

What is it Lord? (Quality: Very good)

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Preacher: Mercer, Seth (1930-2017)

- [0 : 00] The Word of God that I must venture to bring before you this evening, you'll find in the 10th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, reading four words in verse 4, What is it, Lord?
- The 10th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, the 4th verse, reading these four words, What is it, Lord?
- To be favoured with a glimpse of the sovereignty of God in his divine purposes of grace is indeed most humbling.
- And I do so desire that we may be humbled together this evening, because I believe that it is in this posture that the Lord is pleased to make his purposes known.
- And I have felt that I must just read a few lines from our opening hymn as we commence this evening, because this is what we have said.
- [1 : 41] Jesus gives us pure affection by his wills to do what he requires, makes us follow his directions, and what he commands inspires.
- Now we have all this in these blessed truths that are before us. Cornelius was blessed at this time in his life with pure affection.
- I believe he was in a very sacred, blessed state in his soul.
- It's a great mercy to be favoured with such a condition. And then in this place, this follower wills to do what he requires, that is, Jesus, makes us follow his directions, and what he commands, inspires.
- And this is that that the Lord brought to pass here. When the Lord is pleased to bless poor sinners, to favour them, he prepares their heart to receive the blessing.
- [3 : 38] And the Lord knows what is needed to do this in the lives of those that he will bless. The path of providence is linked with the Lord's mercy and goodness in his purposes of grace.
- You will find this is so throughout the word of God. And so the Lord sanctifies the path.
- And this had been fulfilled in the life of Cornelius. He had been singled out from amongst fallen mankind.
- a Roman soldier, a centurion, a centurion, one who was in command of men, yet among the election of grace.
- And so we read of him, a devout man, made so by the grace of God.
- [5 : 00] You might be ready to ask the question, what does this really mean then, to be devout? Well, I can assure you of this, it's not something that is the work or that which is brought to pass by our flesh.
- I believe the most devout souls that have lived upon this earth are those who have been made to know and to feel what wretches they are, what sinners, how helpless, how needy, how destitute.
- And yet, it is through this teaching that the Lord will teach them Jesus well. Oh, the more the Lord humbles a man or a woman, the more they will be made to feel and to know their utter destitution and helplessness.

And yet, at the same time, it is in such souls that the grace of God shines. And is made manifest. So that those that are devout are those whom the Lord has blessed, whom the Lord has humbled, whom the Lord has made very tender, very exercised concerning their souls' eternal welfare and their way of life.

One who is truly devout is one who is very exercised concerning their life. and this, in the first place, as they are exercised concerning living as before God.

[7 : 09] and it will be this exercise that will motivate their life and will motivate what they do in their life.

And it will be this that will be seen of men their very deportment and manner.

And it will be said of such souls, you may feel that this is the very opposite of how you feel. And yet, who can tell if indeed there have been times in our lives when, by and through the grace of God, there have been those who have looked upon us, have taken knowledge of us, and why?

Because such souls have been with Jesus and have learned of him the grace of God, when in gracious exercise is something that can never be hidden.

This does not mean that such souls will make a display in their life, that their very spirit will be manifested, it will be seen, it will be felt.

[8 : 43] I would speak rightly that this blessed devoutness is something that through the grace of God is to be seen both in young people, those in the midst of life, and older friends.

it's a wonderful thing to see the effects of the grace of God in a person's life.

Now we have the evidences of this true devoutness given to us, and one that feared God with all his house.

What a thing. Yet this was what the Lord had blessed him with. There was no doubt that there was a divine purpose in it all. The Lord was going to use Cornelius.

He was preparing him, I believe, for what lay before him. See, the word of God is very clear in why precious souls are quickened into life by the Holy Spirit, and those that are made true disciples, true followers, of the meek and lowly Jesus.

[10 : 11] This people, are we among them? This people, have I formed for myself. They shall show forth my praise.

I believe this was Cornelius' exercise at this time, especially in his life. Show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of nature's darkness into his marvelous light, the light of Christ.

and one that feared God with all his house. When the Lord does give to his people tender, gracious exercise, and as they are favored to live near the Lord, when they are favored, there will be an effect in their life, and in their home.

I do feel my position in attempting to speak like this, I can assure you, that on the other hand, I believe we have these truths in this account here.

Indeed, the word of God plainly tells us, and one that feared God with all his house. wondrous thing when the grace of God is thus exercised by the Holy Spirit, and when a person's very presence is used of God, the Lord has used the presence of his dear people in their lives, their very presence.

[12 : 16] presence. He has used it, and he still is using it, even in these degenerate days.

I feel we little realize why the Lord has said in his word that the pillars of the earth are the Lord's. love. And as the Lord views his dear people, they are so precious to him, there is the apple of his eye, and so he will keep them and use them.

And then we have another blessed effect from the grace of God in his life, which gave much arms to the people.

