

Text: Acts 10: 1-48 (KJV)

Our text records events following the day of Pentecost, when Peter preached the Gospel in Jerusalem to a Jewish assembly. The Holy Ghost fell on all who were there and 3000 confessed Jesus Christ as their savior. Christians around the world now celebrate The Day of Pentecost, the seventh Sunday after Easter, remembering the appearance of the Holy Spirit on that eventful day in biblical history.

In our message today, we see an amazing interaction of characters, separated by distance, ethnicity, and vocation, but through the intervention of God, they are brought into perfect spiritual synchronization. God displays once again his Omnipresence (all knowing) and Omnipresence (everywhere at the same time). It is often said God moves in mysterious ways. Noteworthy is each person in these passages is a believer, The Cornelius, The Italian Centurion, Simon the Tanner, and Simon Peter the Disciple.

God makes his first masterful move, in directing an Angel to speak with the Centurion in Caesarea (Modern day Turkey) and later he speaks directly in a vision to Peter at Joppa (Modern day Tel Aviv, Israel) about 32 miles south. In viewing the events of this passage, I am reminded of the game of chess. When playing this game the best players think in terms of advance moves towards the objective of Check Mate, the King piece is blocked from any further movement.. Garry Kasparov, the Russian Chess Grandmaster, and once World Champion Chess Player, says he always tries to think 3-4 moves ahead with each move he makes on the board. God on the other hand thinks infinitesimally ahead with each move he makes in the lives of all who believe in him. Each move works an interconnectivity that works us all towards his sovereign plan, and releases the power of the King Jesus to move in your lives. What is of central importance here is that all the individuals in this passage were believers.

There are several learning points we can glean from events here:

- 1) We all should have around us a circle of friends who know the Lord. If you think about it, your best friend, the one who gives you advice and counsel should know the Lord. I am not advocating the exclusion of non-believers as acquaintances, but insure you include believers in the relationships that provide you spiritual support;
- 2) Cornelius was in prayer and fasting when he received an answer from God on what is the next step I should take in pleasing him. He knew God but had not yet accepted Christ when the Angel brought him the message – vs. 10:2, 3, and 30. Also note how God used Peter's hunger (a component of fasting) to prepare him for the message. Our prayer life should include fasting (if at all medically possible) and we should “pray without ceasing”—1 Thessalonians 5:17;
- 3) Both Cornelius and Peter obeyed the Words from God, even though they didn't understand fully the meaning of them- vs. 17, “For we walk by faith, not by sight”—1 Cor. 5:7 (KJV);
- 4) God works with fellow believers you know and on occasion he works through believers you don't know to meet your earnest need, for example, the Hartford Family is always in prayer for those that you may not know personally;
- 5) We should insure that your circle of friends & acquaintances include believers who can petition God on your behalf and give you advice and counsel consistent with scripture. Partnering with a Stephen Ministry is certainly an excellent option to pursue when facing rough periods in your life, they are trained to spiritually partner with you, and walk with you through the challenges you face.

I close with a verse and chorus from this Hymn by Ira D. Sankey - “I am Praying for You”...”I have a Savior, He's pleading in glory, A dear, loving Savior, tho' earth friends few; And now He is watching in tenderness o'er me, And, oh, that my Savior were your Savior, too. For you I am praying, For you I am praying, For you I am praying, I'm praying for you”

Yours in Christ,

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