**Unstoppable - wk 16 – 2 Visions – 1 Mission**

**Acts is Jesus: The Sequel. Luke Vol 2 – The “what now?”**

**Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

**With supernatural growth and intense persecution.**

**Yet they are unstoppable.**

**GUESS WHO GOD IS INVITED TO CHURCH? God's Surprise Guest List**

**5 people you might not have over for dinner – Jesus says come!**

**1. Samaritans – Lost causes - people you avoid at all cost (Acts 8)**

**Problems ethnically, beliefs, traditions. God says there are no lost causes – If I have called them to come.**

**2. Simon - local drug dealer/ cult leader, people who hurt people (Acts 8)**

**A person deceiving, using and abusing people. The dealer on the corner who hurts others - God says – I am inviting them.**

**3. Eunuch from Ethiopia – abused, confused and counted out (Acts 8)**

**A person gender altered - Deut 23:1 - could never be right w/ God. God is inviting them- only then will they know who they truly are.**

**4. Saul - a murderer and arch-enemy – the terrorist (Acts 9)**

**Last person you want saved – violent, mean, hurt so many. Zealous to destroy Christianity. God said I chose you!**

**Today another surprise guest no one saw coming - a group no one expected to see come to dinner. Not even the disciples.**

**Acts 10:1 At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment.**

**Map – Caesarea - major Roman port – capital city of Rome in Judean region. Centurion – had over 100 men under him, like a sergeant today. Italian regiment = special forces.**

**Despised as Gentiles, occupiers, invaders and intruders.**

**2 He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; (did not know the real God - but were sincerely religious) he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. (God generalization – generic, a god) 3 One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, “Cornelius!” 4 Cornelius stared at him in fear. “What is it, Lord?” (master) he asked. The angel answered, “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. (The real God - saw him hungry for truth) 5 Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. 6 He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea.”7 When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier (1 of 3 was a seeker) who was one of his attendants. 8 He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa. (13 to 15 hour walk)**

**map - Last wk - Peter the Apostle was in Joppa staying with a Tanner named Simon. He has been there for “some time.” Living with a tanner, God already working on his heart.**

**(In the meantime, God is working on Peter) 9 About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. 10 He became hungry and wanted something to eat, (love that - like us we start to pray and get to thinking about food) and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. (Gets to praying, falls asleep and dreams of food)**

**This was his dream / vision - 11 He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. 12 It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. 13 Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.” 14 “Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.” (Unclean are animals that eat garbage and flesh, and trash – like pigs, lobster, grabs, reptiles, some birds, insects, etc.) 15 The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.” 16 This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.**

**Animals considered unclean come down from heaven – 3X God tells him to eat them. Peter holding to Jewish law is surprised. God says, “Don't you dare call things impure that I make clean."**

**Just as Peter woke - the HS orchestrated a divine appointment.**

**17 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. 18 They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there. (calling from the gate at the same time Peter had the vison – God’s timing is perfect)**

**19 While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three men are looking for you. 20 So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.” 21 Peter went down and said to the men, “I’m the one you’re looking for. Why have you come?”**

**22 The men replied, “We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say.” 23 Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests. (This suggests that Peter had been living there a long time – living there.)**

**23b The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the believers from Joppa went along. (Peter and some disciples head out on walk 13 hrs – walking in faith) 24 The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. (Corn bringing friends and family to church) 25 As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. 26 But Peter made him get up. “Stand up,” he said, “I am only a man myself.”**

**Corn. a strong military sergeant kneels at a Jewish man’s feet. He does not know who God is – but is humbled by the vision**

**I like that Peter was determined to not be the star, ego in check**

**27 While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. (Whoa - not expecting this) 28 He (Peter) said to them: “You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. 29 So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?” 30 Cornelius answered: “Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me 31 and said, ‘Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. 32 Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.’ 33 So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.”**

**Notice the timing – three days earlier – the pacing of the visions – that brought them together in 3 days time.**

**34 Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism (Partiality) 35 but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. (You don't need a dream or angel to tell you to share Jesus - Peter had to have his heart rearranged about people) 36 You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. 37 You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. (you have heard about him – but you don’t know him)**

**39 “We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, 40 but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. 41 He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen - by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. 43 All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”**

**Peter gave the gospel!! He said, “You need to know this.”**

* **Jesus is LORD of all – v36 (Jesus is God/Man)**
* **Jesus earthly ministry – v37-39 (his miracles and power)**
* **Jesus was crucified on the cross – v39 (Killed)**
* **Jesus rose from the dead – v40-41 (3 days later)**
* **Jesus is the eternal righteous judge – v42 (we answer to...)**
* **Everyone who believes this is saved and forgiven – v43**

