

Unclean Food and the Gospel

Matthew Vander Els · 2022-04-23 · foundedintruth.com

MAIN VERSES

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Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? A place founded on truth and love. A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God. Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family. So welcome home.

Welcome Home

It's regularly scheduled programming right now because I feel like we need to pray and seek the Father on behalf of Karen and on behalf of Matthew, who is standing before you, vulnerably waiting to hear what's going on with his mother. So if you guys would join me, let's intercede on behalf of the Vander Els family right now.

Abba Father, I thank you that you are sovereign in all your ways, that you are not taken aback or surprised by this turn of events this morning, Father. I'm coming to you on behalf of the Vander Els family, Father. I'm asking for Karen, that you would comfort her, that you would strengthen her. Knowing all things, Father, you know the source of what is going on. So I pray for your divine wisdom and discernment for doctors. Father, we ask for your healing over her body and that you would sustain her in this time, Father. And I'm coming to you also on behalf of Matthew, asking that you would strengthen him, that you would calm him, that your peace would overwhelm him as he stands to deliver this message. Father, I ask that your word would be powerfully brought forth through him and that you would sustain him as he stands waiting to hear. Father, we thank you that you are with us, that you never leave us, and you do not forsake us. I thank you, Father, that you are all-powerful and you are working for your glory in this situation as well as the good of the Vander Els family, Father. We bless you, we thank you, and we look to you. You are our source, and we honor you in this time. In Yeshua's name, amen.

Okay. Thank you, everybody. That means a lot to have everyone in prayer. Shabbat Shalom, everybody. We're excited to be here today. I know that Josh Inslee gave a fantastic message a few weeks back concerning why we as Christians try to keep Torah as best we can, and what it means to be pro-law or pronomian as a believer. So if you missed that, it was fantastic. Check it out. I think I put the link in the YouTube description.

But guys, we're going to be going through some of the topics and revisiting a lot of topics that most of us are familiar with—like the Sabbath. We discussed Passover last week, the feast days, dietary laws, and what they have to do with Yeshua and why we even care about them and why they're relevant for us today as New Testament believers.

So today's topic is called Unclean Food and the Gospel. I had some critical feedback concerning the thumbnail. It reads "Unclean and the Food Gospel" when it should be "Unclean Food and the Gospel." Have you heard the good news of cheese and rice? No. Unclean Food and the Gospel. Yeah, so just so everyone's clear, we're good.

Now, we're going to explore today some of the strangest boundary laws that are given in the Torah to Israel—the clean and unclean laws, specifically the ones that draw a boundary over which animals were permissible for Israel to eat and which ones are not. It's an amazing topic, very dense topic. If you are one of these nerds that wants to explore this further, I have two great resources. I put the links in the description of the YouTube video. The first one is by Daniel Block—his NIV Application Commentary on Deuteronomy, as well as the Interpretation Commentary series on Leviticus. Check those out; it's great.

Let's Dive Into the Text

Let's go ahead and dive into the text. The text we're going to be focusing on immediately is [Leviticus 11](#), but this topic is also approached in [Deuteronomy 14](#). You'll see very quickly—I tried to sum it up. I kind of paraphrased a lot of [Leviticus 11](#), but I think you'll get the point. Let's go ahead and review these commandments in the Torah, starting in verse 1.

They're unclean to you: Pigs, don't eat them. They are unclean for you. Do not eat any of their meat or touch their dead carcasses. They are unclean to you. This is what you may eat from the water: You may eat anything in the water that has fins and scales, whether in seas or streams.

And so I'll break away for a minute because this is kind of neat. Anything with fins and scales, right? So catfish—they have the fins but they don't have the scales, so they would not fall within the kosher area for the ancient Israelites to partake. Swordfish—I found out something interesting about swordfish. Swordfish have fins and no scales when they're adults and fully

grown. But when they're babies and a meter or less, guess what they have both of? Baby swordfish, da-da-da-da-da, baby swordfish. Right? I've actually seen it—it's kosher as a baby.

You are to, verse 13: you are to abhor these birds. They are not to be eaten because they are abhorrent. Eagles, bearded vultures, Egyptian vultures, kites, and any kind of falcon, birds of prey. All winged insects that walk on all fours are to be abhorrent to you. You may eat these kinds of all winged insects that walk on all fours and those that have jointed legs above their feet for hopping on the ground. So if they hop, they're a hopper, you're good to go. These you may eat: locusts, crickets, grasshoppers, anything that hops. All other winged insects that have four feet are to be abhorrent to you.

