

Approaching God

Read this portion of Psalm 20 and begin with an opening prayer

May the LORD answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you. Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm. LORD, give victory to the king! Answer us when we call!
(Psalm 20:1,7-9)

Answered prayers are occasions for boasting. Take a moment to think about and thank God for any answered prayers this week - big or small. When God shows himself to be the God who brings victory, who enters history and answers human need with salvation, the proper response is praise. Take a moment to praise God for how He has entered history, in Acts, and in your life!

Acts 10:23-48

Passage Introduction:

Caesarea was a prized city, named after Caesar Augustus. It was the most Roman of all cities that was connected with Judea. Its architecture and its culture were distinctly Roman, as evidenced by the aqueduct ruins that can still be seen there. Cornelius had most likely been appointed to serve in Caesarea for the rest of his life. His appointment in Caesarea, as well as his membership of the most illustrious Roman division in the legions, underlines the fact that Cornelius was no average soldier with an ordinary military posting; he was a man of esteem.

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.

vs. 25 - 26

Presumably, a large part of what Cornelius knew regarding worship he had learned from Rome. Caesar claimed to be divine and had the power to take your life. When you entered his presence, you were required to bow and not look up. This would explain Cornelius' actions when he finally sees Peter.

Acts 10:23-48 - 23 The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the believers from Joppa went along. **24** The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. **25** As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. **26** But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself." **27** While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. **28** He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. **29** So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?"

30 Cornelius answered: "Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining

My notes:

Notes: vs. 44-48:

This entire chapter has focused not on the gift of tongues, but on the inclusion of the Gentiles in the covenant community. The coming of the Spirit on the Gentiles and their speaking in tongues is meant to remind us of Acts 2, and demonstrates that the same Spirit has fallen on both Jews and Gentiles. If these two groups share one Spirit, then they are one body—united by faith in Christ and all equally members of his church. This was, in effect, Pentecost for the Gentiles.

clothes stood before me **31** and said, ‘Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. **32** Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.’ **33** So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.” **34** Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism **35** but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. **36** You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. **37** You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— **38** how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. **39** “We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, **40** but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. **41** He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. **42** He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. **43** All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. **45** The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. **46** For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, **47** “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” **48** So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Questions for Reflection & Meditation

- What does this passage today show me about God for which I can thank or praise him?

- What does this passage tell me about people, myself, my neighbor, or perhaps humanity in general?

- How can the events of Acts 10 give us great hope and conviction in our evangelism?

Key Takeaway:

What truth do I most need to remember from today's passage? How would this truth change my life if I took it seriously? If this truth were fully alive and effective in your inward being? Why might God be bringing this truth to your attention today?

Close in Prayer:

“Peter’s vision of clean and unclean animals doesn’t just make an abstract point about the character of God’s covenant people; it is a call to take the gospel to the ends of the earth, and invite men and women from every nation to respond to Christ and to the promises of the gospel. We are called to pray for that mission, and give to that mission—and perhaps you are being called to go on that mission.”

Mohler, R. Albert. Acts 1-12 For You: Charting the birth of the church.

Take some to ask the Lord to help you think about how he is calling you to engage in the mission of seeing the gospel go to the ends of the earth? Ask for the faith and boldness to follow him however he reveals.