He was so exercised, and as God blessed him, so he was made willing to give.

And I would, as the thought comes upon my spirit, in this, we do need to remember of what the Lord said concerning the widow's might.

[13 : 42] She hath given all that she had, and it should be a memorial for her throughout the generations to follow. And now in our giving, whatever we may give, it's this that's important, it's unto the Lord, whatever we give.

and if we give as unto the Lord, oh, think of it, what the Lord has recorded here. Thy prayers and thine arms are come up for a memorial before God.

And the Lord knows what his dear people seek to do. when they feel prompted perhaps to give, and when they give with a softened heart, and when they give as unto the Lord.

Oh, what a blessed way this is, blessed way for the house of God to be maintained like this, souls giving, as unto the Lord.

And when the Lord uses his precious word and blesses a soul, when their hearts are touched, then they give. Oh, I believe it is in such an atmosphere as this, that the blessing of the Lord is now.

[15 : 17] And it is when Christ is first, and Christ is last, and Christ is all in all.

Now, Cornelius was being brought by the Lord to a particular time in his life. The Lord is constantly doing this in the experience of those that he blesses.

The Lord knows where each one of you have come to in your life. you may have come to a place that we read of in the word of God, ye have not walked this way heretofore.

You've come yet to another point, another place, and the Lord knows what may be the exercise of souls here this evening.

And just how you've come to chapel, and what you have come with, the time came when the Lord was pleased to grant an indeed blessing to Cornelius, a time of blessing, a time wherein Christ was to be revealed to his soul as his hope of glory, a time wherein he was going to be made willing to follow Christ, to put on Christ by an open profession.

[17 : 11] God these truths that we have here, they lead up to this. You'll read the remaining part of this chapter.

You'll find what they lead to. As Peter preached on that occasion, know that it might be so tonight. As Peter preached on that occasion, so we read the Holy Ghost.

Let me turn to it for a moment. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. This is what we need.

As we gather together, this is what we so need in these sad days. It is that the power of the Holy Ghost might accompany the word preached with thankful when it does.

It is thankful when there is that manifestation of this. And when the people lose sight of the preacher and yet they go home and they are able to say this, the Lord has spoken.

[18 : 25] And then I believe things are in their right place and the name of the Holy Child, Jesus, is glorified.

so then this day came in the life of Cornelius. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming into him and saying unto him, Cornelius, you might be ready to say, but such things are not known now in our day, but friends, they are.

They are now. When the Lord exercises a soul, is preparing them to receive a blessing, preparing them to receive divine commands, they know what it is, I believe, for the Lord to come to them and he speaks to them.

The Lord said, Cornelius, and when the Lord speaks to a soul that he is preparing to receive his word, they are made aware that the Lord is speaking to them.

And then I believe their heart is open to listen and as one of our hymn writers has put it, then listen what the Lord will say, and hope to follow that.

[20 : 10] And as Cornelius was granted this vision, and when he looked on him, he was afraid and said, what is it, Lord?

God, he was going to do it, he was going to go to the Lord. He was about to speak to a soul, to guide them in their life, or in whatever way it is, there will, I believe, accompany, there will be that that will precede real blessing, and that is, there will be a trembling, there will be a trembling, there will be a measure of holy all come upon the soul.

We have the same truth in the preceding chapter concerning Saul of Tarsus, and he trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

And the Lord said unto him, arise, and go into the city, and it should be told thee what thou must do. You see how that verse, those lines in that hymn, Jesus gives us pure affections, wills to do what he requires, makes us follow his directions, and what he commands inspires, inspire the living faith, that whoso e'er believes, the witness in himself he hath, and joyfully believes.

so then there is this question, what is it, Lord, what is it?

[21 : 59] It's a blessed thing to be brought to such a place, in our experience, what is it, Lord? Have you been there today?

have you had this exercise today? I mention again the same word, because I believe we have the same truth contained in it, and he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

You have the same truth, I believe, here in this word, what is it, Lord? see, when there's this exercise that the Lord would make known his sovereign will, and this is the will of God, even your sanctification, the Lord setting his people apart, making them willing in the day of his power, making them willing to be where he would have them to be, making them willing to be what he would have them to be, directing them in paths of righteousness for his namesake, that they might be as those spoken of in the word of God, a people prepared by the Lord.

God. And then we have the answer to this, and he said unto him, this in answer to these words, what is it, Lord?

And he said unto him, thy prayers and thine arms are come on for a memorial before God.

[23 : 58] God's will. It would be a wondrous thing, and I hope it will be so, that if the Lord should say to anyone here tonight that your prayers have been heard, your prayers have been heard, thy prayers and thine arms are come up for a memorial before God.

When the Lord favours a soul with this intimation, that prayer has been heard, and that prayer will be answered, now the Lord then goes on to give to Cornelius directions as to what he is to do.

