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Acts chapter 10, verses 1 through 43.

There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius. A Centurion of what was called the Italian regiment devout, man. One, who feared God with all his household who gave alms generously to the people and prayed to God. Always about the ninth hour of the day. He saw clearly in a vision, an angel of God coming in and saying to him Cornelius and when he observed him he was afraid and said, what is it?

Lord. So he said to him your prayers and your alms have come up from a memorial before God. Now send men to drop up and send for Simon. Whose surname is Peter. He is lodging with Simon. A Tanner whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do and on the angel who spoke to him had departed Cornelius.

Spoke Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. So when he had explained all these things to them, he sent them to drop up The next day as they went on their journey and drew near the city. Peter went up on the housetop to pray about the sixth hour and he became very hungry and wanted to eat.

But while they made ready, he fell into a trance and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners descending to him and let down to the earth. And that's where all kinds of forefooted. Animals of earth of the earth, while beasts, scraping things birds of the air and a voice came to him.

Rise. Peter kill and eat, But Peter said not so Lord for I have never eaten anything common or unclean, The voice. Spoke to him again. The second time what God has cleansed, you must not call. Common. This was done three times and the object was taken up and to heaven.

Again, Now while Peter wondered within himself, what this vision, which he had seen meant, Behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius, had made inquiry for Simon's house and stood before the gate and they called and asked, whether Simon who's surname was Peter was lodging there. Well, Peter thought about the vision.

The spirit said to him behold three men are seeking you arise. Therefore, go down and go with them doubting nothing. For I have sent them and spirit. Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius and said yes I am. He whom you seek, for what reason?

Have you come? 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 was divinely. Instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house. And to hear words from you and he invited them in and lodged them on the next day, Peter went away with them and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him and the following day.

They entered Caesarea. Now, Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his relatives and close friends. As Peter was coming in Cornelius. Met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him But Peter lifted him up saying, stand up. I myself am also a man and as he

talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together than he said to them, you know, how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with, or to go to one of another nation.

But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore, I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask then, for what reason have you sent for me? 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 and said, Cornelius.

Your prayer has been heard and your arms are remembered in the sight of God, send therefore to Joppa. And call Simon here. His surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon a Tanner by the sea When he comes, he will speak to you. 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. Then Peter opened his mouth and said in truth. I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears him and works righteousness, is accepted by him. The word which God sent to the children of Israel.

Preaching. Peace through Jesus Christ. He is Lord of all That word you know which was proclaimed throughout all Judea and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached 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 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 him. God raised up on the third day and showed him openly, 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, 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 to him, all the prophets witness that through his name. Whoever believes in him will receive remission of sins. Amen. The sense this reading of God's inspired, and then there and tort Please be seated.

Christianity is different than all the religions of the world and indeed the Old Testament. Rightly understood is different than all the religions of the world, the Jews. Many of them had turned it into more of the same, a list of things to do by which you may earn, or maintain, your favored status with God.

They would talk about grace and having been granted a favorite status, but they viewed the law. Not as a mercy from God, restraining their sins that they would hope only in the Christ to come, but many whom we call Judaizers whom, we would call Pharisaical whom the Lord called sons not of Abraham.

But of the devil, They thought that as they searched the scriptures to do the things for the search, the scriptures for eternal life. They were the ones who were maintaining their eternal life by what they did. Jesus, of course, corrected them. He said it's those Scriptures that speak of me, But Cornelius knew.

Then in those scriptures, the Lord proclaimed. Forgiveness of sins to those who could not earn it for themselves. He's called here twice in our passage. A God fearer. This is a specific name for a Gentile who read and understood and believed in but read and understood the Old Testament.

Scriptures, probably the Greek translation of it. What we call this Septuagint. And These would attend worship at the synagogue on the Sabbath day and they kept the seventh day of the week. As as holy, He observes prayer. He's actually doing in some respects better than Peter here. The six in the morning noon hour and then six at night where the three times a day of Jewish private prayer.

The reason Cornelius is praying at three is because three in the afternoon is the time of the evening. Sacrifice Godfarers were not allowed into the part of the temple where the sacrifices were observed. And the Holy Spirit by Luke leaves for us to fill in the blanks for what it was for Rich.