Okay then, that was a fun text to read, right?

Set Apart for Holiness

Here God is in the business of separating Israel out from the nations in an effort to give them a status of set-apartness, holiness, kedushah. Because God is holy, he expects his covenant people to mimic him. That's what he's doing. He's molding a people to be shrouded in his likeness for the ultimate plan to bring forth the blessing of Abraham to all the earth. And because God is holy, he expects his covenant people to mimic him as well. Holiness. And something about eating these animals distorts that sense of holiness in the text.

Now, we love the Torah here. We value its purpose in the story of Israel. And we find great value in participating in the laws and the statutes as a way to show honor to God. It's just what we do. This is what's amazing about our community, and I find it beautiful. At least as much as possible, we do this not because it will somehow grant us salvational benefits or even blessing. I mean, Jesus says blessing comes to the good and the wicked, obedient and disobedient. Rain falls on everybody. No, we choose to participate in commandments like this—the Sabbath and the feast days—because we find value in engulfing our lives in the Word of God and finding the rhythm of life that is based in Scripture. We find Sabbath to be a blessing, which Jesus says was given to us for that purpose. We find edification and honor in the feasts of Torah—Passover, Shavuot, Sukkot. Because as followers of Yeshua, we believe they all point to him. And we participate in not eating certain meats and in other commandments to honor and remember the call to have discipline and the call to pursue holiness. Yeshua has a lot to say about this in the gospel accounts, which we're going to explore here in a few moments. But that's why this community generally adheres to these commandments—because it is another form of worship to us. It's a remembrance that God invites us to his table, and I find that very, very sacred.

Why These Animals?

But it is curious. Why? Why? Why these animals? Why not those animals? Why not certain vegetables? I mean, let's be honest. Why not, right? Can't eat a hippo, but there's no commandment not to eat Brussels sprouts, and we know those are an abomination. I mean, abhorrent.

Why? And what's so interesting is the Bible does not feel the need to tell us why these restrictions exist. It does not care about your curiosity, which is frustrating because some of us want to understand the logic behind this. And there are so many opinions out there about why these animals. I mean, I've heard people justifying eating animals by saying the laws don't apply anymore. I've heard people from the pulpit say things like, "Well, you know, they didn't have refrigerators back then, and so pigs have worms in them that would pop out if it's not refrigerated, and that's why we can eat them now because we have refrigerators." And I'm unconvinced of this. I feel like you can do better.

Some people are convinced that things like pigs are bad for you because they have worms in them. But chicken is okay. Salmonella is not a thing. Anyone who has chickens knows they're not clean, nice. They can turn into carcasses. Oh, they're awful. They eat everything and they're just dirty, but they're cute. But anyway, that's why you've got chicken people, like my wife. They're cute. You don't have to hold them and hug them. Anyway, so many different opinions throughout history.

And why I'm suggesting this is because I found this fascinating. Some people believe that these animals were banned because they're associated with pagan nations. That's not a totally foolproof theory there. Others think in more allegorical terms. So Philo, a first-century Jewish historian, loved allegory. And this is actually a really popular explanation, both in first-century Judaism and in the centuries following with Christianity. So early Christians, some of them seem to agree with this. He believed that it was all allegorical, the food laws. And that like chewing the cud represents the chewing of the knowledge to cultivate wisdom.

So when you partake in only the animals that chew the cud, you're reminded of the pursuit for wisdom. Hey, chew on that, right? The phrase. And the split hoof is a reminder to choose the path of virtue. All right. That's good. I like that. I mean, Philo gets applause for that. I love it. That's why God commanded it. And Philo believed that you literally still keep the commandments—it's still a commandment of God. This is why it was given, but you still do it.

Later generations of early Christians—Irenaeus, Clement, Origen—all believed the same thing. The commandments were given allegorical meaning. The difference is they chose to present

that as a way that they didn't have to keep them. So as long as we realize the allegorical meaning of not eating pig and eating cows, we have the meaning. We don't need to actually do it. But I thought that was neat. Most people just settle for the arbitrary view. God said it, so we don't need it, period. It doesn't matter, right? But yeah, it's neat.

