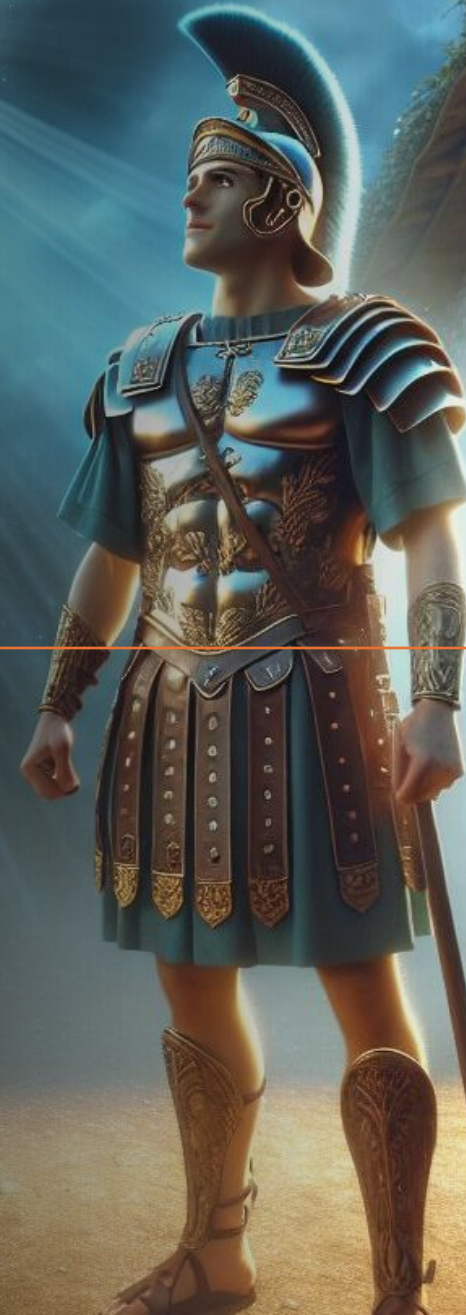


The CHURCH Series

Part 9 – Same Difference



Introduction..

- We want to now continue exactly where we left off last time.
- This is the second part of chapter 10 which has so many lessons.
- In the last session, we looked at the Centurion Cornelius and how his attitude and generosity was applauded by Heaven.
- We also saw how God was dealing with Peter and his deep-seated bias towards the Gentiles



Rise and Eat!

- ⁹The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about ^{le}the sixth hour.
- ¹⁰Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance
- ¹¹and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth.
- ¹²In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. ¹³And a voice came to him, “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.”



What God has Cleansed..

- *15 And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common." 16 This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.*
- *17 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.*
- *18 And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there.*
- *19 While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you. 20 Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them." Acts 10:15-20*



The Religious Spirit

- A **religious spirit** refers to an attitude or mindset that is focused more on outward religious practices, rules, or traditions than on a genuine relationship with God or spiritual authenticity.
- This concept is often discussed in Christian circles to describe a person or community that emphasizes legalism, rigid adherence to doctrine, or ritual, sometimes at the expense of love, compassion, and true faith



Not So, LORD...!

- Notice how the back-and-forth conversation between Peter and God went.
- The all wise, eternal God, Creator of all things! Says something to the 'religious mind'
- The religious spirit challenges and opposes God!
- Not so LORD!
- This mindset rejects even GOD's appeal.
- It is a very rigid mindset!



Religious Characteristics

- **Legalism:** A focus on following religious laws and rules to the letter, often believing that salvation or favor with God is earned by works.
- **Judgmentalism:** A tendency to judge others based on outward behaviours, appearances, or perceived lack of religious observance.
- **Hypocrisy:** Prioritizing appearances or religious status while neglecting internal character and moral consistency
- **Pride and Self-Righteousness:** Feeling spiritually superior to others because of religious achievements or knowledge, rather than humility before God.
- **Lack of Love:** Emphasizing doctrine, rituals, or traditions to the detriment of compassion, grace, and kindness, which are core to true spirituality.



