

Dear Heavenly Father,

### *Praise*

When the circumcision party heard Peter's account of the conversion of Cornelius and his household, they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life" (Acts 11:18). I praise you today as the God who makes no distinction between Jew and Gentile, but welcomes all who believe in your Son, Jesus Christ. You have given the gift of the Spirit to me, just as you did to Peter and the apostles. Hallelujah for the cleansing blood!

### *Today in Your Word*

Today you told me about a watershed moment in the history of the early church: the conversion of Cornelius. Prior to this event, there had been no organized effort to take the gospel to the Gentiles, for the Jews still regarded them as unclean (cf. Acts 11:19). After the vision, Peter realized that he should not "call any person common or unclean," and he went to Cornelius' house to share the good news of Jesus Christ. Cornelius' conversion showed the Jews that the Gentiles could be saved apart from circumcision and that "God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Act 10:34b–35). The Gentiles were saved the same way the Jews were saved—by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 15:9). The gift of the Holy Spirit had been given to "uncircumcised men," and Peter correctly concluded that since God had accepted the Gentiles, the church must accept them too (Acts 11:17). Cornelius' conversion teaches me several lessons: (1) I must be truly born again, for goodness and religiosity alone will not save me. Paul was one of the most devout, religious men of his day, but he was not saved until he believed in Jesus. (2) I must draw near to you, for when I do, you will draw near to me. Cornelius sought you with all his heart, and you rewarded his sincerity by sending him the special revelation he needed to have faith in Christ (Heb 11:6). (3) I must preach Jesus, for there is salvation in no one else (Acts 4:12). The NT is clear that faith *in Christ* is necessary for salvation, and I must be diligent to make the person and work of Jesus the cornerstone of my witness for him. (4) I must never allow social customs or ethnic differences to keep me from reaching out to those in need. Peter regarded the Gentiles as unclean, and it is unlikely that he would have gone to see Cornelius apart from the vision. I need to examine my heart for any signs of prejudice or pride. (5) I must not put my trust in anything other than Christ to be saved, for if any work (e.g., circumcision) is necessary for salvation, then Jesus' sacrifice is not sufficient (Gal 2:17). I am justified by faith alone in Christ alone, and this vital truth would be the battleground of the next great crisis for the church.

### *Reflection*

Herod was struck down because he took the glory that rightly belongs to you for himself. Now before I dismiss him as an arrogant, wicked sinner who welcomed the flattery of the crowd, I need to remind myself that the same spirit of pride can creep into my heart as well. Self, be warned!

### *Request*

Father, help me overcome any barrier—language, culture, race, status, education, or wealth—that might keep me from sharing the gospel. Light a fire in my heart for the salvation of the world!

### *Thanksgiving*

How grateful I am to know that I can trust you with my life. Whether I am killed with the sword like James or rescued by an angel like Peter, I know that you do all things well. Glory to God!

In Jesus' name, Amen.

*Suggested Hymn: "[In Christ There Is No East or West](#)" – John Oxenham.*

*Meditation Verse: Acts 12:15.*