

Date : 28 June 2026
Theme : The Holy Spirit in building the Kingdom of God
Topic : Working in Step with the Holy Spirit in Outreach
Passage : Acts 10-11
Key Verse : So Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing. Acts 10:30
Key Word : I prayed

Introduction

Acts 10 introduces a pivotal moment in Peter's ministry where God begins to expand the gospel beyond Jewish boundaries. This encounter shows us a key barrier – that we often fail to realise that it is God who prepares hearts, orchestrates encounters, and opens doors when we preach the gospel.

1. Why did God have to change Peter's mindset first before he would preach effectively?

Before God sent Peter to Cornelius, He had to reshape Peter's thinking - his inner framework. If the way we think and perceive people is not transformed, we will miss what God is already doing. When we refuse to see our problem, we will never be able to trust God for results. We fail to see that the Holy Spirit is involved in helping us. For Peter, like all Jews, his thinking was shaped by tradition: he was not to associate with non-Jews, not even to step into their house; not to eat their food that was not kosher.

What areas of Peter's thinking needed to be changed?

- **Assumptions**

Peter did not realise Cornelius was a seeker waiting to hear the gospel.

- We do not realise there are seekers waiting whose spiritual interest has already been aroused by the Holy Spirit.
- We often fail to recognise that God may have already prepared them; there is a lack of understanding in the Holy Spirit's activity.

Peter believed Gentiles were unlikely candidates for God's saving work. His fixed conclusion prevented him from seeing what God was already doing in Cornelius.

- We often presume certain people are unlikely to respond to our message.
 - An outspoken, argumentative person who asks difficult questions.
 - A family member whom we see as hostile to the gospel, so we avoid the conversation to "keep the peace".
 - "She is stubborn and not interested in spiritual things"
- We judge openness by appearance, background, lifestyle, occupation, or past behaviour and write off people:
 - Someone who appears rough or intimidating (*tattoos, piercings, tough exterior*).
 - Someone who previously rejected the gospel (*past behaviour*)
 - A friend who says he believes in other deities or religions (*background*).
 - A security guard in my condo (*occupation*).
- We see labels; God sees people He is drawing to Himself.
 - Peter saw a non-Jew centurion; we may see a drug addict, an ex-convict or a difficult colleague.
 - We see someone who is "too rich and successful to need God," but God sees a person He may still be drawing.

The problem is not the absence of seekers; it is the categories we place people in.

- **Convenience**

Peter was comfortable ministering among fellow Jews rather than crossing cultural and social boundaries.

- Like Peter, we naturally gravitate toward familiar people and environments rather than towards those outside our usual circles.
- Peter would never have expected a Roman centurion's home to become a place of spiritual harvest.
- We often limit God's work to convenient places – such as church settings, Christian events, or “spiritual” environments.
- We see neighbours as people to greet, not relationships to build with—staying at a safe distance of convenience rather than stepping into intentional friendship.

- **Fear of rejection**

Later, Peter told the centurion “*You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile.*” Human experience had conditioned Peter to expect rejection rather than receptivity.

- Past setbacks (*rejection, indifference, disappointment*) cause hesitation and can make us miss what God is opening before us.

Peter needed an inner shift in his thinking before he could step into what God had prepared. Likewise, we too need a renewed way of seeing if we are going to recognise and respond to what God is already setting in motion.

- A neighbour we only greet becomes someone we intentionally talk with—and a gospel door opens.
- A resistant family member becomes someone we pray for and gently engage over time.
- A “difficult” colleague becomes someone we listen to, not avoid—and trust begins to build.

2. What happened after Peter's thinking was transformed?

When Peter's thinking was aligned with God's perspective, it reshaped everything he did. What he once avoided, he now stepped into what God had already prepared.

A changed perspective always frees us to take action.

- **He crossed barriers he once avoided.** *Acts 10:23–29*
 - Peter travelled with Cornelius' men and entered a Gentile home.
- **He discovered God had already gone ahead of him** *Acts 10:24, 33*
 - Cornelius had gathered his household, ready to hear the message.
 - God often prepares people as He sends His messengers.
- **He saw people differently** *Acts 10:28, 34–35*
 - Peter realised God shows no favouritism and declared that no person should be called impure or unclean.
 - He realigned his view of people with God's perspective.
- **He proclaimed the gospel without hesitation** *Acts 10:36–43*
 - Peter was ready to preach the gospel to Cornelius' household.
 - Obedience must precede open doors.
- **His example reshaped others' understanding of God's will** *Acts 11: 18*
 - Peter's example reshaped the attitude of the Jerusalem church for a world vision.

A renewed perspective is incomplete until we act by faith. We must see what God sees.

3. How did the Holy Spirit orchestrate an open door for kingdom expansion?

The meeting between Peter and Cornelius was not a random encounter—it was a divinely orchestrated doorway for God’s mission to the Romans. Rome was the capital of the Roman empire.

- **The Holy Spirit orchestrates the timing and setup of the meeting** *Acts 10:19-20*
 - While Peter was available to go even though he was resting from work in Joppa, any delay would have aborted the opportunity.
 - The Holy Spirit prepares the hearts of both parties *Acts 10:7-8, 9-20*
 - Cornelius responded in obedience and gathered his household in expectation.
 - Peter was prepared through the vision, which reshaped his perspective.
 - God was already working before they ever met.
- **The Holy Spirit opens the door – and we determine who enters it** *Acts 10:24*
 - Cornelius responded by gathering his household, relatives, and close friends. His oikos (sphere of influence) included family, relatives, colleagues and fellow soldiers. He also had favour with those around him through his generosity and acts of help.
 - Evangelism begins by intentionally using existing relationships—family, friends, neighbours, and colleagues for gospel moments.
 - The breakthrough came as Cornelius brought his network into what God had opened.
- **The Holy Spirit uses potential leaders such as the centurion, we should be strategic in our vision.**
 - One household became a turning point for the early church *Acts 11:18*
 - The gospel expanded beyond Jewish boundaries into the nations *Acts 11:19–21*
 - A single encounter became a global mission shift.

Principle: God often sets up a big harvest through pre-believers who are influencers like Cornelius, therefore we should be alert.

Applications

Who are the “Cornelius connections” in my life—household, relatives, friends, neighbours, or colleagues—that God is inviting me to intentionally engage and bring into gospel moments?