

**all that  
were  
oppressed of  
the devil**

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**Acts 10:29 – 11:30**

~ When the Lord Jesus said to the disciples, “you have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you” – God revealed salvation is of Him and Him alone, friends. You had nothing to do with it. Are there people in your life you are praying the Lord will choose for salvation? I sure hope so because, if not, those people may never be saved. If they are already saved, then we should be praying the Spirit of God will draw them closer to Christ in His Word. Candidly, I don’t see any other useful prayer. Maybe you have a family member or friend – or maybe you met a complete stranger – who you are concerned for, and you desire they will turn to Christ? Well, this leg of our Spiritual Safari is going to instruct us on the finest type of evangelism we can ever undertake. If the Bible is the Word of God, then nothing else matters. If the Bible is not the Word of God, then nothing matters.

In our last report, we began the examination of the conversion of Cornelius. Simon Peter went into the home of a Gentile man and Roman soldier, and literally insulted him by saying he didn’t think he should even be in his house! Simon Peter obviously didn’t care much about making friends and influencing people. It would seem Peter didn’t have very good social skills, either. He was told by God not to call unclean that which God called clean, but Simon Peter is struggling with those instructions. Peter told the Lord “no” on Simon the Tanner’s rooftop; and he is still not quite yet able to be fully obedient to God. That’s likely one reason we’re going with Paul on his missionary journey’s and circling back to Peter much later in the Bible. Obedience can take a dreadfully long time to learn, friends – even after we are saved – but I digress....

**X**

***29 Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?***

~ I have always wondered why Simon Peter asked this question. I would think he would have opened the conversation speaking of the things of Christ; but this is just plain rude – and even seems combative. Well, as bad as his behavior seems, Peter is waiting on the leading of the Holy Spirit, friends! Peter isn't rushing into evangelism. I'm sure Peter suspected he may be thrown in jail for preaching, too. He didn't want any part of that – and I don't blame him. This passage ought to be a HUGE lesson to many of us today. Most evangelism is rather brusque, even crude. Rushing in is amateurish. Most of us do more harm than good for the cause of Christ in our witness. We must wait on the leading of the Spirit of God. That almost never happens today.

I, personally, believe the finest evangelical effort we can undertake is a prayer ministry. What I mean by that is: we begin by praying for others. Only when we consider the welfare of others above our own and esteem others better than ourselves can the day come when said prayer is answered by the Holy Spirit. We need to ask God for leading in all situations. When we approach our service and witness in that manner, I just happen to know He will lead us in victory. Doing it on our own in the flesh isn't going to work. You're pre-ordained to fail operating on your own volition.

When I was newly converted, I was very zealous in telling people about Jesus – but I discovered the hard way we need to allow the Holy Spirit to open the door before we open our mouths. If we do it our way, people only think we are religious nut-jobs. Sometimes, we will have to talk about everything under the sun except Jesus to have a path opened for us. Just about always, we have to get to know the other person and show some interest in what THEY are doing before they will become interested in anything we are doing. In fact, we will probably have to run out of conversation and have some time to pray even more before the Holy Spirit will begin to speak through us.

Furthermore, allowing the other person to bring the subject of the Lord up is always going to be the most effective conversation for Christ you will ever have. When that happens, the door will definitely be opened wide for

witnessing. That's also when others will truly accept Christ. I'll be honest, because I always am with you dear readers: I never open my mouth to those who do not care to hear about the Lord Jesus Christ! If the Lord doesn't prompt them to want to hear, then I sure don't want to talk about God with them! We really need to study to be quiet; and learn how to be Spirit-led and, thus, to be very careful in our service and witness....

