

CHRISTIANITY TAKES COURAGE

Part 5

“It Takes Courage to Reach Out to Those Not Like You”

Acts 10

Presented by

Pastor Justin Greene

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R. Kent Hughes writes,

When Peter was told “What God has made clean, do not call common,” God was confronting Peter’s prejudice. Peter had bound all the peoples of the world, except for his own race, into one loathsome bundle. God used a vision to bring a radical change in the attitude of the leading apostle of the early church, and it is a good thing he did. Otherwise Christianity would have been reduced to a narrow sect of Judaism, and you and I would have never heard the good news. Those whom we reject and scorn will also be excluded from Christ – as far as *our* Christian outreach and ministry is concerned.

Mahatma Gandhi shares in his autobiography that in his student days in England he was deeply touched by reading the Gospels and seriously considered becoming a convert to Christianity, which seemed to offer a real solution to the caste system that divided the people of India. One Sunday he attended church services and decided to ask the minister for enlightenment on salvation and other doctrines. But when Gandhi entered the sanctuary, the ushers refused to give him a seat and suggested that he go elsewhere to worship with his own people. He left and never came back. “If Christians have caste differences also,” he said to himself, “I might as well remain a Hindu!”

*Some draw a circle that shuts men out;
Race and position are what they flout;
But Christ in love seeks them all to win,
He draws a circle that takes them in!*
- Edwin Markham, adapted¹

GOD'S GRACE COMPELS US NOT JUST TO BE SAVED, BUT TO BE SHAPED BY HIM!

- When our attitude, thinking and actions inhibit the gospel

- God confronts our prejudices (1,2).

“For all our many differences, such as race, creed, culture, gender and nationality, people all over the world have at least one thing in common: prejudice. It’s a stubborn, thorny weed that grows in every heart and draws nourishment from the rotting compost of our fallen, sinful nature. Cut it to the ground, poison its leaves or pull it out by the roots ... and it’ll be back before you know it.

- Chuck Swindoll²

- God confronts our theology (9-16).

- God confronts our blind spots (17).

WHEN WE YIELD TO GOD'S "SHAPING"

- He widens our worldview (34).
- He advances the gospel (36-40).
- He increases our understanding (44-45).
- He fills us with joy (46).

THE WRAP

¹R. Kent Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire*, Copyright © 1996, Crossway, Wheaton, IL, 60187, page 149.

²Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary: Acts*, Copyright © 2016, Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, IL, 60188, page 191.