



*The Rock is a Youth
Ministry of Ascension
Lutheran Church*

Impact!

Based on Acts 10:1-43

Laverne:	Allee ("L" on Shirt)
Shirley:	Lauren
Simon the T:	Matt S. (Bill Murray) (Golf Club)
Carly:	Peri
Angel:	Nathan
Cornelius:	Toby (Rodney Dangerfield) (Neck Tie)
Groucho:	Michael (Groucho Marx, Soldier) (Nose & Glasses)
Chico:	Ryan (Chico Marx, Servant 1) (Hat)
Harpo:	Matt W. (Harpo Marx, Servant 2) (Hat, Horn)
Peter:	Joe
Voice of God:	Zach (Mask)
Sheet Angel:	Annee
Sheet Angel:	Oliver

(Laverne enters room. Shirley is reading her Bible.)

Shirley: So where you been.

Laverne: Oh, nowhere.

Shirley: *(Slams Bible shut.)* I give up. I don't get it.

Laverne: Don't tell me your takin' another one of those night classes to get your degree so's ya don't have ta' work capin' beer at the brewery no more...Again!

Shirley: What do ya' mean, AGAIN?

Laverne: Aha! So you are...

Shirley: No I'm not. I'm just readin' my Bible a little bit...

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Laverne: Readin' your Bible? I don't know what's more amazing: that you can read or that you have a Bible?

Shirley: Ha, ha, very funny. It just so happens that I bumped into the Ascension Lutheran web site. I'm reading the text for this Sunday's sermon: Acts 10.

Laverne: Acts 10? Oh, sure, the story of the Gentile Pentecost. You know, the one where the Centurion Cornelius from Caesarea is instructed by an Angel to invite Simon Peter who is staying with Simon the Tanner down by the sea in Joppa to come visit him, and Simon Peter has a vision of unclean animals in a sheet that he says he won't eat, only God says he can, and then God tells Peter that Corny's men are coming to see him, and he invites them in and they travel back to Corny's place in Caesarea, and Corny bows down to Peter, and Peter says "don't bow down" and then Peter preaches the Gospel to them and their Gentile friends and relatives, and they're baptized and the Gentile church is born.

Shirley: *(Comes over to Laverne and looks at monitor.)* Say, what are you readin' that or something?

Laverne: *(Mocking tone.)* No, I'm not "readin' that or something." What do you think the "L" on my shirts stands for?

Shirley: Laverne, you don't want to know what people think the "L" on your shirts stands for.

Laverne: It stands for "Learn-ed".

Shirley: Okay, so if you're so smart, explain it to me? Why the tanner? I didn't even know they had tanning booths in those days.

Laverne: Shirley, you dying your hair again? Simon the Tanner was a skinner...a guy who skinned animals.

Shirley: Well, half the story takes place at his home, but he

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never actually appears in the story.

Laverne: So let's use our imagination. You see there's this guy Simon the Tanner on his rooftop by the sea, practicing his long shot...(*Caddy Shack music. Simon appears on stage with golf bag*).

Simon: Everyone quiet now. Here we are on the 18th hole of the final round at Augusta. Simon the Tanner, Cinderella boy at the masters...oh I'd say it's about 500 yards or so from the green. That would be about a 5-iron shot. He needs a birdie to tie it. (*Swings club.*) Oh, it's a beauty, it's gonna' be about pin high. Oh, and it's in hole. It's in the hole." And the fans here at Augusta are going crazy.

Carly: (*From off-stage.*) Simon! Simon, is that you up there on the roof again?

Simon: Yes, my dearest. I'll be right there. (*To audience.*) This whole engagement thing is starting to wear on me.

Carly: (*Enters stage.*) There you are! Hey, your not wasting your time clubbing rocks into the sea again, are you?

Simon: Carly, my fiancé, my princess. You know every man needs a little recreation, and it'll be a couple thousand years until they invent video games, so I'm working on a new sport. I think I'll call it "Club".

Carly: That's it, Simon! I know we're engaged to be married and all. But I've had it. It's official, our engagement is off!

Simon: But Carly, my princess, what have I done to offend you.

Carly: What have you done? First you tell me you're the son of a Rabbi...

Simon: Well, my father's name was Rabbi. Rabbi the tanner.

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Carly: TANNER! You and your father are tanners: you are up to your elbows in blood and carcasses day in and day out. By Jewish law you are ceremonially unclean! Why you can't even live in town. You are stuck here by the sea!

Simon: Pretty view, isn't it?

Carly: I'm sorry, Simon. But it's off. The engagement is off.

Shirley: So you think Simon was divorced from his fiancé?

Laverne: Well, we don't know anything about Simon, really. But what we do know is that to Jew's, the trade of being a tanner was considered so unclean that tanner's had to live at least 50 cubits outside of town.

Shirley: So that's why Simon lived by the sea!

Laverne: Exactly. And if a woman was engaged to a tanner who had misled the woman about his occupation, Jewish law actually allowed for the woman to call the engagement off because the tanner was seen as being perpetually unclean.

