



# What Peter Told Cornelius

**Acts 10:34-43**

# Introduction

- We are familiar with the events associated with the conversion of Cornelius (a brief review is to follow).
- In this lesson, I want to focus on the lesson Peter taught on that occasion.
- As we shall see, what Peter taught applies to the group of individuals we are most likely to interact with as we try to teach the gospel.
- This is a “first principle” lesson that Peter was teaching.

# Background leading to Peter's sermon – **Acts 10:1-33**

- **Acts 10:1-2** – we are introduced to Cornelius. A devout man who feared God, was generous and prayerful always. He was also a Roman centurion, and based on the text, a full Gentile.
- NOTE: In America, this is likely whom we will be studying with if we get opportunity. In the USA the majority still believe in God, Jesus and the Bible (though the number continues to decline). But they also believe they are good enough to go to heaven even though they have not obeyed the gospel.
- We are reminded that Cornelius was a good man BUT he was not saved!
- The sermon Peter presented to Cornelius in vs. **34-43** has many basic points that need to be taught and understood before one obeys the gospel.

## Background leading to Peter's sermon – **Acts 10:1-33**

- **Acts 10:3ff** – an angel appears to Cornelius in a vision and tells him to send for Peter who would tell him what he needed to do (to be saved – **Acts 11:13-14**).
- Cornelius immediately complies and sends servants to fetch Peter in Joppa.
- Meanwhile, Peter at home has a vision in which Jesus declares that he needed to accept the Gentiles (*what God has made clean do not call common*)

## Background leading to Peter's sermon – **Acts 10:1-33**

- **Acts 10:17ff** – Peter complies and goes with them. He also takes with him 6 witnesses (**Acts 11:12**) implying he knew what was about to happen.
- **10:28-33** - He arrives and Cornelius explains to Peter what he had seen and been told.
- This leads to Peter's sermon, and our text.

# The sermon of Peter – **Acts 10:34-43**

- **Acts 10:34** – Peter opened his mouth. Notice how Peter had listened FIRST and now he responds.
- **10:34-35** – *God shows no partiality*. This is the main focus of Peter's lesson.
  - It is also a lesson we need to remind ourselves and others of – **Galatians 2:6, Colossians 3:9-11**
- Many today believe they are unworthy for one reason or another (we all are). BUT that is NOT God's standard – **1 Timothy 2:3-4, 2 Peter 3:9**

# The sermon of Peter – **Acts 10:34-43**

- **Acts 10:35** – *We must fear Him and work righteousness*
- We have a part in our salvation! Yes God's grace is greater and PRIME to our salvation – **Ephesians 2:8-9**, but He has placed conditions upon HOW we are to be saved.
- We must fear Him – show Him the reverence and godly fear He is due **Hebrews 12:28-29**. He is NOT like our earthly father!  
- Far too many today do NOT fear Him. They believe in Him, but not with the whole heart.
- **Psalm 89:7**, *God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, And to be held in reverence by all those around Him.*
- **1 Peter 1:17**, without partiality He judges each one according to his works.

# The sermon of Peter – **Acts 10:34-43**

- **Acts 10:35** – *We must fear Him and work righteousness*
- We must also be willing to work righteousness –
  - This is NOT about earning salvation (meritorious works)
  - BUT it is about obeying Him - **Hebrews 5:9,**  
**Matthew 7:21-23.**
- **Psalm 15:2,** *LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart;*

# The sermon of Peter – **Acts 10:34-43**

- **Acts 10:35** – *We must fear Him and work righteousness*
- Working righteousness is more than mental acknowledgment.
  - **Hebrews 11:4** – Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice
  - **Hebrews 11:7** – Noah became heir of righteousness
  - **Hebrews 11:8ff, James 2:23** – Abraham believed God.
  - **Hebrews 11:33** – others who “worked righteousness”
- The point: When we appreciate Jesus, we **MUST** understand the commitment it involves – **1 Peter 3:21**

# The sermon of Peter – **Acts 10:34-43**

- **Acts 10:36** – *Preaching peace through Jesus Christ*
- In context, Peter likely had in mind the breaking down of barriers, especially between Jew & Gentile. **Cf. Ephesians 2:14-15.**
- BUT He also offers peace from the bondage of sin
  - when we sin we are at enmity with God – **Romans 8:7, James 4:4, Ephesians 2:1-4, 2:11-12**
  - sin also brings enmity within ourselves
- Jesus brings us the peace we need
  - **John 14:27**
  - **Ephesians 2:14, Colossians 3:15** – He Himself is our peace
  - **Philippians 4:6-7** – the peace of God that surpasses understanding.
- POINT: Jesus is the answer to our sins and inner struggles. (Not miraculous, but the resources we need are available)

