

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 26 (June 25-July 1, 2017)

Peter has more miracles to perform and more lessons to learn, as we will see in this week's devotions.

Sunday, June 25 (read Acts 9:32-43)

All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.. (Acts 9:35)

A revival breaks out in Lydda and Sharon following the miraculous healing of Aeneas, a paralytic who has been bedridden for eight years (v. 32-35). In a nearby town of Joppa, a believer named Tabitha becomes sick and dies. The disciples in Joppa send word, requesting Peter to come to them (36-38). Tabitha is known for her good works among the poor, so many of the recipients of her gifts gather to pay her respect (v. 39). Upon his arrival, Peter clears the room of all the people and then gets down on his knees and prays. He takes the hand of the dead woman and says, "Tabitha, get up." She awakens as if from a deep sleep and he presents her to the mourners (v. 40-41). This miracle brings about another revival among the citizens of Joppa (v. 42-43). God is using Peter in a mighty way, but the Lord still has a lot to teach him, as we will see in the next few devotions.

Monday, June 26 (read Acts 10:1-8)

The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God." (Acts 10:4b)

In today's text, we meet a man named Cornelius, a centurion in the Italian Regiment (v.1). This man is like so many people, because he believes in God, but he does not know Jesus Christ as his Savior. He does all the right spiritual things to the best of his current knowledge (v. 2-3); therefore, God calls him by name (v. 4). I see a profound truth at work in this passage: If you will walk in obedience to all the truth you have been exposed to, God will send someone to introduce you to the real Savior. The angel tells Cornelius to send someone to bring Peter from Joppa to his house. He obeys the angel and sends for God's special apostle. We will continue the story tomorrow.

Tuesday, June 27 (read Acts 10:9-15)

"Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. I have never eaten anything impure or unclean." (Acts 10:14)

Having prepared Cornelius through an angel's visit, God now prepares Peter to receive the messengers who are on their way to Joppa. The apostle is praying on the roof of the house in which he is staying

(v. 9) when he becomes hungry. While the food is being prepared, Peter falls into a trance and sees a vision of a large sheet coming down from Heaven, filled with all kinds of four-footed animals, reptiles and birds (v. 10-12). A voice says, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat" (v. 13), causing the apostle to reply in the words recorded above (v. 14). The voice from Heaven says, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean" (v. 15). Peter may not be the only one who needs to learn a lesson here. Have you ever criticized a person's past after that person has come to Christ for forgiveness? Often folks say to me, "You don't know what he/she has done." I tell them, "Neither does God. He forgives and forgets!" Peter is about to learn a valuable lesson about the grace of God. I pray that you have learned it as well.

Wednesday, June 28 (read Acts 10:16-23)

While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them." (Acts 10:20-21)

In Scripture, God's number is three, pictured primarily by the Trinity. The vision before Peter occurs three times to emphasize to the confused apostle the importance of what he has seen. Meanwhile, the men sent by Cornelius arrive and ask if Simon is staying in the home (v. 16-18). The Holy Spirit assures Peter that God has orchestrated this, so he must go with the men (v. 19-20). Peter goes down and identifies himself to the travelers, asking them why they have come. They tell the apostle about the experience of Cornelius as well as about the man himself (v. 22). After that, Peter invites the men into the house where he is staying (v. 23). Even today, just as then, nothing of value happens unless the Holy Spirit prepares both the message and the recipients of it. Glory to His Name!

Thursday, June 29 (read Acts 10:23-29)

He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean." (Acts 10:28)

Peter follows his visitors back to the home of the centurion, accompanied by some of the brothers from Joppa (v. 23). Cornelius is expecting them, so he has invited his family and close friends to share in the moment. In awe, he falls at Peter's feet in reverence, but the apostle tells him to stand up on his feet because he is as human as the centurion (v. 24-26). Peter admits that this visit is contrary to Jewish law, but affirms that God has shown him that he must remove his prejudices and enter the man's home (v. 27-29). Is there someone whom you would hesitate to visit? Do you have any secret prejudices that would keep you from following God's call?

Friday, June 30 (read Acts 10:30-33)

"Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us." (Acts 10:33b)

Cornelius answers Peter's question recorded in v. 29 by sharing his spiritual experience. He emphasizes the point that God is offering him salvation, because he is walking in all the light that he currently has by praying and giving gifts (v. 30-31). He tells Simon that God even told him where the apostle was staying, so that he sent immediately for him. After complimenting Peter for coming, Cornelius says the beautiful words printed above (v. 33b). Could you imagine the revival that would take place if all of you could make that statement to your preacher this Sunday morning? The pastor has been in the Lord's presence all week, preparing for this time when you would be present to hear God's Word. If you believe that, you will hear from God through the lips of your imperfect minister.

Saturday, July 1 (read Acts 10:34-43)

"All the prophets testify about Him that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name." (Acts 10:43)

Peter begins by acknowledging a new nugget he has just learned: God does not show favoritism, accepting people from all nations who put their trust in Jesus (v. 34-35). Peter preaches the gospel message, including the good works of the Lord in addition to His death and resurrection (v. 36-40). He testifies that he, himself, was among those who saw Him following His resurrection and who ate and drank with Him (v. 41). Peter confirms that **this same Jesus** will someday judge all who have lived on the earth (v. 42). The message given by the earlier prophets comes together into this one vital truth (v. 43): "Everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name." Intercede for those in your circle of friends and family who have not yet believed.