

Gospel Triumph: What to Say About the King – Acts 10:34-48

For a couple of days this past week I flew to California for a Pastor's Conference at the Seminary I attended. The absolute best part of the conference is catching up with friends I knew from school and life in California. We tell stories about the old days, but we also bring one another up to speed on recent happenings in life. When I got back Bethany asked me if I had a standard answer for people when they asked how things were going for our family and at church and I said yes. There were some core things I covered almost every time I got asked that question. It almost became a mini-news report about life in Michigan.

Last week we saw Peter journey to Caesarea to meet with Cornelius. Of course, Peter didn't know Cornelius before, but when he arrives, he finds a house full of people who are waiting to hear his report on what God has for them. Listen to 10:33. We are going to look at the rest of chapter 10 and it really cannot be separated from the story of Cornelius's vision and Peter's vision. Notice the first few words of verse 34. Peter opened his mouth. Peter's going to essentially give them a report of the news of the gospel, look at the beginning of verse 36. And then we're going to see the impact of the Gospel on this group of people who believe it. Look at verse 44. Both sections have "the word" at their heart. So, here's what we will see, **3 Declarations about the King that Accompany Salvation.**

1. The Sphere of His Lordship Covers All (vv. 34-36)

We won't get into the details of the Gospel message until our second point and verse 37. However, Peter's introductory words provide the foundation for the Gospel message. Look with me at verse 34. Peter has come to this understanding through everything that has happened in chapter 10. From the vision on the rooftop to the arrival of Cornelius's men to the journey to find a house of people waiting on him to Cornelius's explanation of God's vision to him. All of it confirms that God shows no partiality. What does this mean?

In Scripture the fact that God shows no partiality cuts two ways. Listen to Romans 2:9-11. All are sinners and the gospel message is for all, which is what has been made quite clear to Peter. Look at verse 35. Notice the language he uses of "every nation". The point here is to focus on the inclusion of those outside of Israel, Gentiles. Peter has probably been meditating on certain OT promises of the inclusion of the Gentiles. Listen to the original promise in Genesis 12:3.

Now, the language in Acts 10:35 is not indicating that one can come to salvation by simply fearing God and doing good works. The emphasis here is on the fact that people from every nation can come. Cornelius must still come to faith in Christ, which can only happen as the Gospel is declared. And while every nation is invited in, the Gospel has come through Israel. Look at verse 36.

Verse 36 is the foundation of the message we will see in verses 37-43. Here's the ultimate message. It's good news of peace. Isaiah 52:7. Peace between Jew and Gentile. Reconciliation between people who were separated. It's peace because Jesus the Messiah is Lord of All. At this time Caesar, the Roman Emperor claimed to be Lord of All. He ruled over His empire and could exercise his will as he thought best. But Peter is saying here that Caesar can claim to be Lord of All, but at best he is a secondary King with limited and delegated authority. Listen to Matthew 28:18-20.

Peace comes through His all-encompassing Lordship. No one can undo his power and authority. He will bring all things into subjection under his feet. He is the Lord of every nation, and this is why we can proclaim that the Gospel is good news for every nation. This message of Christ's Lordship would have been especially meaningful to the Gentiles. They are not only included, but they now serve the universal King. And His universal Kingship comes because of the work He came to accomplish, which is our second declaration.

2. The Specifics of His Message Bring Good News (vv. 37-43)

Now, beginning in verse 37 we are going to get a summary of the word that was sent to Israel and can be simply stated, Jesus is Lord of all. But how does he become the enthroned Lord? His Lordship is good news. What is the content of our gospel message? What needs to be taught and believed? Peter lays out three distinct phases in the ministry of Jesus that make up the Gospel.

First, the earthly life and ministry of Jesus. Begin in verse 37. John the Baptist was the forerunner to the ministry of Jesus, and he pointed to the substance of Jesus's ministry. Listen to Luke 3:2-6. John baptized to call people to repentance and cleansing to prepare their hearts for God's arrival. Following John, Jesus of Nazareth shows up. Listen to verse 38. Jesus was anointed by God with the Holy Spirit, which showed Him as the Messiah. But it wasn't just His anointing by God. His power as the Messiah was demonstrated in His miracles, healings, and casting

out demons. All of this showed His power over sin and darkness and the ultimate victory that He would win over sin and death. All of this showed that God was with Him. Listen to John 10:37-38. And then notice the beginning of verse 39. The Apostles witnessed all of the earthly life and ministry of Jesus and wrote it down in the Gospels and could report on it here to Cornelius and others. So, the accounts given in the Gospels of the life and ministry of Jesus are a key part of the message of the good news that God sent to Israel.

Second, the death and resurrection of Jesus. Look at the second part of verse 39-41. The life of Jesus, His connection to God, His miracles and divine power all lead to His death on the cross. Notice how Peter puts this. Jesus was hanged on a tree. This takes us back to the curse of God on a man who is hung on a tree. Listen to Deuteronomy 21:22-23. A man cursed by God is rejected by God for breaking the law. They are cursed and not blessed. That man is outside of the fellowship of God because they have broken God's law.

The death of Jesus was all about Him taking on Himself the curse of God that was meant for you and for me. Our sin puts us outside of fellowship with God and under the dominion and power of Satan. He claims us as his own because we are not in communion with God because we have broken God's law. But Jesus was hanged on a tree to take our curse on Himself. Listen to Galatians 3:11-14.

