

February 15, 2004  
AM Service  
Patchogue Church of the Nazarene

“Cornelius Finds What He Was Missing”  
Acts 10: 1-8 & 34- 48 NLT

In Caesarea there lived a Roman army officer named Cornelius, who was a captain of the Italian Regiment. 2 He was a devout man who feared the God of Israel, as did his entire household. He gave generously to charity and was a man who regularly prayed to God. 3 One afternoon about three o'clock, he had a vision in which he saw an angel of God coming toward him. "Cornelius!" the angel said.

4 Cornelius stared at him in terror. "What is it, sir?" he asked the angel.

And the angel replied, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have not gone unnoticed by God! 5 Now send some men down to Joppa to find a man named Simon Peter. 6 He is staying with Simon, a leatherworker who lives near the shore. Ask him to come and visit you."

7 As soon as the angel was gone, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier, one of his personal attendants. 8 He told them what had happened and sent them off to Joppa.

*[Meanwhile, as they were nearing the city of Joppa, God was preparing Peter for their visit and taught Peter that (v15), "If God says something is acceptable, don't say it isn't."*

*When they found Peter he asked them why they had come. They explained that (vs 22-23) a holy angel instructed Cornelius to send for Peter to give him a message.*

*They stayed the night and the next day Peter went with them accompanied by some other believers from Joppa.*

*They arrived in Caesarea the following day. Cornelius was waiting for him and had called together his relatives and close friends to meet Peter. As Peter entered his home, Cornelius fell to the floor before him in worship. But Peter pulled him up and said, "Stand up! I'm a human being like you!" So Cornelius got up, and they talked together and went inside where the others were assembled.*

*Peter told them, "You know it is against the Jewish laws for me to come into a Gentile home like this. But God has shown me that I should never think of anyone as inferior. So I came as soon as I was sent for. Now tell me why you sent for me."*

*Cornelius told Peter what happened and said, "it was good of you to come. Now here we are, waiting before God to hear the message the Lord has given you."]*

34 Then Peter replied, "I see very clearly that God doesn't show partiality. 35 In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right. 36 I'm sure you have heard about the Good News for the people of Israel--that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. 37 You know what happened all through Judea, beginning in Galilee after John the Baptist began preaching. 38 And no doubt you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the Devil, for God was with him.

39 "And we apostles are witnesses of all he did throughout Israel and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by crucifying him, 40 but God raised him to life three days later. Then God allowed him to appear, 41 not to the general public, but to us whom God had chosen beforehand to be his witnesses. We were those who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42 And he ordered us to preach everywhere and to testify that Jesus is ordained of God to be the judge of all--the living and the dead. 43 He is the one all the prophets testified about, saying that everyone who believes in him will have their sins forgiven through his name."

44 Even as Peter was saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who had heard the message. 45 The Jewish believers who came with Peter were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles, too. 46 And there could be no doubt about it, for they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

Then Peter asked, 47 "Can anyone object to their being baptized, now that they have received the Holy Spirit just as we did?" 48 So he gave orders for them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Afterward Cornelius asked him to stay with them for several days.

Cornelius was wealthy, respected (a Roman soldier with 100 men under his authority), religious, a good man, contributed to the poor, even feared God and prayed, Yet something was missing. Peter comes to minister to Cornelius and shares with him three important things about God:

### **1. *God's Attitude***

(v34-35 - Then Peter replied, "I see very clearly that God doesn't show partiality. In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right.)

