

*Do not consider anything unclean that God has declared clean.
Acts 11: 9b*

If you have email and have friends who love to forward things...jokes, prayers, pictures etc....you probably received an email that listed all the main food groups...and why you shouldn't eat or drink any of them. This email declared that because of all the things wrong with those food groups, the only thing you should eat would be.....CHOCOLATE!

This is certainly not the premise of this portion of the Acts narrative ,but quite the reverse. Peter has gone to Jerusalem and there the believers are questioning him about being in the home and eating with a Gentile, a man who is not circumcised. Peter relates the story of the vision he received, where God declares to Peter that nothing of what he has created is unclean. He tells them of the three men who were sent to bring him to the home of Cornelius in Caesarea where he ate with him and spoke with him and where the Spirit came down to them as it had at Pentecost. With Peter's testimony to the other believers they understood that God was not limited to those people who were the first believers, and those things they thought were unclean or unfit were declared good by God. The Genesis story reminds us that ALL that God created was called GOOD.

God is the hero here. Where distinctions born of racial, ethnic, class or gender prejudice stand as obstacles to the advance of the gospel, we can be sure that God will prod us to eliminate them. To refuse to incorporate other believers into the church by baptism and full communion would be to thwart God's purposes. To quote Peter in v . 17, *It is clear that God gave those Gentiles the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ; who was I then to try to stop God!"*

This may be the time when we need to consider who we may be shutting out of our fellowship, and who we should be inviting to share the meal with us. May God open our hearts and minds as he did the early believers so that we continue the work we are called to do for Him.

O Lord, open my heart to welcome all those you send me to reach out to. Help me do the right thing, the good thing in the name of Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen

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