# The sermon of Peter – **Acts 10:34-43**

- **Acts 10:36** – *He is Lord of all*
- In context, emphasizing Jesus came for all mankind (not just the Jews or select individuals).
- We MUST understand what it means to make Him Lord!
  - **Matthew 16:24** – deny self, take up His cross and follow Him
  - **Romans 10:9** – we must confess Him as Lord leading to salvation

# The sermon of Peter – **Acts 10:34-43**

- **Acts 10:36** – *He is Lord of all*
- What does it mean that Jesus is Lord over us?
- The word Lord means master or ruler. It implies supremacy . Used more than 700x in NT Greek.
- IF Jesus is your Lord:
  - you surrender to Him – **Galatians 2:20,**  
**2 Corinthians 13:5, 5:17, Colossians 3:24, etc.**
  - you are willing to repent of and renounce sinful ways – **Ephesians 4:17, 22-24** – you no longer walk as you used to
  - you obey Him in everything – **Matthew 28:19-20**
  - you wear His name – **Acts 11:26**
  - you are living a new life – **Colossians 2:6**
- IF you are unwilling to make Him Lord, you are not a true believer!  
You are NOT ready to obey the gospel!  
And it does NOT end when you obey the gospel!

# The sermon of Peter – **Acts 10:34-43**

- **Acts 10:37-41** – ... *how God anointed Jesus*
- Peter NEXT explained the foundation of the gospel – who Jesus is and what He did
- It began with the baptism of John – **Matthew 3:13-4:17**
  - He preached in Galilee & Judea
  - anointed with the Holy Spirit by God – **Matthew 3:16-17**
  - He did good and had compassion – **Matthew 4:23-25**
  - God was with Him – **John 8:29, 3:2**

# The sermon of Peter – **Acts 10:34-43**

- **Acts 10:37-41** – ... *how God anointed Jesus*
- The fulcrum of the gospel – who Jesus is and what He did (continued)
- This was done openly – witnesses – **Luke 24:46-48, Acts 1:8**
  - He was killed by Jewish leaders – **Acts 2:23, Matt. 27:22-25**
  - But God raised Him on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day – **Matthew 28:1ff, etc.**
  - Shown openly to certain witnesses – **1 Cor. 15:1-8.**  
He was literally raised
    - we ate with Him – **cf. Luke 24:40-43**

# The sermon of Peter – **Acts 10:34-43**

- **Acts 10:37-41** – ... *how God anointed Jesus*
- This is the message our faith is based on. God's plan was fulfilled in Jesus, exactly as God planned – **Galatians 4:4** – the fullness of the times.
- **WHY should Jesus be your Lord?**  
**Because of who He is and what He did!**

# The sermon of Peter – **Acts 10:34-43**

- **Acts 10:42** – ... *He commanded us to preach and to testify...*
- Peter next explains the apostle's mission (and those who followed after them) – preach Him to all the people
  - **Mark 16:15-16, Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 24:46-48**
  - This is WHY we seek to share the gospel with others

# The sermon of Peter – **Acts 10:34-43**

- **Acts 10:42** – ... *He was ordained by God to be judge*
- A fundamental doctrine one must understand – there is a day of judgment coming. Jesus WILL judge us
- Jesus taught it – **John 5:28-29**,  
**cf. Matthew 25:31-46**
- A warning throughout scripture – **Romans 14:10-12**, **2 Corinthians 5:10-11**, **Hebrews 9:27**
- Paul reasoned with Felix – **Acts 24:25**

