

KiKi, do you Love me?

Acts 10: 9- 17a

This morning message will be coming from the book of Acts, the 10<sup>th</sup> Chapter starting at the 9<sup>th</sup> verse, through 17 a. The words read as *9 About noon the next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. 10 He became hungry and wanted something to eat; and while it was being prepared, he fell into a trance. 11 He saw the heaven opened and something like a large sheet coming down, being lowered to the ground by its four corners. 12 In it were all kinds of four-footed creatures and reptiles and birds of the air. 13 Then he heard a voice saying, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat." 14 But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is profane or unclean." 15 The voice said to him again, a second time, "What God has made clean, you must not call profane." 16 This happened three times, and the thing was suddenly taken up to heaven. 17 Now while Peter was greatly puzzled about what to make of the vision that he had seen, suddenly the men sent by Cornelius appeared.*

For the sake of the message and for exegetical purposes, I will be coming from the thought, KiKi, DO YOU LOVE ME?

In 2018, the rapper and musical legend Drake released a song on this fifth album, Scorpion called *In my Feelings*. This rhythmic and contemporary hit radio song in collaboration with the City Girls is known for its catchy lyrics and drop-down beat. Some of us may know the song, Drake sings, *"KiKi, Do you love me, are you riding, say you'll never leave from beside me cause I want you and you want me and I'm down for you always. Kiki Do you love me?"*

This song released by Drake in 2018 is known across the world and had remained on the Top 100 Billboard Charts for 10 weeks. Drake uses words, tunes, and his musical genius to ask the question, KiKi, do you love me? In an interview with BET.com, Drake expressed that the theme of this song is centered around the idea of wanting acceptance and love from others that seem to not love them. Drake in this song tackles not only a personal issue that many of us have experienced, but Drake tackles a societal issue that seems to close to home. In the midst of everything going on in the world today, I have to ask the question, KiKi, I mean America, do you love me?

In the 1800's black and brown people had to ask the question; KiKi, do you love me? As they gathered on cotton fields and churches to fight for citizenship, humanity, and the end of slavery.

In the 1900's black and brown women had to ask the question; KiKi, do you love me? As women gathered in the streets of DC for the Women's Suffrage March to fight for the equal rights of women.

Yet, here we are in the year 2020, living in a society dipped in evangelical privilege, living in a society dipped in power hungry oppressive policies, living in a society dipped in hatred and greed, and we still have to ask the question; KeKe, I'm sorry America, Do you love me?

Here in this text, we find ourselves in the moments of two characters, Peter a Jew in Joppa and Cornelius a non-Jew, centurion in Caesarea. While Peter and Cornelius are in two different locations, God seems to somehow allow God's spirit to flow through both. Peter traveling to Caesarea has now been put to a daze with a dream about clean and unclean animals. At the same time Cornelius has had an encounter with God and Cornelius sends men sent to Joppa.

In the text we have read the dream and verse 17 tells us that now Peter is trying to understand and translate this dream. It is not until Peter meets the men of Cornelius, men that are non-Jew, that Peter realizes that his dream is not about animals being unclean or profane. But the dream was about people like the men of Cornelius, the Gentile's that have a history of being mistreated, oppressed, bullied, killed, and disposed of because of where they come from and who they were. It is in this moment that Peter, realizes that his discrimination against animals as well as humans are not in alignment of God purpose of humanity.

The first thing we gather from this text is **Are You Living God's New Dream?** In this season, God is calling us to the dream of Dr. King, a dream of love and equality!

It's in the text, *13 When Peter saw the animals of the earth and heard a voice say to him "Arise, Peter slay and eat. 14 But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is profane or unclean." 15 The voice said to him again, a second time, "What God has made clean, you must not call profane.* In like manner, in 1963 Dr. King stood on the Lincoln Memorial and told the World about a dream that was ordained by God. Dr. King said it very simple, *"I have a dream, that one day, my children will live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skins , but by the content of their character."*

Here in this text. Peter, a believer of Christ and Jewish man has been taught and shaped by a society to not associate, and not to gather with Gentiles and to view Gentiles as less than. In other words, Peter has been molded by a society, its laws, and leaders that Gentiles are unholy and unclean. This fact is a troubling one but is still a concern that we as Believers of Christ still must face today. This dream is a testament and call for us to not only accept new food that we once thought was unclean, but to accept new people too- different people that we had not imagined that God would send across our paths. Not only do we accept them, but our actions, our churches, and our voice must be acceptable of them too. The food in Peter's dream serves as a symbol of the Gentiles that he is about to meet when we awakens from the dream.

