

**An Open Door to Mission Part 1– A Personal Mission**  
**Acts 10 & 11 – Key: Acts 11:1-3**

1. Overview of Acts 10 & 11
  - a. Three stories in parallel – Cornelius praying; Peter eating; Jerusalem Church judging.
    - i. See Peter’s “unclean” animals – focus on Vs. 10:15
  - b. Central Characters
    - i. Cornelius – a “religious” man who needed to be saved – 11:14
      1. A good man, but not saved from his sin
    - ii. Peter – a saved man who needed enlightenment – 10:15
      1. We must all continue to “walk in the light” as we have light to see.
    - iii. Jerusalem Church “circumcised believers” – believers who needed grace.
      1. Accusation was association with Gentiles – rather than celebration of Gentile salvation.
2. A closer look at each in comparison to us.
  - a. Cornelius represents the culture around us.
    - i. We live in the most “religious” and “spiritually minded” culture ever since biblical times.
    - ii. We live in an atmosphere of tolerance, goodness. We know “religion.”
    - iii. We know more “good” people than we do “rank sinners.”
    - iv. Cornelius was one man needing to talk to one man.
      1. Cornelius was hungry and Peter had food!
  - b. Peter represents the personal call to mission – our open door to God’s assignment
    - i. Being mission minded begins in the heart of each individual
    - ii. Our mission – our assignment from God – is to be able to tell others what God has done for us.
      1. Be ready to give an account...
    - iii. Peter felt religiously superior to Cornelius.
      1. Studies show people will not discuss spiritual matters with people to whom they feel they are superior – likewise they will not talk with people with whom they feel inferior.
    - iv. Peter’s judgment was based on race – nationality.
      1. There is no space given in Scripture for any form of prejudice based on race, gender, and ethnic origin, economic or social status.
      2. 10:34 “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.”
      3. We do not condone sin – but we do love the sinner!
        - a. The alcoholic is welcome here; but he cannot bring his liquor to our fellowship dinner.
      4. We must recognize Wesley’s great statement of “There but by the grace of God go I.” So we do not judge another person.
  - c. The circumcised believers represent the church in its least favorable view
    - i. This remains the opinion of many outside the church today – “they love Jesus, but they don’t like the church.”
    - ii. The contended – criticized – Peter for eating with Gentiles

1. I know pastors who would think I just preached heresy by saying alcoholics are welcome here!
    2. They think you have to get saved first before you are welcome at the church.
      - a. Like getting cleaned up to take a shower!?
  - iii. The circumcised believers...
    1. Had been set free but refused to leave their cell
    2. Legislated holiness but without the Holy Spirit to empower it
    3. Administered the rule but dismissed the grace
    4. Remembered the law for forgot the cross
3. Behold, I stand at the door and knock...”
  - a. Before our congregation as a whole can be Mission Minded it must begin in the heart of each one.
  - b. This story highlights the personal mission call – our personal assignment – to declare God’s worth in all we do and to all with whom we communicate.
  - c. The fields are white unto harvest – the fields that YOU walk in are ripe for harvest
  - d. Jesus is calling... will you open the door of your heart to a personal mission for our Lord?