Don't you wonder why the *angel* didn't just give Cornelius God's message? Why did God want Cornelius to send for Peter? I think part of the answer to that question is that God had a lesson to teach to Peter, the other believers, Cornelius, his relatives and friends and to every person who would hear of this story right down to you and me this morning. And the lesson is this: God does not show favoritism - He accepts all people. God accepts people from every nationality, culture, race and religion. What a statement against racism and prejudice. Peter reminds them that he was taught and it was even a law that a Jew was not suppose to go into the home of a Gentile. But God as revealed in Jesus Christ teaches that no one is to be looked down on as inferior. All are made in the image of God. All are precious to Him and significant in His eyes. God loves each one equally and wants us to love all people too

Furthermore, God had shown Peter through a vision that Jesus came not only for the Jews but also for the non-Jew. All who seek Him will find Him. Some religions want to kill those who do not believe as they do – our religion wants to save those who do not believe as we do. Some religions reject and shun those who do not believe what they do. Our religion wants to accept and share its message with those who do not believe as we do. We are taught to love all people. God does not show favoritism. It doesn't matter who you are or what you've done. God loves you. In the world it is not like this. In the world certain people are shown favoritism because of who they are or what they've done or what they have. But all are the same in God's eyes. He loves all people and will not reject any who seek Him. His *Message* and *Promise* are for all people.

## **2. *God's Message***

His message is the good news of peace through Jesus Christ (v36). That is good news! Peace with God which results in peace in your heart and peace with others and comes through Jesus Christ. Who is Jesus and why is peace found only in Him?

### **a. *Jesus is Lord of all (v36)***

Peter begins by emphasizing the deity of Jesus. Jesus is Lord of all: He is Lord of angels, powers of darkness, all people, nations, Lord of the universe and of every situation and circumstance.

### **b. *Jesus is God's anointed (v37-38a)***

Christ/Messiah= "God's anointed." The one promised and sent to be the Savior of the world.

### **c. *Jesus heals those oppressed by the devil (v38b)***

In a sense all are oppressed or beaten down by the devil. He wants to destroy us. But Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil and his power over our life. Jesus can do this because He is the Savior sent by the Father; He is God Himself, God the Son, Lord of all (all people, all powers, all things). How did He accomplish destroying the works of the devil, how do we know He is Savior and Lord?

### **d. *Jesus died but was raised from the dead on the third day (v39-41)***

There are trustworthy witnesses of this, eyewitnesses who wrote, reporting what they had seen. Jesus lived a holy life, did miracles of love, but was rejected and killed. These same eyewitnesses also testify that Jesus was raised from the dead on the third day. Thus proving that He is Lord, God, Savior. Therefore...

### **e. *Jesus is the judge of all - the living and the dead (v42)***

Since He is good, since He is God, since He is the Savior of all, since He is Lord of all; He is therefore the judge of the living and the dead.

## **3. *God's Promise***

Everyone who believes in Jesus receives forgiveness in His name and the Holy Spirit (v43-44). He not only wants to forgive the things you've done wrong. He wants to live

in you so that you can know Him, have a personal relationship with Him. He wants to be not only your Savior but also the Lord/King of/over your life. He forgives our sins and declares us forgiven and cleansed of sin so that His Holy Spirit can dwell in us. He doesn't pardon our sin and leave us empty, but fills us with the God the Holy Spirit. But note how this happens, not by being in the right religion, not by doing good and right things, not by fear of God. Cornelius was doing all those things yet realized something more was needed. Cornelius was wealthy, respected (a Roman soldier with 100 men under him), religious, a good man, contributed to the poor, even feared God and prayed. But He did not know Jesus and the forgiveness Jesus offers that gives peace. He needed to know God in a personal way.

Cornelius was missing peace with God. But found it when he heard and believed in Jesus. Not by keeping rules, not by trying hard to do everything right, not by being religious but through repentance and faith in Jesus.

Of course there are standards to be kept, and keeping them requires effort. God's standards are tough and unyielding, but their firmness feels harsh only when we fail to appreciate the privilege of relationship with Him (and what it cost Him to provide it). The point of obedience is to build an enjoyable relationship w/God.

What do you need more than anything else to make you deeply happy? There is only one correct answer: forgiveness from God that brings you into relationship with Him and ongoing forgiveness that makes continued fellowship possible.

God's attitude is for all people to hear and accept the message of Jesus and receive His promise of forgiveness and peace as He lives in you by the Holy Spirit. God wants all to have a relationship with Him and that has been made possible for all people who put their faith in Jesus.