As Peter is in a daze and fully submerged in this dream, God transforms Peter's reality and theology. Despite where people come from, what people have done, what people may look like, nothing created by God is profane or unclean. And we know that in Genesis, God created everything, and it was good! Peter reveals to us the importance of God's new Dream that Gentiles and Jews both are acceptable to Christ.

So, I ask you today, **are you dreaming God's new dream? Are you dreaming the dream of justice for all? Are you dreaming the dreams of access to equal healthcare, rights, and life? Are you dreaming God dream that Black Lives Matter?**

The second thing we gather from this text is that **God is a God of all people**. It's in the text 34, *Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality.*

This is what Peter came to understand when he awakens from his dream and see the Italian servants, the Gentiles sent by Cornelius. This is what Peter came to understand when he arrives at Cornelius house and discovers that God was speaking to Cornelius about Peter the day before God spoke to Peter through his dream. This is what Peter came to understand when he broke the law of the land to go into Cornelius house and fellowship with his family. Peter came to understand that God shows no partiality.

So, when families, and people all of races have to gather and scream Black Lives Matter and call for the equality of black people in America. Does our theology show no partiality?

When women and the trans communities still have to stand on the step of the Supreme Court to call for the accountability of institution infringing on people civil rights. Does our theology show no partiality?

When institutions and officers use excessive force, choke holes, and rapid-fire tactics killing the lives of black, brown, and immigrant people. Does our theology show no partiality?

When policies and political leaders uses children and families as pawns to discriminate and push for laws and policies that hinder the lives of immigrants and their families. Kiki, I mean America, does our theology show no partiality?

When injustice, and oppression still sits at the doors of our Churches, and homes and we chose not to liberate and show love to those oppressed. KiKi, I mean America, does our theology show no partiality?

I can only imagine the sense of awakening that Peter is feeling right now in this text. After being molded and shaped by churches, leaders, and doctrines, Peter has found the core concern that we today must not overlook. Peter comes to the realization after his dream, that God's purpose of humanity and faith are one. Peter comes to realization that cultural codes and social rules and theology that normally apply are being suspended in his encounter with Cornelius and Cornelius family. Willie Jennings argues that through Peter, we learn that God refuses to allow bodies, people, races, and personal identifies to be separated for even theological reasons.

Theology and churches should no longer suppress, or segregate society based on race, creed, or one's personal identity. Theology and doctrines should not move past one to get to another, it should not choose or reject one another, but bring us together. We share one spirit and through this experience between Peter and Cornelius we find that we share One God. God is a God of all people and our Theology cannot persuade or move individuals to believe that certain people are not clean, holy, sacred, or created by God. God is a God of all people.

The last thing we gather from this text is that **God's Love still has POWER!** It's in the text, *44 While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word.*

After Peter comes to the realization and tells the Gentiles that they too are a part of God's creation and love. God's blessing and spirit falls fresh unto them!

We gather from this text is that through Christ, God love still has power! We as believers must not only recognize that God love has power, but as disciples it is our duty, it is our mission, it is the churches responsibility in the midst of hatred, in the midst of discrimination, in the midst of evil powers, we are called to spread the love, liberate the oppressed, and prove that God love still has power. Although, Drake blasted the Billboard Charts for ten weeks. Drake missed a fundamental thought, that when Kiki, that when societies, that when President and Politicians seem to not to care for our humanity and wellbeing. I can rest assured that God still loves me and that through Christ, love conquers all!

God's love is what called Moses to the people of Israel and fight against the evils of oppression and slavery. God's love is what saved the three Hebrew boys that refused to bow down to a government that oppressed and acted unjustly. If I could testify, God's love is what saved me when I was sinking deep in sin, far from the peaceful shore Very deeply stained within, sinking to rise no more. God's love is what saved the woman with the issues of blood from death in a society that did not have equal access to healthcare for women. God's love is what exilic communities and families held onto when countries forced them out of their own land and enforced borders. God's love is what ordained a man name Jesus, to be nailed to a cross in an attempt to show the world that its action of hatred, injustice, and greed are unholy. God's love is what raised that man on the third day and gave him all power in his hands. Love dismantles hatred! Love dismantles bigotry! Love dismantles oppression! Love dismantles discrimination! Love dismantles prejudice! Love dismantles privilege! Love dismantles fear! Love dismantles persecution! Love dismantles police brutality! Love dismantles Nationalist! Love dismantles tyranny! *For God, so loved the world, that God gave its only begotten son!* Are you living a life of love? Does your work and mission in this season include justice and equality? Do you love all of God's creation? KiKi, I mean America, do you love me?

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