

## **Clarification – God’s grace is prevenient and progressive in bringing us to our mission to accomplish God’s will.**

God always gets the *message*, the *messenger* and the *man* in the same place for salvation to occur.

**Verse 17:** Picking up where we left off. Peter has been reminded three times to feed the sheep. Joppa was in the south and Caesarea in the North. This was a three day journey. I would call this clarification at its finest. Peter is deeply perplexed about the word God gave him.

The Greek word is **diaporeo**; this means to be perplexed, in doubt, or at a loss. **Aporeo** from **poros** with the **a**, this word refers to being without resources or way. To doubt, perplexed or unable to move forward. The alpha privative on **aporeo** is prefixed with **di** which intensifies the confusion or strength of the word. Peter was **thoroughly** confused.

Was Peter wrong to be confused? Was this a sin? No!

ἀπορέω and its cognates depict the interior state of being “at a loss,” experiencing perplexity, or facing an impasse that human wisdom cannot unravel. The term never signifies intellectual laziness; rather, it portrays earnest people honestly baffled before something greater than themselves.

This is actually a great place to be spiritually because you know God is working in your life.

### **In the Pauline Epistles**

**2 Corinthians 4:8:** “We are hard pressed on all sides, yet not crushed; **perplexed**, yet not in despair.” The first clause pictures external pressure; the second, internal perplexity coupled with unconquerable hope. **The pairing teaches that perplexity is compatible with steadfast faith. Believers may lack explanations but never lack the God who sustains them.**

## Theological Significance

Perplexity is neither sin nor defeat. Scripture portrays it as a crossroads where reliance on self must yield to reliance on God. The empty tomb, the unresolved case before Festus, and apostolic hardship all illustrate the same pattern: **human limitation sets the stage for divine intervention.**

Strong's 639 **words paint a portrait of human perplexity meeting divine purpose.** Whether in palaces, tombs, courtrooms, or churches, the New Testament reveals that God enters the scene where people confess, "**We are at a loss.**" There He turns confusion into **conviction**, uncertainty into **understanding**, and despair into **resilient hope**.

- Discernment: Whether guidance arrives through Scripture, providential circumstances, or Spirit-prompted conviction, believers must weigh every impression against the **canon** that already bears God's authority.

In this difficult time of confusion, God sends three men from a three-day journey to clarify.

**Verse 18:** Clarification has arrived. If you are not in a spiritual state, you may miss it. What if Peter was at the temple or a Jewish hotel and not where God sent him? Remember he's at a Gentiles house.

**Verse 19:** – Peter is now being led by the Spirit. How many men show up? 3! Feed my sheep!

If Peter were a Southern Baptist he would have said, "If I could only get a sign in the sky or a vision from the Lord to tell me what to do." Peter could not have gotten a more clear confirmation about God's will if he had received a letter in the mail.

Peter was thinking about the vision. *Thinking on the words of Jesus is a good practice.* Good things happen when you do that. **Enthumenomai. En thumos.** Great passion. Inspired pondering. Thinking is great, you should try it sometimes.

Get up! Go down! Three men are looking for you. I sent them! Don't hesitate. Don't doubt- **diakrino**. Don't get caught between

two judgements. **Dia-** through, **krino-** judgment. No doubting, misgivings, decisions, to stagger, or waver.

**Verse 21:** This verse has such a beautiful ring to it. Peter is totally obedient. Read this verse and hear the beauty of it.

**Acts 10:21:** <sup>21</sup> Then Peter went down to the men and said, “Here I am, the one you’re looking for. What is the reason you’re here?”

**Verse 22:** We know Cornelius by now, but Peter doesn’t. Peter is informed of this man and his character. I am just praying that God can describe me this way.

**Illustration:** Richard introduced me to an electrician that could wire up my welding machine. When he told me I could trust the man because he was a Christian, never over charges, honest, and his son was the same way. Richard said, “He’s a godly man.” I was good. That’s a good reputation.

I have taught you to pray for divine appointments. Here is a great place in the Word to confirm that teaching.

