

**Ministry of The Holy Spirit**  
**The Gentile Pentecost**  
**Acts 10:17-48**

Last time...Peter's ministry in the coastal plain of Sharon

- Lydda – Aeneas
- Joppa – Tabitha

Peter had been prepared for those appointments in carrying out the ministry given to him.

As he walked with the Lord, "Lord, what do you want to do?"

Peter was being prepared for something else the Lord wants to do

This time...that something else the Lord wants to do – The Lord is going to do something huge using Peter; the Gentile Pentecost, the mystery of the Church is going to be further revealed

Peter will have to take some Big Steps to be a part of what the Lord is doing

v17-20 doubted in himself...doubting nothing:

Last week we left Peter up on the roof, in the silence, alone with his thoughts

He is perplexed by the vision of the "animal kingdom sheet" and the words of

God: "Kill and eat...What God has cleansed, call not common."

He is not sure what to make of the vision and is sorting it out in his mind

While he is chewing on those things, there is a "knock at the door."

Cornelius' delegation got to Joppa, asked for directions to Simon the tanner's house, and have arrived

They ask for Peter, just as the angel instructed Cornelius

As the delegation from Caesarea announce themselves to Simon the tanner, the Holy Spirit announces them to Simon Peter

The Holy Spirit spoke to Peter

God the Holy Spirit speaks to people

With a still small voice that

- will not compete with the noise of the world...  
unlike the noise of the world that DOES compete with the voice of God!
- requires us to be still and know that He is God...  
to focus on Him instead of ourselves  
sign: If you want your child to listen, speak softly about someone else
- takes cultivation to hear...  
time and effort to hear God speak to us personally

Not leaving any doubt or misunderstanding in Peter's mind, the Holy Spirit gives him very clear instructions

- Arise...that's enough reflection, it's time to get moving
- Go back downstairs
- Go with the three men that I have sent here to you
- Doubting nothing...the Holy Spirit knew what Peter was "doubting in himself" (v17)

The Holy Spirit issues another "Arise and go" here in the Book of Acts

Key qualifier: doubting nothing...all in, by faith/confidence/assurance of having heard God speak to you

v21-22 ye seek, what is the cause...hear words of thee:

Peter's obedience is immediate – he offers no push back or back talk this time

He presents himself to the 3 men...

one of which is a Roman soldier (Ooook, ummm Acts 1:6???)...  
and asks what they want with him

The messengers are faithful to deliver Cornelius' message, the message of God that the angel gave him

What do they want with Peter?

"To hear words of him"...words God will give to Peter that He did not give to the angel

So...

- Cornelius' vision involves Peter, a Jew
- Peter's vision involves Cornelius, a Gentile (God-fearing Gentile)

The two visions are linked

How?

That will be revealed when both recipients

"Arise and go, doubting nothing"

- Cornelius did (sent his delegation)'  
and
- if Peter does...which is going to require Peter to take some Big Steps of faith

v23 called them in and lodged:

A Big Step of faith for Peter – to invite 3 Gentiles into the house of a Jew and give them hospitality

In his flesh/emotions, Peter would probably have been uncomfortable with this arrangement...but God is in this somehow because He sent these 3 men

went away with them:

A Big, Big Step for Peter – to go on a 35 mile journey with the 3 Gentiles to see a Roman centurion

Peter does not yet understand but clearly the Holy Spirit told him to go, so God is in this somehow and he goes with confidence

And the Holy Spirit gave Peter the spiritual gift of wisdom...to have some of the Jewish believers from the fellowship in Joppa to come with him to be witnesses of what the Lord is going to do

v24-25 Cornelius waited for them...fell down at his feet and worshipped:

Walking 35 miles takes longer than one day so the next day Peter, the Jews, and the Gentiles arrive in the Roman city of Caesarea

Cornelius has been keeping an eye out for them...as have his family and friends

As Peter was coming into Cornelius' home...

a Big, Big, Big Step for Peter, evidence he is "all in" and doubting nothing...

Cornelius fell at Peter's feet and worshipped him, giving Peter reverence and adoration

Yikes!

