

## Scripture Reading:

**Acts 10: “27 And as [Peter] talked with Cornelius, he went in and found many who had come together. 28 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. 29 Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for.**

**I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?" ”30 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, 31 and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. 32 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.' 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." 34 Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. 35 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.**

**36 The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ-- He is Lord of all-- 37 that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. 39 And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. 40 Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, 41 not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. 42 And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. 43 To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins." 44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. 45 And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, 47 "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.”**

# "Peter Preaches to the Gentiles"

Well, as you can tell from the text, this was one of the easiest sermons that I have ever had to prepare for! Looking at how the Holy Spirit worked there in Caesarea, I knew that all I had to do was prepare a simple Gospel message and trust God to gather all those who needed to hear the message right here this morning. Everyone would be excited about being present and listen intently. After my short delivery, the Spirit would be poured out with great power on all those gathered! There would be baptisms and speaking in tongues and everybody would be blessed! Word would get out and the crowds would grow week after week and soon we would need to buy up one of those mega-churches that have fallen on tough times! Can you blame me for dreaming?

- We need to understand that the account we have before us from Caesarea is very similar to the miracles of Peter we just studied.

**God moved in some incredible ways in the early days of the Church and He can do so at any point in history.**

- **But we learned how Peter's miracles have given way to major advances in healthcare & hygiene**
- **Advances that bring so many blessings that sadly we largely take them for granted today.**

**It is much the same with this example of Peter's preaching:**

- **Just as we saw at Pentecost there is a miraculous response and we can tend to want the Spirit to repeat this in our day.**

**Certainly God can move people as He pleases and we still see examples today: No matter what theological differences we might have, we know that God greatly used Pastor Billy Graham over the years, with some of those who were blessed by his ministry with us today! Pastor Glen Cole spoke at a pastor's luncheon this week recounting how God has moved many people to repentance at Trinity Church in just these past two years.**

- **We are not to disparage nor be jealous of these movements of God's Spirit**
- **As we learned by comparing miracles and healthcare, we must realize that God now more often uses ordinary means to accomplish His extraordinary ends.**
- **This is something that we are rightly reminded of each and every year as we move through the church calendar.**

**It might seem tedious as we announce that this is the 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday of ordinary time and next week the 15<sup>th</sup> and then the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and so on until we reach the Advent season.**

**BUT this is the pattern that we see in so much of life... For example, we have been blessed with many, many covenant children in our small congregation!**

- **Our prayer is certainly that they would grow to be faithful servants of the living God.**

**Now from a management perspective this starting them out as children does not seem very efficient: After all God made Adam as an adult from the dust of the ground...**

- **He could have continued to do so and saved us a lot of trouble.**

**But that is not how He has chosen to populate the earth with His Saints: He commissions sinful parents with the task of raising covenant children!**

**Mom changes the first diaper and then the second and then the third, the fourth, the fifth and fortunately we don't remember just how many until they are potty trained. We then let them mess up the kitchen and disrupt our mealtimes as they learn to eat properly. After this comes speech and reading, critical thinking and maturity all of which come with the tedious repetitions that are required.**

- **But Lord willing, after many years of such training, we come to see them serving in God's Church as the next generation.**

**Soon dad is walking his daughter down the aisle to put her in the hands of a faithful husband or watching his son blossom in his vocation.**

**Mom smiles as she sees the fruit of her work:**

- **Work which also continues as she trains the next generation!**
- **This is what it means to live in ordinary time!**

**The same principle applies in so many areas:**

**Marriages begin with two people who must learn to live with one another: If they are young, they have little experience and if they are older they have been single too long! If we think diapers and dishes and child rearing is tedious, that does not hold a candle to what is required for them to become one flesh. Now don't get me wrong, there is a whole lot of fun along the way, but if we are going to enjoy the full blessing of marriage we must learn to be obedient in all the little ways required of us each day as we move through 'ordinary' life! Deciding where to squeeze that tube of toothpaste is just one small example!**

**Or a young man begins his career thinking it is the end of his freedom, not realizing it is the beginning of the life-long enjoyment of his vocation. There is blessing here not because of which vocation he has chosen, but rather because, Lord willing he will be faithful in whatever God has chosen for him to do: Getting to work on time each day, going above and beyond the call of duty with the quality of his work whether or not his boss appreciates it!**

- **He must have the same vision for establishing his work as a young parent has for their child!**

**These principles apply whether you work for someone else or set out to establish your own business.**

**In the end, Lord willing we look back at all that has been accomplished as we grow into old age... Seeing that it came not all at once but grew over time, that ordinary time, with the faithful actions of each day building one upon another.**

- **Well, there I have gone and done it again: Starting out my sermon with the application**

**Well I did so, not only because these are important things for us to review and listen to, but also so we don't learn the wrong lesson from today's text:**

- **This is a special miraculous occurrence not an ordinary one.**

**Sadly, our temptation in life is to try and short-circuit or avoid the ordinary tasks that build the Kingdom.**

- **In our flesh, we would much rather experience the dramatic than the ordinary!**

**We want those children who need no discipline, & a life where we can give them over the day-care and schools for the hard work and just enjoy them when we have the need.**

- **Then of course we come to wonder why there are so many spoiled brats with us today!**

**We want our marriages to be like what Hollywood portrays: Love at first sight with moving music building in the background as they sinfully jump into the marriage bed prematurely and skip over all that hard work of courtship and engagement and having a real relationship.**

