his mouth, and I'm excited about this, and said, truly, I understand that God shows no partiality.

But in every nation, anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. What was previously a revelation of perplexity and pondering has become a revelation of understanding that Jesus is for all people.

Amen? The conditions? Well, yes, there's conditions. They must fear the Lord, vobis, to fear the Lord.

Feelings of respect and reverence, exalted to be in awe of. But they also must do what is right, literally translated as to do righteousness.

How does this translate according to the gospel? That salvation is available to those who exalt God. How? Clothing themselves in the righteousness of Christ.

[ 39 : 34 ] And I want you to think for a moment today. It's remarkable. Absolutely remarkable. Less isn't here. We're going to call it spectacular. spectacular.

Spectacular to think that God is holy. That is who God is.

His entire being is holy. It is light. Unblemished light. Pure. And to say that God is impartial. is absolutely remarkable, isn't it? Because the only way for a holy God to be impartial to that which is unholy calls for sin to be dealt with effectively.

This means that Christ's atonement, His death upon the cross, was most effectual and most sufficient, not lacking anything.

[ 40 : 48 ] And what gives a Christian confidence of pardon? God's partiality concluded as His wrath was poured upon the cross that all now may come.

If there is any favorable component that God sees in a person, it is not bound to our piety nor cultural, ethnical, or racial prejudices.

It is because that person is hidden in the righteousness of Christ. And this is good news. And Peter is about to open up a can of worms for this Gentile household here.

And we'll continue with that sermon next week. But as we come to a close in what this means for us today, is that Luke has penned for us a truth.

Luke has went to the length of binding this message for us today. Why is that significant? it? Because we can interrogate that truth.

[ 42 : 10 ] By way of the text, we can ask Peter, how is it that you know that you know that you know without a shadow of a doubt?

And Peter will constantly repeat, God showed me this, God sent me this, and all the while God showed this to them, and God sent me to them, to tell them this, God shows no partiality, but in

every nation anyone who fears the Lord and does what is right and is acceptable to him. Amen? This is why it's good news. The gospel is for all people. You can be the poorest person living under the Market Street Bridge and have everything in Jesus Christ, but you can also have everything, all the financial riches of Bill Gates and charitable donations and be removed from grace as well.

God is for all people, but are we for all people? Truly for all people.

For all people. For all people. For all people. For all people. For all people. For all people. the moment that we're disrespected in a restaurant by our waitress who's going through a living hell in their life doesn't treat you how you want to be treated.

[ 43 : 42 ] And you just make all these assumptions and you give her a lousy tip. When people don't look like you or respect the same things and the same people as you do.

When people don't talk like you say what you want them to say maybe don't vote the same way as you do as you believe that a faithful Christian should.

When people don't drive like you all of these things are we truly for all people? one remarkable aspect of Peter's journey as he was taken from confusion to confirmation is the present reality that God often reveals to us the incremental implications of the cross.

That he didn't just set Peter on course and say this is the way and Peter was like okay here we go. There was this incremental implication of wrestling with the truth of God's word as God has declared to him.

This is known in our lives as sanctification and it's humbling. It's a humble reality of how God incrementally breaks down our piety breaks down our prejudice at the progressive revelation and understanding of the gospel.

[ 45 : 23 ] In other words God takes our immature faith and grows us incrementally maturing us from the moment you have come to Jesus Christ and will continue to the moment you see him face to face.

If we have thoughts for a moment that we have arrived have we forgotten have we forgotten God have done the good news a prejudiced immature Christian can be reforms the text gives us that good news there is level ground at the foot of the cross who are we to ever withhold the good news from somebody else or cast judgments upon somebody else with our prejudices this is good news for your neighbor who you're quick to judge quick to neglect quick to abandon and in abandoning them you abandon the second greatest command to love your neighbor as yourself given by Jesus Christ may we be a church that proclaims a gospel that God has made available to all people and let us be remembered by not building walls where God has built a bridge amen let's pray