



## Summary

This powerful exploration of Acts chapter 10 reveals one of the most transformative moments in early Christianity: the day the gospel broke through cultural barriers to reach the Gentiles. We encounter Cornelius, a Roman centurion whose devotion to God was remarkable yet incomplete. Despite his prayers, generosity, and fear of God, something was missing in his spiritual life. What unfolds is a beautiful picture of our Heavenly Father orchestrating an elaborate divine appointment between a seeking Gentile and a reluctant Jewish apostle. Peter's vision of the sheet filled with unclean animals wasn't merely about dietary laws—it was God dismantling centuries of prejudice and revealing that no person should be called common or unclean. The climax comes when the Holy Spirit falls upon Cornelius and his household even as Peter preaches, marking what we might call the Gentile Pentecost. This wasn't just about one family's salvation; it established that Gentiles could come directly to Christ without first becoming Jews. For us today, this passage reminds us that God pursues every seeking heart with relentless love, crossing whatever boundaries necessary to bring us into relationship with Him. It challenges us to examine our own prejudices and to recognize that God's grace extends to all people, regardless of background or past.

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## Points

Title: The Greatest Father's Day Ever: The Gentile Pentecost and God's Pursuit of Cornelius

### Sermon Summary:

This Father's Day sermon explores Acts 10 and the remarkable account of Cornelius, a Roman centurion whose spiritual hunger led to what the pastor calls "the Gentile Pentecost." The message demonstrates how our Father in heaven orchestrated divine appointments to bring salvation to a Gentile father and his household, breaking down the barrier between Jew and Gentile. Through supernatural visions given to both Cornelius and Peter, God revealed that the gospel was not exclusively for Jews but for all nations. The sermon emphasizes that Cornelius exemplified godly fatherhood by prioritizing his family's spiritual welfare above all else, gathering his relatives and close friends to hear God's word. When Peter preached the gospel, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard, baptizing them immediately just as He had done with Jewish believers at Pentecost. This event proved that Gentiles did not need to become Jews before becoming Christians, establishing that salvation through Jesus Christ is available to all who seek God with sincere hearts. The message challenges fathers to follow Cornelius's example of spiritual leadership and reminds all believers that God actively pursues those whose hearts are turned toward Him.

### Key Points:

- Every mention of a centurion in Scripture is positive, showing their character and faith
- Cornelius was a devout man who feared God, gave generously, and prayed continually, yet still lacked personal relationship with God
- God orchestrated supernatural visions to both Cornelius and Peter to bring about this divine appointment
- Peter had to overcome deep-seated Jewish prejudice against Gentiles, reinforced three times through the vision of unclean animals
- The vision of the sheet with unclean animals was not primarily about dietary laws but about God accepting all people
- Cornelius demonstrated exceptional fatherhood by gathering his family and close friends to hear God's word



- The Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentiles immediately upon hearing the gospel, marking the "Gentile Pentecost"
- This event proved Gentiles could become Christians without first becoming Jews
- God promises in Jeremiah 29:13 that those who seek Him with all their heart will find Him
- Spiritual fatherhood means prioritizing the eternal destiny of family and friends above all else
- The baptism with the Holy Spirit occurred simultaneously with salvation in this instance to validate God's acceptance of Gentiles
- All Gentile believers are spiritual descendants of Cornelius and this pivotal moment in church history

#### Scripture Reference:

- Acts 10:1-48 (primary passage)
- Luke 7:1-10 (centurion's faith)
- Matthew 27:50-54 (centurion at the crucifixion)
- 1 Timothy 4:4-5 (all creatures of God are good)
- 1 Peter 4:3-6 (Gentile lifestyle before Christ)
- Jeremiah 29:11-13 (God's promise to those who seek Him)
- John 3:16 (God's love for the world)
- Isaiah 49:6 (light to the Gentiles)

#### Stories:

- The account of Cornelius receiving an angelic vision instructing him to send for Peter in Joppa
- Peter's vision of the sheet containing unclean animals descending from heaven, repeated three times
- The centurion in Capernaum whose servant Jesus healed, demonstrating great faith
- The centurion at Jesus's crucifixion who declared, "Truly this was the Son of God"



- Peter staying with Simon the tanner, demonstrating he had already overcome some Jewish restrictions
- The divine coordination of messengers traveling 35 miles from Caesarea to Joppa to find Peter
- Cornelius gathering his relatives and close friends in his home to hear Peter's message
- The Holy Spirit interrupting Peter's sermon by falling upon all the Gentile listeners
- The six Jewish witnesses Peter brought who were astonished at the Gentiles receiving the Holy Spirit
- The immediate baptism of Cornelius's household following their salvation experience

