**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

Thirtieth Week Since the Resurrection

 ***Simple Spirit-Faith Salvation***

***Acts 10***

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(Unless otherwise noted, NAS quoted.)

I have preached sermons previously that incorporated the text of Acts 10. This is one of the most revealing chapters in the New Testament, highlighting the Truth that all the “families” of the earth would be blessed through God’s covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12:3). The chapter is a complete story in itself. Here are the main actors:

**God, Holy Spirit, Jesus, Angel, Peter,**

**Centurion Cornelius, Cornelius’ men,**

**Gentiles, Circumcised Believers**

Both men (Peter and Cornelius) have spiritual encounters with God whereby they heard a voice giving them instruction.

 Cornelius has a vision, and Peter falls into a trance (meditative state).

 Cornelius is a “God Fearer” - a term used in the New Testament to describe a person who believed in the God of the Jews and participated to some extent with synagogue religious life.

**God continues to work through non-Jews and those who have not followed Jesus – Cornelius, the Roman Centurion in Caesarea**

**Acts 10:1**

Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius,

a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort,

 2 a devout man and one who feared God with all his household,

and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually.

**Cornelius’ Vision of an Angel of God**

 3 About the ninth hour of the day

he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God

who had just come in and said to him, "Cornelius!"

 4 And fixing his gaze on him and being much alarmed, he said,

 "What is it, Lord?"

And he said to him,

"Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God.

 5 "Now dispatch some men to Joppa

and send for a man named Simon,

who is also called Peter;

 6 he is staying with a tanner named Simon, whose house is by the sea."

 7 When the angel who was speaking to him had left,

he summoned two of his servants

and a devout soldier of those who were his personal attendants,

8 and after he had explained everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

**Spirit-Voice from God Comes to Peter in a Trance**

 9 On the next day, as they were on their way and approaching the city,

Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray.

 10 But he became hungry and was desiring to eat;

but while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance;

 11 and he saw the sky opened up,

and an object like a great sheet coming down,

lowered by four corners to the ground,

 12 and there were in it all kinds of four-footed animals

and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air.

**The Voice**

 13 A voice came to him, "Get up, Peter, kill and eat!"

 14 But Peter said,

"By no means, Lord,

 for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean."

 15 Again a voice came to him a second time,

"What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy."

 16 This happened three times,

and immediately the object was taken up into the sky.

 17 Now while Peter was greatly perplexed in mind as to what the vision which he had seen might be, behold, the men who had been sent by Cornelius, having asked directions for Simon's house, appeared at the gate;

 18 and calling out, they were asking whether Simon, who was also called Peter, was staying there.

 19 While Peter was reflecting on the vision,

 the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you.

20 "But get up, go downstairs and accompany them without misgivings, for I have sent them Myself."

**Cornelius’ Men**

 21 Peter went down to the men and said,

"Behold, I am the one you are looking for;

what is the reason for which you have come?"

 22 They said,

"Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well-spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews, was divinely directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and hear a message from you."

 23 So he invited them in and gave them lodging. And on the next day he got up and went away with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

 **Off to Caesarea**

 24 On the following day he entered Caesarea.

Now Cornelius was waiting for them

 and had called together his relatives and close friends.

 25 When Peter entered,

Cornelius met him, and fell at his feet and worshiped him.

 26 But Peter raised him up, saying,

"Stand up; I too am just a man."

 27 As he talked with him, he entered and found many people assembled.

 28 And he [Peter] said to them,

 "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and yet God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean.

29 "That is why I came without even raising any objection when I was sent for. So, I ask for what reason you have sent for me."

 30 **Cornelius said**,

 "Four days ago, to this hour, I was praying in my house during the ninth hour; and behold, a man stood before me in shining garments,

 31 and he said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God.

 32 'Therefore send to Joppa and invite Simon, who is also called Peter, to come to you; he is staying at the house of Simon the tanner by the sea.'

 33 "So I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord."

**God is not Partial**

 34 Opening his mouth, Peter said:

"I most certainly understand now that **God is not one to show partiality,**

35 but in every nation the **man who fears Him**

**and does what is right** is welcome to Him.

 36 "The word which He sent to the sons of Israel,

preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)--

37 you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed.

38 "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

39 "We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross.

40 "God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible,

41 not to all the people,

but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is,

to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.

42 "And He ordered us to preach to the people,

and solemnly to testify that this is the One

who has been appointed by God

as Judge of the living and the dead.

43 "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name

everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins."

**Holy Spirit Falls Upon Gentiles Before Water Baptism**

 44 While Peter was still speaking these words,

the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.

