

LIFE GROUP SERMON SUMMARY QUESTIONS

Acts Series

These questions are for the **March 15, 2020** sermon, "Strategic Encounters." Please read the sermon passage (Acts 9:32-43) together out loud.

Sermon Outline

IN THE MIDST OF HEIGHTENED HEALTH CONCERNS, GOD USES . . .

1. Overlooked settings to advance his purposes (32-35)
 - a. Severe situations often push God's servants into new and "ordinary" places.
 - b. In a difficult situation, Peter is more intentional and purposeful in ministry.
 - i. Thrust into the lives of strangers, he increases his effort level.
 - ii. God turns the mundane into the miraculous, as the kingdom advances.
 - c. Many who see the effects of Jesus Christ will turn to him.
2. Unexpected events to advance his purposes (36-42)
 - a. Peter is pressed to Joppa. Why? Why Joppa?
 - i. God may position you in new places (doctor's offices, new place of leadership).
 - ii. You may invest more time AT HOME, with your kids getting more of your time.
 - iii. God may be calling you closer to the sick/vulnerable/infected.
 - b. The result: "Many believed in the LORD."
3. Unlikely people to advance his purposes (43)
 - a. Simon is "a tanner," usually eschewed/avoided by Jews (they work with dead animals)
 - b. But Simon is used as a hospitality base for Peter while in Joppa.

Life Group Discussion Questions

1. Based on #1, above: Do you have a heart of peace and calm because of the hope that you have that God's kingdom is real and present? How does the certainty of life eternal with God through Jesus Christ calm any fears we might have about death, about safety, about uncertainties?
2. Based on #1, above: Every one of us has a weak spot. Some of us have anxiety about the future that we will always need help from God's Spirit and God's people to overcome. Do you have a friend in your life who is at peace because of faith in Jesus Christ? How might they help you?
3. Based on #1, above: How has God positioned you uniquely at this moment? In what ways are you coming into contact with new people? Who is in your life today that was not in your life three weeks ago? Are you sensitive to opportunities to get to know them?
4. Based on #2, above: How might God use your heart (your internal mindset of peace) to impact others? How might he use your body (your willingness to serve)? How might he use your words (your expression of hope)?
5. Based on #2, above: God's kingdom and whole-hearted belief in Jesus is an extraordinary and miraculous response to ordinary things like pandemics, dangers and afflictions. God sometimes miraculously shrinks our worlds so that we must focus on "Joppa" or "our children" or "our spouse" or even "our own hearts before him." Respond to this directive: "Time devoted to social distancing can increase our effectiveness with those closest to us."