Divinely directed- **chrematizo**, χρηματιζω– from the word for money **chrema** (to establish with a title, a resource- to constitute a business- to provide what is needed). **Chrematizo** refers to a diving oracle. Something divinely intimate. To be called or admonished. To be revealed or directed. My favorite is “**to transact business.**”

Strong’s 5537 gathers two complementary ideas: (1) an authoritative communication that directs or warns, and (2) a formal designation that establishes identity or legal standing. In every New Testament use the voice behind the verb carries binding force, whether God, an angelic messenger, or recognized public opinion.

Let me make it clear for us. **In John 5:17** the Pharisees judged Jesus for doing things on the Sabbath. Jesus said, “My Father is

always working, and I am also working.” If you want to do the Father’s business, you must be working. If you are working, you will get Divine appointments. Divine interaction and business.

**Matthew 22:5** is the parable of the wedding banquet. Messengers were sent out to invite people to the wedding of the King’s Son. All the preparation was made but no one came. I hate to say it but this is us many times at WBC. Verse 5 says this.

**“But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business.”**

Here is what should be happening.

### **John 15:15**

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s **business**. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

### **Luke 2:49**

And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about **My Father’s business**?”

When God sends a person in our paths for a divine message, they need to get it. Churches and pastors all over our free country let divine appointments go away hungry and lost because they did not deliver the divine transaction. **Whose business are we doing?**

**Verse 23:** – They are invited in – **Gentiles are in the house.** Peter could have sent them to a Holiday Inn express or told them to go stay on the beach and because they wanted to know the truth so badly they would have done that. Peter has been conveniently and progressively prepared by the vision and by staying with the tanner.

Peter had fellowship with the Tanner and had gotten accustomed to the Tanner. When you get to know people, you find out they are just people like we. When you grow to love and care for new friends you forget they are different. You find they have families, hurts, sorrows, joys and they seek holiness just like you do.

Have you ever wondered why God didn't open up the way of the Gentiles with another Gentile? No, God chose a Jewish man to make a statement. Then followed it up with another Gentile name Paul who was a Pharisee.

When God calls something clean, it is clean. That includes you too. Peter also took some other Jews from Jappa with him. He needs proof of what's going to happen.

**Verse 24:** Talk about a diving appointment. Cornelius was expecting Peter to show. That's belief and trust in what God said to him.

Relatives and friends were there. Cornelius was serious and ready for a great word from God. I can only pray for you to come to church like this. Looking for a divine word from Jesus. Bringing your relatives and friends.

Do you think that some of his relatives didn't show? I can assure you that some of them had a ball game or slept in that day. Soccer practice or some irrelevant occasion caused someone to miss the greatest event in all of history for the Gentiles.

– Cornelius had really believed God was going to save his family and friends. In chapter 11, Peter has to explain his actions – in verse 14 it says Cornelius and his household would receive a message of salvation! Everybody is going to get saved. \* **That's worth inviting your friends too!!!**

**Verse 25:** – He falls down in reverence and humility. I don't personally think that Cornelius wanted to worship Peter. He is so overwhelmed to have the great apostle in his home. A Jewish representative of Jesus is in his home. Many people in scripture have fallen down before the angel of the Lord in humility only to be directed to stand.

The true servant of the Lord says exactly what Peter did. Stand up, I am only a man. What a great statement. "I am only a man! **The presence of God does this to sinful men.**

**Illustration:** Early on in ministry I experienced this at the YDC jail in Augusta. I was going out to share my testimony and actually was learning to preach and teach. This was very early on in my Christian walk. I shared my testimony and several of the young boys came to Jesus. Most of the boys were African American. One young man in particular was overwhelmed with the message and was radically saved. When I closed in prayer I was startled to feel a kiss on my cheek. Eyes closed and I was kissed. I opened my eyes and this young man had walked up while I was praying and kissed me. I have to say that it was the sweetest thing that has ever happened while I preached. He was overwhelmed with the presence of God. He was not worshipping me. He just wanted to express his joy that God was here. He found hope in the words of God. This reminds me of what happened when Peter brought Jews and Gentiles together. Only God was important. This young man didn't care what his friends thought about him kissing a white man. He just felt the presence of God and wanted to acknowledge it. When we really encounter God, **it makes us want to fall down.**

In Isaiah 6, Isaiah said he was undone when he saw the Lord. Shattered into pieces. Ruth fell down before Boaz. Abigail fell before David as she fell from her donkey. The Magi came and fell down before the child. The unclean spirits fell down before Jesus. The woman with the issue of blood fell down before Christ. Peter

fell down before Jesus and said depart from me I am a sinful man. Read **Revelation 1:12-17** John fell down like a dead man when he saw what the risen Christ looked like.