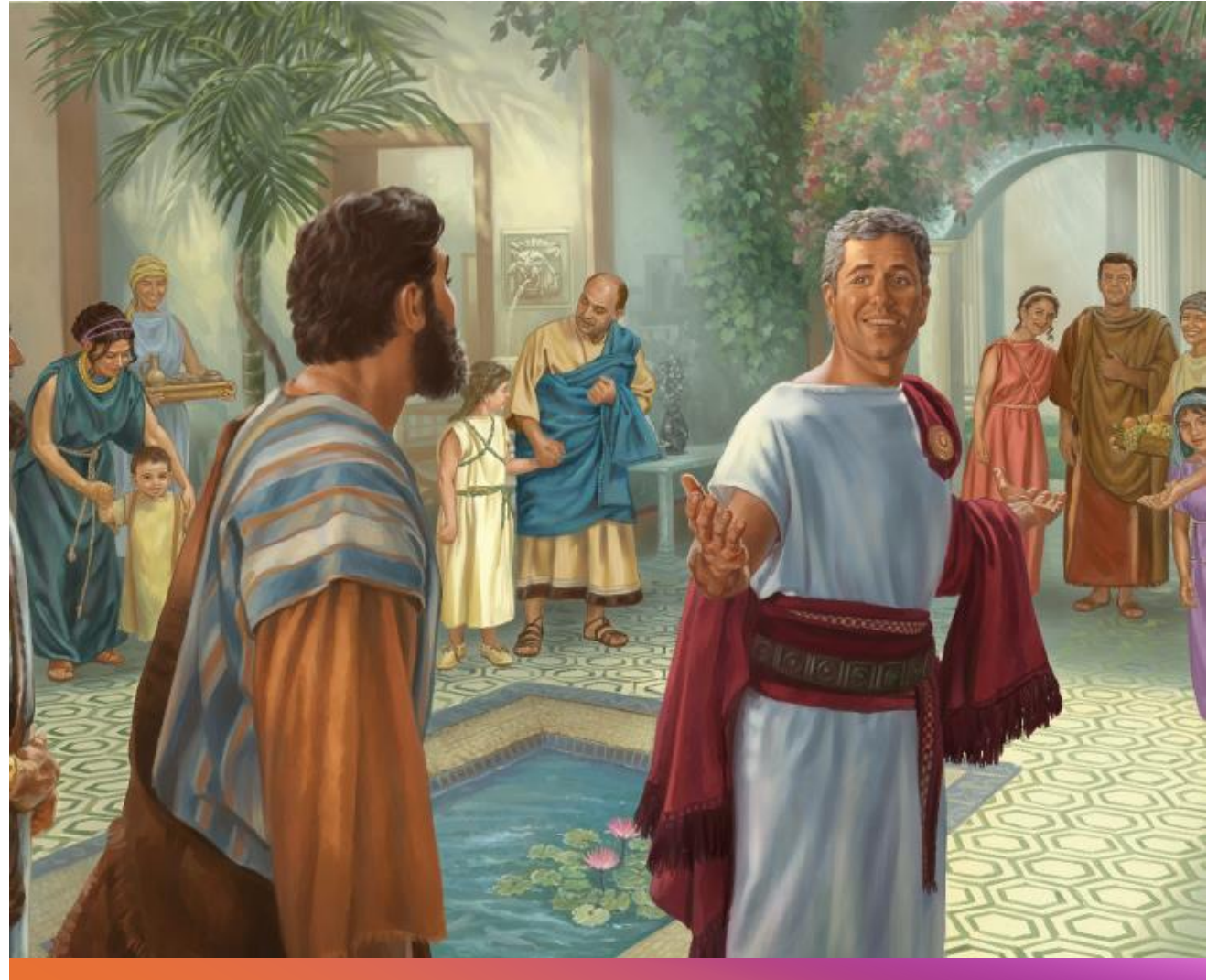
Far from....

- **Isaiah 29:13:**
"These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."
- This verse captures the essence of a religious spirit,
- where external piety is disconnected from a heartfelt relationship with God.



Doubting nothing..