Wisdom and the Covenant

There is good news for ancient Israel, though, when we're going through these laws and for those keeping the commandments today. You have access to a variety of delectable insects, according to the Bible. Now, any insect that flies is off limits. The wasp, you don't want to, nope. But if the thing can jump, man, you go to town. Woo! Right? Crickets, grasshoppers, locusts on the side of cow all just dipping sauce. Maybe add some honey—John the Baptist. Okay. No one? No one ever had the chocolate-covered crickets that they used to give away at Discovery Place? Yeah. That's right. Kosher. Clean.

Despite the details, something that I love in [Deuteronomy 14](#)—Moses brings it back to the point in the epilogue of this section, [Deuteronomy 14](#), verse 21. And here's what he says. He's speaking about two different aspects of the clean and unclean laws, and basically he's saying, listen, you don't eat any of the carcasses either. So if an animal dies on its own, don't eat the carcass. But you can give it to a resident alien within your city gates, and he can eat it, or you can sell it to the foreigner and make some money. And here's the point of bringing it back home. For you are a holy people belonging to the Lord your God. This is the pursuit of all of these commandments. Something about this identifies Israel with God in their holiness.

And we have this extra stipulation here about animals dying. Did you notice in verse 21, though? Israel, if they find an animal that had a stroke, what are they allowed to do with it? They can't eat it, but they're allowed to give it to who? The alien resident that dwells among them, or they can sell it to a foreigner. I love that. They can turn it into charity or make it into a business transaction. These restrictions here do not apply to resident aliens and foreigners because they are not part of the holy people, the covenantal people. As a result, the food may be given to the former, again, as an act of charity or sold in a business transaction to those who are not in covenant or identified as covenant people.

Grace and Judgment

Man, that brings up a good point, doesn't it? How many times do we try to judge or even restrict others with commandments, religious convictions, or opinions of our faith when they

are not even interested in partaking in them? Did you guys hear that? The can of worms. There are people in the world who do not currently subscribe to having a covenantal relationship with God through Yeshua, Jesus the Christ. And we yearn that everybody would experience his love, but not everybody is interested in that or has made that commitment.

Treating them like they do and then applying judgments on them because they are breaking your interpretation of the commandments that you think applies to believers is not scriptural. It's not scriptural. As we will see in Yeshua's address, the world notices two things about religious people: humility and pride. And for those of you who are already frustrated at the direction I took this verse, that's the scope of what I'm talking about. The world notices pride and humility when it comes to people of faith. And that's the scope here.

As you remember when President Barack Obama was president, man, he had a great voice. I will be honest, I love just hearing the man. I don't know what he said when he had his addresses. He just spoke well, kind of like a Morgan Freeman. There's a National Geographic thing, I think on Netflix right now, where he's commentating. It just sounded nice. It was good—if I can be honest, a good change from George W. Anyway, a couple of you agree, despite who you voted. But there was a conspiracy theory, and it was dumb. There was a conspiracy theory that was going on all over the place that President Obama was a Muslim and he was going to implement Sharia law.

Some of you remember that. Some of you were a part of spreading that. And it was dumb and it's shameful at times because we are so glad to go swimming in bearing false witness to promote an agenda while still proclaiming a life of integrity as a Christian. You notice that? The conspiracy theory was prompted because in an interview with President Barack Obama, they asked what he liked to have for breakfast and he said that he liked eggs and turkey sausage. That was the source of the conspiracy theory. Turkey sausage. So he didn't eat pork.

But why was this such a scary conspiracy theory to a specific demographic of Christian believers? Why was it so scary? Because Christians don't want to be judged or forced to obey laws or a faith lifestyle that they don't subscribe to. But we sometimes gladly do it to others with intention. We have to be careful how far our zeal for religious dogma takes us, because many times our zeal will take us from a place of holiness to haughtiness. Many times. And here the Torah instructs the Israelites to not allow something off limits to them to get in the way of serving others.

Serving Others with Humility

There was a man that had gotten out of prison. And he was homeless and got dropped off in Fort Mill. Some of you were around years ago when this happened. And he had nothing. He was literally dropped off, didn't have a home, didn't have a job, didn't have anything. Clothes on his back. And so this community here at Founded in Truth stepped up in a way that was absolutely incredible. And collectively, we got him a room at a hotel for a long-term stay, set up a laptop for him. I went over there, helped him apply to online jobs. And we took him grocery shopping, right? First time he'd been in a grocery store for who knows how long.

