

CTW: Psalm 20

Reading: Acts 10

There is a lot of appearing and invitations in this text

- Both Cornelius and Peter have visions
- God invites Cornelius to send for Peter
- God opens Peter's mind to the kind of people God accepts (fear Him and do good)

Jews were raised to believe the Gentiles were all but hopelessly lost having neither the Law, genetics nor traditions.

They understood the holiness of God. They had an awareness of God's wrath against sin. As a people they experienced over and over again God's judgment against the sin that so easily entangled them—idolatry, injustice, immorality, violence. They had been enslaved, deported, exiled. They had seen their nation divided and the walls of the cities torn down.

And they had the Law written in stone with them. They had seen God's mighty works. They had the written law and the prophets. They had every advantage but still found themselves sinners. They even had the Messiah come through their blood line but they killed Him!

JOKE #1 Lawyer "The good news is the guy suing you for injuries has died. The bad news is his dad is the judge"

If the Jews had the law of God, were descendants of Abraham and the Temple and were still exposed to the wrath of God then what hope was there for the Gentiles?

And I think that was Peter's problem. God had to send him a vision to help Peter understand.

Are you ever slow to understand things?

- Read the Bible and it's like sorting socks with no mates?
- Try to live right but wonder why misfortune follows you?
- Ever have to deal with a temptation that causes you to fail and fail again?
- I'm just asking because I want to know if anyone else here is a sinner.
- Anybody here ever have doubts about whether what you believe is true (anybody willing to admit you doubt if God really even exists?)
- Or maybe you believe God exists you just resent Him because of what you've had to endure

We are slow to understand because God is infinite and we are finite. God is all knowing but we are not. Heck, we are not even consistent once we do "learn" something. You would think after his experiences with Jesus that Peter might do a little better with knowing what God is up to.

But the problem is God is holy and we are sinners. We are just too far apart and we are too broken to close the gap. **Sinners by default cannot save themselves.**

JOKE #2 Pilot "The bad news is we are lost, have no place to land and low on fuel. The good news is we are making good time!"

The bad news is that we are sinners. The worse news is that being sinful we cannot save ourselves. The worst news is that there is a fate reserved for sinners.

Cornelius was a good guy it seems but Cornelius was heading for hell. At the final judgment he would have to answer for his sins and he had no answer. Hell was created to remove evil from God's holy presence. Separation from God is the fate of every sinner.

But God sends an invitation. There is news that Cornelius needs to hear and the news is good!

Cornelius says, "Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord."

The pieces fall into place for Peter here it seems. Even though he has been with Jesus there were still things he needed to learn. He tells us right clearly in this text what he learned, "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, 35 but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to Him."

You would think Peter's own experiences of recognizing his unworthiness to even have Jesus preach from his boat but being called to follow anyway, of betraying Jesus yet being restored by Him would have had a little more effect on Peter's understanding of God's grace but even believers have lots to learn and ways to grow.

[And how ironic that Peter had reservations about going into a Gentile's home when he himself was staying in a tanner's house (someone who tanned animal skins) the stench of which would have allowed anyone to easily locate!]

JOKE #3 Pastor "The good news is the Sunshine Committee voted to send you a "Get Well Soon" fruit basket. The bad news is that the vote was 7 to 6."

So here are two men fumbling and stumbling after God. And God revealing and inviting!

Peter shares the Gospel (Good News)

1. Sinners can have peace with God through Jesus Christ
2. The Life of Jesus
 - a. Doing good
 - b. Healing all those oppressed by the devil
3. God's glorification of Jesus
 - a. Holy Spirit
 - b. Empowered Jesus
 - c. Raised Him from the dead
4. Peter takes his place
 - a. We are witnesses
 - b. Commanded to preach (to sinners!—that covers everyone!)
 - c. Tell that Jesus is the Judge and all sinners will answer to Him
 - d. But the Judge is forgiving!

It's not news that people are sinners. From the beginning we've been slow to learn what God teaches, we've been disobedient when we did know what God commands, we've been defiant when convicted and corrected.

The mess that the world is in, with its violence and hatred and immorality, is a mess of our own making. Our fate in the hands of Holy God is not surprising. None of that is news what is news is that God is forgiving.

JOKE #4 Doctor "The good news is what you have is curable. The bad news is that you can't afford it"

The Good News is that God Himself paid the cost of your cure.

God saves sinners. God heals. God teaches. God forgives. That's the news and the news is good!