

Marks of Discipleship

November 15, 2020

Day 1: Acts 10:9

About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray.

Two men were sent from Joppa to find Peter. These men were servants of Cornelius, a Roman officer. There are certain times of the day that prayer is believed to be more effective. Noon is one of them; Midnight is another one. Today not many people like the idea of having certain times to pray, they like to pray whenever they want to. Unfortunately this leads to very little prayer being said. We should take the time to pray at least three times a day. I mean to set aside 15-20 minutes and just pray.

Question: Where is your favorite place to pray?

Challenge: This week each day and twice a day pray in different places just to see what that feels like.

Scripture: Matthew 6:5-8, Matthew 26:36-46, Luke 5:12-1

Day 2: Acts 10:10

He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance.

Peter was not only praying but he was also at the end of a fast. It was believed that during a fast a person was in a better state of mind to receive a vision. During a fast whenever we feel hungry we are supposed to do two things: 1) pause and pray 2) use our "suffering" (because of hunger) to recall Christ's suffering and the reason for it.

Question: What is the longest time you have gone without food?

Challenge: Prepare a meal for someone else this week.

Scripture: Matthew 6:25-34

Day 3: Acts 10:11-12

He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air.

The animals were ones that a Jew wouldn't eat or be around. In the Jewish faith there were dietary rules about what could be eaten and what was to be avoided. Most of these rules had as their side benefits being more sanitary. Peter sees the animals but is not sure what it all means. He does know that he is hungry and wants to eat something.

Question: If you were going to be an animal, what would it be?

Challenge: If you had a farm, what animals would you keep? For each one write down what it would take to care for them. Now do you want to keep them?

Scripture: Genesis 2:18-20, Genesis 1:26-28

Day 4: Acts 10:13-14

Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat." "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."

Peter would have to kill, clean, cook and then eat the animals God was showing him. Peter's response was normal for a Jewish person. Peter believes he is being asked to do something that goes against his religious upbringing. Many of the Jewish laws were cultural as well as religious. For Peter it was like asking him to put his hands in mud, then eat lunch.

Question: What is the most unusual food you have ever eaten?

Challenge: Think of some foods that you would consider "unclean?" Can you think of anything else besides some foods that you would consider unclean?

Scripture: Leviticus 5:1-6

Day 5: Acts 10:15

The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."

Peter needs to learn that if God says something is clean than it is clean. The point is that it is God who says what is clean and unclean. We, like Peter may have to re-think our former beliefs to fit new circumstances. God wants the message to reach to the ends of the earth and to do so we may need to rethink our beliefs.

Question: What do you think the Law meant when it called some food impure?

Challenge: How did God make you "clean?"

Scripture: Romans 14:1-23

Day 6: Acts 10:16-17

This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven. While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate

The repeating of the request by God shows how hard it is for Peter to accept what he is being told. It was easier to believe the Resurrection than to undo years of early training. His attitudes needed to be changed and attitudes are something that we lose ten minutes after we die. One of the reasons God wanted Peter to stay at Simon the Tanner's house was that it was easy to find because of the smell associated with the trade of Tanning (cleaning animal hides).

Question: Think of the last time you heard something that was very hard to believe. How many times did you have to hear it to believe it?

Challenge: Think of 3-5 impossible things you believe are true.

Scripture: John 3:1-17