

Would you eat insects? Does the very idea make you go 'Urghh!?' How could you – all those legs, and surely they would be very hard and scratchy? Normally if there's a caterpillar on our lettuce or a grub in our apple we spit it out or pick it off and throw it away – or squash it – we'd never think of actually eating it. But some people do. Aborigines in Australia eat big fat grubs (insect larvae), and very nutritious they are, too. We'll all be eating insects before long. They are an excellent source of protein and can be reared more sustainably and with much less impact on the environment than animals for meat. You may not even realise you're doing it if bread or pastry is made from insect flour. It's still rather squirm-inducing, though.

Poor old Peter found himself with a similar problem, though it wasn't insects. He had kept the Jewish food laws all his life, so he hated even the idea of eating pork, or rabbit, or shellfish, or any animal that preyed on other animals, and he would never mix meat and milk together. So when he had his dream, his reaction to all the unclean animals he saw in the sheet would have been just like ours at the thought of eating insects. And he is still the same Peter, so even though he recognised that God was talking to him, he argued. Symbolically, he argued three times! But eventually, helped by the sudden appearance of three unexpected visitors, he understood, and accepted that God was telling him that anyone can become a Christian. It wasn't just a privilege for Jewish people. You don't have to follow Jewish rules about food, or anything else, to be accepted. The very first Christians were Jews, but Jesus made it clear that his message was for everyone. 'When I am lifted up I will draw everyone to myself'. It wasn't long after the resurrection that both Peter and Paul found themselves teaching and baptising people who weren't Jews. This was even more important because many of the Jews simply wouldn't listen, and put them in prison or tried to drive them away. If Christianity had been reserved for the Jews it would never have got going.

This openness, this message of universal acceptance, is something that many people find very difficult to grasp. If it's so special to be a Christian, how is it that absolutely anyone can join? Surely there ought to be some sort of qualification, or test, or apprenticeship? Or perhaps you should commit to give a lot of money, or guarantee to do so many hours of prayer and good works every day? Surely, because we are good Christians (aren't we?), anyone who wants to be let in should be like us, and believe and behave just like us? The woman I sat next to on the bus the other day, who insisted on telling me that science isn't true and all scientists are evil because they deliberately lie about God – surely she can't be a Christian? But however much I disagreed with most of what she said, she was right about one thing. We have to trust God.

There are some things all Christians must do. We must be open to God's word. We must realise that we get things wrong and ask God for forgiveness. Above all we must love one another. That was Jesus's new commandment for his followers: 'Love one another as I have loved you'. That is the real test, and the one we all keep failing. But because God is full of love for his people, we can pick ourselves up, acknowledge where we went wrong, and start again. God will forgive us, as long as – as the lady on the bus said – we trust him.

Peter trusted God. He went to Caesarea and found a household of complete strangers ready to repent and be baptised. We try to trust God too, and today we have two young men who are ready to be baptised. But they are not strangers – Mylo and Floyd are already very much part of our community. They've come to receive the Holy Spirit and start their journey as Christians. It's great to have them and their family here. Their job is to learn and grow. Their family and godparents will help them to love God and follow Jesus. Our role is to support, encourage and love them all. We all have work to do, and we shall trust God to help us.