


**A Five-Day Devotional Journey**
**June 1 - 7, 2008**

Acts 10:17-48

# Tear down the wall

## 1 Go with them without hesitation

**Read.** Acts 10:17-23 NLT

Peter was very perplexed. What could the vision mean? Just then the men sent by Cornelius found Simon's house. Standing outside the gate, they asked if a man named Simon Peter was staying there. Meanwhile, as Peter was puzzling over the vision, the Holy Spirit said to him, "Three men have come looking for you. Get up, go downstairs, and go with them without hesitation. Don't worry, for I have sent them." So Peter went down and said, "I'm the man you are looking for. Why have you come?" They said, "We were sent by Cornelius, a Roman officer. He is a devout and God-fearing man, well respected by all the Jews. A holy angel instructed him to summon you to his house so that he can hear your message." So Peter invited the men to stay for the night. The next day he went with them, accompanied by some of the brothers from Joppa.

**Read.** Ephesians 2:10 NIV

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

**Think.**

- Take a moment and reread Acts 10:1-16. In what state had the vision left Peter? Why was he having such a hard time with this lesson?
- What does the Holy Spirit instruct him to do now? What might Peter's first thought have been when he was told that men from a Roman centurion were looking for him? What does Peter do?
- In a rather dramatic and clear manner, the Lord prepared Peter to take a very significant step. When have you found yourself similarly prepared and positioned to step into a divine moment? What happened?
- How attuned would you say you are to the voice and movements of the Holy Spirit? Why do you think God speaks to some and not to others? How much of this depends on our readiness to hear? On God's initiative to speak?

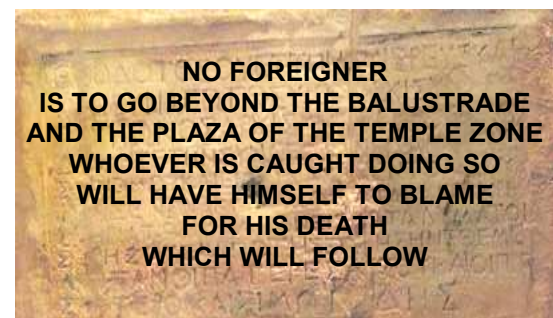
**Pray.**

Holy Spirit, create in me a humble, unassuming heart that is ready to be stretched and used as you will, where you will, and how you will.

**Live.**

Be ready for divine nudges in unexpected ways today.

The Messiah has made things up between us so that we're now together on this, both non-Jewish outsiders and Jewish insiders. He tore down the wall we used to keep each other at a distance.  
Ephesians 2:14 Message



Every Jew in the temple could see it.

No gentile could miss it.

The wall.

A six foot barrier built within the Court of the Gentiles surrounding the Temple proper. Posted at each entry point was the above warning. Seven lines in both Greek and Latin.

No foreigners beyond this point.

Keep out.

The veil might have been torn in two inside the Temple when Jesus died. But outside the Temple the wall remained. When Paul spoke of God tearing down the dividing wall, he wasn't just painting a word picture. He no doubt saw the actual wall on the temple grounds. It was a wall he had taken great pride in before he met Jesus. But knowing Jesus had cast the wall in a dark, malignant light. It then became to him what all such walls represent — enmity, hostility, hatred.

And the cross obliterates it.

But it was the fisherman from Galilee that first witnessed its breach. Timidly, Peter had walked through the wall to the waiting gentile Cornelius on the other side — and then watched as the Holy Spirit enthusiastically ushered him right through a wall that was no more. Death did not await him, but a bubbling, profuse outpouring of life and power and voice — and the fisherman is left gawking at yet one more miraculous catch.

