

SERIES: SAINT AND SINNER- 3/17/24 (#6)

PASTOR LEE

Church Events:
Opportunities
To Share!
Are You Willing
To Help?

- Pastor Lee reviews upcoming, exciting Church events....encourages us to identify and invite those in our lives who most need it....to attend.
- This morning, discussing Acts, 10....Cornelius and Peter.....up front, our key message to this story is: **"EVERYONE NEEDS SOMEONE TO HELP THEM TO JESUS."** Ensuing question..."**ARE YOU WILLING TO BE THAT ONE?"** God's already prepared them....you just need to step forward!
- Story setting is in Caesarea (not to be confused with Caesarea Phillippi- -(see Series #2), a 'man-made' port city (and Roman strong-hold) filled with Gentiles. It is here that Peter meets the Roman centurion, Cornelius.

A 'Sharing'
story:
Peter &
Cornelius

Acts 10: 1-2 *At Caesarea, there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, (2) a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God.*

An 'essential'
For Salvation:
"Knowing
Jesus"!

- Note: with all his positive and 'God-respecting/fearing' attributes, he is (not yet) a Christ-follower. Clarifier: **IF YOU DON'T KNOW JESUS, YOU DO NOT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE!** (All the good works in the world do NOT save us...only through Jesus' righteousness and grace-giving). So Cornelius, notwithstanding all his good efforts..without Jesus, had no way to establish true connection with God.
- Note also: his story is occurring about seven years AFTER Jesus had told his apostles to go out and extend the Gospel across the land. Recognize also that the Jews strict belief system/culture didn't even allow them contact with what was viewed as the 'unclean' culture of the gentiles (by the way, most gentiles had equally strong distaste for Jews).

Applies To
All People!

Acts 10: 3-5 *About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, "Cornelius." (4) And he stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord? And he said to him, "your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God." (5) Now send a man to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter.*

Our Lord
listens...
knows...
Intercedes

- Note on V 4: When we pray and when we give, God knows!
- Re: V 5, God often uses Angels to accomplish His tasks (Note also that Joppa is a Jewish seaport).

God's
Message To
Peter To
Reach Out!

(6) He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. (7) When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him. (8) and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa. (9) The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the City, Peter went out on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. (10) And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance (11) and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. (12) In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. (13) and there came a voice to him: "Rise Peter, kill and eat." (14) But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." (15) And the voice came to him a second time, "What God has made clean, do not call common." (16) this happened three times and the thing was taken up to heaven.

- RE: V14, Peter was following the kosher laws as laid out in Lev 20:25 and Deut 14:3-21 and added to still further by the ancient Rabbis'.
- Pastor speculates on these myriad rules, God's original intent, etc. Perhaps God was looking to make the Jewish community distinctive, separate, protected....and undesirable in the sense that outsiders wouldn't want to intermarry. BUT...now God (V13)-15 was insistently and emphatically seeking, through Peter and the Apostles, to reach out.

Peter &
Cornelius
Connect!

Acts 10:17 Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house stood at the gate. (18) and called out to ask whether Simon, who was called Peter, was lodging there. (19) And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. (20) Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them."

- The connections: serendipitous (?) or God's plan (?)....three times, God says eat these things....three men show upand remember, 900 years before, Jonah was there being told by God to go to Nineva (who audaciously said "no" and wound up in the belly of a fish!). It would seem God is reinforcing the notion that **EVERYONE NEEDS SOMEONE TO HELP THEM COME TO JESUS!** (Jonah, Peter, us) Peter responds (V 20-21)....will we?
- Pastor reads V 22-25 in which Peter is invited by the messengers to Cornelius's home...he accepts and Cornelius, along with his relatives and close friends, receives and welcomes him.

We All Seek
God
Together!

Acts 10:25-26 When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshipped him. (26) but Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am a man."

- Peter rejected this literal worship....as we should reject any worship of a person or thing other than God.
- We are all seeking God together! Pastor Lee encourages us again to seek out people...facilitate their participation in one of our Church events.....could be the start of their turn toward Jesus!
- V 27- 33 God Will comes to fruition in the story. Peter explains to Cornelius' household God's instructions to him and his (at first, reluctant) obedience. Cornelius reiterates his experience .

Salvation Is
Available
To All!

Acts 10: 34 -35 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.

- So, God shows no partiality!.....See John 3:16 (God so loved the world.....) God loves everyone!.....irrespectively!
- Pastor Lee continues with V 35-38.....and notes that the Centurian wasn't the only one to be saved, a large group comprising the whole 'household' was saved!! A great example to all of us.....who of us knows the effects of taking simple acts to share your faith.....and their potentially exponential effects! Like Peter, step out of your norms and just do it! Be ready!.....people are hungry to receive the message of faith...be bold. Even 'good' people need to hear the message of Jesus....just like Cornelius.
- Refers to V 39-43 where Peter testifies as to Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension and Jesus' ensuing command to spread His word " that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name."

Its All About
Jesus & Our
Belief In Him!

Share The
Gospel &
Watch the
H.S. Work!

"Christ Be
Magnified"

Acts 10: 44 While Peter was still saying these things, **THE HOLY SPIRIT FELL ON ALL WHO HEARD THE WORD.**

- So, just like Peter, we just have to present the Gospel....the Holy Spirit takes it from there!

OPPORTUNITIES: LET GOD USE YOU!!!!!!!