- **Then we wonder why no one is content today and why our divorce rate is over 50%**

**Young men today want to start their careers at the management level... Not on some bottom rung pushing papers or boxes. This carries over into how we handle our finances, needing everything that our parents and grandparents worked their entire lives to get RIGHT NOW!**

- **And we wonder why our economy and family budgets are such a mess.**

**And sadly, this is what many churches and ministries focus on as well...**

**We don't want the hard work of teaching some of our Saints how to survive years of medical training so they can be the doctors and nurses who will help the sick:**

- **It is SO much easier to just have some weekly healing services!**

**We don't want to do the hard work of training up covenant children to be faithful disciples ALL of their lives.**

- **We would rather enjoy them while they are young, let them sow a few wild oaks as young adults and then get them saved at youth camp or a church revival.**

**Well, God has miraculously healed people down through the ages and He has certainly saved a lot of foolish people in revival meetings or church services.**

- **But if we are serious students of God's Word, we see that these are to be extraordinary examples to encourage us in our faithful ordinary service!**

**Would I like to preach a sermon where thousands respond with repentance and get baptized?**

**Sure! Would I like to hold a miracle service where we restore Elijah's broken arm and make Doug's heart healthy again right on the spot? Sure would! But this is NOT what God has called me to do:**

- **I have been called to faithfully serve as a shepherd here at Church of the King.**

**My obligation is to lead you all in right worship each Lord's Day and to faithfully preach the Word of God. The results are in God's hands and I am sure there will be many good results that I will know little or nothing about! And sadly, there will also be some that I proudly take credit for which in the end will only be that wood, hay and stubble that will burn up in the furnace of God's right judgment.**

- **And the important point is that each of you has also been called to the role you are to play in the advance of God's Kingdom.**
- **Your service does not have to be dramatic or flashy...**
- **It needs to be faithful and consistent!**

**Well, that rabbit trail has become long enough to be the sermon for today...**

**So we are going to leave the content of Peter's message until next week and then Lord willing, we will look at the reaction and implications the following week as we return from family camp.**

- **So in closing, I want to once again have us think about the similarity that I mentioned last week with Simeon and Cornelius.**

**God is breaking down the wall of separation between Jew and Gentile as the Spirit prepares to fill the earth with God's Kingdom.**

- **It is very fitting that we see God touching the life of a faithful Jew and the life of a faithful Gentile as He teaches us how we are ALL dependent completely on His Grace!**

**In both cases we see very faithful men practicing the principles we should learn during ordinary time. Consider what we know from just the brief information we are given about each man, both of whom we know only from Luke's orderly account! Here is what Luke tells of Simeon from chapter two of his Gospel:**

**"25 And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him."**

- **Compare this with how Luke describes Cornelius at the beginning of chapter ten:**

**"There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, 2 a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always."**

- And Luke adds the testimony of his friends at verse 22:

**“And they said, "Cornelius the centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews.””**

- Both men described as just and devout.
- Both men faithfully serving God as they waited for salvation.

**The prophet Micah told God’s people how they were to live:**

**“8 He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?” Micah 6;8**

- In both cases we find the Spirit of God speaking to these men:

**Luke 4:26 “And it had been revealed to [Simeon] by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.”**

**And the angel spoke to Cornelius saying: “your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God.”**

**We know that God speaks to us today as well, rewarding faithful service with faithful instruction**

- Right here in His Word, day by day, if we are ready and willing to hear!
- And finally we see the obedience that is to be a natural result of hearing God’s instructions and obeying them:

**Luke 4:27 “So Simeon came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, 28 he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: 29 "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; 30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation 31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, 32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.”**

- A prayer we sing as we are commissioned each week!

**Those present marveled at what Simeon was saying not seeing how this little baby could have such an impact...**

- The birth of Jesus was both extraordinary and ordinary...
- He was both the Son of God and the son of Mary.
- Such is the case with all of our faithful works:  
They are empowered and directed by the Holy Spirit and carried out by human hands!

**It is not necessary for us to see the miracles of Peter or these reactions to his preaching to know this is true in our lives:**

- We have the promises of God!

**I can confidently bring God’s Word each week because of the promise given to the Prophet Isaiah:**

**“For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, 11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. Isaiah 55:10-11**

**As mom changes that diaper she remembers the promise “train up a child in the way they should go, and when they are old, they will not depart from it!”**

- **The child knows the promise of a blessed long life IF they honor their mother and father.**
- **As we work in our vocations we can claim the promise of Psalm 90 that God will establish the work of our hands.**

**And finally the Apostle Paul teaches us that as we faithfully grow in our loving marriage relationships that we will be demonstrating to a watching world the very love that Jesus has for His Bride: The Church.**

**May we learn the right lessons from these just and devout men that Luke has presented to us:**

**As we meditate on their lives, may we learn to more and more heed the instructions the Apostle Paul gave to the Thessalonians:**

**“You are witnesses, & God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; 11 as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, 12 that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. 13 For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.”**

**Communion Meditation: Psalm 28:6-9**

**Davis, after praying for the destruction of his enemies...**

**“6 Blessed be Jehovah, Because He has heard the voice of my supplications! 7 Jehovah is my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, And with my song I will praise Him.**

**8 Jehovah is their strength, And He is the saving refuge of His anointed.**

**9 Save Your people, And bless Your inheritance; Shepherd them also, And bear them up forever.**