

SESSION THREE: "THE HOLY SPIRIT FALLS ON EVERYONE"

TEXT: ACTS 10:34-48

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak to them: 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶ You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. ³⁷ That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹ We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; ⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.' ⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, ⁴⁶ for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷ 'Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?' ⁴⁸ So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

Even though we might believe and confess that God shows no partiality, can we name times or identify people that challenge us in that belief? Where do you struggle to see the "other" through the eyes of God's impartiality?

What is the most powerful aspect of the Christian proclamation to you? Did Peter/Luke leave anything out?

Reflect on your own experiences and expectations of the Holy Spirit's activity in your lives and in the lives of others; where have you experienced the Holy Spirit in your lives? in the lives of others? at points in the historical sweep of our communal life?

How can we transform our experience of threat by an "other" into an experience of being enlarged by that other? What is required of us? Where and why do we hesitate?