

Prayer List

Gene
Veda
Wallace
Sheila
Judy
Rose

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 10:00 a.m.
Assembly 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Elders:

Brad Behrens - bradbehrens@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Michael Odom - MichaelOdom@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Ernie Sprinkel - preacher@pinolechurchofchrist.com

This Week's Question:

Which prophet said, "All we like sheep have gone astray"?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Benaiah - 2 Samuel 23:20

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Pinole Tidings

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Cornelius

Jerry King

The story of the conversion of Cornelius and his household is found in Acts 10:1–11:18.

Caesarea was the headquarters for the Roman government in Palestine. Stationed in Caesarea was a centurion (a leader of one hundred soldiers) named Cornelius. Centurions were considered to be the backbone of the Roman army, men chosen for their steady leadership and loyalty to their post even to the point of death. The centurion Cornelius was a special kind of man—devout, God fearing, generous and prayerful (Acts 10:2).

But Cornelius was a sinner (Acts 11:14), and he was Gentile—"Uncircumcision ... separate from Christ, excluded from the common-wealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:11–12). Although Jesus had commanded it (Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:15) and Peter had foretold it (Acts 2:39), salvation through Christ had evidently not yet been preached to the Gentiles.

But one afternoon an angel appeared to Cornelius with wonderful news: “Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God” (Acts 10:4). “Send to Joppa, and have Simon, who is also called Peter, brought here; and he shall speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household” (Acts 11:13–14). God had already prepared Peter for the task that lay ahead, through a vision helping him understand that he should not call any man unholy or unclean (Acts 10:9–16, 28). On the following day Peter accompanied Cornelius’ messengers to Caesarea.

“I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him,” Peter declared as he began his sermon to Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:34–35). Peter preached to them about Jesus Christ—Lord of all, anointed by God with the Holy Spirit and power, a doer of good, an undoer of Satan’s evil, put to death on a cross, raised by God on the third day, appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead (Acts 10:36–42).

As Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon those who were listening to him and they began speaking in tongues (foreign languages) and exalting God (Acts 10:44, 46). Peter’s Jewish companions were amazed, seeing that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles. But Peter knew that this could mean only one thing: “Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?” (Acts 10:47). Peter ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Paul would later note to the Gentile Christians in Ephesus, “But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For

He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall” (Ephesians 2:13–14). With the conversion of Cornelius, the wall between Jew and Gentile came tumbling down. The rest is glorious history.

There are many great lessons from the story of Cornelius’ conversion, but let me suggest just three:

First, there is a difference between being good and being saved. It sounds like Acts 10:2 is describing a Christian, does it not? But it is describing a non-Christian who needed to be saved by Jesus Christ. God expects the saved to be devout, God fearing, generous and prayerful. He expects the unsaved to believe in Jesus Christ, repent of their sins and be baptized to have their sins forgiven (Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38). Until a person has done that, no matter what else he has done, he is lost.

Second, there is no difference between being a good lost man and a bad lost man. Both are lost and will spend eternity in hell if they do not do something about it. The Bible describes several kinds of folks who will spend eternity in hell. Revelation 21:8 describes some pretty rough customers—morally bankrupt. Matthew 25:41–46 describes some who will be in hell because they neglected to do good. And then Matthew 7:21–23 tells of some who did good things and yet will be in hell. Salvation is the result of God’s mercy and our faith, not our merit.

Third, there is no race or nationality difference in lost and saved men. One person’s soul is just as precious to God as any other person’s. God is not interested in the color of a man’s skin or the nation of a man’s birth, but He is vitally interested in the faith in a man’s heart. May we ever imitate His love for every soul!