

"Peter's Ministry"

Part 7

Acts 10

Introduction: Last week in our study of Acts we were traveling with Peter as he had just arrived at the house of Cornelius. Tonight, in our study we are privileged to listen to the conversation between Peter and Cornelius.

➤ **The Gentiles and the Body of Christ**

Part 5

Notice Acts 10:28-29

Peter began to understand what his vision was all about. God was showing Peter the wall of separation had been broken down between the Jew and the Gentile. When Peter understood this Truth, he went to Cornelius with no "gainsaying" which means he went with no resistance. As he understood what God was teaching him, he was happy to walk in obedience. I will say that as we read these verses, we do not understand how much Peter's obedience showed his dedication to the Lord. Possibly we can understand more by looking at two verses in Ephesians.

Ephesians 2:11-12

¹¹ Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

¹² That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

The Gentiles were the seen as far more than unclean, they were looked at as God's outcasts. They had no covenants, they had no relationship with God, and they were completely without hope. For the Gentiles the situation could not be any worse. But Jesus changed all of this as He broke down the walls and in Acts 10 Peter is the Apostle who has the privilege of opening the door for the Gentiles to be members of the body of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:13-16

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

Any Gentile who is without Jesus Christ today is still in the place described by Ephesians 2:12.

Ephesians 2:12

12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

This is exactly where the unsaved are today. This is the most frightening place there is to live yet many today live in this state. Some by choice and some because they have not heard the Gospel.

Notice Acts 10:30-33

Here Cornelius tells of the reason Peter was sent. Cornelius says something here that we did not see before and that was that he was fasting. This tells us a little more about him. Fasting in the New Testament relates to mourning.

Matthew 9:14-15

14 Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?

*15 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber **mourn**, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.*

Here we see that fasting is associated with mourning.

Notice Acts 10:30-31 again.

I want you to notice that Cornelius was praying a certain prayer because the angel tells him his PRAYER is heard. This combined with the fasting paints a picture for us. It

appears Cornelius was mourning which caused him to fast and he was praying about the situation. In answering his prayer God sent Peter and Cornelius was comforted and his prayer was answered. We do not have the specifics of what he was asking for but it seems as though Cornelius knew he was missing something. Possibly he had heard of what was happening in Jerusalem with the believing Jews. There was within Cornelius a hollow and he longed for it to be filled. The hollow would be the place where the Holy Spirit would live within him. He did not understand what would unfold when Peter arrived all he knew was there was more and he longed for it. He longed to have the hollow filled to the point of mourning.

Application:

God still puts hollows in His people today and the reason is because He wants us to seek more of Him. No matter how close we are walking to Him there is always more that He wants us to enjoy. Now there are many believers who seek else where to fill the hollow. Many times, they turn to the world or the "stuff" of the world. They buy into Satan's lie in which he declares that the world or the "stuff" in the world will fill us up to the point of contentment. Solomon tells us that this will never happen.

Ecclesiastes 2:1-12

I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity.

² *I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?*

³ *I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.*

⁴ *I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards:*

⁵ *I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits:*

⁶ *I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees:*

⁷ *I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me:*

⁸ *I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts.*

⁹ *So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me.*

¹⁰ *And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy: for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour.*

¹¹ *Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.*

¹² *And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly: for what can the man do that cometh after the king? even that which hath been already done.*

Notice Acts 10:34

Peter reveals here that God is no respecter of persons. This tells us that Peter had grasp onto what God was communicating in the vision. Peter understood that it made no difference what nationality a person is, salvation is available to all. God sees people in a different way than man sees his fellow man. Man looks at his fellow man and makes his determination by what he sees on the outside. The color of his skin, the piercings on his body, the tattoos on his body, the car he drives, the money he makes, the length of his hair, his age, his physic, and the list goes on and on.

1 Samuel 16:7

⁷ *But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.*

The believers who James wrote to had a problem with the respect of persons.

James 2:1-6

My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

² *For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;*

³ *And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:*

⁴ *Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?*

⁵ *Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?*

⁶ *But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?*

His readers were favoring the wealthy and they were despising the poor. This happens far too many times in the church and it should not be. God shows no favoritism and neither should we.

Notice Acts 10:35

Here is the contrast to the previous thought. God is no respecter of persons, but instead He accepts anyone from any nation who fears Him and works righteousness. This does not mean that anyone is saved by works. But instead, this is a description of a true believer. A true believer fears the Lord/shows reverence toward Him, and a true believer works righteousness. This reinforces that Cornelius was a believer before Peter was ever sent to him. Keep in mind Acts 10 takes place in a transitional time. God is letting the world know through the pen of Luke that anyone anywhere who repents and trusts in the finished work of Jesus Christ will be a member of the body of Jesus Christ. This is all new to the Jews. Notice what happens in the next chapter.

Acts 11:1-3

And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

² *And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him.*

³ *Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.*

When Peter went back to Jerusalem he was confronted by the Jews because he went to the Gentiles. I use this to show you that this was all new and God is letting the world know that whosoever will my come.

Now I know there are many who disagree that Cornelius was saved before Peter came to him and they will point to a verse in the next chapter.

Acts 11:13-14

¹³ *And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter:*

¹⁴ *Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.*

These are Peter's words as he tells the Jews at Jerusalem what had transpired. So how are we to understand Acts 11:14? As I had said before, Cornelius and possibly those of his house were Old Testament believers. But under the old economy they were required to offer sacrifices for the covering of sin. After hearing Peter's message, they would experience salvation in the fullest sense. Notice the words of John Whitcomb:

"Cornelius and perhaps some in his household believed in God and were "saved," but only in an Old Testament sense. Peter preached to him the gospel of Christ, and once he believed this message, he was then saved in the New Testament sense, with all that this entails (the knowledge of the once-for-all judicial forgiveness of sins, eternal life with the knowledge and fellowship of the Father and the Son, death to the old man and sin in the flesh, membership in the body of Christ, the indwelling and sealing of the Spirit, an unsurpassable standing, position and nearness before the Father in the risen Christ in the heavenlies, etc.)."

Conclusion:

Might we never forget that God loves everyone and He desires that all men be saved. Therefore, we can look at no one and think they are too sinful for God to save.

1 Timothy 2:1-4

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

² *For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*

³ *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;*

⁴ *Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*