

## Focus on Acts 10:44–48

### WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” A. Katherine Grieb

Peter’s question—“Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”—underlines the priority of God’s action and the subsequent response of the church. To restate the words spoken to Peter in his vision at Joppa, “what God has made clean,” the church must not call profane (10:15). The pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius and his companions shows God’s acceptance of these Gentiles. They have received the gift of the Spirit (speaking in tongues and extolling God) “just as we have,” a clear reference back to the outpouring of the Spirit upon Jewish Christians at Pentecost.

### WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” Noel Leo Erskine

It is instructive that in Peter’s sermon in Cornelius’s house the Holy Spirit interrupts him again. It is as if the Holy Spirit seeks to remind the listeners that, as eloquent as Peter’s sermon was, what is crucial is not Peter’s perception of the gospel, but Peter allowing God to speak through and in spite of him. God was and is and must always be the subject of salvation. Peter was an instrument, not the source of salvation. The new revelation made possible by the inbreaking of the Holy One was clear.

### SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

— From “Pastoral Perspective,”

Jeffrey D. Peterson-Davis

In this brief text we find exemplified the extravagance of the Holy Spirit and the wideness of God’s grace. This story demonstrates that the Spirit is not bound by the limitations that even faithful believers have. The Spirit is not only poured out on the Gentiles; it is given to the Jewish Christians, enabling them to see with new eyes and capture a new vision of the kingdom of God. This is an important text for the church today. Not only do the wounds of exclusion run deep in our culture and in the church; the realities of uncrossed boundaries still exist.

### NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective,”

Barbara K. Lundblad

“Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” (v. 47). Peter echoes the question the Ethiopian eunuch asked Philip back in chapter 8: “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” Those who heard that story could have shouted, “Everything prevents you! You’re a different race, you are from a far-off country, you are a sexual misfit, and you have had very little instruction.” In both stories, there were good reasons to withhold the water of baptism. Yet the Holy Spirit surprised Philip on a desert road and surprised Peter in Cornelius’s house. The Holy Spirit can be disruptive.