



DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

Easter (B) – Acts 10:34-43

Focus: *Easter is For All*

word of life

“I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.” Acts 10:34-35 (NRSV)

Read Acts 10:34-43

Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!

We proclaim this good news on this Easter Sunday with clarity and conviction, confident that the message of the resurrection of Christ is for all. The early church, however, wrestled with the inclusive scope of the Christian message. There were some who believed that the convert to Christianity had to follow the Jewish law before being accepted into the Christian community.

1. *What expectations are there today for those who convert and become Christian?*

It is in this struggle that we find Peter in the lesson for today. The context is critical for us to fully understand the importance of these verses. Cornelius – a centurion, a member of the Roman military, a Gentile – had a vision. An angel of the Lord instructed Cornelius to send messengers to ask Peter to come to his home. Before the messengers arrived at Peter’s home, Peter also had a vision of a sheet filled with animals – both clean and unclean. In the vision, Peter is commanded to eat, both the clean and unclean. When he protested eating that which was profane, a voice said to Peter, “What God has made clean, you must not call profane.” (Acts 10:15 NRSV) Peter was perplexed about the meaning of the vision, and then the messengers from Cornelius arrived.

It all began to make sense – the vision, the animals, the voice. Peter crossed the boundary of clean and unclean, of Jew and Gentile. He went to Cornelius’ home, even though it was unlawful for a Jew to associate with a Gentile. As Cornelius invited Peter to share the good news, Peter began with these profound words: “I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.” (Acts 10:34-35)

2. *What does it mean that God shows no partiality?*

Peter then told the story of Jesus. He told of Jesus’ ministry and message. He recalled how Jesus healed those who were oppressed. He proclaimed Jesus’ healing deeds and power.

Then Peter told the centrality of the faith: “They put him (Jesus) to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him up on the third day” (Acts 10:39-40 NRSV) And, in a bold statement reflecting a new insight, Peter said that everyone who believes in Jesus – both Jew and Gentile, clean and unclean – is included and receives forgiveness of sins in Jesus’ name.

3. *What do you guess the reaction to that news might have been?*
4. *Are there still walls which divide Christians? Explain. How do we move beyond the walls?*

The meaning of the visions of Cornelius and Peter became clear. Peter’s sermon had a profound effect on Cornelius and on all those gathered in his house who heard it. They were moved by the Holy Spirit to speak in tongues and extol God. The Spirit moved Peter to announce, “Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” (Acts 10:47 NRSV) The good news of Jesus is for all!

word among us

“Am I included?” “Is the invitation for me, too?” “Who invited them?” “They shouldn’t be here, should they?”

We too often gather in like-minded groups. We too often have lists of requirements that must be met before being accepted. We too often make prejudgments (note the word “prejudice”) about others, especially those who differ from us.

1. *How did your congregation invite newcomers to your Easter service?*
2. *What extra steps have been taken at your church to provide hospitality for guests who come to celebrate Easter with you?*

The good news – the Gospel message this glorious Easter day – is heard in the opening words of Peter’s sermon to those gathered in Cornelius’ home: “I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to him.” (Acts 10:34-35 NRSV)

We can’t fully grasp the significance of Peter’s insight for the early church. The inclusive universality of the message of Jesus empowered the apostle Paul to go to Ephesus, Corinth, Thessalonica, and even to Rome to share the good news of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. It empowered Peter to proclaim to the Gentiles assembled at Cornelius’ house, “Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” (Acts 10:47 NRSV) And it empowered the saving message of Jesus to be proclaimed to our ancestors, our descendants, and to each of us.

3. *Put into words the significance of Peter’s insight for the early church.*
4. *How did his insight help to open the door for non-Jews to become Christian?*
5. *How might this insight help to open doors for you (and your ancestors as well as descendants) to become Christian?*

Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Easter is for all!

faith practice in daily life

Proclaim the Good News of Christ in word and deed

Today, of all days, is a day for proclamation. We shout the glorious message, “Christ is risen!” We play trumpets and sing triumphant melodies. And perhaps most importantly, we proclaim through our words and our actions: Easter is for all! Christ, given and shed – for you! Christ, crucified – for you! Christ, risen – for you! We are called in baptism to announce this wondrous news to all the world, for all are included! Easter is for all!

6. *Why is Easter a day of proclamation for the church?*
7. *What makes it easy for the church to open its doors to all on Easter?*

Prayer

Risen Christ, empower us to proclaim the good news of the resurrection to all the world. Amen

last word

Tell the good news of Easter to someone you meet this week.

Daily Faith Practices

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