

“HOW GOOD IS GOOD ENOUGH?” ACTS 10

KNOW: HOW TO BE SURE OF OUR SALVATION. IF WE EARN OUR WAY TO HEAVEN, HOW CAN WE EVER KNOW IF WE ARE GOOD ENOUGH? WE WILL BE ETERNALLY INSECURE!

DO: FOCUS ON THE STEPS CHRIST AND GOD’S WORD SAYS ARE NECESSARY FOR A REAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. LISTEN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT’S LEADING WHEN COMMUNICATING THE GOSPEL TO OTHERS.

INTRO. – LAST WK. LOOKED AT STORY OF A MAN OF HISTORY FROM THE BOOK OF ACTS – SAUL OF TARSUS. CAME TO CHRIST SUDDENLY AND DRAMATICALLY. THEME: “NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF A CHANGED LIFE”(including yours). SAUL WAS ZEALOUS AND SINCERE IN HIS RELIGION, BUT WAS SINCERELY WRONG. HE WAS A MURDERER, OR AT LEAST COMPLICIT IN THE MURDER OF STEPHEN, THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYR. WHEN CHRIST APPEARED TO HIM, HE WAS A CHANGED MAN. HE REALIZED HIS SINFULNESS AND HIS NEED FOR GOD.

BUT WHAT ABOUT GOOD PEOPLE WHO DON'T THINK THEY NEED GOD?

- **NICODEMUS** - a righteous Pharisee
- **MY PARENTS** - went to church, American, followed Golden Rule

THIS MORNING WE ARE GOING TO ANSWER THE QUESTION, “How good is good enough?” IS THERE A WAY TO BE CERTAIN OF OUR SALVATION? (“If you died tonight and God asked why He should let you into heaven. . .”)

WOULD YOU BE CONFIDENT IN YOUR ANSWER OR ARE YOU LIVING “ETERNALLY INSECURE”?

I. Meet Cornelius

Acts 10:1-8 (READ/TELL)

**At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment.
2 He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to**

God regularly. ³ One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, “Cornelius!”

⁴ Cornelius stared at him in fear. “What is it, Lord?” he asked.

The angel answered, “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. ⁵ Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. ⁶ He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea.”

⁷ When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants.

⁸ He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

A. “CENTURION” = ROMAN SOLDIER IN CHARGE OF AT LEAST 100 SOLDIERS

DEVOUT AND GOD FEARING – SOME IN THAT DAY GREW TIRED OF THE IMMORALITY AND IDOLATRY OF THEIR ANCESTRAL GODS. SOME NON JEWS LIKE CORNELIUS EMBRACED SOME OF THE ASPECTS OF JUDAISM THEY CONSIDERED WISE.

Cornelius was:

- **Devout and God fearing**
- **Generous**
- **Prayed regularly**
- **Has a vision from God**
- **Was responsive and obedient**
- **Family man**

**WOULD MOST CALL CORNELIUS A GOOD MAN?
WOULD MOST CALL HIM A CHRISTIAN? (HASN'T
EVEN HEARD THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT JESUS'
DEATH, BURIAL, AND RESURRECTION YET.)**

****BUT. . .HAS HE RESPONDED SO FAR TO THE LIGHT
HE HAS BEEN GIVEN? (ROMANS CH. 2 ANSWERS
THE QUESTION, "WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE WHO
NEVER HEAR ABOUT JESUS?") WELL GOD IS
GOING TO MAKE SURE CORNELIUS AND HIS FAMILY
DO HAVE A CHANCE TO HEAR. (DOING THE SAME
WITH SOME IN IRAQ AND IRAN + HARD TO GET
PLACES).**

- **GOD RECOGNIZES A WILLING, OPEN HEART**

***CORNELIUS MAY BE LIKE MANY IN OUR CHURCHES, BUT DOES HE HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT YET? HOW NECESSARY IS THAT TO BEING SAVED AND FORGIVEN FOR ETERNITY?**

WATCH WHAT GOD DOES FOR HIM AND HIS FAMILY. .

II. Peter learns an important lesson

ACTS 10:9-23 (read/tell)

About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹ He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹² It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. ¹³ Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.”

¹⁴ “Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.”