- *19 While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are seeking you.*
- *20 Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them.”*
- *Only the STRONG WORD of the Lord can break through a religious mindset.*
- *It was the combination of the TRANCE and the VOICE of the Holy Spirit that even made Peter follow these Gentile men that had been sent by an Angel!*





My Papa!!

- On the next day Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him.
- ²⁴ And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his relatives and close friends.
- ²⁵ As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped *him*.
- ²⁶ But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I myself am also a man.



My Father!!

- There is a very strong cultural spirit that works with the Religious spirit to hold men captive.
- This cultural spirit many times negates the WORD of God.
- *¹³ making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.”*
Mark 7:13
- There are Christians in the global south (Asia, Africa, Americas) who venerate their Elders above Christ!

My FATHER in the Lord!

- Traditions are powerful things!
- Cornelius was meeting Peter for the first time.
- His natural instincts was to bow down to him because he represented God.
- The lowering of one's body, dignity or person to respect another person is learnt culturally.
- Many times these respectful gestures are then extended to manipulate or control another human being.
- Peter IMMEDIATELY rejects the gesture by Spirit because it was MORE THAN respect:
- ...It was worship!!
- Do NOT worship another person In the guise of respecting them!
- Do NOT receive respect that has crossed over into Worship!!



Your Alms...

- *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."*
- Acts 10:28-33

Unlawful..But

- *“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...*
- There are things in our minds that still register as ‘unlawful’ even though God says its OKAY!
- Its interesting that Peter still asks the Man of the House why he sent for him, even though he knew.
- This is a respectful gesture to allow the host to be the ‘chair’ of the conversation.
- Learn to allow the other person ‘present’ their thoughts or words. This is a show of respect for the other person.



Opened his mouth...

- *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.*
- Acts 10:34-38





Opened...

- Peter opened his mouth...
- This phrase has depth of meaning:
- *Psalm 81:10 ...open your mouth and I will fill it*
- *Mark 13:11 ...don't worry what to say, just say what is given you at the time; because it is not you speaking but the Holy Spirit.*
- The anointed Minister must fill up themselves with study, meditation and prayer of the word.
- At the time of speech or ministrations, they are to open their mouth and learn to allow the Holy Spirit release the words.

Anointed!

- Jesus is our model of being anointed by God
- The Holy Spirit is seen
- Power is demonstrated
- Movement is from God; went about....
- Doing Good – people are blessed by the anointed of God
- Healing is a hall mark of the anointing
- Oppression is from the devil and the anointed breaks its hold
- God's presence is with the Lord's anointed



Fell...

- 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.



Holy Spirit Fell...

- The unique situation here was that God bypassed laying on of hands.
- In Samaria, the Word was preached first and then the Spirit second.
- Here the Holy Spirit came with the Word of God!
- The tongues were an accompanying sign pointing back to the Day of Pentecost
- God was saying “I am repeating Pentecost with the Gentiles!”



Astonished!

- Peter came with a company of Jewish believers.
- They were witnesses to the miracle that took place.
- The fact that they were astonished and surprised shows that they were sceptical up until that point.
- God was teaching everyone a lesson of acceptance and generosity of spirit.
- Do not hold bias against anyone!
- God is after every human being.
- Even those we are sceptical about



New Beginnings...

- God used Peter for a good reason.
- He was recognised as the leader of the Apostles.
- God had used him to perform some notable miracles to authenticate his ministry before this Cornelius encounter.
- God was setting the stage for Paul's ministry to the Gentiles
- This was the beginning of a whole new chapter
- To make the Jewish church accept it was God, the Lord used someone who was verified and authorised
- There could be no denial of the encounter with the Gentiles; it was Peter! And there were witnesses!!



Gentiles...

- ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be [c]witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:8
- With this Cornelius miracle, the Word’s of Jesus are fulfilled.
- The Gospel was now set for a global move as the Apostles had now touched Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria....AND THE NATIONS! (beginning with Cornelius)
- God has a very clear strategy if we are open to following Him and how He wants to do things.



Memory Verse

- *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*
Acts 10:38