***30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,***

***31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.***

***32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.***

***33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.***

***34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:***

***35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.***

***36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all)***

***37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;***

***38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.***

***39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:***

***40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;***

~ Only when Cornelius admits he had no idea why he sent for Simon Peter, except for the fact that Peter must have had a message of further enlightenment for him, does Peter begin to speak of the Lord! Make a note of that, my beloved. Cornelius and those there with him knew certain basic facts about Jesus of Nazareth, and what had been happening during the past three or four years. But only when Cornelius brings it up will Peter begin to speak of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. That's the entire Gospel message – and nothing else, friends. There isn't a sermon preached in the New Testament that doesn't center around the resurrection of Christ! This is simply a marvelous account of the conversion of this man, Cornelius, at this time! ~

***41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.***

***42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.***

***43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.***

~ We have criticized Simon Peter when it was appropriate on safari; and we have applauded him, likewise. I am very appreciative of this man because he reminds me of all the faults of another man I know named Hunt. The important thing is, Simon Peter preached the Gospel. Until we believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ for the remission of our sins then we haven't done anything for God at all. Until we start there, we haven't started anywhere with God....

***44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.***

***45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.***

***46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,***

***47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?***

***48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.***

~ This section of Scripture has been labeled the "Gentile Pentecost" by many theologians. Peter is astonished that Gentiles could receive the Holy Spirit. To see it was simply mind-boggling to Peter. It was made audible by their speaking in tongues, too, by the way! Tongues had a purpose in that day that they do not have today. Speaking in tongues was more of an evidentiary matter for Simon Peter and the apostles; one which indicated God would save Gentiles. Well, Simon Peter will come back to this incident in the next chapter and also in the fifteenth chapter. Jews in that day simply could not believe Gentiles could be saved; even though the Lord Jesus had told them exactly that.

So, everyone in Cornelius' house believed and was saved; and it was a house full of Gentiles. Again, I call your attention to the fact that Noah's three sons' families are all represented in separate conversions in the Book of Acts: the Ethiopian Eunuch was a son of Ham; Saul of Tarsus was a son of Shem; here, Cornelius was a son of Japheth. All have been converted and have accepted Christ as their Savior. The Holy Spirit moved in each case using the Word of God through the man of God, as we so painstakingly considered in previous reports. Only when that formula is complete can there be a true conversion from being dead in trespasses and sin to genuine son of God....

**XI**

***1 And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.***

***2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,***

~ In this chapter, Simon Peter defends his ministry against much doubting and division. It's not going to be an easy thing for Peter to do. Eating with the Gentiles was questionable for Simon Peter. Just a few weeks before this, Peter would have told you it was a terrible and blasphemous thing to eat with Gentiles. Well, as we read on, we have another apology given by Simon Peter. He still didn't want to do this, but the Spirit of God has been leading him....

***3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.***

***4 But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying,***

***5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:***

***6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw four footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.***

***7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.***

***8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.***

***9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.***

**10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.**

**11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me.**

**12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:**

**13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter;**

**14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.**

**15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.**

**16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.**

**17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?**

**18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.**

**19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.**

**20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.**

**21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.**

***22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.***

***23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.***

***24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.***

***25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:***

***26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.***

***27 And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.***

***28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.***

***29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:***

***30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.***

~ So, our safari ends this leg of our expedition with the world capital of religion shifting from Jerusalem to Antioch. This is where Christians are first called such. Those accusing Simon Peter of improperly interacting with the Gentiles are silenced. This is also when Barnabus becomes the preacher in Antioch, and quickly discovers he needs an assistant. That's when he



connects with Saul of Tarsus! I think Saul was reluctant to join Barnabus at this time. I've always wondered about that, too.

The events of verse twenty-eight are well documented in secular history. A binding of love held the early church together. The church in Jerusalem had been persecuted, decimated and badly hurt at this time. They were in a time of great need and famine. I believe the episode with Ananias and Sapphira badly hurt church credibility early on. That's when the other believers sent help. Saul had been one who wasted the church, and it is by his hands relief is being sent. That is how Christianity walks in reality, friends. That's where it ought to walk today ~

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