Why did he (who fears God) do that?

Well why did the Apostle John do it in Rev 19:10 and Rev 22:8-9?

What is important here with Cornelius is Peter's response

v26 Stand up, I myself also am a man:

Peter responds properly

"Don't glorify me, I am just a sinner saved by grace.

I am merely a man, just as you."

God alone is to be worshipped

No person is to seek the worship and glory of which He alone is worthy

Nonetheless, imagine the scene: a Roman centurion humbling himself before a Jewish fisherman!

v27 found many:

Peter gets his host back on his feet and follows him into his house...to find many others were gathered there, awaiting his arrival

Ready to “hears words of thee” (v22) is an eager congregation!  
All eyes are on Peter, looking at him with high anticipation

v28-29 an unlawful thing...but God...came I without gainsaying:

Peter begins with a simple acknowledgment of a fact-of-life in a Jew and Gentile world, as codified in the Law of Moses: the “separateness” between Jews and Gentiles, that made

- Jews self-righteous (spiritual haughtiness)
- Gentiles despise Jews (we aren’t good enough for you!)
- Jews difficult for Gentiles to govern (times of the Gentiles)
- a great wall between Jew and Gentile

Why is this “separateness” between peoples in the Law of Moses?  
Preservation of the line of the promised Messiah

But God...made it patently obvious to Peter via the vision that

- he is not to call ANY man common or unclean
- EVERY person is precious in God’s sight
- the wall between Jew and Gentile is coming down  
as prophesied by Jesus in John 10:16

*And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd*

as will be codified in the Law of Love in Paul’s Epistles

Why is the wall coming down now,  
why is “separateness” no longer necessary?  
Because the promised Messiah has already come!  
“It is finished!”

Peter, without understanding the vision the Lord gave him, obeyed the Holy Spirit immediately

He came to Cornelius’ house not knowing why he is being sent there

He came by faith, walking in obedience, not needing to know why or what in order to obey

He, as are we, is on a need-to-know-basis with God  
He will tell us what we need to know when we need to know it...  
while we move, walking by faith

“So why have you sent for me?”

v30-33 shall speak unto thee...present before God to hear all things:  
Cornelius answers by telling Peter his vision from the Lord

“Cornelius, your prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God”

What did Cornelius learn about God in his vision?  
God Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth

- knows his name!
- heard his prayer (notice: singular)
- sees what he is doing on behalf of His people

God heard Cornelius’ prayer

What was Cornelius’ prayer?

We will find out, as we keep moving

What is God’s initial answer to Cornelius’ prayer?

“Bring Peter here. He is My chosen vessel thru whom I will give you the answer to your prayer.”

A man who knows a great deal about authority, and expects immediate obedience, commends Peter’s immediate submission to the authority of the Lord

“So why are you here, Peter?

Because God sent you here

And we are all here before God to hear everything that God has commanded you to tell us.

You have God’s answer to my prayer

Therefore, you have our complete attention, Peter.

We will hear the words of God now.”

Peter is “on”, instant in season

v34-35 The Peter opened his mouth:

These are powerful words: Then Peter opened his mouth

Peter takes a Big, Big, Big, Big Step for a Jew: speaking a wall-destroying truth:

God does not play favorites!

The chosen people (Jews) are not His favorites!

He has no favorites, ALL peoples are His favorites!

He is faithful to His promises to ALL mankind (Adam’s race)!

Meaning: No one is more important to God than you!

Peter, who obeyed the Holy Spirit immediately without knowing why he was being sent, is no longer doubting in himself about the vision; he understands what God showed him

God our Savior, beside Whom there is no savior (Is 43:3, 11; Is 45:15)  
is the Savior of ALL people who  
1. fear/revere/worship Him  
2. believe Him (Gen 15:6, John 6:28-29)  
regardless of nationality, whether Jew or Gentile

The Gentiles do not need to become Jews!  
God-fearing Gentiles are accepted into the kingdom of God too!  
Being Jewish does not save you, does not make you just! (Hab 2:4)  
Conversely, unbelievers are not accepted, whether Jew or Gentile!

v36 word...Israel...peace by Jesus Christ:

His mouth open, Peter speaks the things commanded by God...now:  
The Word sent by God to Israel...preaching peace by Jesus Christ

Is 9:6            For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and  
his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor,  
The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince  
of Peace.

