

HELEN SANDERS
11-20-2023
BEING WILLING TO CHANGE

Most of us are influenced by our parents, our extended family, our church, and school. Often, we get locked into what we believe and find it difficult to change.

Peter was brought up in a traditional Jewish environment. He learned the first five books of the Old Testament and recited them as was the custom at age 13. This is when he was considered an adult. He would have observed the Jewish feasts, including Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Even though he was a lowly fisherman, and considered not part of the elite, he was a devout Jew and kept the law and observed the Jewish customs.

One day he was lodging at a friend's house and was on the housetop praying. About noon he was getting hungry and would have eaten, but had a vision or as Acts 10:10 says, ***"...he fell into a trance."***

He saw heaven opened and a large vessel that looked like a sheet being lowered down to the earth. In it were all kinds of four-footed beasts, creeping things, and fowls of the air that the Jews considered unclean.

He then heard a voice that said, ***"Rise, Peter; kill, and eat."*** He recognized that it was the voice of Jesus speaking, but Peter immediately spoke and said, ***"Not so, Lord; (I can't do this) for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean."*** His Jewish traditions were kicking in.

The voice (Jesus) spoke again and said, ***"What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."*** This happened three times. Peter questioned what this meant because if he did what the voice said it would be a "tremendous change." He had never done this, so he continued to question it.

While he pondered this the Lord told him that someone would be coming to the door and asking him to go with them to a gentile's home. Now, this was something that Jews didn't do either. It would go against everything that a devout Jew would do. In spite of his Jewish training, Peter was obedient and did what Jesus said and went to the home of Cornelius, a Roman soldier. While there, Peter preached the gospel of Jesus Christ and Cornelius's household received salvation and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Change had come. The vision represented the unclean gentiles that God grafted in. Salvation wasn't just for the Jews. It had now come to the gentiles.

One man's obedience to a vision and the voice of God changed history. Peter brought the message of salvation to the gentiles and that includes me and you (if you aren't Jewish). Most often we resist change, but this change would change the history of the world. Don't hesitate to change when God is bringing it to you, my friend. It just might be that your obedience will bring deliverance to many people like it did when Peter obeyed.