Cornelius was preaching, Did you notice that? He is told and then he repeats later that the messages has prayers have been answered. Therefore go and send for someone who would speak to him words. So we know what he was praying for, because we know what those words are. That would be spoken to him and we know what the Holy Spirit would do in him.

As he heard those words, he was a man who feared God and not only feared God for himself, but with his whole household. He feared God. Here's a spiritual leader in his home That which many of us men continue to plead for God to grow us in. And and when we look back at where we had been and, and we realize how much spiritual leadership of our household, we have squandered, and we thank God that in his economy in our lives.

We waste but he doesn't. Cornelius was a faithful man in that He feared God and he led a devout household in which there were many servants.

And yet, he longed for a participation in the forgiveness, to which those sacrifices pointed, And as prayers were insert and the Lord made Peter to know that it's God-fearers from all the nations whom God has accepted, not because of their preying and fasting and attending synagogue and giving alms Peter didn't suddenly find works salvation in this passage, but because the Lord had made it plain that he is the one who gives the fear of the Lord, He is the one who gives hope and the promised Savior from the Old Testament.

He's the one who arranges our lives so that we'll hear the gospel preached. He's the one who gives the spirit to make hearts come to life and believe in the Lord, Jesus Christ who's offered in the gospel.

It's the Christian difference. And the will say Mosaic Christian difference, don't buy that Judeo-Christian language when it's used in our culture. It's used to speak of Judaism and Christianity. Judaism is not the Old Testament and I know Moses didn't write the Old Testament but think of it some other way.

It's the biblical difference. There's only one true religion, The religion of the God who was actively giving salvation to those who cannot earn it, because he has elected them in. Love that they would be forgiven of sins, through faith, and to, which he calls them by the preaching of the gospel.

And we'll take those things in a little bit of it. Different order. Maybe probably the the forgiveness of sins through faith will have to extend a week. Sometimes I forget when I'm preparing the sermon, if I'm the one leading the service, then we have longer prayers and more explanations but we rejoice in God's providence.

So the first, the three ways in which we've organized, the teaching of the passage, God shows electing love to the people from all the nations. There's a lot of information and we'll probably

open up a bunch of it in the passage leading up through about verse 33. But in verse 34, Peter finally gets it.

He has a now, I know Now. I understand there's been a buildup in the passage All of these things happening in Peter. Meditating upon what is happening and and wondering what is happening. And then Cornelius makes his presentation. And Peter says a hot. I know what this is all about, So when Peter by the Holy Spirit says, aha, I know what this is all about, then preacher and hearer.

We read Act 10 verses, 1 through 33 and we say okay this is what it's all about. God shows. No. Partiality. He's saving from every nation. And so in the first place, we'll see that God shows electing love to people from all nations. And in the second place, we'll see that God calls unto salvation through the preaching of his word, God calls unto salvation through the preaching of his word.

And then in the third place that what that word announces is that he forgives sin through faith in Jesus Christ. The Savior that that is the content of Christian preaching. That is the content of the scriptures. That is the word, the preaching through which God gives faith and forgive sins.

So in the first place, God shows electing love to people from all nations verse 34, when Peter is giving his aha moment. Then Peter opened his mouth and said, which you try not to be humorous in the study or plan to be humorous. But considering how open mouth Peter usually is, it does strike you that his mouth had been shot for a little while and now he opens his mouth and said, it's it's a way of the Holy Spirit.

Giving us a little bit of a drum roll in Revelation, for instance, which is very noisy for an extended period of time, and then they're silence in heaven. And it creates suspense, The spirit creates suspense for here. Then, Peter opened his mouth and said in truth. I perceive that God shows no partiality.

But in every nation whoever fears him and works. Righteousness is accepted by him. It's amazing to realize what this is saying that Peter the Apostle thought up until this point in his ministry and really something that is not going to be solved in the church more broadly, until we get to Acts 15 and that general assembly that they have of the local Presbyterians and the Presbytery that's just been planted in the first missionary journey.