Now, I don't eat pork. I don't eat pork. And my kids don't eat pork. These commandments are part of our household expression of faith. We asked this man to go in the grocery store and get whatever he would want for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Be conscious about what you have in your hotel, microwave, all of it. And yeah, he totally went and chose Hebrew national hot dogs over Polish sausage. Like 100%. No. Man knew what he liked. He got pork breakfast sausages, bologna for sandwiches, bag of pork rinds, and a little bit of that shrimp cocktail, which was his favorite food before he went to prison. Hadn't had it in years. He was so excited.

Do you think for a second that I informed him that he could not eat that because it's an abomination and he needs to take God's commandments more seriously and he's unclean? No. How audacious to obtrude my opinions onto him when he doesn't give a hoot about clean or unclean in the Torah. Man is on day one in rebuilding the rest of his life. There are bigger priorities sometimes, as we will see in the New Testament.

When we believe something, we tend to be zealous about it. And zeal without grace is misdirected. Paul addresses this in Romans chapter 10 about people who are zealous for God and zealous for the commandments of the Torah, but have completely missed the knowledge of Yeshua. And it's so easy to do. It's so easy to do in this world. It's easy to do in politics. Lord knows. It's easy to do to justify war and violence and death. It's easy to do when we want to feel like a conqueror and a warrior so we can lord over others.

Zeal and Humility

And we have to be very careful because as we see in groups like the KKK, Nazi Germany, and the inquisitions of the past, you can justify anything by spray painting Jesus on it. And it should also be a reminder that your opinions that drive your religious dogma are not the only opinions or interpretations of a verse or topic. It should force us to navigate our zeal and our views and our walk of faith with humility and not arrogance. Hear what I'm saying.

When Israel was given dietary laws, they did not view them as burdensome or allegorical, I don't believe. The context of the food laws is simple. It is a sharing at the table of Yahweh. It is an invitation to this—Yahweh's menu, and you are invited to participate. Like literally, this is the menu that Yahweh accepts for himself on the altar, and you're invited to participate. Noah, with the recreation story, the flood water is coming back together and then dividing again with dry land. We have Noah, and how many unclean animals did he take on the ark? [Genesis 7-2](#) says he took two of every unclean animal and seven or seven pairs, depending on translation, of clean animals. Two by two, right? No. He took two of every unclean animal and seven or seven pairs of clean animals. Two pigs, 14 giraffes. Giraffes are on the menu. Yeah. That's weird, huh?

Noah's Offering and God's Pleasure

Right? Two cats and 14 cows on the ark. Why? Why? Well, when they got off the ark, he made an altar. He set a table to God. He offered the clean animals on it. The only two have been in problem extinction, right? And it says something very specific about how God responded. It was a savory aroma to God. God was pleased at what was on the table offered to him.

A Holy Nation, A Kingdom of Priests

The people called into covenant with God are called a holy nation by God. They are described as specially chosen from all over the earth. He calls them a kingdom of priests. He calls them his treasured possession. This God moves inward towards a relationship with his people. He wants intimacy with them.

In [Deuteronomy 12](#), 18... It speaks about bringing offerings to God, to the tabernacle, future temple. And this is what it says: not only do you bring your offering to God's table, you eat it with God. Remember Mount Sinai? We have Aaron's sons and Moses going up on the mountain to eat and drink with the Lord. And now the invitation has been extended to all of Israel, even the male and female servants. God likes to have people at his table.

Every Meal Is Worship

As Daniel Bach puts it, every slaughter that takes place is a sacrifice. And every meal eaten is a form of worship. Right? This suggests that these so-called food laws in [Deuteronomy 14](#), [Leviticus 11](#), invite the Israelites to imagine themselves dining at Yahweh's table whenever they sit down for a meal. The emphasis is not on the restrictions of the animals, but on the extent of the available menu for God's covenant people. The Israelites may enjoy precisely those foods

that Yahweh himself accepts as offerings on his table. I think that's absolutely beautiful. Absolutely beautiful. I believe it.

What do we do? If you're not a heathen, you bless God for the food when you eat, right? Say the blessing. That's funny, heathen. You say prayer, right? Some bless the food, some bless God. We enact this spiritual framework around a meal every time we eat it. And this is an ancient tradition. We invite God, some way, shape, or form, to be a part of the meal because table fellowship was a big deal. And that's what the context, I believe, is behind the clean and unclean animals. It's a connection between God's table and his people.