## 2) Peter pulled him up

**Read.** Acts 10:24-33 NLT

They arrived in Caesarea the following day. Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his relatives and close friends. As Peter entered his home, Cornelius fell at his feet and worshiped him. But Peter pulled him up and said, “Stand up! I’m a human being just like you!” So they talked together and went inside, where many others were assembled. Peter told them, “You know it is against our laws for a Jewish man to enter a Gentile home like this or to associate with you. But God has shown me that I should no longer think of anyone as impure or unclean. So I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. Now tell me why you sent for me.” Cornelius replied, “Four days ago I was praying in my house about this same time, three o’clock in the afternoon. Suddenly, a man in dazzling clothes was standing in front of me. He told me, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your gifts to the poor have been noticed by God! Now send messengers to Joppa, and summon a man named Simon Peter. He is staying in the home of Simon, a tanner who lives near the seashore.’ So I sent for you at once, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here, waiting before God to hear the message the Lord has given you.”

**Think.**

- How does Cornelius greet Peter, and how does Peter respond? What does this exchange tell you about each of them?
- What’s the key to getting over ourselves and putting the spotlight on others — and on the Lord?

**Pray.**

Holy Spirit, help me to be a humble and empowering presence in someone’s life today.

**Live.**

Help pull someone up on their feet today.

## 4) We are witnesses of all he did

**Read.** Acts 10:39-43 NLT

“And we apostles are witnesses of all he did throughout Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a cross, but God raised him to life on the third day. Then God allowed him to appear, not to the general public, but to us whom God had chosen in advance to be his witnesses. We were those who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he ordered us to preach everywhere and to testify that Jesus is the one appointed by God to be the judge of all—the living and the dead. He is the one all the prophets testified about, saying that everyone who believes in him will have their sins forgiven through his name.”

**Think.**

- Read back through yesterday and today’s readings. Make a list of everything that Peter specifically says that God did. How does this highlight God’s sovereignty and initiative in the whole process of salvation?
- What does Peter highlight as our part in the process of salvation? How would you define “believe in him” for someone in our culture?
- This is the third time in Acts we hear a presentation of the gospel from Peter (Acts 2 and 3 being the others). What similarities and differences do you notice between these three “sermons”? What pointers do you see for your own presentation of the good news of Jesus to others?

**Pray.**

Holy Spirit, when I open my mouth to speak of Jesus, help me to speak clearly, simply, boldly and with your great passion and love.

**Live.**

Celebrate God’s salvation! Ask for a fresh revelation of its reality.

## 3) This is the message of Good News

**Read.** Acts 10:34-38 NLT

Then Peter replied, “I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right. This is the message of Good News for the people of Israel—that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know what happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee, after John began preaching his message of baptism. And you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

**Think.**

- After being puzzled and perplexed, what does Peter now see very clearly?
- “In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right.” What do you see as the implications of this statement? Does this mean that people who “do what is right” are acceptable to God without hearing about Jesus? Why or why not?
- How does Peter summarize the message and ministry of Jesus? What were the key ingredients of Jesus’ ministry?
- Do you tend to see the message of Jesus as good news or bad news for people around you? How does this impact your sharing of the message?

**Pray.**

Holy Spirit, make me an instrument of your peace. Anoint, empower and equip me to do what Jesus did, just as he said. Guide my feet into paths of doing good and being a vessel of your healing in this broken world.

**Live.**

Using words if necessary, share the life and message of Jesus today.

## 5) The Holy Spirit fell upon all

**Read.** Acts 10:44-48 NLT

Even as Peter was saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the message. The Jewish believers who came with Peter were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles, too. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter asked, “Can anyone object to their being baptized, now that they have received the Holy Spirit just as we did?” So he gave orders for them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Afterward Cornelius asked him to stay with them for several days.

**Read.** John 3:8 NLT

The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.

**Think.**

- How does the Holy Spirit interrupt Peter’s presentation? How does this impact the Jewish believers present? What does Peter say and do?
- What lessons do you see here about the Holy Spirit’s working and ways? What has your personal experience been with the Holy Spirit?
- Looking back over this chapter, summarize what lessons you have learned from how the Lord breached this age-old wall between Jew and Gentile. What wall would you like to see the Lord breach in your world?

**Pray.**

Holy Spirit, breathe upon me and through me — when I’m tempted just to be a battering ram or bulldozer. Lead me in your ways.

**Live.**

Pray for a fresh working of the Spirit in, around and through you.