And yes, preparing you to see that the Lord Jesus starts Presbyterianism and synods and councils but they don't they don't really resolve until Acts 15. Whether you have to become a Jew in order to become a Christian, That was Cornelius's big problem. If he went up to Jerusalem and and wanted to enter, He had not been accepted as a Jew, he would go to synagogue at Sabbath But because he is not been accepted as a Jew when the Jews sat down to eat.

He and the Gentiles who went who went with him, that's what the word devout means when it talks about the soldier, it means as a soldier who is not only in his household, but who attended synagogue with him, They wouldn't get to eat with the Jews. The Jews didn't eat with Gentiles.

There's actually very weird When Peter showed up and rather than provisions that came from Simon the Tanner's house. He accepted the hospitality from Cornelius's house and he has to explain to them. Yeah. Why it is that? This Jew is so weird who enters the house and eats with them.

The Lord preparing Peter even by the, the vision and so forth. It's amazing to think that up until Acts 10 verse 34. When Peter remembered Jesus saying Judea and Samaria into the ends of the earth. He thought, Jesus meant Jews who had been dispersed to the ends of the earth and then astonishing, Isn't it amazing?

What we can miss in the Word of God. When we are prejudiced as Peter was, but God had worked in Cornelius. As we said already, Cornelius had great regard for the sacrifices that were taking place, and we don't fault Peter, or we shouldn't fault Peter. There's that juxtaposition of the two.

So that we may see, Cornelius, praying at three. And, and we know why Peter, of course, knew that the ones for all sacrifice of Christ, had had been offered Cornelius, was was praying that he would be saved and the angel comes. And he says, Your prayers and your arms have been remembered by God.

Now what does that mean? Does that mean he prayed? So well, that God said, oh look how well Cornelius. Praise. I think we'll send him the gospel and save him. Does that mean he gave enough money and what is enough money? And that's something, the papists can give you a calculation on Once.

Had a deer man in our church in Iowa, whose parents were Roman Catholic. He attended his dad's funeral at the end of the funeral. He was given by the priest, a an invoice. How many masses it would take to get his dad out of purgatory. How long each mass would take.

If if done whatever rate, how much per hour, it would cost. And at the bottom, there was a bottom dollar. How much you can give to get out of purgatory? Well, it's not how much Cornelius had given it was from where the giving had come. The praying had come from the love of God, that was bringing to him to himself in Jesus Christ.

The giving had come from the love of God that God had given to Cornelius for the sake of Jesus Christ to whom, he would bring him in faith.

Fearing God and working righteousness. Comes from God's acceptance. You see how important it is to interpret Scripture with Scripture, you know. Don't you what a papist does with Acts 10:35 in every nation, whoever fears him and works righteousness as accepted by him. But we don't overrule, the plain teaching of Scripture with Scripture rather, we assume that if we understand verse 35, in a way that denies justification by faith alone.

Then we're not understanding verse 35. And in a passage, the whole of which is about how God is the one who chooses whom to send, where, and God is the one who gives faith by the preaching of the Word, because God is the one who gave atonement by the sacrifice of His Son.

Even in the local context, we would be kept from reading verse 35 that way. God shows electing love to people from all nations. The Word was sent to Israel. Peter preaches that and what we are going to probably hear next week, in verse 36, the word, which God sent to the children of Israel.

And Cornelius knows that There's a reason why instead of attending the idle temples that were so popular in the Roman world, especially as the Centurion of the Italian cohort. And we know from external history, it's actually the second Italian cohort of which this particular Cornelius was, was the Centurion and so forth.

But he had extra ties to Rome and yet he didn't participate in all those other religions. Why? Because the one true God had given to this little stubborn irritating, people group in Palestine.

The living God had given them his word and proclaimed, his forgiveness of sins. And so Cornelius was devoted to the God of this Bible. And Peter says the word which God sent to the children of Israel preaching, peace through Jesus Christ. He is Lord of all those words that can get a centurion in trouble because there's a Roman, you have to be able to say, Kaiser curios, Caesar is Lord, But Jesus is Lord of all, all authority in heaven and on earth had been given to him.