Yeshua Calls Us to the Table

Why do you think Yeshua was so big on table fellowship? And he was always trying to sit down at a table and have food with someone, break bread. We see Jesus reclining at the Last Supper with his disciples, sharing a meal at the end of his ministry. And in Mark chapter 2, we see Jesus reclining with tax collectors and sinners, breaking bread just like God did with Israel. Yeshua calls us to the table.

Now, Matt, these food laws are a great lesson. Jesus did away with those. That's one opinion. I don't see it in the text, like many of you, but that's one opinion. We don't ever see Yeshua eating anything specifically unclean in the gospel accounts in the text or radically departing from Jewish identity. If the text wanted to show him abolishing specific Torah-related laws, you would expect the gospel writers to highlight that because that would have been a big deal. Actually, at this point in the story, in the gospel accounts, we don't see Yeshua ever eating with anyone who wasn't Jewish. Again, framing him to be working within the Jewish framework, expanding outward after his death.

But one major verse that does seem to portray Yeshua overturning food laws is found in Mark chapter 7.

The Pharisees and the Heart's Defilement

And the scene here in Mark chapter 7 is the Pharisees see Yeshua eating with his disciples and they get upset. They get upset a lot. We see that throughout all the accounts, right? So the religious are just always upset about Yeshua. The religious who have traded holiness for haughtiness will always get upset when they see you producing the kingdom of God instead of prescribing the kingdom of God. Just so you know. That is a standard attribute. The religious always get upset when they see you producing the kingdom of God instead of prescribing it to

others. That's exactly what Yeshua calls out throughout his entire ministry. That problem with religion.

And so these Pharisees get upset because the disciples of Yeshua did not wash their hands before they started breaking bread and eating. Now, don't get me wrong, pandemic. I'll get upset with you if you don't wash your hands. But here, they come at Yeshua as essentially claiming that they're breaking the law of God. They're breaking the Torah. They read the Torah in a certain way that they believed you were breaking it and purposely making yourself unclean, defiling the whole community if you did not wash your hands before you eat. And of course, that's nowhere in the Torah specifically, but that is their interpretation of it. They read the Torah and somehow they got that from it and they were forcing that on others.

And of course, what's Yeshua say? He accuses them of making the word of God to no effect by their tradition. I would like—I hate the word tradition. We hear tradition and we think, we have our own little framework of what tradition is. I would assert you could say because of their interpretation, because of the zeal for what they interpreted the Torah was saying, they have made the word of God to no effect. That's a bit more convicting for me.

And so we're gonna start in Mark chapter seven, verse 14. And here's what it says. It's a good little chunk of scripture. But this is how Yeshua responds to the Pharisees getting so upset. He says this:

"And he said unto them, Are you so without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatsoever thing from outside enters into a man, it cannot defile him? Because it enters into, not his heart, but into his belly, and he goes into his draught, purging all meats. And he said, That which cometh out of a man, that defiles a man. From within you, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders."

So Yeshua's arguing with the Pharisees about how they are taking the purity laws that they interpreted from the reading of Torah, and he calls their interpretation a tradition that they're adding to God's word. That's what they're focused on. That was their priority. That was the hill that they were going to die on. The disciples didn't wash their hands. That's the hill.

And Yeshua flips the script. He says, there's nothing that goes into your body that's going to defile you. Now, that's bold. That's bold. A bold thing to say. But Yeshua is arguing that anything that makes you unclean or defiles you originates from within, from within your heart. Those are the things that truly make you unclean.

What Truly Defiles

See, just like Yeshua did on the Sermon on the Mount or the plain, Mark, he takes the perception of Torah that man has found a way to exploit and lord over others, and he reframes it with a higher standard. Don't murder. Yeah, that's a pretty easy one. I didn't stab someone today. I am righteous. He says, if you think you can harbor bitterness in your heart and still represent God's kingdom, you can't. You're a murderer. You didn't commit adultery? If you think that you can still harbor lust in your heart, even though you did not physically touch anybody, and still be a representative of God's kingdom, you can't. You're an adulterer. You can't sneak those things into God's kingdom. If you think your arrogance and pride is overlooked by God because you washed your hands, you are so defiled, not even the ashes of the red cow can cleanse you.

