

# Breaking Down Walls: How God Sees All People

In 1989, the world watched as the Berlin Wall came tumbling down. For 28 years, this concrete barrier had separated families and symbolized division between East and West Germany. But 2,000 years ago, Jesus accomplished something far greater - He tore down the wall that separated humanity from God and from each other.

## What Does It Mean to See Others as God Sees Them?

In Acts chapter 10, we witness a revolutionary moment when God breaks down cultural and religious barriers. Peter, a Jewish fisherman, receives a divine vision that challenges everything he's been taught about who deserves God's love. Meanwhile, Cornelius, a Roman centurion, has been instructed by an angel to send for Peter. This unlikely meeting would change the course of Christianity forever.

### The Power of Humility in Ministry

When Cornelius falls down to worship Peter, the apostle's response reveals a crucial truth about godly leadership. Peter immediately lifts him up, saying "Stand up. I myself am also a man." Despite being used mightily by God - healing the sick, raising the dead, and leading thousands to faith - Peter refuses to accept worship that belongs only to Jesus.

This teaches us that no matter how God has used us in the past or what vision He's given us for the future, we must be careful not to take His glory. We're all just people, servants doing our duty. True servants of Christ don't seek to rule over others; they seek to lift them up to Jesus.

### When God's Ways Challenge Our Traditions

Peter acknowledges that culturally and traditionally, Jews didn't associate with Gentiles. These weren't necessarily biblical commands, but cultural preferences that had become religious law over time. The Jewish people had taken God's instructions about not mixing with pagan nations and turned them into complete separation and discrimination.

But Peter makes a powerful statement: "God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean." This wasn't about Peter's preference - it was about God's plan.

Are We Following God or Our Preferences?

Too often our complaints aren't biblical - they're preferential. We don't like change, whether cultural, traditional, or generational. When something challenges our norm, we push back and attach a "God label" to our resistance. But what if God wants to do something fresh?

The greatest works of God are often done outside religious boxes. We must ask ourselves: Does my life reflect more of God's love or man's legalisms? Am I fixated on traditions and what people are doing wrong, or on showing God's love and grace?

### God Shows No Partiality

Peter's declaration that "God shows no partiality" was revolutionary coming from a Jewish man who would have prayed daily, thanking God he wasn't a Gentile, woman, or slave. This statement revealed that God loves all people equally and has opened the door for everyone to stand on equal ground before Him, regardless of race, background, or nationality.

The Difference Between Friendship and Favoritism

Having close friends isn't showing partiality - that's normal life. Favoritism becomes problematic when we favor someone because of our pride, preferences, prejudices, or because we want something from them. James warned believers against showing favoritism in church, particularly between the wealthy and poor.

We must check our hearts, motives, and words. Sometimes we don't need to say what we're thinking if it doesn't reflect God's heart. When we treat all people with value, we won't be unloving or partial.

### **How to Share the Gospel Effectively**

When Peter finally shares the Gospel with Cornelius and his household, his presentation is concise and powerful. He covers three essential elements:

- The Man: Who Jesus Christ is and what He's done
- The Witnesses: Personal testimony of those who saw Him alive
- The Mission: That everyone who believes receives forgiveness of sins

Peter started with what they knew about Jesus and took them to what they needed from Jesus. This approach is both biblical and practical for sharing our faith today.

### **When God Interrupts Our Plans**

While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon everyone who heard the Word. God essentially said, "Peter, you've said enough - step back and let Me work." This reminds us that salvation is God's work, not ours. We present the truth; He pours out His Spirit.

The work of the Spirit doesn't always happen at the end of a service or presentation. Sometimes it occurs right in the middle when a word or truth pierces someone's heart. God is in charge of the timing and the results.

### **Welcoming Others Into God's Family**

When the Jewish believers saw Gentiles receiving the same Holy Spirit they had received, they were astonished. There was no competition, no power plays - just recognition that God was doing for others what He had done for them. This is the heart of true ministry: "You've got to experience this too. Welcome to the family of God."

## **Life Application**

If Jesus tore down the wall that separates people from God and from each other, don't build it back up. Some walls are meant to stay down forever. This week, examine your heart for any prejudices or favoritism that might be hindering your ability to see others as God sees them.

Consider these questions:

- Do I see others as God sees them, or am I struggling with prejudices in my heart?
- Does my life reflect more of God's love or man's legalisms?
- Am I willing to step outside my comfort zone to share God's love with someone different from me?
- How can I show the same grace to others that God has shown to me?

Ask God to reveal any areas where you've built walls instead of bridges. If He shows you prejudices or favoritism in your heart, own it, ask for forgiveness, and let Him replace those attitudes with His overflowing love. Remember, you're just one person telling another person where to find life - and that life is found in Jesus Christ alone.