John 14:27      *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you:  
not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not  
your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

John 16:33a     *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye  
might have peace*

Rom 5:1          Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace  
with God through our Lord Jesus Christ

Peace with God (Table 1 satisfied) leads to peace with others  
(Table 2 satisfied)

He is Lord of all: Jesus Christ is the Lord of all people, Jew and Gentile

Rom 3:29        *Is he* the God of the Jews only? *is he* not also of the  
Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also

Rom 10:12       For there is no difference between the Jew and the  
Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all  
that call upon him

All mankind has the same Lord,  
all people can be saved by the one Lord (John 14:6)

Peter follows the identification of the Word and the Lord with...the Gospel

v37-38 God anointed Jesus...God was with Him:

Peter gives a very succinct synopsis of the ministry of Jesus Christ

1. God (the Father) anointed Jesus (God the Son) with (God the) Holy Spirit and power (Luke 4:14) after the baptism of John the Baptist
2. Jesus did what the Father gave Him authority to do
3. God was with Him

v39 we are witnesses:

We are witnesses of all that Jesus did

We are witnesses that the Jews killed/crucified Jesus

Both Jew and Gentile killed Jesus

Peter lays most of the blame on the Jews (Matt 27:25, Luke 12:48)

Then...another "But God"

v40-41 God raised Him up the 3<sup>rd</sup> day:

Acts 13:30 "But God raised him from the dead."

And God displayed/declared the risen Jesus openly

- by many infallible works for 40 days (Acts 1:3)
- not hidden in a corner (Acts 26:26)

But not to all, but only to witnesses (believers, no unbelievers) He had chosen

- the faithful women
- the 2 disciples on the road to Emmaus
- Peter
- the 10 disciples
- the 11 disciples (Thomas)
- 500 (1 Cor 15:6)
- James (1 Cor 15:7)
- Saul of Tarsus

who ate and drank with the Lord after His resurrection (1 John 1:1-3)

v42-43 He commanded us to preach...to testify:

Jesus commanded the witnesses of His resurrection to

1. preach the Gospel to the people  
(we thought Jews only, but apparently that is not the case)
2. testify
  - a. Jesus is the God-ordained Judge of the living and the dead  
(spiritual conditions)
  - b. all the prophets (the servants of God) bear witness of Jesus
  - c. thru His name whosoever believes shall be forgiven of their sin  
Gen 15:6 and Hab 2:4, Luke 24:44-49

v31 “your prayer is heard”

v22 “to hear words of you”

v33 “to hear all things that are commanded you of God”

What was Cornelius’ prayer?

He read the Law of Moses...the Law revealed his sin and

God’s justifiable penalty for sin

He read the prophets...Is 59:1-2, for example

“Lord, what is the answer to my horrifying problem?

Who can help me?

How can I be forgiven?

What must I do?”

Cornelius’ prayer was a cry for mercy, forgiveness, and salvation

What is God’s answer to Cornelius’ prayer, spoken by Peter to this eager congregation?

1. Jesus Christ
2. Believe

v44-46a The Holy Ghost fell:

God’s answer to Cornelius’ prayer/cry (his greatest need) is simple

1. Jesus
2. Believe

And the heart-felt response of Cornelius, his family, and his friends is evident:  
Believed, and immediately so because...

While Peter is still talking, “Acts 2” happened again, this time on Gentiles!

The Gentile Pentecost!

