

Recap of 8/22/21 message (Joe Ricchuiti – Acts 10:9-23a):

1. God has to deal with Peter's prejudices and legalistic attitude toward the gentiles. He uses the everyday circumstance of Peter's hunger to bring him to the place where he can accept that the regulations concerning clean and unclean animals are abolished, thus the extension of these laws to the gentiles, making them unclean, is thus also abolished.

-“God frequently reveals Himself not only in but also by means of our human situations.”

(Longenecker)

2. A legalistic lifestyle (which either adds to God's Word, has a prideful attitude about keeping His commandments or makes a personal conviction in a gray area the standard for other believers) cannot produce spiritual growth, but instead hinders growth because it concentrates on the exterior and does not touch the heart.

3. Characteristics of Legalism:

-the legalist makes sin out of what God has left to individual consciences.

-the legalist makes their personal conviction the standard for everyone else.

-true holiness is seen in the inward response of the heart to God.

-a mature Christian must only curb their liberty for the weaker brother or sister, not for a legalistic Christian, who does not consider themselves weak and is not in danger of falling.

-legalism kills the spirit of a church – robbing it of joy, and acting as thought police.

-legalism can only touch the exterior, it cannot produce spiritual growth (Mark 7:8,9,14ff; Matthew 15:15ff). It cleans up the outside without touching the real culprit, the heart. Only God can touch the heart through His Word.

4. Peter refuses the Lord's command. As Ryrie writes: “If He is Lord one cannot say, ‘Not so,’ and if one says, ‘Not so,’ He cannot be Lord.”

5. The believer is guided today by the Scriptures through prayer and the Holy Spirit's filling ministry. As we read and study the Word of God, pray for guidance, and yield to the control of the Spirit, God will lead us.