

Cornelius Converted.
Acts 10:34-48.
Sunday morning, June 6, 2010.

I. No partiality with God.

A. "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality."

1. These words stand in contrast to the notion held by the Jews of that day, that they were God's favorite people; that they only were in God's good graces.
2. If a Gentile person wanted to share in those good graces, he had to become a proselyte. He became a Jew inwardly by being circumcised, and baptized in the Old Testament sense, and an animal sacrifice would be made in his behalf as he was presented to the priests in Jerusalem, in the temple.
3. What made this clear to Peter?
 - The vision of the clean and unclean animals had demonstrated this in Joppa.
 - The Holy Spirit's testimony regarding the three men at Peter's doorstep.
 - Cornelius' testimony regarding the message of the angel.
4. In summary: God doesn't have a favorite nationality, ethnic group or skin color

B. Yet there is a discriminating principle with God.

This much is clearly stated by Peter when he says: "...whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him." Vs. 35. Implied is that those who do not fear Him, and do not stand ready to do righteousness, are not accepted of Him.

1. Those who fear Him.

That is those who more than anything else in life want to know, and be rightly related to God. God is for them the first and overarching reality. They can not content themselves with mere ritual; with mere religion. They must have the reality of the abiding presence of God in their hearts.

2. Those who work righteousness.

They can never content themselves with merely hearing the will of God; they also desire to do it. Cornelius was a military officer. His men stood ready to hear his commands; they also stood ready to do them.

3. The readiness of Cornelius is clear from vs. 33: "We are all present before God, to hear (and to do) all the things commanded you by God."

C. This discriminating principle is taught by the Lord Jesus Himself.

1. Regarding the hearing and understanding of God's word.

"If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the teaching whether it is from God, or whether I speak on my own authority." John 7:17.

2. Regarding the Lord coming to us, and imparting his own presence to us.

"Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him: 'Lord how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?' Jesus answered, 'if anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.'" John 14:22,23.

Application:

1. Are you at that place this morning; Are you like Cornelius and company, ready to hear, to understand and to do the will of God? Is that what you want more than anything else in life?

2. If not, are you willing to honestly ask the Lord to bring you to that place. Are you willing to be made willing and ready to hear and do His will?

II. A gospel rooted in historic facts.

- A. The life and death; the doing and dying of Jesus Christ.
Cornelius was familiar with these things, for he had been around during the life and ministry of Jesus.
- B. God had anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit, and with power and wisdom clearly shown by the works and wonders He did. He was the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Redeemer and Restorer of all things. “The Lord of All.” Vs. 36.
- C. The Jewish leaders took Him and crucified Him.
But God raised Him from the dead and showed Him openly; not to all people, for He would not be subjected to rejection a second time. He was shown to those who stood ready to hear and to do His will, just like we spoke about this before.
- D. The significance of these events is that God has ordained Jesus as Judge of the living and the dead. That God has committed the restoration of His Kingdom into the hands of Jesus. And that through Jesus, all those who believe on Him, receive not only the forgiveness of sins, but also the gift of the Holy Spirit. That is God’s own indwelling presence in the Person of the Holy Spirit.

Application:

Have you come to grips with the implications of the historic facts of the life and death of Jesus? Have you ever placed yourself before Him like Cornelius and company did; as the Judge of all; the Lord of all; the Restorer of all things? He is still the same, and He still stands ready to do what He did for Cornelius and company.

III. The blessing of God’s own presence.

- A. While Peter was still speaking (And Cornelius and company believed the word spoken to them), God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ came in the Person of the Holy Spirit and took up residence in their hearts.
- B. The Jewish brothers of Joppa were astonished that the Lord would come and dwell in these gentiles without circumcision, baptism and presenting them to the priests in Jerusalem in order to present a sacrifice for them.
- C. The evidence was undeniable. They all spoke of the works of God with other tongues (languages), the Holy Spirit indicating that the currents of God’s saving work were shifting away from Judaism and toward the nations of the earth.
- D. Peter then commands them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord. A baptism that did not join them to Judaism, but to the Lord Jesus Christ and His church. Peter, like Paul, did not baptize them. Probably so they would not become the followers of Peter, or Paul, but of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Application:

At the Lord’s table we renew this commitment. Sometimes we can stray from the Lord’s presence long and far. But He comes to us under the elements, and in the Person of the Holy Spirit. And He says: “If any man hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and fellowship with Him.” Do you hear His voice?