God’s gift of the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:9-13), the promise of the Father  
(Luke 24:49), is poured out upon a people that were not a people  
(1 Peter 2:9-10)



Here in Cornelius' home,  
2 Cor 4:6      God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness,  
                         hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge  
                         of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

And the Jewish disciples from Joppa were absolutely astounded!

v46b-48   forbid water...not be baptized...as well as we:

Peter's reaction is not recorded; he now understands what the Lord is doing.  
He had been prepared for this, the disciples from Joppa had not been

So Peter immediately wants to know if there is any reason why these Gentiles  
                         cannot also be baptized with John's baptism, seeing how they have already  
                         been baptized with Jesus' baptism

After all, it is obvious that Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus Christ are equals  
                         in God's sight

So, in keeping with Matt 28:19-20, the Gentiles were baptized with water...  
                         perhaps in the Med Sea

Filled with the joy of the Lord, the "Caesarean fellowship" ask Peter to stay...  
                         and feed them more Bread of Life

Luke 22:31-32...*when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren*  
John 21:15-17...*Feed My lambs/sheep*

#### Historical note

Per Clement of Rome, a disciple of Peter and John and Paul, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*:

Antioch had become a center of Christian evangelism during the ministry of the  
Apostle Paul

That serpent Simon Magnus (Gnosticism) went to Antioch to fight against the  
Gospel and the servants of the Gospel

He performed magic and railed against Peter and Paul

The apostles and disciples tried to drive Simon Magnus out of town but simply  
could not do it

So Cornelius came from Caesarea and, with the power of the Roman Empire at  
his command, drove Simon Magnus and all of his followers out of  
Antioch

## Application/Lessons

### A. Big Steps

The Lord took a Big Step in His Plan of Redemption of fallen man by revealing Himself to a non-covenant people, using His covenant people preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ  
Man had erected a great wall (bigger than the one in China) and the Lord is breaking it down

Peter took 4 Big Steps in his walk of faith that led to the breaking down of this great wall

4 Big Steps for us in our walk of faith that will lead to walls falling down

1. v20...doubting nothing

with a cultivated sense of hearing the small still voice of God,  
we obey with no doubts, no back talk  
“Yes, Lord, whatever!”

2. v28...But God

Wonderful things happen, or horrible things don’t happen,  
because of “But God”

A topical study in and of itself

I’m sharing tonight at His Church: “But God”  
Come or watch/listen

3. v34...Then Peter opened his mouth

How can others “hear words (God’s) of us” (v22) unless we open  
our  
mouth?

Step 1 to preach/speak/communicate the words of God: open your  
mouth

How can we be used by God unless we open our mouth?  
How can we participate in what God wants to do if we don’t say  
anything?

But, Doug, does it really matter if I open my mouth?  
I have and it doesn’t ever seem to do any good...

But, brethren...Is 55:8-11

a. If you blow the trumpet and the people are warned but they  
took not the warning then their blood is on them But if you  
blow not the trumpet and the people are not warned, their blood  
I will require at your hand

Ezk 18:17-19

Ezk 33:1-6

b. They will know that a prophet has been among them

Ezk 2:1-5  
Ezk 33:30-33

4. v36...He is Lord of all

Jesus is Savior to many superficial, lukewarm, in-name-only Christians  
But is He Lord?

Supreme Authority, Master  
Are we servants willingly seeking only His will

Rom 10:13...Savior or Lord?  
Difference between Savior and Lord?  
The depth and breadth of our individual surrender to Him

During this message, has the Holy Spirit spoken to you?

About walls in your life/relationships that need to be torn down?

About taking a Big Step of faith in your walk with the Lord to be a part of what He wants to do?

You do not need to have all the answers to your questions,  
You are expected to move without knowing why or what  
It may be, "That's enough reflection, it's time to get moving."

And you just might be astounded at what the Lord does when you obey, doubting nothing

B. Confidence

Confidence: full trust, assurance  
certitude/certainty/freedom from doubt

What does confidence do for us physically?

Lower heart rate  
Lower blood pressure  
Breathe easy  
Removal of stress

What does confidence do for us emotionally?

Peace of mind  
Calmness

What does confidence do for us spiritually?

Hope  
Peace, even in the midst of a storm/mayhem

None of those things come from self-confidence, they all come from Jesus-confidence

Unbeliever: Trust Jesus  
Backslider: Trust Jesus  
Believer: Trust Jesus