**44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. 45 The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. (uncircumcised people) 46 For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. (Sign to Jewish believers that Gentiles had same HS, Acts 2)**

**What no sinner prayer? No baptism first? No church membership? How did the HS fill them while still speaking? God enabled them and they believed as they heard the truth.**

**As they heard – by faith they believed = and were saved / filled.**

**Acts 10:46b Then Peter said, 47 “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” (Salvation) 48 So he ordered (commanded - insisted) that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. (By the authority of Jesus – trinity baptism) Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.**

**\*\* True believers - are baptized with the Holy Spirit**

**and baptized in water. An outward sign of an inward work.**

**Notice - baptism is not salvation, but it is required**

**Which is why baptism is so important – it says I believe!**

**5. Cornelius – A gentile Roman soldier**

**Cornelius was the first gentile born again –the last person they ever expected to be on God's guest list.**

**The big deal is - anyone not from Jewish decent was considered unclean - lost - Gentiles were a dirty word.**

**Ethnically - gentile pig / Politically - roman occupier / Positionally - military commander / Socially - wealthy roman / Everything Peter despised. But God says, If I call them – they are mine.**

**\* We are Gentiles - this was about Jesus inviting the rest of us.**

What We can Learn from these Unexpected Invites

**1.The gospel is a message that must be preached, heard, and received.**

**Peter, Phillip didn’t sit around thinking God will figure it out.**

**Being a good person and going to church is not enough, you must tell**

**Romans 10:14 But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? 15 And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, “How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!”**

**It is news – it must be told – it not water wells and food drives**

**Believing in God / doing good is not enough, you must believe (faith)**

**Notice God did not tell, Cornelius, you're okay as you are. But rather, I am going to send someone to tell you the truth - what you need. (KJV)**

**Jo 6:28 Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” 29 Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”**

**Only then do you become His - John 1:12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.**

**Salvation is not based on good deeds, devotion, belief in God, and worship services and church - Corn, you must believe in the gospel of Jesus, by grace (God’s enablement) by faith.**

**Acts 15:9 He did not discriminate between us and them, (Jewish and gentiles) for he purified their hearts by faith. 10 Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? 11 No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”**

**Churches tend to do 1 of 2 things - either say change before you come - or - say come as you and leave it at that - But God says... come as you are and let me change you – inside out.**

**2. If God is putting someone on your heart, He is most often is working on their heart.**

**Like Cornelius, Eunuch, and even Paul after the Damascus Rd, God was working on them and sent someone into their life at just the right moment. God orchestrated the events.**

**God works, in ways unseen to us, to draw people to Himself.**

**Who has God put on your heart?**

**3. God saves the unexpected – don’t count anyone out**

**The main point of this passage is this - The Gospel of Jesus is for all nations. No partiality of nations when it comes to salvation.**

**This was unimaginable to Jewish Christians. Does not compute.**

**Who do you consider “unclean” – the no way people?**

**God was moving the early church out of their bubble.**

**A lot of Christians like to live in the Christian yellow pages - never crossing path with a non-Christian**

**Do you look at the world with fear (isolate) or with boldness (infiltrate)**

**A new Christian may need to isolate for a season to grow - but our goal is to ultimately be with those who need Jesus -**

**We are called to be salt & light - Salt is no good in the shaker!**

**Reach out to broken people & you’ll find beautiful people**

**Who would have ever guessed that these people would lead so many to Jesus.**

**The world may see a boulder, the Lord sees a beautiful statue. What do you see when you see people? Hard hearted / rough edges... or a piece of art made by the hands of a master artist.**

**These dinner guests remind us no one is beyond the reach of God**

* + **The ethnic and religious outcasts**
  + **The despicable in the community**
  + **The abused confused and counted out**
  + **The violent enemy who is hard to trust**
  + **The least likely counted out**

**But there is one more - The last people on the list – you**

**You are not beyond God's reach - Jesus says - you're invited...**

**4. God is still sending people**

**Just as God sent Phillip up the road and then to a distant land.**

**As God sent Peter to a little costal town by the sea.**

**As God sent Paul to the Roman world - God still sends people!**

**Somewhere right now - God is working in the heart of someone - waiting for you to show up.**

**For you it could be a person in a distant land, or a woman across the street, a man down hall, a person at your table or group.**

**So, as we go today - make your heaven party people list - and let’s get going**