 45 All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed,

 because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

 46 For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God.

 Then Peter answered,

 47 "Surely no one can refuse the water

for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit

just as we did, can he?"

 48 And he ordered them to be baptized

in the name of Jesus Christ.

Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

 **End of Acts 10**

**Let us break-down Peter’s sermon in order to explain to someone who has little to no knowledge of the Bible or the life of Jesus and Peter.**

**God is not Partial**

 34 Opening his mouth, Peter said:

"I most certainly understand now that **God is not one to show partiality,**

The fact that Peter, the Jew, is preaching this sermon to Gentiles is a miracle. Peter was transitioning himself in his understanding of what Jesus had called them to do. Peter thought that a person had to become a Jew first and go through completion of some of the aspects of the Law of Moses, like circumcision and water-baptism. This whole experience at Cornelius’s house, being Holy Spirit directed, changed Peter’s understanding.

35 but in every nation the

**man who fears Him** **and does what is right**

is welcome to Him.

The ability to do what is right is predicated on having reverence for God. This is why non-believers cannot do the things believers can do. Believers can function with all the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23). Believers can pray to God for others, including their enemy. Believers can forgive others and not live a life in bitterness. Believers live in peace with God and their neighbor.

36 "The word which He sent to the sons of Israel,

preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)--

37 you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed.

Peter lays-out a basic outline of the life-mission of Jesus. Note that for Peter, “peace” is the goal of Jesus’ preaching. He assumes that these Gentiles know about “Jesus of Nazareth” and John the Baptist. He makes clear the starting point of Jesus’ public mission started at the baptism of John (Matthew 3) and that John proclaimed his actions with Jesus.

 38 "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. Peter also assumes these Gentiles knew that God set Jesus aside (anointed) with the Holy Spirit power to heal those oppressed by the devil.

39 "We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross.

40 "God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible,

 Peter, who was recruited by Jesus to be an apostle (Matthew 4:18), claims to be a witness to Jesus’ ministry and the Cross. He reports the most important thing he witnesses, the resurrection, when God raised Jesus from the dead on the third day, and made Him visible to those who God chose beforehand. This is interesting that God chose the visibility of Jesus in His resurrected state to only be visible to some. It is of note that the two on the road to Emmaus only recognized Jesus when they stopped to eat with Him.

 41 not to all the people,

but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is,

to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.

Peter confirms Jesus’ Great Commission to them. Peter also recognizes Jesus’ Messianic role of judgement, which is to come at the end of the age. Even though Peter’s audience is not Jewish, he still references the Jewish prophets to bring legitimacy to his preaching.

42 "And He ordered us to preach to the people,

and solemnly to testify that this is the One

who has been appointed by God

as Judge of the living and the dead.

43 "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name

everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins."

Before Peter can finish his sermon, the Holy Spirit engages the audience, but not before Peter states that everyone who believes in Jesus receives forgiveness of sins. It was after Peter states this salvation point that God intervenes. Is this not the question everyone wants answered? Everyone wants peace with God, which is why Peter said Jesus came preaching (v. 36).

**From reviewing Peter’s sermon, . . .**

. . . how much simpler can it be? A heart-felt surrender to God produces salvation. Peter’s message is simple - Believe God can forgive you of yours sins; who has made the payment for your sins at the Cross. Not all people around the world have heard this message. But Peter made the audience at Cornelius’s house responsible for hearing his witness.

We know God has other ways to share His message. We do not forget Romans 1:18ff where God has revealed Himself through the creation from the beginning. Regardless, if someone has heard of the Cross of Jesus or not, the Cross still applies to them. Meaning, the Cross pays the price of sin for the ignorant, the unknowing. Therefore, once they hear the Truth of the Cross, they are responsible to God. Common sense tells us that not everyone who has ever lived, on every continent, in every age will hear the story of the Cross. This is where God has taken the witness upon himself. We see this in passages like Romans 1:18ff. It is not our responsibility. We should see that God is capable to witness to all people in His time and way.

Peter’s Resurrection witness impowers him and those in the audience. The eye-witness testimony to the Resurrection is what drove the apostles to risk their lives to proclaim the Good News in Jesus’ name. They knew that even if they were killed for their preaching, they, too, would be resurrected. This is what catapulted Christianity to overcome the Roman empire. Due to the Resurrection, the apostle’s witness could not be stopped. By 315 A.D., the Roman Emperor (Constantine) chose Christianity to save the empire.