Yeshua flips the script on the topic. And some use this verse to say that food laws are abolished. I quoted from the KJV. Because modern translations take this phrase at the end, purging all meats, in verse 19, and they make it into an author's note and they translate it, thus Jesus made all food clean. Josh Inslee has a fantastic video on this on his YouTube channel. Reference you twice. Do a good job. Great video. And this is quite concerning. Most modern translations add this in, but it's not in ancient manuscripts, it's not in ancient translations. Catholic Dewey Reims Bible, KJV, you won't see it. What goes into the body goes in your belly. It comes out, goes in the sewer, it's gone. But the things that are in your heart remain, and that's what truly rots your soul.

Yeshua here takes the clean and unclean perception laws the Pharisees are exploiting to conquer or lord over others, and he's relativizing them in favor of what really counts in the vision of God's kingdom. If you are running around making up traditions or interpretations in order to bash others, you are so contaminated, so contaminated. And Yeshua gets bold here. He says, you can eat and it will eventually come out your rear and into the sewer. But you can't poop your bitter, vain, self-righteous, arrogant, prideful, sinful heart out. You can't.

The Heart Matters

So maybe you should reevaluate what you think the job of a member of God's kingdom really is. Remember when Yeshua said, follow me and let the dead bury their own dead? He was not commanding his disciples to abandon the sacred custom of honoring and bearing your loved ones. No. Honor your father and mother? No. His purpose was to reflect upon the higher and more pressing needs of the kingdom. What are you prioritizing? There are weightier matters at

stake. And if you're not willing to commit to those, you're not willing to follow me. That's what he's saying.

Peter's Rooftop Prayer

The next set of verses we come to that talk about clean and unclean laws and traditionally used to say they're done away with or whatnot is in Acts chapter 10. Everyone knows the story. With Peter, right? And Peter is staying with a tanner named Simon who lives in Jaffa or Joppa. Where does he live? Joppa? By the sea. And he goes to the roof to pray and then he gets hungry. Anyone else ever pray? Been praying and you're hungry, no, come on, right? Everyone's had their stomach growling. Everyone's taken a nap before when they're praying.

It's happened. So he gets hungry while he's praying and he has a vision, minding his own business, having a nice prayer, and he's now forced into this seemingly traumatizing trance of a vision. So he looks up and heaven breaks open and a huge sheet, like a bed sheet, comes down. And inside of this big towel are all kinds of four-footed animals, reptiles, and birds. And then a heavenly voice tells him, hey, Peter, go kill and eat. See that iguana and that hippopotamus? Get your fork. Go to town, Peter. And in verse 14, here's what it says: "The warrior spoke to him a second time, do not call anything impure that God has made clean. This happened three times and immediately it went up back to heaven."

Peter Never Ate Unclean Food

So note, Peter says he has never eaten anything unclean, which is interesting because if [Mark 7](#) is truly saying that Jesus abolished all the food laws then and there, you would think his disciples would have gotten wind of that in any way. That's the argument. But here he's told to go eat all of these unclean and common animals. And when Peter objects, what does the voice say from heaven? "Don't call anything impure that God has made clean." He's confused by the vision. He's thinking about it. And right then and there, Simon breaks forward and tells him, "Hey, man, there's a bunch of guys waiting at the door for you. They want to see you. They want to take you to this Gentile's house named Cornelius." So Peter goes with them. And Peter arrives at this Gentile's house. A Gentile that would have been considered unclean in the Jewish culture at this time. You cannot sit with Gentiles. You cannot go inside a Gentile's house to eat. Don't even touch them. Stay away. Stay away from them. They're unclean. And Peter, a first century Jew, Judean, walks into this Gentile's house. And there a whole crowd of people are waiting to see him. And during his whole time, since he had this crazy vision, he's realizing what the vision meant.

The Vision's True Meaning

And here's what he says in verse 27 of Acts chapter 10. Some argue that the vision Peter had was about making all foods clean. And I would assert that Luke, the author here, does the same thing Yeshua does. He uses common imagery and conviction to drive home a larger point. This section is not talking about making unclean food clean. It has nothing to do with it. It was about the gospel being destined for all people, not just one, not just a favorite. It was about the message of God's love reaching the people that you would normally not associate with, that you would probably, on the inside, not really want them to experience God's love like you have because it's your gift, that you would consider unclean, that you would consider undeserving of God's mercy. The vision was about Peter no longer calling people unclean because what God has declared is they are also included and invited into his kingdom.

