"Blessed are the Flexible"
September 17, 2017

The Book of Acts 11

CORE: Anonymous quote: “Blessed are the Flexible—for they shall not be bent out of shape.”

Warnings about the foolishness of “losing our temper” (i.e., Proverbs 29:11)—our “temper” is “the capacity to remain firm on convictions, yet adaptable to circumstances”—are a call to be flexible. This chapter in Acts is an excellent example of wise flexibility.

**FLEXIBILITY INCLUDES THE ABILITY TO:**

1. **CHANGE YOUR MIND** (Able to adjust old mindsets)
   - Willing to let go of “traditions of men” that served us well “for a season”—but are now “out of season” (i.e., OT \(\rightarrow\) NT)
   - After a vision (repeated 3 times—11:10), Peter went with it (and with 3 Gentile strangers) “doubting nothing” (11:11). No longer “double-minded” (The root meaning of “doubt”—notice the “doub” in the word).
   - 1 Kings 18:21- “How long halt ye between two opinions?” (KJV)
   - Indecision **halts** us.
   - “Change is inevitable—except from vending machines.”
   - BUT…because change is a principle of life—we must discover how to benefit from it!

2. **CHANGE YOUR APPROACH** (Able to wisely & patiently share our new perspectives with others—trusting God to make the changes.)
   - Peter radically changed his approach to those who opposed him (SEE Acts 11:4ff.).
   - In order to go on from “glory to glory, strength to strength”—we **must** change!
   - There comes a time when we must move beyond “that’s just the way I am” \(\rightarrow\) choosing the higher ground

3. **CHANGE YOUR JUDGMENTS** (Able to give others a new opportunity; a fresh start).
   - Traditions—**solidified judgments founded on past experiences**—are often the greatest hindrance to positive changes.
• NOTE: Nazareth restricted Jesus to being “the carpenter’s son”—failing to see Him as Messiah—limiting His ministry in their lives
• NOTE: The anointing is covering His body (Psalm 133)—equipping all

4. CHANGE YOUR DIRECTION  (Able to flex with the HS’s new directives...even when it is costly & inconvenient)

• (11:27-30) Challenged to trust a prophet and contribute to a future need—and then to entrust their gifts to Saul of Tarsus & Barnabas.
• Willing to “keep in step with the Holy Spirit”; current with the “proceeding word” (i.e., Abraham & Isaac at the altar)
• One of the subtlest (and most deceptive) temptations is to believe you have “arrived.”
• Like Laodicea, the church that locked Jesus out, by their blindness to their need for more of Him
• Total dependence is the only way to navigate change.
• Contentment is not about lowering our expectancy—it is refusing to let delays decrease our joy, our trust, or our hope.

Listen to Paul’s declaration of flexibility:

Philippians 4:12-13 (NIV)

“I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”