¹⁵ The voice spoke to him a second time, “*Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.*”

16 This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

17 *While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision,* the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. **18 They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.**

19 While Peter was still thinking about the vision, *the Spirit said to him,* “Simon, three^[a] men are looking for you. **20 So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.”**

21 Peter went down and said to the men, “I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?”

22 The men replied, “We have come from Cornelius the centurion. *He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. (If this was all he needed, why is God setting up this divine appointment?)* A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say.” **23 Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.**

The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the believers from Joppa went along.

A. PETER GOES TO THE FLAT ROOF TOP OF SIMON THE TANNER'S HOUSE TO PRAY OVERLOOKING THE OCEAN. HE IS PROBABLY

LOOKING OUT AT THE SAILS ON THE HORIZON. .

- FALLS INTO A TRANCE AND GOD GIVES HIM A VISION. HE IS NOT “DRUNK IN THE SPIRIT”, BUT NOT NECESSARILY DREAMING EITHER.**

***ANOTHER BIG WHITE SHEET THAT LOOKS LIKE THOSE SAILS OUT ON THE SEA COMES DOWN FROM HEAVEN LIKE A BIG TABLE CLOTH FULL OF ANIMALS THE JEWS REFUSED TO EAT IN ACCORDANCE W. CEREMONIAL LAW (SEE. LEVITICUS 11). BUGS, SCORPIANS, NO DOUBT A BIG PIG – CERTAINLY NOT A COSHER MENU. (CEREMONIAL LAW = DIFF. THAN MORAL LAW). PETER IS NOW LIVING IN THE AGE OF GRACE WHERE ALL THE LAW IS SUMMED UP IN FOLLOWING CHRIST, SO WE CAN EAT WHAT WE WANT (CONSIDERING THE BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE SPIRIT). IN **ACTS 10:15** – GOD IS TALKING ABOUT PEOPLE HERE AND USING THE VISION SYMBOLICALLY.**

*****GOD GIVES PETER THIS SAME VISION 3 TIMES SO HE KNOWS IT IS FROM GOD.**

***GOD CAN SPEAK THROUGH OUR DREAMS.**

*****DREAM I HAD AS JR. HIGH DIRECTOR (boxing ring stage, parents, loud buzz)**

****BUT NEED TO BE CAREFUL WITH THIS AND CHECK W. THE WORD OF GOD AS TEST. SATAN CAN ALSO SPEAK THROUGH OUR DREAMS/VISIONS. OUR DREAMS OFTEN REFLECT OUR FEARS AND LUSTS. NOT ALWAYS A DIVINE MESSAGE!**

B. V. 17 – PETER IS WONDERING ABOUT THE MEANING AND RIGHT ABOUT THAT TIME LIKE A DIVINE APPOINTMENT, GOD SENDS CORNELIUS' MEN TO HIS DOOR.

***STOPPED AT THE GATE AND CALLED IN – GENTILES NOT ALLOWED TO ENTER A JEWISH HOME.**

V.23 – BUT PETER HAS ALREADY BROKEN TRADITION BY STAYING IN SIMON'S HOUSE BECAUSE TANNERS HANDLED DEAD BODIES of animals – AGAIN WENT AGAINST CEREMONIAL LAW. HAD TO LIVE OUTSIDE THE CITY BY THE BEACH (NOT KNOWING ONE DAY WOULD BE THE MOST VALUABLE AREA TO LIVE IN ANYWAY!) PETER INVITES GENTILES IN!

****YOU CAN SEE HOW GOD HAS BEEN PREPARING PETER'S HEART FOR THE WORK AHEAD.**

III. Peter's Divine Appointment with Cornelius

Acts 10:24-45

The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵ *As Peter entered the house*, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. ²⁶ But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."

²⁷ While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. ²⁸ He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. ²⁹ So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?"

³⁰ Cornelius answered: "Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me ³¹ and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. ³² Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' ³³ So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of *God to*

listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.”

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak: *“I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism* ³⁵ *but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.* ³⁶ *You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.* ³⁷ *You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—* ³⁸ *how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.*

³⁹ *“We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross,* ⁴⁰ *but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen.*

⁴¹ *He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen (over 500)—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.*

⁴² *He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.* ⁴³ *All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”*

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. ⁴⁵ The

circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles.