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## Scripture

# Scripture References from the Sermon

## Explicitly Mentioned References:

1. **Acts 10** (entire chapter - primary text)
2. **Luke 7:1-10** (Centurion's servant healed)
3. **Matthew 27:50-54** (Centurion at the crucifixion)
4. **Acts 9:43** (Peter staying with Simon the Tanner)
5. **John 4** (Woman at the well)
6. **Acts 8** (Ethiopian eunuch)
7. **1 Corinthians 12:3** (No one calls Jesus Lord except by the Holy Spirit)
8. **1 Timothy 4:4-5** (Every creature of God is good)
9. **Acts 11:15** (Peter's testimony about the Holy Spirit falling on Gentiles)
10. **1 Corinthians 12** (Not everyone speaks in tongues)
11. **Isaiah 49:6** (Light to the Gentiles)
12. **Jeremiah 29:11-13** (God's plans for hope and a future)
13. **John 3:16** (God so loved the world)
14. **Leviticus 11** (Dietary laws - mentioned but not read)
15. **1 Peter 4:3-6** (Past life in Gentile practices)
16. **Luke 11** (Encouragement to receive baptism with Holy Spirit - alluded to)

## Additional References Mentioned:

17. **Acts 2** (Day of Pentecost)



18. **Acts 4** (Peter baptized with Holy Spirit - twice)

19. **Acts 9** (Baptism with Holy Spirit)

20. **Acts 13** (Baptism with Holy Spirit)

21. **Acts 19** (Baptism with Holy Spirit)

### ## Suggested Verses for Main Themes:

- **Breaking down barriers between Jews and Gentiles:**

- Ephesians 2:14-16

- Galatians 3:28

- **God's impartiality:**

- Romans 2:11

- Acts 10:34-35 (mentioned in sermon)

- **Seeking and finding God:**

- Deuteronomy 4:29

- Proverbs 8:17

- **Fatherhood and spiritual leadership:**

- Deuteronomy 6:6-7

- Ephesians 6:4



## Quotes

God desires every man to come to repentance. But the problem is most men deny the need for this papering over the emptiness in their souls.

We think we're seeking you, but in reality, you are seeking us. And we see in this example, Lord, of this man, Cornelius, Father, your undying, unceasing, unquenchable search for a man whose heart was stayed upon you.

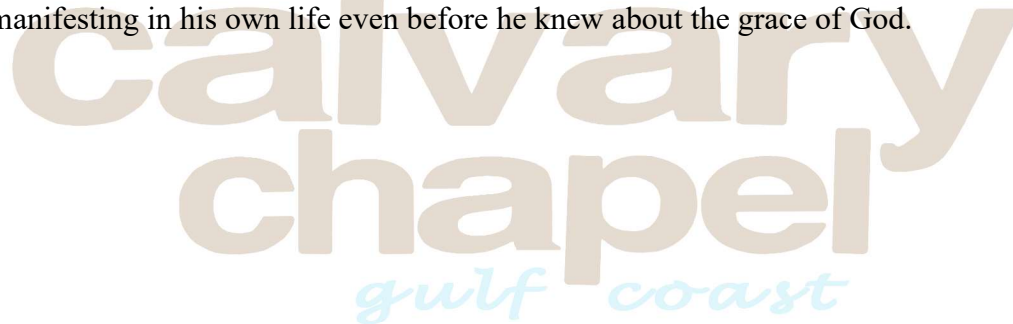
He considered, Cornelius, he considered his most important role as a father, as a centurion, as a Roman soldier, he considered his most important role was to be a spiritual leader as a husband to his wife and as a dad to his children.

This was the day of the Gentile Pentecost. This was the day when a father here on earth and our father in heaven were both fully satisfied as both God and man entered into personal relationship for which all men are intended.

Had Cornelius not been the kind of father he was, more concerned with spiritual descendency than genetic, none of this would have happened, and we might not be here today.

You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. I will be found by you says the Lord.

Our only greatness as fathers is found in the grace of God which Cornelius unwittingly was in pursuit of and even manifesting in his own life even before he knew about the grace of God.





## Discussion Questions

What prejudices or barriers in your own life might God be calling you to overcome in order to reach people who are different from you with the gospel?

Cornelius prioritized gathering his family and close friends to hear from God. How intentional are you about creating spiritual opportunities for those closest to you?

Peter had to receive the same vision three times before understanding God's message. What might God be repeatedly trying to teach you that you have been slow to grasp?

The sermon describes Cornelius as seeking God even before knowing Him personally. How does this challenge our understanding of who God pursues and how salvation works?

What does it mean that God considered Cornelius' prayers and giving as a memorial before Him, even before Cornelius knew Christ? How does this affect your view of sincere seekers?

