



## Talk summary:

### **God prepares His people for the expansion of his family [Acts 11:1-18]**

*How God's Spirit draws us together as we try to see one another's dignity with humility*

There are 3 lenses to see through in this account (and God took away a filter from each of them):

1. The Lens of Peter (v7, 9, 12, 17)
  - a. God gave Peter a vision, which showed him that he wanted to include the Gentiles in his vision (the promise to Abraham at the start of this series was being fulfilled). Peter takes time to humbly see what Cornelius shared and then sees the Spirit falling on them like at Pentecost. God was able to take away Peter's filter of who could and couldn't be in God's family. By letting his filter of wrong seeing be removed, Peter saw God was doing a New Thing and didn't want to be in the way. If this hadn't happened then all of us (unless we have Jewish heritage) wouldn't today be able to count ourselves as part of God's family.
2. The Lens of Cornelius (v13-14)
  - a. Cornelius (named in the chapter before) was a Gentile believer in God. They would always have felt second class. They may have been nervous about what would happen, but they boldly responded to God's vision to invite Peter in letting God take away their filters of who God could use, they experienced the wonder of the Holy Spirit being poured out upon them. Let's not forget that it takes tremendous courage for those on the margins to stand up and take a risk to come towards the centre, because there is always the fear of being excluded, of being quietly discarded or pushed aside, which is what initially happened with the Jerusalem believers
3. The lens of the Jerusalem believers (v2 & 18)
  - a. The Jerusalem believers were up in arms about Peter associating with the Gentiles. For one thing it would have upset the fragile protection they received from the Romans to go about their religious business. But after Peter explains his story note how the Jerusalem believers humbly took in Peter's account and in doing so God took away the filter they had. The account starts with accusation and ends in celebration because their filters based on culture and ethnicity were taken away and everyone could see God's hand at work.

## Questions:

*Have we ever experienced being left out because of a difference of: race, background, way of talking, education status, physical ability, appearance, mental ability, gender, age? How did we experience that? Have we ever ignored or unintentionally left someone out because they were different to us, or we just found them 'difficult'? What filters might God want to take away to help us truly see the dignity in one another and celebrate the diversity we all bring? Even if we have not experienced racial prejudice in this country, how might God be preparing us as a church community to stand against racism in our community?*

Listen to the following song 'We are one' and ask God how he wants to give us a deeper vision of the unity we have in Christ by taking away the filters that we see the world through.

We are One: [https://youtu.be/9DzyXHI\\_nLM](https://youtu.be/9DzyXHI_nLM)

*Going deeper notes overpage*

## Going deeper recommendations

*to help us 'see' through the lenses of different experiences of race in our church and culture*

### Films

#### Family Movies:

**"Zootopia" (2016)** - A family-friendly animated film that addresses issues of prejudice and stereotypes in a diverse animal society.

**"The Princess and the Frog" (2009)** - An animated fairy tale with themes of race, identity, and breaking stereotypes.

**"Akeelah and the Bee" (2006)** - A heart-warming drama that portrays the challenges and triumphs of a young African-American girl in a spelling bee competition.

**"Remember the Titans" (2000)** - Based on a true story, this film explores racial integration and teamwork within a high school football team.

Movies (check IMDB for ratings on appropriateness for you, e.g. depictions of violence)

**12 Years a Slave (2013)** - Explores the historical injustice of slavery.

**Selma (2014)** - Chronicles the 1965 Selma to Montgomery voting rights marches led by Martin Luther King Jr.

**Hidden Figures (2016)** - Celebrates the contributions of African-American women mathematicians at NASA.

#### Series

**"When They See Us" (2019)** - Directed by Ava DuVernay, this limited series tells the true story of the Central Park Five, five young black men wrongfully convicted of a brutal assault in New York City in 1989

**"Noughts + Crosses"** is a TV series adaptation based on the novel of the same name by Malorie Blackman. This is a dystopian drama that explores themes of race, privilege, and discrimination. It is set in an alternate reality where societal roles are reversed, with black Africans (Crosses) being the ruling class and white Europeans (Noughts) facing systemic oppression. The series follows the lives of two young people, Sephy Hadley and Callum McGregor, who navigate their complex and divided world.

#### Documentaries

**"Skin" by Beverly Naya.** Beverly Naya, a Nigerian actress, produced and starred in this documentary, which explores the issues of colourism in Nigeria. The documentary delves into the standards of beauty, skin bleaching, and societal perceptions of skin colour.

**"What Happened, Miss Simone?" (2015)** - A documentary on the life of Nina Simone, addressing her activism and struggles against racial injustice.

## **Books (many available as audiobooks)**

**"Be the Bridge"** by Latasha Morrison: Latasha Morrison provides practical guidance for Christians seeking racial reconciliation, challenging readers to bridge racial divides and pursue unity.

**"God Is Not a White Man"** by Chine McDonald: McDonald explores issues of race, gender, and identity within Christianity, challenging stereotypes and advocating for a more inclusive understanding of God.

**"Ghost Ship: Institutional Racism and the Church of England"** by A.D.A. France-Williams addresses the issue of institutional racism within the Church of England. The book critically examines the structures and practices of the Church, shedding light on how systemic racism operates within its institutions and offering insights into the challenges and opportunities for fostering a more inclusive and just religious community.

**"The Good Ally"** by Nova Reid provides guidance on becoming an effective ally in the fight against racism. Nova Reid offers practical insights, personal experiences, and actionable steps to help readers understand and confront their own biases, contributing to a more inclusive and equitable society. The book encourages self-reflection and advocates for intentional allyship in the pursuit of justice.

**"Growing Up Black in Britain: Stories of Courage, Success, and Hope"** is a collection of narratives edited by Stuart Lawrence and Ashley Hickson-Lovence, along with other contributors. The book likely compiles personal stories from individuals who share their experiences of growing up as Black in Britain. These stories may highlight challenges, successes, and moments of resilience, offering a diverse perspective on the Black British experience. The aim is likely to contribute to a broader understanding of the complexities of identity, racism, and the pursuit of success within the context of Britain's cultural landscape.

**"So You Want to Talk About Race"** by Ijeoma Oluo is a book that delves into the complex and often challenging conversations surrounding race. Oluo provides practical insights and guidance on how to engage in meaningful discussions about race, racism, and social justice. The book covers various topics, including privilege, microaggressions, and systemic racism. It aims to equip readers with the tools and understanding needed to navigate these conversations with empathy, awareness, and a commitment to positive change.

## **Podcasts**

**About Race with Reni Eddo-Lodge.** Summary: Reni Eddo-Lodge, the author of "Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race," explores various aspects of race and racism in the UK, featuring interviews with experts, activists, and individuals sharing their experiences.

### **The Colour Code**

Summary: Hosted by Amina Iro and Hannah Mylrea, this podcast dives into conversations about race, culture, and identity in the UK. The hosts discuss various issues and bring in guests to share their perspectives.

**In Good Company by Otegha Uwagba** Summary: Otegha Uwagba, author of "Little Black Book: A Toolkit for Working Women," explores issues related to work, creativity, and diversity. The podcast features interviews with guests from various industries.

*For further recommendations see the blog post on the Springfield website.*