A. CORNELIUS TRIES TO WORSHIP PETER AS A gOD (AGAIN SHOWING HIS BACKGROUND IS SINCERE, BUT SINCERELY WRONG). WOULDN'T LET ANYONE BOW TO HIM OR KISS HIS BIG TOE!

B. PETER STARTS OFF SOUNDING PRETTY BIGOTED. PAUL WILL BE GOD'S CHOICE TO MINISTER TO THE GENTILES, BUT HE IS PREPARING IN ARABIA. GOD USES PETER HERE TO OPEN THE DOOR OF THE GOSPEL TO THE GENTILES AND CHANGES HIS HEART IN THE PROCESS!

God, the Holy Spirit, often leads us into a situation that is out of our comfort zone to reach out and do good to others - while He grows us.

C. V. 33 – GOD HAS BEEN WORKING ON THEIR HEARTS AHEAD OF TIME BEFORE THEY MEET – HE MAY BE DOING THE SAME ALREADY WITH YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY THAT ARE COMING

FOR THE HOLIDAYS. PRAY AND TRUST GOD TO LEAD YOU INTO WHAT TO SAY IF HE OPENS THE DOOR. GOD PROMISES TO BE WITH YOU.

D. ACTS 10:34 -- Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism = A MAJOR THEME IN THIS PASSAGE

God shows no favoritism. All are invited.

WHOSOEVER CAN COME, BUT DOESN'T MEAN THEY ARE SAVED YET.

THEN PETER SHARES THE GOSPEL WITH THEM, INCLUDING THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS (V. 40). *THE GOSPEL ALWAYS INCLUDES THE RESURRECTION WHEN IT IS SHARED THROUGHOUT THE BOOK OF ACTS.

EVEN BELOVED WRITINGS ABOUT CHRIST LIKE “ONE SOLITARY LIFE” LEAVE THIS OUT! BUT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, IT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART!

ACTS 10:40-43 (THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT THE RESURRECTION) IS THE MAIN MESSAGE FOR

CORNELIUS, HIS FAMILY, AND FRIENDS AND ALL THE GENTILES. SHOULD BE THE CENTERPIECE OF SHARING OUR FAITH AS WELL!! INCLUDES WHY WE BELIEVE! (Fulfilled prophecy, eyewitness testimony - "Case for Christ" - the book or the movie!)

IV. Cornelius and his household receive the Holy Spirit

ACTS 10:44-48

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speaking in tongues^[a] and praising God.

Then Peter said, ⁴⁷ "Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." ⁴⁸ So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

- A. WHILE PETER = STILL SPEAKING THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES ON THOSE WHO HEAR THE MESSAGE. (faith cometh by hearing – Rom. 10:17).**

***THIS IS LIKE A MINI PENTECOST FOR THE GENTILES AS THEY SPEAK IN TONGUES AND PROCLAIM THE MIGHTY WORKS OF GOD LIKE THE JEWS DID IN ACTS 2.**

THIS WAS A SIGN THAT GOD WAS IN THIS. PETER USES THIS EVENT IN HIS REPORT TO THE JERUSALEM CHURCH LATER IN ACTS 11 TO SHOW GOD WAS REACHING OUT TO THE GENTILES JUST AS HE HAD THEM.

***WHEN YOU RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT OR ARE FILLED WITH HIM, SHOULD EVERYONE EXPECT THE SAME EXPERIENCE?**

In the early church the gift of tongues was A sign, not THE sign of being baptized or filled with the Spirit.

FOR EXAMPLE - ACTS 4:31

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

****REASON I MENTION = SOME GROUPS CAN MAKE YOU FEEL YOU HAVEN'T "ARRIVED" YET OR ARE NOT FILLED UNLESS YOU SPEAK IN TONGUES, BUT 1 CORINTHIANS 12:27-31 I THINK MAKES IT CLEAR NOT EVERYONE WILL HAVE THIS GIFT, BUT TO SEEK AFTER GIFTS THAT BUILD UP THE CHURCH.**

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. ²⁸ And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues^[a]? Do all interpret? ³¹ Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.

A "MORE EXCELLENT WAY. . ." SEGUAYS IN TO 1 COR. 13:1-3 If I speak in the tongues^[a] of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast,^[b] but do not have love, I gain nothing.