Peter said he could not call any man common or unclean after his vision. Who are the people groups or individuals you might unconsciously consider less worthy of hearing the gospel?

The Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles while Peter was still speaking, interrupting his sermon. How does this demonstrate God's sovereignty in salvation versus human effort or eloquence?

Cornelius is described as wanting everyone to know the Father in heaven he knew about but did not yet know personally. What is the difference between knowing about God and knowing God personally in your own experience?

The sermon emphasizes that God will be found by those who genuinely seek Him with all their heart. What does wholehearted seeking look like in practical terms in your daily life?

As spiritual descendants of Cornelius, how should the story of the Gentile Pentecost shape our gratitude and our mission to reach others who are far from God?



## Small Group Guide:

### Small Group Guide: The Greatest Father's Day Ever

#### Based on Acts 10 - The Story of Cornelius

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#### Opening Prayer

Begin your time together by thanking God for seeking us and for the example of faithful fathers who prioritize spiritual leadership in their families.

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#### Icebreaker Question

**Share about a time when God surprised you by working in a way you didn't expect or through someone you didn't anticipate.**

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#### Key Scripture

Acts 10:1-48 (Focus verses: 1-2, 34-35, 44-48)

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#### Sermon Summary

This message explores how God orchestrated the salvation of Cornelius, a Roman centurion, and his household—marking the "Gentile Pentecost." Despite being a devout, generous man who feared God, Cornelius still lacked a personal relationship with Jesus. God went to extraordinary lengths to bring Peter to Cornelius's home, breaking down cultural and religious barriers. The story demonstrates God's relentless pursuit of those who seek Him and provides a powerful example of spiritual fatherhood.

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#### Discussion Questions

##### Understanding the Text

1. **What do we learn about Cornelius's character in Acts 10:1-2?** How was he already seeking God even before he knew Jesus personally?
2. **Why was it so difficult for Peter to go to a Gentile's home?** What prejudices and religious laws did he have to overcome?
3. **What was the significance of the vision Peter received (the sheet with unclean animals)?** How does this relate to people rather than just food?



## Personal Reflection

4. **Cornelius gathered his family and close friends to hear from God (v. 24). What does this reveal about his priorities as a father and friend?** How does this challenge or encourage you?
5. **The sermon stated: "God desires every man to come to repentance, but the problem is most men deny the need for this, papering over the emptiness in their souls."** Have you ever experienced this emptiness? How did God fill it or how is He working to fill it now?
6. **Peter had to overcome significant prejudice to obey God. What prejudices, assumptions, or comfort zones might God be calling you to overcome to share the gospel?**

## Application

7. **Cornelius wanted everyone he knew—especially family and friends—to hear God's word. Who in your circle of influence needs to hear about Jesus?** What practical steps can you take this week to share with them?
8. **The sermon emphasized that Cornelius's "only greatness as a father is found in the grace of God." For fathers/grandfathers: How can you lead your family spiritually?** For everyone: How can you support the fathers in your life?
9. **God promised in Jeremiah 29:13, "You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart."** Is there an area where you need to seek God more earnestly? What would that look like practically?

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## Key Takeaways

- ✓ **God actively seeks those who seek Him** - Cornelius's devotion caught God's attention, and God orchestrated everything to bring him salvation.
  - ✓ **Spiritual leadership matters** - Cornelius prioritized gathering his family and friends to hear God's word, showing the importance of spiritual fatherhood.
  - ✓ **The gospel breaks all barriers** - God demonstrated that salvation is available to all people, regardless of background, ethnicity, or past.
  - ✓ **Good works don't save, but they reflect a seeking heart** - Cornelius was devout and generous, but still needed a personal relationship with Jesus.
  - ✓ **We are spiritual descendants of Cornelius** - As Gentile believers, we benefit from God's work on this "Gentile Pentecost."
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## Practical Applications

### This Week's Challenge:

#### Choose one of the following to implement this week:

1. **The Cornelius Challenge:** Like Cornelius, invite family members or close friends to hear about Jesus—whether through attending church, watching a sermon online together, or sharing your testimony over a meal.
  2. **The Seeking Prayer:** Commit to praying daily for someone who doesn't know Jesus, asking God to reveal Himself to them as He did to Cornelius.
  3. **The Barrier Breaker:** Identify one prejudice, assumption, or comfort zone that might be hindering you from sharing the gospel, and ask God to help you overcome it.
  4. **The Father's Legacy:** (For fathers/grandfathers) Have an intentional spiritual conversation with your children or grandchildren this week about what Jesus means to you.
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### Memory Verse