 **Significant Theological Impact**

1. God is not just the God of the Jews.
2. A person can become justified with God without going through Judaism (being circumcised).
3. God’s Spirit speaks to any person at His choosing. This is exactly what Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3.

 "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit." (John 3:8)

1. You do not have to be in a “justified/righteous” relationship with God for His Spirit to communicate to you.
2. God speaks through angels.
3. God uses visions and meditative (trance) states to communicate through us.
4. You do not have to be water-baptized before receiving a spiritual gift,

 like speaking in tongues.

1. Water-baptism is not the human act (work) that saves people.
2. You do not have to be water-baptized to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
3. God’s spiritual indwelling is the mechanism by which God saves people.

The normal sermon time this morning prevents us from covering all ten of these significant theological impacts, but they are all very important. A sermon could be preached on each one. In fact, doctrinal dissertation could be written on each. You may be drawn to one more than another. Most people simply want to know how to have a relationship with God. From all of these, we can understand that God, by the nature of His outreach plan, intends for all of us to have an opportunity to respond to Him. Remember, God is knocking on people’s doors (Revelation 3:20). God does not want to lose one person (2 Peter 3:9). Anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved (Romans 10:13). John 3:16 … whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. Paul declares, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and, also, to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." (Romans 1:16-17). With all of this said - those who do surrender to God are in a respectful “love” relationship with Him, and these “love” God and follow/keep His commands (John 14:15).

 I want to be clear that there isn’t any *carte blanche* universalism with God. There isn’t any just saying the words “I do” and you’re ‘in’. The demons believe in God (James 2:19), but they do not follow His commands. Those who have God’s Spirit indwelled in them have the ability to keep His instruction for life. God knows that we will have a bad day. God knows that we will sin, and, if we deny we have sinful thoughts and acts, we are lying. Therefore, God has asked for us to be faithful and come to Him seeking forgiveness and He is faithful to forgive us (1 John 1: 1-10). Believers can have bad days, but do not have a life of purposely practicing sin, as a life style.

**John 14:21** "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

**John 14:23** Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.

**John 15:10** "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

**1 John 2:3** By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

**1 John 5:3** For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

**2 John 1:6** And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.

**The Cross pays the entry fee**

We are called upon to humble ourselves to accept God’s free gift of His sacrifice for our sins upon the Cross. What happens at Cornelius’ house makes it clear that it is 24/7/365 “open season” for all to come to God regardless of your religion, social tradition, or cultural environment. God calls for us to come directly to Him and not through anyone else or through our own actions.

**So, what are the “commands” of God?**

A lawyer asked Jesus this question chronicled in Luke’s Gospel.

**Luke 10:25-28** 25 And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?"

 27 And he answered, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."

 28 And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE."

The same account is given in **Matthew 22:40.** There we read that Jesus teaches that "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." These two commands are drawn from the Law in Deuteronomy and Leviticus.

**Deuteronomy 6:5** "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

**Leviticus 19:18** You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.

 What other commands do we have of the Lord that we are to keep? We see the *Sermon on the Mount* in Matthew 5 is a direct teaching from Jesus.

1 When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and

after He sat down, His disciples came to Him.

 2 He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying,

 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of

heaven.

 4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

 5 "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

 6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for

they shall be satisfied.

 7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

 8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

 9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of

God.

 10 "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of

righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

 11 "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you,

and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

After Jesus gives these commands, He continues by declaring that His disciples are to be a light and salt to the world and not to hide their witness from the world. Jesus commands that people repent (Matthew 4:17), turn from their rebellious life, to be born again (John 3), and to follow Him (Matthew 4:19). Part of the *Sermon on the Mount*, (Matthew 5) Jesus tells His disciples to reconcile with others (v. 23-25), not to lust (v. 28-30), keep their word (v. 37), turn the other cheek and go the extra mile (v. 38-42). Love their enemies (v. 44-46), seek His kingdom first (6:33), you will be judged by the same measure you judge (7:1-3), do not cast pearls before swine (7:6), watch and pray (26:41), and make disciples, water-baptizing them in His name (28:19). This is not a complete list of commands from Jesus. However, Jesus did not come to institute another Law-Code. I see that if a person has the love of God in them, operating every day, they will be following the His commands. A relationship with God is not a legal system. God operating in a person will guide them to follow His will for their life.

From reviewing these commands of Jesus, we see the *life-picture* of a person who has rejected the fallen world’s ways of unforgiveness, hate and no love. Note, these are *life-style* characteristics. These are not functionary religious acts to be performed for show. Jesus’ commands are everyday fruits of the Spirit at work in the Believer. **AMEN**