

## Sermon Transcript from 24<sup>th</sup> August 2025 §– Spirit Led Christians

References: Job 33:14-15, Numbers 12:6 & Acts 10

Speaker: Tony Randall

### Sermon Summary

This talk delves into the **work of the Holy Spirit** in the early Christian church, specifically focusing on the pivotal moment when the **Gospel was extended to non-Jewish people**. The speaker recounts the biblical narrative from Acts chapter 10, highlighting the **divine intervention through visions** experienced by both Cornelius, a Roman centurion, and Peter, a leading apostle. These visions, alongside Peter's subsequent journey and sermon, illustrate how God **broke down cultural and religious barriers** to offer **full and free salvation to all** through Jesus Christ. The discussion culminates in the powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius's household, signifying the birth of the worldwide church and underscoring the ongoing need for believers to **yield to the Holy Spirit's guidance** in their lives today.

### Link to the Start of the Sermon (on YouTube)

<https://youtu.be/Tx3y3K-O9hA?t=2464>

### Sermon Transcript

Well, I wasn't here yesterday afternoon, but I understand you had a thoroughly good time.

Like Paul, I also went to a football match and it was at the same time. Some of you know I have a job with a football club. So, it's kind of a responsibility and it was rather more poignant because last Saturday our match day secretary died quite suddenly. That was a shock to all of us when we learned it later that evening. And so yesterday was a time when before the match we remembered Mark, had a moment of not silence but clapping to remember him and most of his family were there at the match.

Let me bore you for a moment about uh two incidents that happen toward the end of the game because they're quite interesting. We don't have VAR at Arbor Park so the decision of the assistant referee as to whether someone is offside or not is absolutely down to him or her.

We were playing the league leaders who hadn't let a goal in. We ourselves hadn't scored a goal in the previous three matches. We were bottom of the league [and] somehow we sneaked a goal in the first few minutes and held on to that till very near the end when the opponents' feet were pressing hard and the ball was played forward and our star player collected the ball started to run and the assistant referee put his flag up for offside.

I thought he was right, but my grandson sent me a picture and he was wrong but never mind because a few minutes later and we're into added time and are so desperate to try and get something out of the game that the goalkeeper comes up to join the attack. Defenders clear the ball, put it forward and the same player this side stays five yards inside our half to stay on side and then runs collects the ball and from 40 yards has an open goal to hit the ball into.

So, we scored two goals now and have won a match. So, it was quite interesting and exciting.

People can get things wrong and not know it. And I suspect that assistant if he sees that picture from the video will be slightly embarrassed today.

But we're turning our attention for the last time to the work of the Holy spirit in the new church.

It's well over two months since on Pentecost Sunday, Jim Mitchell launched us into our looking at how the Holy Spirit works in the church. We've looked at the experiences of individuals of groups as he the Holy Spirit has taken control of situations and we together sit considered situations in the early chapters of the book of Acts. And in the last two weeks, we've given our attention to both the fruit of the spirit and the gifts of the spirit based on Paul's writing to churches at Galatia, Corinth, and Rome.

So, what do we know now for certain?

Well, Grandma said it there *[referencing an earlier sketch]* for one of them that she said that Jesus was living in her by the power of the Holy Spirit and that we should absolutely know if we're Christians.

That the Holy Spirit is God and as believers in Jesus is with us always. We should be as aware of him as we are of others around us. our friends and our family. If and when we responded to the call of the gospel to accept Jesus as saviour and lord when we put our trust in him, it was the Holy Spirit working then in us to bring us salvation and then to continue in us to bring us deeper into our faith.

If we serve the Lord, if we witness to others, that was the Holy Spirit working in us. And we each of us should have received the fruit of the spirit. They should be growing in us. And at least one of those gifts that we looked at last week should be de developing within us. Not for our benefit, but for the benefit of the church, the local community, and the service of God. You say *[yes]* to that. I hope we can.

So, is there anything more to learn?

Well, this morning, we're going to take a look at how the gospel became available to people who weren't Jews. We're going to pick up on the opening chapter in Acts chapter 10 to do that.

*[a video dramatization of the reading of Act 10 is played]*

.... and a vision repeated three times to a new Christian leader.

It's a new beginning, an incredible story. God begins a new thing by sending an angel to meet Cornelius. He's a good guy. Basanta and the angel tells him to send some of his servants including a probably junior officer to Joppa.

Now Joppa is a modern-day Jaffa part of Tel Aviv. Jaffa is the place where oranges come from. They smell rather sweet. It was the tanner's house that they went to. If you know anything about tanning, particularly in previous times, it would be anything but pleasant smelling.

But that's where they went. 40 miles down the Mediterranean coast to Joppa to find Peter who was staying with another Simon. So, they go and as they're arriving nearly two days later, Peter too is having that vision in which an angel speaks to him.

The message is a strange one and difficult for Peter to grasp. He needs to see and hear it three times. While Peter is trying to grasp the meaning of this vision, Cornelius's representatives arrive at the door and the angel tells Peter to go with them.

Just an observation, the Holy Spirit can sometimes be very patient with us and understand we're pretty thick headed and we need telling something more than once. Don't worry because that was the way it was with Peter, one of the earlier leaders.

It's late in the day and Simon Peter assumes that the other Simon the Tanner will be quite okay if the guys stay. So, he offers them hospitality. They stay the night and then set off back. It's a challenging life working for a Roman officer. 80 miles in that three or four days.

Then they arrive the next day and Cornelius has invited his family and friends around to come and see what's going to happen. Cornelius started to treat Jesus, Simon Peter as though he was a god. Not unusual in those places at that time. A whole load of people were taken for gods.

