



Repentance Tabernacle Church

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Salvation for Every Nation

Focus Verses: Acts 10:34-35 - ³⁴ Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: ³⁵ But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

Lesson Text: Acts 10:30-48

Truth About God: God's plans and promises are bigger than my preconceptions or prejudices.

Truth For My Life: I will not let my prejudices and preconceptions limit what God can do through me.

Cornelius was not just any Gentile. He was a Roman centurion. Acts 10:2 tells us Cornelius was *"a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway."* He had an amazing visitation by an angel (Acts 10:30-31). The angel told Cornelius his prayer had been heard.

If we do an honest moral inventory, many of us would have to admit Cornelius was more devout than we are. Many present-day believers fear God on Sundays, give just enough to appease our conscience, and pray to God when we are in trouble. This centurion allied with Rome politically, but most importantly he was hungry for God. **He was an example of a man who was able to live in the world but not be shaped by it.**

Just as Cornelius sought God, so did the apostle Peter. During Peter's prayer time, *"he fell into a trance, and saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending upon him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth"* (Acts 10:10-11). On this sheet were several animals Jews were forbidden to eat. Then a voice came to him, saying: *"Rise, Peter; kill, and eat"* (Acts 10:13). Peter acknowledged the voice in his vision as the voice of God, for he called Him Lord (Acts 10:14). Finally, after God challenged Peter's assumptions three times, Peter submitted.

When we believe we heard the voice of God speaking to us, we should consider our hearts and check with your trusted pastor. Making ourselves accountable to others is a voluntary act that demonstrates to God, He can trust us to walk *"circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise"* (Ephesians 5:15). While you may have heard from the Lord, pastors can help us ensure we follow the voice in the right way and at the right time.

"While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them" (Acts 10:19-20). Although Peter had struggled to understand and obey, he finally followed the voice of God and went with the visitors to Cornelius's house.

Peter did not expect to find the house full of people, full of faith and hungry to hear the gospel. Once Cornelius explained why he sent for Peter, Peter exclaimed, *"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him"* (Acts 10:34-35). Suddenly, the vision made sense. Just as no food that is blessed should be called unclean, no person God blesses should be considered unclean. So Peter preached the gospel to all the Gentiles who were gathered together.

Peter began to preach Jesus to Cornelius and his household, and suddenly *"the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word"* (Acts 10:44). This stunned the Jews who came with Peter. They were astonished because the Gentiles were receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. They did not have to wonder if Cornelius and his family received the same Holy Ghost they had received only a short time before, *"For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God"* (Acts 10:46). **Because God had sanctified these uncircumcised Gentiles**, the apostles knew they could not *"forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost"* in the same way they had (Acts 10:47). The Jewish apostles baptized the Gentile converts in Jesus' name (Acts 10:48).

Time is too short to allow our own biases and even prejudices to interfere with the plans of God. When we proclaim God is the Lord of our lives, inherent in that proclamation is the admission that we are not the master of our own lives. **If He is God, then we are not.** God's plans and promises are bigger than our preconceptions or prejudices. If we are willing to obey His voice in conjunction with the counsel of ministers who love us, God can use us to reach people we never thought possible.