And Peter is just now realized that when Jesus says go into all the nations making disciples baptizing and teaching. Jesus doesn't just mean the Jews who are in all the nations. He means people from all of those nations That word, you know, and so forth. The word and the Christ were sent to Israel, but Jesus is Lord of all.

If you are right with God, if you are forgiven with your sins, it is because you believe a Jewish Bible or Hebrew Bible to be more specific, a little bit of Aramaic in there too. It is because you believe a word that was sent at first to Israel. If you are right with God, if you are forgiven with your sins, If when the wicked are cast into hell, you are not going to be.

It is because you trust in an Israelite Messiah, descended from Abraham, through Judah from the house of David according to the flesh and yet it was love for those whom. He would say, from all the nations in, which he had set apart, Israel, in which he had called Abraham in which he had prophesied.

That Shiloh would come in Judah's family. And that the scepter wouldn't depart from his house, It was out of love for all whom. He would say, from all of the nations that God did everything that he did throughout the Scripture So we don't read the Old Testament as a Jewish book, We read it as a divine book of salvation for all the nations about what God did through the Jewish, people whom he set apart for that purpose.

God shows electing love to people from all the nations. And we see that also in, who's the one who chooses, how all of this finds falls out, Men are minding their own business, which each of us our household or our ministry. Cornelius has a lot to attend to and he is and he's also attending to his own spiritual life, fasting and praying until the ninth hour, Apparently, a little more self-discipline than Peter.

Peter was fasting too but he could only make it to the sixth hour and he was starving. So these prepare for me some food, but Centurion Cornelius, you know, three, three more hours, men minding their own business. It's In God's providence. We are just learning yesterday. Weren't. We about particular callings and the wonderful particular calling that even a wife and a mother has and the wonderful particular calling that a child has to obey his parents.

That that being called, by God to serve, God isn't something that you wait for later and that some people's particular callings include public calling. But public is, you know, outside of the house is not greater than inside of the house because really none of us are great in our particular callings.

It's the work that Christ does through all and yeah we've been having that and in first Kings Justin the Reading we just had now Elijah discouraged by the fact that despite what happened on Carmel and despite the running before the chariot in front of Ahab, God hadn't converted. Ah, and God hadn't converted Jezebel.

And as far as he knew, God wasn't converting. Anyone Elijah felt that his particular calling was kind of fruitless, is it? All right. Lord kill me and God says, well, you're not done with your particular calling. Yet, I'll tell you, when I kill you. At least, have to anoint three more guys, and what you are doing.

Elijah isn't the sum of what I am doing. I didn't need you to keep 7,000 people from opening their mouth to confess bail or bowing their need to Him. God can do that all by himself. That's what we have Cornelius. My knees and business and Caesarea and Peter minding his own business and Joppa and neither of them have any clue what's about to happen over the next three days in change Four days in first century reckoning?

Because a part of a day was counted as a day if you're like doing the math on the passage, don't don't go all liberal progressive and say hot, they said four but it's actually three. That's you have to use language the way it's used But Peter and Cornelius don't have they don't have a clue.

What's gonna happen? You think angels ordinarily showed up? When Cornelius is praying at three in the afternoon, But the Lord, who knows what's going to happen? And it's going to save Cornelius. He sends the angel to Cornelius. You think Peter was planning to go to Caesarea and to preach to Gentiles, It took three appearances of the sheet and and we'll get to that in a moment.

Well after you know, after after all that, it took to get Peter there. One of the main points of the chapter is that Peter didn't plan this evangelism and Caesarea who planned it? Well, I think the children will, you know, ask a rhetorical question that, I don't know about pastor God planned it.

Of course, Master aren't you? Listening. Don't, you know who plans everything. So I ask you don't, you know who plans, everything. Well, you're fulfilling your particular calling, which seems rather unimpressive and God forbid that you think your particular calling scenes impressive. That's even worse because it's what Christ is doing in all things to save.

All his people that is designed to impress us. What Cornelius was doing. He was praying for this salvation but he didn't know how to get it. Didn't know where to look for it. If he don't known, he would have sent for Peter weeks ago, He would have sent for an apostle.