The Jonah Connection

What city did Simon live in? Jaffa. Jaffa. What other story? What other story does Jaffa appear in? It's Jonah. That's right, it was Jonah. That's where Jonah went when he got in the boat to flee the mission that God sent him on. The mission to go to the Gentiles and preach the message of God's coming judgment so God's mercy and grace would be found among them. Jonah ran. Jonah ran. And when Jonah was forced to go, he was mad. He was mad because his religious dogma said the Assyrians do not deserve God's forgiveness, do not deserve the love of God that he felt he was entitled to. That's the lesson of Jonah. Jonah ends with asking both Jonah and you as the reader a question. God's asking a question. That's how the book ends. "Can I not give mercy to whoever I want to? Because I'm God. Do I have your permission to give mercy and grace and forgiveness to whoever I want? Is that okay with you?" And that's where the book of Jonah ends. It is so beautiful. Because that is when it's like the Sixth Sense scene. Like, now you know the whole story is flipped around. The book of Jonah doesn't give an answer because you, the reader, have to give that answer. And what's the answer? And are you willing to admit to yourself that that is the answer? Yes, God can give love and mercy and grace to even the people I don't want to see get it. So beautiful.

Peter and Jonah: The Contrast

Jonah ran from the mission to show God's grace to the Gentiles. Peter ran to it. And here's what it says in verse 34. The clean and unclean dietary laws found in the Torah teach us about God's desire to have us sit at his table. They teach us about entering into a sacred space that is not like the world, but is filled with worship and connection with God. They teach us to examine

our own hearts with the zeal we have concerning our opinions and assertions and our desires to look down on others. They teach us about the grace of God. And here they teach us about the gospel, that God has decided who he wants to express his love, mercy, and grace to. And you have no excuses to get in the way of it.

What's Really in Your Heart?

So yeah, I try to eat clean. No pork, shrimp, or bumblebees. But just like Yeshua taught, there are bigger fish to fry concerning what people see concerning your faith. If you are known more for what you eat and don't eat, more so than reflecting the humility, graciousness, and generosity of Yeshua, then maybe you need to look more at the things that really make you unclean than the ingredients in the back of a package. So what's in your heart today? I think that's the ultimate message here. What's in your heart? Because those are the things that are really corrupting. Those are the things that are truly, in the sense that matters the most, defiling. And so please stand as we conclude services. Yeshua says, you cannot have lust in your heart and not take on the identity as an adulterer. You cannot have bitterness and unforgiveness and hatred in your heart towards others and not take on the identity of a murderer in God's kingdom. He says the source of true contamination, defilement, is in your heart. That is where evil sparks and grows if it's not addressed like a weed. That is where theft comes from. That is where hatred comes from. That is where lies come from. That is where faking and wearing a mask comes from. That is where self-righteousness and pride and arrogance come from.

The Heart's True Condition

And so yeah, we're discussing the clean and unclean laws. Don't eat the pig. But there's also a time to address the things that are in our hearts. And so as we conclude with worship, I invite you guys to have a time of self-reflection today and examine your heart and examine the words of Yeshua in relation to unclean food and what it has to do with the gospel. And guys, if you need prayer today for anything that may be going on in your life situations, I know there's several people going through hard times. If you would like someone to pray for you, we have a bold worship team on the other side of the room and they will lift you up before the Father. I invite you to take advantage of that.

Alvino McCain, our Father, our King, we thank you for this time that we come before you in worship and reflection of your Son, Yeshua. We ask that your Holy Spirit that you say is within us now would search our hearts and bring things to light so that we can move forward to your

table to dine with you as our King. We thank you, Father, for the Sabbath. We thank you for your generous love. In Yeshua's name we pray. Amen.

Let's sing the Shema.

Shema Yisrael, Eloheka, Ruk'sha, K'vokuta. Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one. Blessed is the name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity. And may the God of patience and encouragement grant you to be like-minded with one another in the manner of Messiah, so that together with one voice, we glorify the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua, the Messiah. May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up his countenance towards you and give you peace. Amen. Shabbat Shalom. Be blessed.

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