



## Approaching God

Read this portion of Psalm 21 and begin with an opening prayer

*The king rejoices in your strength, LORD. How great is his joy in the victories you give! For the king trusts in the LORD; through the unfailing love of the Most High he will not be shaken. Your hand will lay hold on all your enemies; your right hand will seize your foes.. (Psalm 21:1,7-8)*

Remember today that you can trust the Lord to fight for you. Ask him to keep you from the easy nonchalance that fails to prepare for the attacks of the evil one that come our way. Ask the Lord to protect you from any pride or indignation that attempts to fight sin in your own strength.

## Acts 11:1-18

**Passage Introduction: Peter's Defense of the Gospel**

The final scene of the Cornelius narrative takes place in Jerusalem, where some of Peter's fellow Jewish Christians questioned his acceptance of the Gentiles. What a difference it makes when we look at others with attitudes that are inclusive, open-armed, optimistic, and lovingly and courteously aggressive. Peter's story reminds us that God wants to instill in us his attitude toward the world.

## Bible Reading, Study & Meditation

**Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.**

Use the space in the margin to jot down notes, or themes/ideas that stand out as important.

**Acts 11:1-18 - 1** The apostles and the believers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. **2** So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him **3** and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them." **4** Starting from the beginning, Peter told them the whole story: **5** "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. **6** I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles and birds. **7** Then I heard a voice telling me, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.' **8** "I replied, 'Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' **9** "The voice spoke from heaven a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.' **10** This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again. **11** "Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. **12** The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the

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man's house. **13** He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. **14** He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.' **15** "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. **16** Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' **17** So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God's way?" **18** When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life."

## Questions for Reflection & Meditation

- What are 2-3 things you learn or observe about God in this passage?
- What controversy awaits Peter when he travels from Joppa to Jerusalem?
- Can you think of a time when you were criticized for something you did in ministry? How did you respond? Why do you think Peter's critics came to agree with him?

## Key Takeaway:

As you read today's passage, what are 1 or 2 main takeaways that you wrote down in the margins? How would you briefly summarize your observations and meditations for today?

## Close in Prayer:

*Gracious Lord, I want to have a heart that is inclusive and optimistic. I desire a blessed, merciful aggressiveness like Jesus'. Enlarge the circle of my life, I pray, whatever the cost. Help me to be open to your leading and not to see myself as above those you want me to reach. May your love for everyone overflow from my heart and draw others to the Savior who died for them as much as he died for me. In Jesus' name, Amen.*