And we know that God accepted the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus for you and for me because of what it says in verse 40. The resurrection shows us so many things, but to name a few. God accepts Christ's sacrifice for our sins and so now we can be justified or declared righteous by God because He rose. The resurrection inaugurates the new creation as Jesus overcomes death and sin by rising to life again. The resurrection promises you and I a future hope of bodily resurrection if we are in Christ because what happens to Him happens to us.

And we know the resurrection took place because we have eyewitness testimony of real people who saw him and ate with him. Look at verse 41.

The third phase of the ministry of Jesus is found in verses 42-43 and is the proclamation of the good news and the call to repentance and faith. Look at verse 42. What are the Apostles supposed to preach? Jesus is the judge of the living and the dead and the offer of forgiveness through His name is made when the Gospel of His life, death, and resurrection are preached.

Jesus is the judge of the living and the dead because of what we talked about a minute ago. We are all cursed by sin and out of fellowship with God and under the judgment of God for our sin. It's the truth of Romans 3:19-20. We can take that judgement ourselves or have another take it for us. When you believe in Him, as verse 43 says, you receive forgiveness of sins and are no longer under God's judgment.

Jesus will be the one to render judgment because He is Lord of all. The only way to escape that judgment is to believe in Him and find life in His name. What must you believe? The message Peter has just proclaimed concerning His Lordship, earthly power and miracles, and substitutionary death and resurrection and the offer of forgiveness made in His name.

These are the specifics of the message that Peter proclaims to Cornelius and the Gentiles, and they are the same specifics you and I must believe. So, what happens when the Gentiles hear this and believe it? That's our 3rd declaration.

3. The Gift of His Spirit Confirms His Presence (vv. 44-48)

Keep in mind verse 36. The message we have just seen is the word sent to Israel. Now let's read verse 44. The Good news of God sent to Israel is proclaimed and belief happens in verse 43 and while Peter is still speaking about Jesus, the Spirit falls on those who heard.

It's clear to those present with Peter that something significant has happened and they recognize this as the Spirit. Look at verse 45. So, these are Jewish believers who have kept the Old Covenant by being circumcised and then have come to faith in Christ and now they are watching the Spirit fall on these Gentile believers. This is what was promised in Acts 2:17, which is a quote of Joel 2. This is the expectation all the way back to the OT, but it's rather shocking for them to see a move by God to those outside of Israel. How did they know the Spirit had come? Look at verse 46.

This is exactly what happened to the Apostles in Acts 2. One author called this the Gentile Pentecost. It's not that we can expect the Spirit to arrive in this way for every new Christian. These are unique times. But, the same demonstration of the Spirit happens to show us that the Gentiles had truly entered into the New Covenant and received forgiveness of sins and the Spirit.

The next move by Peter makes complete sense. Look at verses 47-48. It's important for us to just make note that this situation is the opposite of what happened in Samaria. In Acts 8 the Samaritans came to faith in Christ and were baptized and still hadn't received the Holy Spirit. Here they come to faith and receive the Spirit and need to be baptized. The order is not what is vital here. The important truth is that the same elements are present in each salvation situation. And the gift of the Spirit confirms God's presence with these Gentile believers.

As we finish up this morning, I want to draw out two points of application for us to consider. Both have to do with the Gospel as the power of God. First, God arranges this entire situation through visions, and journeys, and filled households so that Peter can open his mouth and speak the Gospel or good news. God sends His message to people and wants that message to be clearly and accurately explained and taught. Why? Because of Romans 1:16. This gospel message is the power of God. When we say someone has power it means they have the capacity to move, influence, or change something else. You either have the power to move that piano or you don't. The Gospel is the power of God and when it is explained, God's power pulses through the message and into the hearts of men and women.

This is true when we speak the Gospel to unbelievers and it's true when we, as believers, hear the Gospel again. If you want your life to change, place yourself in front of the Gospel.

Second point of application is a variation on the first. When the Spirit shows up, stuff happens. People change. Lives are altered. We see this in the lives of Cornelius and His household. The Spirit shows up and, in their case, they speak in tongues and praise God. We don't expect the speaking in tongues part today, but we do expect that the Spirit will actively work to change a person's life. When God moves in, the house gets renovated. This is why we read this in Galatians 5:25. And it's why the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, and on and on. Maintain the experiential connection to the Spirit and your life will change.

The bottom line this morning is to expose your heart to the message of the King and let God do His Work through His powerful Word. Let's pray.

Sermon Reflection Questions – 3/9/25

- If you were sharing a 1-2 minute update on your life today to an old friend you hadn't seen in 10-15 years, what would you say?
- What is the connection between Acts 10:34-48 and Acts 10:1-33?
- What does it mean that God shows no partiality?
- Was Cornelius a believer before verse 34? Why or why not?
- Is verse 35 teaching that God accepts those from outside the church who have a general awareness of God and try to do what's right? Why or why not?
- What are the specifics of Peter's message in verses 37-43?
- What is the significance of Peter's description of the death of Jesus in verse 39 that "they put him to death by hanging him on a tree"?
- How does Christ's work of judging the living and the dead relate to the offer of forgiveness of sins?
- Why must the gospel be clearly and accurately taught and explained to both believers and unbelievers?

- How does the Spirit actively work in our lives today to change us? How can you personally tell if you are walking in the Spirit?
- What can you do to more regularly expose your heart to the specifics of the Gospel message?