But Peter puts him right and makes him stand up. And then he confesses that he as a Jew doesn't quite understand why he should be there. He really ought to be dealing with Gentiles. But God has told him that things have changed.

And he asks Cornelius what he wants. And Cornelius explains about his vision and the action he took in sending for Peter. Peter responds clearly speaking to everyone present by telling the simple straightforward story of Jesus and what he did.

Let's pick up on three of those verses in particular that Luke, the writer of Acts, tells us in verse 36. We read and I'm still leaving my reading Jim's New Living Testimony translation. "The message of good news for the people of Israel was that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ who is Lord of all."

Peter was speaking of Jesus as coming to redeem Jewish people. Bring peace with God and that Jesus is indeed Lord of all. That was the present situation right up until the now of this story. The gospel was about to be brought to other people, to Gentiles, to you and me. The Jews who put their trust in Jesus would have found peace with God and acknowledged that Jesus is Lord.

Then in verse 39, Peter says that we are apostles and witnesses of all that Jesus did. He wasn't in Caesaria to speak of something he'd heard about or received second hand. He was a witness giving a true testimony of what they had seen Jesus do and what had happened to him. And just as he was a witness of those acts, the life of Jesus, the death on the cross, the resurrection, Jesus talking to them again, his ascension into heaven.

So, we are expected that when we tell other people of Jesus that it's not second hand, it's our experience of his love in our lives, of his salvation that's changed us and brought us into new life.

And then thirdly in verse 43, we read that Jesus is the one that all the prophets of the Old Testament had testified about saying that everyone who believes in him will have their sins forgiven in his name in the name of Jesus.

So, as well as Peter and the other apostles there is a testimony of people like Isaiah who had spoken and written about Jesus and what he would do. Those people in Caesaria could confidently put their trust in Jesus, the risen saviour, and so can you. And so can I.

Then as Peter comes to the end of this message, this sermon, he concludes saying, "Everyone who believes in Jesus will have their sins forgiven in his name. And the Holy Spirit acts falling upon all who were listening to the astonishment of Peter's companions. And so Peter says, "Shall we baptize them?" No one was left out. All who had heard the good news, the simple story of what Jesus had done, must have responded to it in their hearts. And the Holy Spirit fell on them."

Now that was a charismatic situation as you would have seen in the video or as the video writers thought it. It may have been, it may not have been. We need to be responsive to the Holy Spirit.

We may be Christians. We may have been Christians a long, long time. But we need both individually and as a fellowship to allow the Holy Spirit to work his way in us.

Just [to] sum up a few points from the story.

Who God chooses? Well, Peter's an obvious choice. Or is he? He was pretty prejudiced about what might be happening, but his prejudice was overcome. I think Peter's the disciple that we know most about the sort of person he was pretty quick to respond to things sometimes in the wrong way, sometimes right.

But Jesus, God, the Holy Spirit, chose him to be this special messenger to bring the first non-Jewish people into faith in Jesus. And of course, he continued to be the leading apostle to the Jewish people.

But Cornelius, pretty odd choice. He's a Roman soldier living in what I call Cesaria, but Cesaria was the way our video showed it. No obvious reason why he was chosen. He was a pretty good guy. It's true. But our goodness doesn't matter when it comes to the gospel. We can all be brought to Jesus. We can all claim his salvation if we put our trust in him. It's not by our merits at all.

But for whatever reason, God chose this man, this Roman soldier to be the first one together with his family to be called. The good news comes with God's promise for full and free salvation, not based on merits or anything special. Nothing to do with Cornelius's standing. but entirely the work of God's grace.

A barrier had been broken and you and I, if we're trusting in Jesus, are the beneficiaries of that broken barrier.

We have become followers of Jesus, those who have new life in him just as Cornelius, his household and friends did. The experiences, there were visions, lots of miles travelled on dusty roads. There was generous hospitality and a very serious though simple explanation in Peter's gospel message. Many were included and the Holy Spirit descended upon all of them.

I wonder what it would be like if we had something like that happen here in Langley Free Church this morning.

So what's our experience of God's grace and love?

The plan just as in the timing of Jesus's coming into the world to fulfil God's promise as he died to procure our salvation. So, his timing is right to open up the way for non-Jews to be brought into the family of God.

He chooses a place, an unlikely one. You would never have thought of Joppa and Cesaria as such places. And as we have seen, no one would have predicted a Roman soldier and their friends and family and carrying it out in included perfect timing.

Peter's having his vision just as the travellers arrive. The Holy Spirit had earlier shown the vision through the angel to Cornelius and God carried it out and the Holy Spirit completed the work.

We sometimes have to act to do the right thing for God to respond and Peter did that. And so ultimately did that household in Cesaria and the outcome of course was that new lives based on Jesus's sacrifice but enacted by the Holy Spirit began in those people.

The start of the worldwide church began in a Roman soldiers' house in Cesaria and it extended as the Holy Spirit used Peter and others to carry that message particularly through Saul or Paul of Tarsus as he carried that message of hope to the world.

So as we conclude this series in studying on the Holy Spirit and the new church, let's dedicate ourselves a fresh, not just to having Jesus living in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, but by allowing God the Holy Spirit to be our guide, to be our leader, to have complete control of each of our lives and of us as a body of Christ here in this place.

Just allow a few moments for us each to individually reflect and respond on that. Then I'm going to use an old prayer from a different tradition than ours to conclude this series.

*[After a quiet pause, Tony closes his message with this prayer]*

So shall we pray over Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of all your faithful servants. Kindle in us the fire of your love. Send forth your spirit and they shall be created, and you will renew the face of the earth. By the light of the Holy Spirit, you have taught the hearts of the faithful in the same spirit. Help us to relish what is right and always rejoice in your consolation.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.