

Simon Says

Devotion

To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name (Acts 10:43).

If you had a typical childhood, you probably were bossed around by a Simon character. He/she told you to stand up, sit down, or put your hand on your head for no good reason except to get a laugh if you did it all wrong.

Who is this Simon person anyway? The game itself is centuries old. There is evidence that in Marcus Tillus Cicero's day, children played "Cicero Says." A very powerful 13th century French-English noble named Simon imprisoned King Henry III. With power like that, you can imagine people would do what he said.

In Scripture, there are many Simons. The most popular is Simon Peter, but there is Simon the Cananaean (Matthew 10:4), Simon the brother of Jesus (Matthew 13:55), Simon the leper (Matthew 26:6), and Simon of Cyrene (Mark 15:21), to name a few.

In Acts 10, Simon Peter is staying with Simon the tanner when a centurion, Cornelius, has a vision to send for Simon Peter. Cornelius is an Italian Gentile, and this gives Peter pause since up to that time, the disciples had only preached the Good News to the Jews. However, Peter also had a vision that he must not consider Gentiles unclean, but instead, to go see what Cornelius wanted. Cornelius told Peter "*So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord*" (Acts 10:33b). How does Simon Peter respond? So Peter opened his mouth and said: "**Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.** As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all) (Acts 10:34–36).

As is true for many today, Peter may have been unsure about befriending someone from another culture, but the Holy Spirit led him to the truth that God loves everyone and we should treat everyone the same regardless of race, culture, or background. *To him [Jesus] all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name (Acts 10:43).*

True, Simon Peter had to defend himself when he returned to the believers he left behind. He had to explain why he spent several days in the home of a Gentile, but he told them, "*If then God gave the*

same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" (Acts 11:17).

Now, the game "Simon Says" is found in almost every language, from Afrikaans: "**Kolonel Bevel**" ("Colonel commands"); to Russian: "**Саймон говорит**" ("Simon says"). If a silly game can be that contagious, imagine how the Good News of Jesus can spread everywhere. We need to listen to what Simon says.

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, give us the spirit of acceptance to all. Have us look past our differences and embrace our oneness in You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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