And among other considerations, why I ventured to read the few verses in the ninth chapter, it was there, in the 43rd verse, and it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a ten.

See, the Lord brought Peter to this place, he tarried many days in Joppa, he didn't tarry many days in Joppa, without there being a sovereign purpose in it.

And I am thankful in this, that the Lord still directs his servants, he still brings them to those appointed places, should it be for one day or a few days, that they must be in that place as long as the Lord would have them to be there.

[26 : 01] We think for a moment of that time in the life of Philip and the Euna, the Lord directed Philip into that desert place for a comparatively short time, and then we read and Philip and the Euna saw him again no more.

Philip must go on, he must continue in that work that the Lord had given him to do, he must go on and yet he must stay in that place as long as the Lord had purposed and to fulfil that which the Lord had designed should be accomplished.

So that Peter then must be in this house with one Simon a tanner and then you find this and now send men to Joppa and call for one Simon whose surname is Peter he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner whose house is by the seaside he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

So here again we have divine direction the Lord instructing his people the Lord telling them what they are to do and so the Lord I believe still is pleased from time to time in bringing to pass his purposes those appointed times which are in his hand those times of blessing those times when the Lord is pleased to work and they are still in his hand so Cornelius must be directed and the Lord knows if there are anyone if there is anyone here tonight whom the Lord has spoken to whom the

Lord has given an exercise and that which is upon your heart and that which may have been with you now for a long time it may have been up for a few days if you've known what it is to be burdened before God then perhaps the Lord has brought me here tonight to say this that what the Lord has exercised your soul with it must be accomplished it must be done we had recently to try and speak from a word that Rachel and Leah said to Jacob as Jacob came to his wives and told them what he was exercised with the burden upon his heart the Lord had instructed him as to what he was to do as the

[29 : 31] Lord instructed you you might ask the question how may I know whether the Lord has instructed me in this matter I venture to say that the very burden of your heart and because the Lord continues to burden your heart with this and because the Lord does not permit this to leave you because it is something that is with you day in and day out it is that that the Lord would have you to do the very exercise of soul I believe in the Lord's hand could indeed be an answer to your prayer this evening to your prayers now when Jacob came to his wives and sometimes this is the case with those that are exercised he came to them and he told them what the

Lord had said to him now what did they say now then whatsoever God hath said unto thee do now you will find if you read that account that Jacob arose to obey what the Lord had laid upon his heart he didn't delay he must arise and yet he found this he found that his wives were with him he found that there were those that were exercised with him and I believe it is the case with those whom the Lord will bring before the church of God to tell what he has done for their son they will find I believe as

Cornelius found that the Lord has gone before them because it was the Lord that made Peter willing to come it was the Lord that directed Peter the spirit said unto him get thee down and go with them doubting nothing for I have sent thee what do we find that he went he he he he he obeyed the voice of God although he had been so unwilling to go and it's like that sometimes in the experience of a child of God they're unwilling in themselves to go indeed I believe it is the case with those whom the Lord will bring is that in them that shrinks whether it is venturing to tell to sinners round what a dear saviour we have found or whether it is to venture forth upon

Zion's walls is that within a poor sinner that shrinks and yet at the same time there's that within that commands and I believe the time comes when those that have been commanded they must like Jacob arise now Jacob found that there were those that were with him but he also found there was opposition you read on in that account you'll find that there was Laban there was opposition and I believe in the sovereign purposes of God as he brings them to pass he knows what encouragement is needed he knows what discouragement is needed and why is this it is I believe all to make us sick of self and fond of him that Jesus may have all the honour and praise and glory so then in answer to this word what is it

Lord he must send men to Joppa and call for one Simon whose surname is Peter he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner whose house is by the seaside he shall tell them what thou oughtest to do and so Peter made willing to go Cornelius his prayers had come up in his arms as a memorial before God and so these must come together because the Lord had a message to deliver and that message was indeed that Christ was preached to the soul of Cornelius Peter opened his mouth and said of a truth

[35 : 00] I perceive that God is no respecter of persons the word which God sent unto the children of Israel preaching peace by Jesus Christ he is Lord of all and this preaching went right into Cornelius his heart and I believe he was favoured to know that Jesus Christ was not only the all and in all of in the experience of a true believer but he was favoured to know it in his own soul and so we have presently the outcome of all that had taken place can any man forbid water that these should not be baptised which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we and he commanded them to be baptised in the name of the

Lord and when Peter commanded it was not Peter but it was the Lord speaking through him may we have this clearly in our thoughts when Peter commanded these precious souls to be baptised it was not Peter it was not Peter saying to them well now you must speak that time but it was the Holy Ghost speaking through the ministry of God's word and it was the Holy Ghost speaking through Peter and that word went home and there was response so I believe it is when the Lord speaks with power Amen here don't