Shirley: Wow, so tanners really got no respect.

Laverne: Which brings us back to our story. You see, Christ's follower's at the time were still largely Jewish, and they were struggling with what to do with Gentiles like Cornelius, who were drawn to the Jewish God, but Jewish rules and norms kept the two groups apart.

Cornelius: Respect. I tell you, I don't get no respect. (*Adjust tie.*)

Angel: Cornelius!

Cornelius: What is it, Lord?

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Angel: God has heard your prayers and observed your gifts to the poor. Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea.

Cornelius: A tanner?

Angel: Don't ask! (*Exits.*)

Cornelius: Groucho, Chico, Harpo! (*Marx brothers appear.*)

Chico: You call, boss?

Cornelius: Yes, Groucho, Chico, and Harpo, my trusted servants! Now I need you boys to go to Joppa by the Sea.

Groucho: Joppa? (*To audience.*) Now that's the funniest word I've ever heard. I don't know about you boys, but I'll take Cardiff by the Sea.

Cornelius: No, Joppa!

Harpo: (*Honks horn several times.*)

Cornelius: What did he say?

Chico: He said, "so you want us to find Simon Peter at the home of Simon the Tanner?"

Cornelius: Exactly!

Shirley: The names of Cornelius' servants and soldier were Groucho, Chico, and Harpo?

Laverne: What'd you expect? Lenny and Squiggy? Now pay attention, Shirley!

Shirley: So the three of them all head out for Joppa. We'll pick it up the next day when Peter is praying on the roof of Simon's house. Now it's about noon, and he's getting kind of hungry, so the Lord gives him a vision.

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Laverne: Bratwurst and anchovy pizza?
Shirley: Worse!

(Peter is praying on the roof. Four angels enter with sheet. Another tosses stuffed animals into the sheet.)

Peter: *(Looks at sheet. Picks up a vile looking creature. Looks at audience.)* Let this be a lesson to you. Never pray on an empty stomach!

God: Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.

Peter: Surely not, Lord! I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.

God: Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.

Shirley: Now Peter has this vision three times, right Laverne?

Laverne: Three is a big number for Pete. He denied the Lord 3 times. Jesus asked him if he loved him 3 times.

Shirley: And now he refuses God's picnic spread three times.

Laverne: And remember in Mark 5:18, Jesus said "Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him 'unclean'?"

Shirley: So the food part of this is really consistent with what Peter heard from Jesus himself.

Laverne: It's all consistent. So much of what the disciples re-learned in Acts is stuff that Jesus had tried to teach them over and over and over again in his three years of ministry with them.

Shirley: People can be kind of dense, can't we, Laverne?

Laverne: Don't even get me started. Now back to Peter...

Peter: Hmm. Strange vision, God. What could it mean?

God: Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and

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go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.

Peter: *(Goes down steps. To audience.)* Yikes! Gentiles. And funny looking ones too! *(Chico Tips hat, Groucho tips cigar. Harpo honks his horn.)*

Groucho: So, pardon me, but our master, the Roman Centurion, Cornelius of Caesarea has sent for you.

Peter: Oh, God? First you send me to a tanner's house. Now you send me Gentiles? What could be worse than a tanner's house? A tanner's house full of Gentiles?

God: Peter, do not call anything impure that God has made clean.

Peter: Very well, come in. *(Motions for men to enter.)*

Shirley: So they lived happily ever after, right, Laverne?

Laverne: No, now the fun really starts. The next day, Pete and his guests, along with some of Pete's undisclosed friends head for Caesarea.

Shirley: Perhaps even Simon the Tanner went with them?

Simon: Hey, what do you mean, "Perhaps even Simon the Tanner?" I'm really not that bad.

Whole Cast: He is that bad!

Simon: Just a little rough around the edges...is all. *(Sniffs pits.)* Well, maybe just a shower would help.

Laverne: And When they arrive at the home of Cornelius, Peter—who has stayed in a tanner's home and invited Gentile guests to spend the night—now takes yet another step. He enters a Gentile home and preaches the gospel message to him and his friends and family.

Shirley: And now he really realizes that God's vision wasn't

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just about food, but about bending or even breaking man-made norms, rules, and biases to share the Gospel with everyone.

Peter: You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection.

Lavern: And the rest of the story is in Acts 10:34-47, where Pete gives his mini sermon, the people believe, are baptized, and saved.

Simon: Excuse me?

Lavern: Yes?

Simon: I have a question? Is this just about Jews, Tanners, and Gentiles, or does it apply to these people too? (*Gestures to audience?*)

Peter: I think I know the answer to that. You see, as Christians we're to follow Christ's example. Just as God left heaven and entered the unclean confines of earth to go to a place he really didn't fit in, so also I was called to go among the unclean and witness.

Cornelius: Sometimes as Christians we'd rather not bother entering the unclean world, but would rather keep to ourselves or pretend we can help save the world without entering it. Fortunately for us, Jesus didn't do that, and neither did Peter. And just as God asked Peter to enter my home, so he's going to call each of us into areas of ministry where we might not feel at home. That's when the church can make an impact.