



Fulfillment Hour
June 21, 2020

What Happens When God Changes Our Traditions?
Acts 11:1-17

God is not silent when it comes to racism. But, He wants the church to lead in this area. In the book of Acts, God deals with racism. He shows us that He is no respecter of such a person in the body of Christ. He shows us that saved individuals, because of their culture and traditions, can be racist and unaware of their racist tendencies. However, He shows us that those are the individuals whose heart He changes and uses them to execute His will. God breaks traditions to get His will done. Traditions are important to any and every society. Traditions build culture and identity. Traditions are the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation. In the theological sense, some traditions are believed to have divine authority—although not found in the Scriptures.

Traditions are good and useful as long as they do not conflict with the Word of God. Jesus challenges traditions that hinders His will. That's why He rebuked the Pharisees in **Mark 7:9**. He said to them, "All too well you [b] reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. **Jesus told them that their tradition had made the Word of God of none effect.**

Reflection Point: How do you see God breaking traditions or cultures today, making the will of God of none effect?

In our lesson today, God changes the traditions that hindered His will—[Acts 1:8](#). At that time the church was made up of mainly Jews. According to their tradition, they thought that they were the only ones who could be saved, and they were superior to all other nations. In their culture, a Jew could not eat or enter into a Gentile's house. If a Gentile wanted to be saved, according to their tradition not the Word of God, he/she had to become circumcised and become identified with the Jews before he/she could be saved—identified with God. God changed their tradition when He changed Peter in [Acts 10](#) and sent Peter to the house of a Gentile named Cornelius. **Reflection Point: How did God do this? What lessons does this teach about believers who have surrendered to God?**

This act of God caused a negative response by other believers because Peter entered the Gentile's house, breaking their tradition. That's where our text picks up today. It shows us what happens when God changes our traditions.

1. **Some People Will Become Angry—[Verses 1-3](#)**. These were angry believers. Angry because Peter had broken their tradition. Listen to [Verse 2-3](#). They were more concerned about what Peter did than what God was doing. Their traditional mindset caused them to ignore God's plan to take the Gospel to the world—[Acts 1:8](#). Peter had been led by the spirit but at this point they did not care because of their tradition. He broke their tradition and they were angry. These believers did not have God on their minds. God had made it plain that one did not have to become a Jew to be saved. One did not have to obey the Mosaic Law to receive salvation. The radical nature of the Gospel had opened the door to all people totally unconnected to the Mosaic Law. Here was the message—grace, not performance, brings salvation. By grace, we are saved through faith. It's hard to rethink traditions, culture, and personal preferences, but the Gospel demands that we do. **They had the same complaint that the Pharisees had against Jesus ([Luke 5:30-31](#))** and their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, "Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" [Luke 15:2](#), *And the Pharisees and scribes*

complained, saying, "This Man [a] receives sinners and eats with them." How often do you get angry because God's purpose challenges your tradition?

2. **God Has Already Moved Through His Agent—Verse 4.** Peter was God's agent—not only was he God's agent to the Gentiles but also to believers. He had witnessed to the Gentiles (non-believers) to receive Jesus and now he has to witness to the Jewish believers to trust Jesus. Even though his saved brothers were angry with him, their anger did not stop his witness. He now explains to the angry saints who have totally ignored God's Word. God had changed Peter and then used him to change their tradition. Peter must have remembered just a few moments prior, he felt the same way that they felt now, but God had overruled his opinion. Then he begins to talk about God—**Verse 5-14.** That's what a good agent will do. They will talk about God.

3. **God Provides the Final Answer—Verses 15-17.** Here, Peter now gives God's final answer. Now it does not matter how they felt or what they thought; God has already moved. I know our tradition, but God has taken over our tradition—**Verse 15.** When the Holy Spirit fell upon them, then I remembered what Jesus said. John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit—**Verses 17-18.**