THIS IS SANDWICHED IN BETWEEN 1 COR. 12 AND 14 ON HOW TO USE THE GIFTS IN THE CHURCH. SO IF ANYTHING, LOVE IS THE SIGN TO LOOK FOR FIRST WHEN FILLED W. THE HOLY SPIRIT. NOT DIVISION.

CONCLUSION:

****SO WAS CORNELIUS AND FAM. SAVED BEFORE THEY RECEIVED THE HOLY SPIRIT?**

- **ACTS 11:14 (Angel to Cornelius about Peter)**
 - n. **He will bring you a message through which you and all your household *will be saved.***

- **2 CORINTHIANS 1:21**

Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, ²² set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

- **JOHN 3: 3 and 5 – JESUS' WORDS TO NICODEMUS (a righteous Pharisee)**

Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again

Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.

- **LUKE 10:16**

"Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me."

- **1 JOHN 5:12**

Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

YOU CAN BE ETERNALLY SECURE!

- **JESUS SAID WE WILL KNOW THEM BY THEIR FRUITS (MATT. 7:16) WHICH COME FROM THE SPIRIT. (GAL. 5:22-23)**

***IF YOU WERE 100% COMMITTED TO GODS WILL
RIGHT NOW, WHAT DO YOU THINK HE WOULD ASK
YOU TO DO? (Maybe He wants you to make sure you
have the Holy Spirit before anything else)**

****AT TIMES YOU WILL RUN INTO PEOPLE WHO THINK
THEY ARE ALREADY GOOD ENOUGH WITHOUT
CHRIST OR THE HOLY SPIRIT. . .BUT AGAIN, HOW
GOOD IS GOOD ENOUGH? (Point them to story of
Cornelius)**

- 3 SINS A DAY

Good is never good enough. We need the Holy Spirit.

He is our advocate before the Father

DO YOU KNOW HIM? DO YOUR KIDS KNOW HIM?

GOD HAS CHILDREN, BUT NO GRANDCHILDREN

MY MOM AND DAD STARTED CHANGING AFTER RECEIVING CHRIST - LESS ANGRY, FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT, BAPTIZED. DAD SO INVOLVED AT HIS CHURCH, BUILT HIM AN OFFICE. SERVED HIS NEIGHBORS.

***FRIEND AT LUNCH W. BROKEN NECK – TOOK THAT FOR DAUGHTER TO MAKE HER PARENTS' FAITH HER OWN.**

PARENTS: DOES YOUR FAITH EXAMPLE LEND ITSELF TO THIS?? SATAN IS A DECEIVER. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS YOUR KIDS ANTIDOTE AND YOURS!

JOHN 1:12 -

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

YOU DONT NEED TO BE "ETERNALLY INSECURE"!

GOD DOES NOT SHOW FAVORITISM BUT RECEIVES ALL WHO CALL ON HIS NAME! WHETHER YOU ARE LIKE SAUL OF TARSUS OR CORNELIUS!

PRAY TO RECEIVE CHRIST AND HIS SPIRIT AND BEGIN TO SEE HOW HIS CHARACTER TRAITS - THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT START TO GROW IN YOUR LIFE. ASK TO BE FILLED, THEN BE BAPTIZED AS AN OUTWARD SYMBOL OF WHAT GOD IS DOING ON THE INSIDE!

****PRAYER TO RECEIVE THE SPIRIT OR REDEDICATION. RAISE HANDS WHILE ALL EYES ARE CLOSED. PRAYER ROOM OPEN. Nick and Diane will receive you TO MY LEFT as we sing this next song together!**

*****INVITATION SONG******

COMMISSION:

FILL IN YOUR COMMUNICATION CARD TO RESPOND AND LEARN MORE - PLACE IN OFFERING BOXES - ESP. FIRST OR SECOND TIME GUESTS!

Get in the habit of seeking God's will for your life every day in the here and now. Ask His Holy Spirit to fill you when you start slipping. "One Baptism, many fillings". Problem is - WE LEAK!

So ask Him to fill you moment by moment to do his will.

"If you were 100 % committed to doing the Holy Spirit's will, what would He ask you to do in the coming days?"

Go with that on your mind and we will see you next week. Or if the Spirit is asking you to stay and help clean up, listen to Him!