

# PLOT TWIST

## When God Surprises His People

### Part 2: *Breaking the Rules for God?*

#### INTRODUCTION – Lord of the Plot Twist

Mark 7:17-23

#### DINE IN – The Conversion Cornelius...and Peter

Acts 10:1-43

Acts 10:1-11:18

Leviticus 11:1-47; 20:25-26

Matthew 15:16-20

Genesis 12:3

Deuteronomy 10:17-19

#### TAKE OUT – I'll Have That to Go Please

##### TAKE OUT #1 – Total Depravity?

The example of Cornelius shows us that although all people are sinful and in need of salvation, that doesn't mean people are completely evil and incapable of honouring God. We should avoid the extremes of seeing people as completely wicked or completely light and love. We are image bearers of God, but we are sinful, broken, and in need of repair, restoration, and renewal. There is good to be found in all people. But everyone still has the need of forgiveness, salvation, and reconciliation with God.

Isaiah 64:6; Psalm 14:3; Romans 3:10-12, 23; John 6:44

VS

Job 1:1; John 12:32; John 16:8

##### TAKE OUT #2 – Jesus is the Way

Salvation is given to us through faith in Christ, not by being as good a person as possible. Being good is a good thing and pleases God. But our level of brokenness is more extreme and demands a more radical solution than merely being good can accomplish. Jesus came to forgive our sin and offer healing to our souls. Trusting Christ aligns us with God's Spirit at work in the world today.

##### TAKE OUT #3 – True Holiness

Biblical holiness (that is, being set apart to do God's will; aligning with God's work in the world) is defined for us by Christ, not by conservatives (or liberals). Christians must always allow Jesus to challenge our religious traditions and scriptural assumptions. Are you really aiming for Jesus, or for the perpetuation of a theological system or a familiar religious culture?

##### TAKE OUT #4 – Making Room

The early Jewish Christians had to radically change their traditions in order to make room for Gentiles (see Ephesians 2:11-22). When God converts new people and new kinds of people to himself, the church must also convert in some ways to make room. The orientation of the church is always forward, into new growth and adaptation and not a backward focus, trying to steward the way things were.

#### CONCLUSION – Getting the Gospel

Acts 10:42-43

#### HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS

##### Warming Up...

1. In the first century, the idea of Jews and Gentiles uniting together in faith and life was unthinkable. What are some groups in our world today that would take a miracle to become united together as one family?

##### Look to the Book...

2. Take some time to review the entire story of Cornelius and Peter in **Acts 10:1-11:18**. A) What verse, lesson, or idea stands out to you the most? Talk about it. B) Why would God send an angel to tell Cornelius that he needs to get Peter to come to him and give Peter instructions to go to Cornelius, when he could have just had the angel tell Cornelius the gospel in the first place? What does this say about how God works in our world today? C) Do you think Peter had a vision about food because of the Holy Spirit or because he was hungry and tired? What are some other ways God uses our basic realities (circumstances, personalities, talents, etc) to speak to us and through us? Talk about examples. D) Look again at **10:28-43**. What can we learn from Peter about our presentation of the Gospel to spiritual seekers today?
3. Obviously God wants all believers to live as one new people. Read **Galatians 2:11-16; 3:28-29; and Ephesians 2:11-22**. A) What verse, lesson, or idea stands out to you the most? Talk about it. B) What are the implications of this for ethnically-focused churches? What about Messianic synagogues (Jewish churches)? C) How can the typical Evangelical focus on the nation of Israel help and/or hurt the unity of the body of Christ? D) What other trends in the church work against radical unified diversity today?

##### So What?...

4. Review TAKE OUT #1. Are you more in danger of becoming biblically unbalanced by viewing people as generally sinful or generally pure?
5. Review TAKE OUT #2. Are you ever tempted to become lazy in sharing the good news of Jesus motivated by the self-serving hope that as long as people are living good lives that is enough?
6. Review TAKE OUT #3. In your life, what system of theology or church tradition or way of approaching faith are you tempted to put in the centre instead of the radical person and teachings of Jesus?
7. Review TAKE OUT #4. Take time to pray for The Meeting House, that we as a church community will become more excited about moving forward into new opportunities rather than about keeping things the way we're used to them.

The Meeting House | Sunday, January 24, 2010 | Bruxy Cavey

Notes are available online at [themeetinghouse.ca/teaching](http://themeetinghouse.ca/teaching)