

Background Scripture: Acts 10:34-47

Print Passage: Acts 10:34-47

No Favorites



RACHEL HAD WAITED FOR YEARS TO BE ADOPTED BY A FAMILY THAT WOULD LOVE AND CARE FOR HER. During her thirteen years of life, Rachel lived in five different foster care homes. From what Rachel learned about foster care, older children were less likely to get adopted because many people

preferred younger children. When Rachel was six years old, the foster family she lived with went to church regularly. Rachel enjoyed going to church, and she believed that if anyone could help her find a family, God could. Although she continued to be moved from one family to another, Rachel made her request known to God and she never stopped hoping that one day, she would be adopted and have the family she always wanted.

During the Thanksgiving break, Rachel was invited to have dinner at a classmate's house. The classmate and Rachel had become great friends. Rachel's friend Trisha had secretly been talking to her parents about Rachel's coming to live with them permanently. Trisha's family had interacted with Rachel many times. They thought she was delightful, and since Trisha was an only child, they appreciated how the two easily connected and enjoyed spending time together. After some serious thinking and preparation, Trisha's family decided they would put a plan into action to adopt Rachel. At the dinner, Tricia's mother said, "Well, you know, Rachel, Trish gets pretty lonely around here. We were wondering if you could do us a favor by becoming Trish's sister? I mean, there would be no favorites, you will be treated like Trish and will have to pull your weight around here. What do you say?"

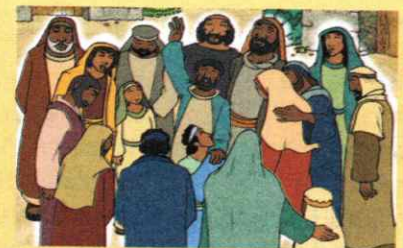
Rachel could not believe what she was hearing. She was so excited she jumped up from the table and started hugging everyone. All Rachel could think about was that God heard her cry years ago and today, He answered her prayer.



WORD UP

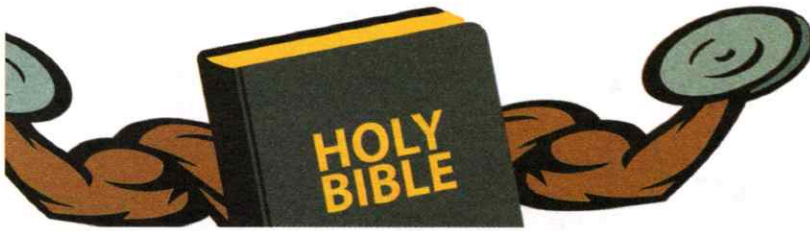
Acts 10:34-47

34 Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism **35** but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. **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. **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." **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. **46** For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. 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."



KEY VERSES:

Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right." (Acts 10:34-35)



THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!

WORK OUT

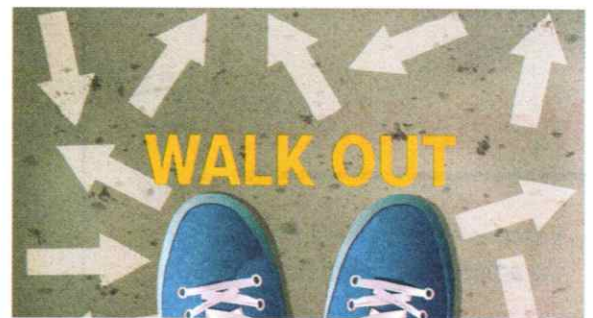
IN TODAY'S LESSON, PETER IS TEACHING THE IMPORTANT MESSAGE THAT GOD DOES NOT SHOW PARTIALITY OR FAVORITISM BETWEEN PEOPLE GROUPS. During the time of the early church, Jews and Gentiles did not associate with each other. Jews prided themselves in being God's chosen people. To them, the Good News message of Jesus Christ was for them. Peter challenged their thinking by teaching that the gift of salvation is free for everyone. No longer would there be barriers that would prevent people from having a relationship with Jesus. In his sermon, Peter teaches how Jesus lived on the earth and went about doing good. He also taught about Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. Those who believe in these things and confess that Jesus is Lord receive the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

God arranged for Peter (a Jewish man) and Cornelius (a Gentile) to meet. Peter ministered to Cornelius and his household about Jesus Christ and they all believed in all that Peter told them. God poured out the Holy Spirit onto all those who listened to Peter's Good News message about Jesus Christ and believed. On that day, Gentiles were saved and given the gift of the Holy Spirit just like the believing Jews, and they now shared the same Spirit, who would lead and guide them into their new life with Jesus. After receiving the Holy Spirit, the new converts were baptized to publicly announce their identification with the Christian community.

Cornelius was a Gentile who, along with his household, received the message of Jesus Christ and was saved! During ancient times, Jews and Gentiles did not hang out together because of certain laws and customs. But when Cornelius met Jesus, laws and customs did not matter anymore. Cornelius was so pleased with Peter that he invited him to stay at his home for a while. This gesture showed Peter Cornelius's genuine desire for knowledge and fellowship. Christians grow in strength and faith when they fellowship with other believers. Open your heart to new Christian connections and watch your faith grow.

INSIDE OUT

Sometimes, people may try to convince you that only certain religious denominations have access to the rights and privileges that come with knowing God. Today's lesson highlights the fact that anyone who believes the Good News message of Jesus' life, death, burial, and resurrection can be saved. Never allow anyone to persuade you that only certain people can have a relationship with Jesus. Jesus' finished work on Calvary's Cross paid for the sins of the world. Therefore, anyone who surrenders their heart to Jesus can have a personal relationship with Him. Hallelujah!



Today's message reminds us that God does not have favorites. God loves all people equally. Believers should reflect God's image of love in the world. Pray and ask God to help you show unconditional love to others. Trust that God will show you how to demonstrate love to everyone, especially those who have a special need.