As soon as the day of Pentecost had happened Peter ministering the word and praying. That's why there are deacons so that he so that he can do that. And he's he's up there praying and someone's preparing food for him. He certainly wasn't looking to take the gospel to Caesarea, but what was Jesus doing His speaking by angels?

He was giving Peter a vision on the Housetop. He was you know another one of these three times for Peter, right, denying Christ, three times restored, three times on the beach, the sheet comes down. When he says rise Peter kill and eat Peter understands, there are actually clean animals on the sheet, right?

Because it's it's all sorts of beasts and creeping things and and and birds. All of The creatures from the creation except for the ones from the sea are there. It's kind of like a little Noah's Ark in a blanket And Peter could have found something appropriate but he understands that the the command means kill indiscriminately kill and eat indiscriminately And he actually answers the way Ezekiel does.

You remember when Ezekiel was told in order to show to be a living display of how Israel had committed idolatry against God. You Ezekiel was told that he had to cook his food over human dung. But human dung is unclean and Ezekiel complains. He says, I've never defiled myself.

Oh, Lord. And God says, okay you can use cowdung. Well, Peter probably thought he was like being super biblical. Maybe this was a test. No Lord. I've never eaten anything unclean and yet the Lord does it three times and then he withdraws the vision.

So Christ is overcoming Cornelius's, fear and Cornelius's ignorance about how salvation comes. He's overcoming Peter's hard-headedness and his theological immaturity. Peter still growing into understanding, what Jesus has commanded them. For instance, at the at the great commission, And Christ was also gathering. Dozens of others. There were relatives of Cornelius and friends of Cornelius, not just now servants from his household who always had to show up for family worship, It's one of the benefits of having a Christian master.

If he says you show up for family worship, you have to show up for family worship But Cornelius brought not just his household but relatives and friends, They're all sorts of people in that room who had just been minding their own business going through their daily life and they didn't know that suddenly they would be summoned to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Proclaims and that the Holy Spirit would come and would give them faith in the Christ, whom they heard preached and that their lives would be completely different forever because they would be forgiven of their sins. And they would be united to Jesus through faith and they would be less and less their earthly fleshly self that they had gotten from the first Adam and more and more their new self.

According to the last Adam Christ and the heavenlies and their new life would be hidden in Christ with God. They had no clue that. That was about to happen to them.

Now we have gathered and you know, we have exercised, some will but we must remember that. Whenever We are gathered to preach the gospel and hear it, preached That is Christ who has ruled and overruled to do that, and that we can look to him and his Spirit to give life to overcome unbelief and resistance.

So, God shows electing love to people from all the nations. I thought we would get through two points. Well, We'll stop there. Well just call to your attention that of all the extraordinary things that we have in this passage right? An angel showing up during prayer time. And a voice from heaven and a sheet from heaven.

And then the Holy Spirit, you know, telling you giving him knowledge about how many people would be at the door. And telling Peter, you know, go without hesitation and and so forth Of all of the amazing extraordinary things that happen. The thing that God chooses by which to save is the preaching of his word will return to that point in more fullness, next week, let's pray.

Our gracious. God how we thank you for giving us in some measure to fear you and some measure to love you and some measure to love your people to be generous with them just because they're yours Lord. You know how much we mourn over how small our love for you is, and our love for your people.

Is, but let us not be forgetful. Lord, that it is acceptance with you through. Jesus. That is the reason that we have any love at all, that your spirit has given it because your everlasting love has desired it. And Jesus has earned it and your spirit is the one who applies it to us.

And so we thank you for what you did in Cornelius's life. In that moment. We thank you for the ministry that you gave Peter in that moment, we ask you. Oh God to give us this confidence and hope that Christ is really, and truly working. All things together for the good of those whom you bring to love you because you call them according to your purpose.

Because that calling comes from your foreknowing and your predestining. And so, Lord, give us the humility to operate. Each of us in the particular things you have called us to. But give us the worship and thanksgiving that responds to remembering what you are doing. Thank you for this passage that sets before us how your sovereign rule over all things as exercising.

Sovereign grace according to electing love, we praise you. For this truth in Jesus name. Amen.