

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Salvation Comes To The Gentiles, Pt 2

Acts 10:24-35

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PowerPoint Presentation included: none

SermonAudio Blurb: We continue in this examination of the story of Cornelius the Centurion and Peter the Apostle. We discover how Peter comes to learn how the gospel affects everything, including his precious connections to the old way of worshiping YHWH. It is a critical shifting of thought for the purpose of gathering in the Gentiles in Christ.

I. Introduction.

- A. We come again to this critical turning point in the book of Acts (10).
 - 1. Luke is the author and is showing the expansion of the Church of Jesus Christ.
 - 2. The starting point was in Jerusalem and through persecution it began to move outward.
 - a. Remember that a key difference between the nation of Israel and the Church is that the Church is commanded to go outward with the gospel unto every nation and people.
 - b. Yet the reality that the early church was primarily Jewish created some unique challenges. And the key one is found in this passage.
 - c. **Read vs 24-35.**
- B. Last time we saw two visions:
 - 1. The first was an angel appearing to a God-fearing, devout centurion in Caesarea and the second was by God to the apostle Peter.
 - 2. The first directed Cornelius to send for Peter to learn of Jesus Christ.
 - 3. The second was a vision of animals forbidden by the Old Testament Law for a Jew to eat. Something new had come for the command given three times to Peter was to kill and eat.
 - 4. Now, this was a vision so after the point was made the vision ended and nothing was eaten. This leaves Peter wondering exactly what is going on, and we will find the answer today.

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- C. The core issue here is that with the conversion of Cornelius there becomes a very real question of what does a Christian look like?
- D. Today we see Peter meeting Cornelius and in it we find the turning of a page in biblical history that diverts the Church to worldwide missions. And in doing so we learn three key truths:
 - 1. The first is that the gospel propels us to engage every type of people and nation and not allow tradition and preference to constrain us.
 - 2. The second is that in God there is no partiality.
 - 3. The third is that God saves all who fear Him.
 - 4. We will focus only on that first point today.

II. The Conversion of Cornelius.

- A. The initial meeting of Jew and Gentile (24-27).
 - 1. Once it was determined that God was at work through the arrival of Cornelius's entourage there was no delay in going to Caesarea.
 - 2. What Peter discovers is more than a private meeting with this centurion.. Vs 24 shows us that all of his family and intimate friends are there as well. This is the way of evangelism so often. One person hears or learns and they quickly invite others to come and hear.
 - 3. The reaction by Cornelius in prostrating himself before Peter (25) is not unexpected though it was not appropriate.
 - a. Within the Greek and Roman world there was a tradition of what some would call "divine humans."
 - b. This would extend even to unusually excellent orators or philosophers who were so gifted in their rhetoric and logic that they were called divine. Peter since it was a holy angel who told him to seek out Peter.
 - c. But we learn something in this that is worth noting. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the saints and the Virgin Mary are to be venerated but only God is to be worshiped.

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- B. The breaking down of the walls of separation for the sake of the gospel (28).
 - 1. We see Peter likely somewhat taken aback by the crowd waiting for him (27). But because of his own vision he is already coming with an expectation that something surprising is waiting.
 - a. If he had no vision, this whole scenario likely would have ended very differently and very abruptly.
 - b. Here we see how Peter is able to connect the vision with the situation.
 - 2. But much more is happening here than this meeting between Cornelius and Peter. It is an entire paradigm shift brought about through Jesus Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. We also see that he has come to realize that something truly new is happening (28b). This, again, is because the Church is not Israel or a new and improved Israel, it something utterly new and different.
 - b. This is quite radical. Peter realizes that what for a couple of thousand of years is now done. What was unclean is now clean. What was defiling was no longer a defiling.
 - c. And this is the essence of Christian freedom. God breaks down these walls for the sake of the gospel. We are free.
 - d. Paul deals with this very issue throughout his various letters. The one to Ephesus is key (turn to chapter 2).

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e. In Galatians 5:1-15.

f. Peter himself instructs the churches in 1 Peter 2:16.

g. Here is the point you need to see: this freedom is not so you can enjoy BBQ pork or wear whatever sort of clothing or hair style you wish. It has nothing to do with you.

(1) It has everything to do with showing honor and grace toward those you seek to win to Christ.

(2) Therefore, if your freedom becomes a stumbling block to an unbeliever who you seek to evangelize, then you change.

(3) 1 Corinthians 9:19-22.

III. Conclusion.

A. Here then is our challenge before us.

1. Are there things that keep you from engaging your unbelieving neighbor or co-worker?

2. Have you erected a wall of some sort of tradition that prevents you from being involved with and in the lives of those outside of Jesus Christ?

3. Do you create your own set of rules and regulations that keep you from being in the presence of those who do not love and believe the gospel?

B. For all of us we need to give thought to the essence of the mercy and kindness of God in saving us.

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1. “For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly” (Romans 5:6).
2. “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).
3. “For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Romans 5:10).
4. If this is what God has done for every believer in this room, then should we not look to the weak, the enemy of God and the sinner and show them Christ in and through the gospel?

Benediction

May the God who gave us the Word sanctify us in it so that we might find ourselves strengthened in the truth, humble of heart, able to encourage one another toward love and good deeds, especially as we see the day of our Lord’s return drawing nearer. Amen.