

# Readings

## Scripture

<sup>1</sup> Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. <sup>2</sup> So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, <sup>3</sup> "You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them." <sup>4</sup> But Peter began and explained it to them in order: <sup>5</sup> "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, something like a great sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to me. <sup>6</sup> Looking at it closely, I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the air. <sup>7</sup> And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' <sup>8</sup> But I said, 'By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' <sup>9</sup> But the voice answered a second time from heaven, 'What God has made clean, do not call common.' <sup>10</sup> This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into heaven. <sup>11</sup> And behold, at that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. <sup>12</sup> And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. <sup>13</sup> And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; <sup>14</sup> he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.' <sup>15</sup> As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. <sup>16</sup> And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' <sup>17</sup> If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" <sup>18</sup> When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."

- Acts 11:1-18 (English Standard Version)

# Sermon Outline

Jesus' Learning Laboratory  
Acts 11:1-18

*The Acts of the Apostles*  
Stephen Baldwin

*The Spirit of Christ strives to open our eyes to his saving work.*

**Blind hearts can't see the saving work of God.** (Acts 11:1-3)

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**Seeing hearts discern the saving work of God.** (Acts 11:4-17)

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**Seeing hearts praise the God who works to save.** (Acts 11:18)

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**Reflection Questions** (taken in part from the *Serendipity Study Bible for Groups*)

- Are you persuaded that Peter and the circumcision party were racially prejudiced?
- Does their particular form of prejudice corresponded to prejudices and racism in the modern world?
- Does the Bible teach that the descendants of Abraham were given the blessings of God's covenant just for themselves. Can you trace your answer through scripture?
- Where do you see evidences of God's people getting that right? Where did they get it wrong?
- Have you ever experienced what it is like to have your eyes opened to something that you just couldn't see before? How did it make you feel?
- What other hidden prejudices and fears can we help one another to see and to name?
- What does it look like to live faithfully in Christ in our culture where many nations and ethnicities are present?
- What steps could we take to live out...and live in, the reality of his purpose to make a new humanity under his Lordship?