

35. The Lord Led Peter to the House of Cornelius

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to work with each member of the Trinity in the ministry of evangelism. We saw that the Holy Spirit convicts, the Father draws and the Son seeks and saves. Our responsibility is to help our children learn to work with each member of the Trinity by sharing the Word of God so that each member of the Trinity can carry out His part in bringing people to true faith through the Word of God that we have shared. In our topic today, we are going to see how the Lord continued to work in the life of Peter and through the life of Peter to begin drawing the Gentiles to true faith in Christ.

Acts 10:23 says, “Then he invited them in and lodged *them*. On the next day Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him.” Here, we see that Peter immediately began to violate the traditions of the Jews. Acts 10:28 says, “Then he said to them, ‘You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.’” The Jews did not invite Gentiles into their homes and they did not eat with them. The Lord had just shown Peter that He had cleansed the Gentiles and that the Christians were no longer to follow the Jewish traditions that discriminated against the Gentiles. Peter invited them into the house, ate with them and had them spend the night in the house.

The next day, Peter went with the three men. He also took six other Jews with him. Peter knew he would get opposition from the other Jews who followed Christ when he returned to Jerusalem, so he prepared for that opposition in advance. Acts 11:9-12 says, ““But the voice answered me again from heaven, “What God has cleansed you must not call common.” Now this was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven. At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea. Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house.” Peter prepared for the opposition he knew would come from the other believers by taking these six Jewish believers with him.

Acts 10:24-27 says, “And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends. As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped *him*. But Peter lifted him up, saying, ‘Stand up; I myself am also a man.’ And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together.” Cornelius was eagerly waiting when Peter and the other men arrived at his house. In fact, he had also called together his relatives and close friends. Here, we see that the Lord gives us an example of how to share the message of the death and resurrection of Christ with whole extended families when we find a person that will invite friends and relatives to their home.

As Peter walked in the door, Cornelius fell down at his feet and worshiped him. Peter immediately stopped him and told him to stand up. Peter made it very clear that he was just a man and had no special powers in himself. This is a key lesson to remember. We are just the person that the Lord has chosen to be the messenger to bring His message and we have no special powers in ourselves. Ephesians 3:20-21 says, “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we

ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” We are to bring glory to God and not to ourselves.

Peter talked with Cornelius and then they walked together into the house. There, Peter and the six Jews who had accompanied him saw that Cornelius had gathered together a large group of relatives and close friends. Acts 10:28-29 says, “Then he said to them, ‘You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?’” Peter began by reminding these Gentiles what they already knew about the Jews.

He reminded them that it was unlawful for the Jews for a man to keep company with anyone that was not a Jew. The word translated “keep company” means *to join with or to fasten together*. This word is used twice in 1 Corinthians 6:16-17 where we read, “Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body *with her*? For ‘the two,’ He says, ‘shall become one flesh.’ But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit *with Him*.” In these two verses, the word is translated “joined to”. Instead of being joined to a prostitute, we are to be joined to the Lord. In the same way, Peter said that the Jews were not to be joined together with people who were from a different nation than the Jews.

The word translated “go to” means *to come to or to approach*. The word is used in Luke 10:34 to describe the actions of the Good Samaritan. That verse says, “So he went to *him* and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.” Here, we see that a Samaritan was very willing to come close to a Jew in need and care for him. Normally, a Jew would not be as kind to a person of another nation. However, we see here that Peter had come close to a whole houseful of Gentiles to minister to them.

Peter said that the reason why he had come was because “God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” As a result, Peter had come without any objection as soon as he was sent for.” Here, we see that Peter gives us a great example for our own lives. Peter obeyed immediately when God told him that he was to go and share the message of the death and resurrection with the Gentiles. In the same way, we want to provide a good example for our children by being sensitive to the Lord and being ready to share that message whenever the Lord provides an opportunity both to people of our own culture and to people of other cultures.

Peter gives us a good example by the next question that he asked. Peter said, “I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?” Here, we see that Peter took time to find out what they were ready to hear. Acts 10:30-33 says, “So 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, and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.’ So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the

things commanded you by God.” Cornelius began by telling how the Lord had spoken to him and given him instructions to invite Peter to his house to answer his prayers to the Lord.

Here, we see that God is concerned to answer the prayers of people who are seeking God. We saw this illustrated in the previous chapter when Ananias was sent to speak to Saul. We saw that Ananias was obedient and went. Acts 9:17 says, “And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’” We see the same thing happening here with Cornelius. We also need to be ready to share the Gospel, because we never know whose hearts the Lord has been preparing to hear the message of the death and resurrection of Christ.

Cornelius said in Acts 10:33, “So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God.” The word translated “well” means *to speak or do well, beautifully, honorably or excellently*. Paul used this word in Philippians 4:14 as he thanked the Philippians for their gift to help him. “Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress.” We see that Cornelius was very thankful that Peter would come and share with him, his relatives and his close friends.

Cornelius also said that they were gathered to hear all the things that God had commanded Peter to speak. 1 Corinthians 15:1-5 says, “Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.” Here, we see that the message we are commanded to share is the message of the death and resurrection of Christ. In our next topic, we will see that was the message Peter shared with all those who were gathered at the house of Cornelius that day.

We also want to help our physical and spiritual children learn that the message that God commands us to share with those who are not Christians is the message of the death and resurrection of Christ. That is the message every person on the earth needs to hear, because that is the only message that can give peace and eternal life. That is the only message that offers forgiveness of sin. For that reason, we want to help our children learn to work with the Trinity by sharing that message with all those who are without spiritual life and without hope. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to share the message of the death and resurrection of Christ.