

Discerning God's Call

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, "Cornelius." And he stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea." When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him, and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. And there came a voice to him: "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." And the voice came to him again a second time, "What God has made clean, do not call common." This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them." And Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming?" And they said, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say." So he invited them in to be his guests.

Sermon Outline:

- I. We Must Tune Our Senses to Understand by the Means of Grace (Acts 10:1-4, 9)
 - A. Word: When we read, meditate on, and apply Scripture, we put ourselves in a place to hear and respond to God's call.
 - B. Prayer: When we pray consistently, regularly, and listen to God, we put ourselves in a place to hear and respond to God's call.
 - C. Ministry/Obedience: When we obey God, we join Him in the work He is already doing and so draw near to Him
- II. We Must Humble Our Wills to Obey by Trusting Him (Acts 10:5-23)
 - A. Incomplete Details
 - B. Fear

Discussion Questions

1. Do you make the word a priority in your life?
2. Do you find yourself only reading God's word without meditating or applying? If so, how can you put yourself in a place to consistently mediate on and apply the word?

3. Do you regularly make time in your schedule for prayer? We are often task-oriented and because prayer doesn't feel productive, we are not consistent. What are some practical steps you can take to be more consistent in prayer?
4. How does weekly worship enable you access to the means of grace?
5. In what specific ways do you feel the Spirit convicting you to be more obedient so that you might draw into closer communion with Christ?
6. What fears tend to make you hesitant to obey God's commands?
7. What are the purposes of God's commands?

Going Deeper

1. When we fail to utilize the means of grace, God convicts us and draws us back to Himself because He loves us and wants life to go well with us. Do you often feel weighed down as by a burden by the means of grace because you feel guilt when you are not consistent? How does the fact that they are God's way of causing life to go well with you rather than His means of judging you change that?
2. Are you willing to become uncomfortable if it means the difference between obeying and disobeying God? How did Christ exemplify this for us?