



*BIBLE STUDY for the
FIFTH SUNDAY of EASTER*

Focus text: Ac 11:1-18
“Jumping the hurdles”

The mission of God is extending and reaching out. There is an urgency and energy about this mission. It is the power, love and life of the Holy Spirit, the actions of the resurrected Christ. It is good and renews all things. It is a new outreaching to all. Yet there are those who seek to halt this gift of life. And how are they doing this? By holding on to the past. It is what they know, what has given them the security they have needed. It has also given them the moral high ground because there are the ones who have upheld the law.

These differences lead to conflict and raise important questions. Should they return to the past or embrace the new life-giving and inclusive mission of God? Should they shrink the work of God or move with the Spirit of God? We have seen how Peter makes a compelling argument, which wins the day. It is so compelling that all are silenced and in agreement. Essentially he has shown that this is God’s work and God’s call, and who can resist?

The Psalm links in beautifully with this theme: All of creation is called in praise. This is a big vision; the past cannot be allowed to contain it. The mission movement of Acts, to include all of creation, is reflected in the vision of this Psalm. God is the God of all heaven and all earth.

The text from Revelation describes how all things will be made new through the uniting of heaven and earth. This is the mission of Acts. What an amazing mission this is!

The Gospel passage calls us to love one another. This mission is an expression of that love reaching out.

*Creator of the universe,
you made the world in beauty,
and restore all things in glory
through the victory of Jesus Christ.
We pray that our security will always be in You alone.
Help us to embrace our differences and so avoid conflict,
so that we may portray Your image and unite as a new creation in You
to the glory of your name.*

Amen.