**"You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the Lord." - Jeremiah 29:13-14a**

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### Closing Prayer Points

- Thank God for seeking us and making salvation available to all people
  - Pray for fathers and spiritual leaders to prioritize leading their families to Christ
  - Ask God to reveal Himself to those who are seeking Him
  - Pray for courage to overcome barriers and share the gospel with those around us
  - Intercede for specific family members and friends who need to know Jesus
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### For Further Study

- Acts 11:1-18 (Peter's defense of reaching the Gentiles)
  - Ephesians 2:11-22 (Jews and Gentiles united in Christ)
  - Luke 7:1-10 (Another centurion with great faith)
  - 1 Peter 4:1-6 (Peter's later reflection on Gentile transformation)
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### Leader Notes

- Be sensitive to those in your group who may not have had positive father figures; emphasize God as our perfect heavenly Father
- Create space for anyone who may want to respond to the gospel for the first time
- Encourage testimonies of how God has broken down barriers in people's lives
- Consider having fathers share one practical way they're leading their families spiritually



## 5-Day Devotional:

### 5-Day Devotional: God's Pursuit of Every Heart

Day 1: When God Seeks You First

Reading: Acts 10:1-8

Devotional: Before Cornelius ever knocked on heaven's door, God was already orchestrating his salvation. This Roman centurion thought he was seeking God, but the truth is far more beautiful—God was pursuing him. The angel's appearance wasn't random; it was the culmination of God watching a devoted heart from afar. Your prayers, your generosity, your seeking—God sees it all and responds. Perhaps you've been faithfully seeking God, feeling the emptiness only He can fill. Take comfort today: if you're seeking Him, it's because He's already been seeking you. God goes to extraordinary lengths to bring His children home, arranging divine appointments and supernatural encounters. Your search for God is actually His search for you.

Day 2: Breaking Down the Walls

Reading: Acts 10:9-23; Ephesians 2:11-18

Devotional: Peter's vision of the sheet filled with unclean animals challenged everything he believed about who deserved God's grace. Three times God had to tell him: "What I have cleansed, you must not call common." How often do we build walls around God's love, deciding who's worthy and who's not? The gospel shatters every barrier—ethnic, social, moral, and religious. God was teaching Peter that His love extends beyond our comfortable categories. What prejudices or preconceptions limit your view of God's redemptive reach? Who have you written off as too far gone, too different, or too undeserving? Today, ask God to show you where you've made His grace too small. His love is scandalously inclusive, pursuing hearts you might never expect.

Day 3: A Father's Greatest Legacy

Reading: Acts 10:24-33; Joshua 24:14-15

Devotional: Cornelius didn't just seek God for himself—he gathered his entire household, relatives, and close friends. His most important role wasn't as a centurion commanding soldiers, but as a spiritual leader inviting others into God's presence. True fatherhood, whether biological or spiritual, means desperately wanting those you love to know the Father you're discovering. Cornelius's living room became a sanctuary because one man valued spiritual inheritance over everything else. What legacy are you building? Are you inviting others into your spiritual journey, or keeping it private? Your pursuit of God has the power to transform your entire household. Like Cornelius, fill your home with hungry hearts ready to hear from God. Your greatest achievement won't be professional success—it will be leading others to Jesus.



#### Day 4: The Gentile Pentecost

Reading: Acts 10:34-48; Joel 2:28-32

Devotional: While Peter was still preaching, the Holy Spirit interrupted with salvation and power. This wasn't just another conversion—it was the Gentile Pentecost, proving God's Spirit falls on all who believe, regardless of background. The same power that transformed Jewish believers at Pentecost now filled Gentile hearts. God doesn't have favorites; He has seekers. Your ethnicity, past, or religious background doesn't disqualify you from the fullness of God's Spirit. The astonished Jewish witnesses learned what we must remember: God's grace cannot be contained by human categories. If you've been seeking God with all your heart, He will be found by you. The baptism of the Holy Spirit isn't reserved for the "qualified"—it's available to every hungry heart. Today, ask boldly for fresh filling.

#### Day 5: You Will Seek Me and Find Me

Reading: Jeremiah 29:11-14; Matthew 7:7-11

Devotional: God's promise echoes through the ages: "You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart." Cornelius's story proves this isn't empty religious rhetoric—it's God's ironclad guarantee. Despite being in spiritual exile, disconnected from God's covenant people, Cornelius sought the Lord sincerely, and God moved heaven and earth to reveal Himself. Your search isn't in vain. God knows the thoughts He has toward you—thoughts of peace, future, and hope. The emptiness you feel isn't punishment; it's invitation. God is more committed to being found than you are to finding Him. Whatever background you come from, whatever you've done, however far you feel from God—seek Him wholeheartedly today. He promises: "I will be found by you." That's not wishful thinking. That's the Father's guarantee.