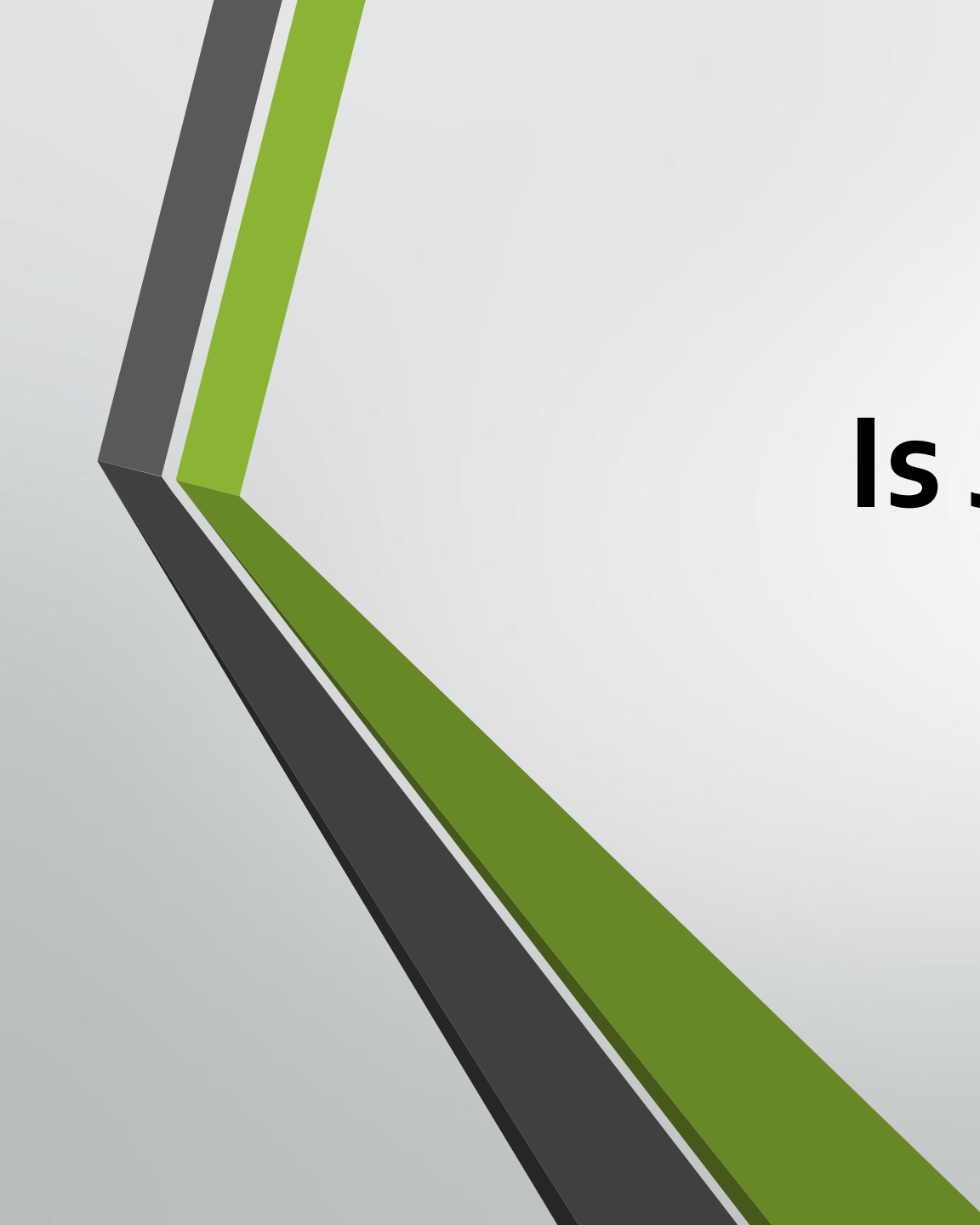
This is WHY sharing the gospel is important!

## What happened? **Acts 10:44-48**

- As Peter spoke, Cornelius and his house were baptized with the Holy Spirit and they spoke in tongues.
- NOTE: This was NOT an act of salvation! It was evidence.
- Peter KNOWS what this means – salvation IS available to all! He challenges his Jewish brethren (the witnesses)
- **10:47-48** Can anyone forbid water? Why ask this?
- Because it was HOW they would be saved.  
Consider what Cornelius did:
  - Heard – **Acts 10:33ff**
  - Believed in Jesus – implied
  - Repented – **Acts 11:18**
  - They were baptized – **Acts 10:48, 2:38, etc.**

# Concluding thoughts

- And thus we see the sermon of Peter to Cornelius and its results.
- These are things one ought to understand BEFORE obeying the gospel! The MORE one knows, the more likely they are to remain faithful!
- Being a Christian is NOT just about “getting wet”. It is a committed way of life with Jesus as your Lord.



**Is Jesus Lord of  
your life?**