<sup>12</sup> Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, <sup>13</sup> and in the midst of the seven lampstands *One* like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. <sup>14</sup> His head and hair *were* white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; <sup>15</sup> His feet *were* like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; <sup>16</sup> He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance *was* like the sun shining in its strength. <sup>17</sup> And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying ☐to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. <sup>18</sup> I *am* He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of ☐Hades and of Death.

We need some falling down around here. We need to fall in love with the alter so we can see some divine appointments happen. We need to get some humility.

**Verse 26:** Something Benny Hinn and Kenneth Copland have never said.

**Verse 27:** We have the man, the message, and the messenger all in one place (Divine Appointment). Do you remember when I said to you last week that I didn’t understand grace and the calling to salvation in all its magnificence? Paul said it is the **mystery** of the gospel message or salvation. But I said **I do know it when I see it.**

Let me explain that I’m not concerned how this happened; I just know that it did happen. We can debate all day long about how

these people chose to be there. We can search and search the scripture through and through and never fully understand how the sovereignty of God and these folks free will came together, but I do see that it did.

Peter does not show up to teach a lesson on Calvinism or Armenianism because those men were not even born yet. What He did do was bring the message of the gospel to God-prepared hearts. I love to spend personal time figuring out how it happens; That's okay too; but I definitely want to be a part of it when it does happen.

This is prevenient, progressive and soon to come **provisional** grace.

**Verse 28-29: Divine Conj- but God!!!** Let me put this prevenient grace thing in perspective for you. This is how you apply the Word of God in a hermeneutical sense. One rule of Hermeneutics is to compare clear passages with obscure passages to get a better understanding. Now the passage in Acts is not obscure but we can compare scripture with scripture.

**Let me show you prevenient grace in a parable: Matthew 13 gives us an example. The parable of the soils.**

<sup>13</sup> That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. <sup>2</sup> Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. <sup>3</sup> Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “**A farmer went out to sow his seed.** <sup>4</sup> As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the **path**, and the birds came and ate it up. <sup>5</sup> Some fell on **rocky places**, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. <sup>6</sup> But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. <sup>7</sup> Other seed fell among **thorns**, which grew up and choked the plants. <sup>8</sup> Still other seed fell on **good soil**, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. <sup>9</sup> Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

<sup>10</sup> The disciples came to him and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?”

<sup>11</sup> He replied, “Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. <sup>12</sup> Whoever has will be given more (**This is Cornelius**), and

they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. <sup>13</sup> This is why I speak to them in parables:

1 Cor 2:14↓ The Natural man cannot see.

“Though seeing, they do not see;  
though hearing, they do not hear or understand.

<sup>14</sup> In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

“You will be ever hearing but never understanding;  
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.

<sup>15</sup> For this people’s heart has become calloused;  
they hardly hear with their ears,  
and they have closed their eyes.

Otherwise they might see with their eyes,  
hear with their ears,  
understand with their hearts

and turn, and I would heal them.’<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>16</sup> But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. <sup>17</sup> For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

**<sup>18</sup> “Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: <sup>19</sup> When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it,** the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. <sup>20</sup> The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. <sup>21</sup> But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. <sup>22</sup> The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. <sup>23</sup> **But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”**

**Question: How did the soil get to be good? It was prepared.**

Cornelius, his relatives, and Peter are all plowed ground right here. God’s teaching Peter evangelism. We know more about evangelism today than Peter did in this vignette. He was untrained but filled with the Spirit and obedient.

The people are humble, submissive and ready for the Word. Peter is humble, spirit-filled, obedient, knowledgeable, and accepting of his prospects.

**Verse 28:** God has shown me. **Deiknumi**, shown, showed, revealed.

**Verse 34:** I know really know- **katalambino**, to take possession of, to seize. To lay hold of.

**Verse 30-33:** The story is repeated, explained and clarified. Cornelius then says “we are now all here in the “presence of God” to listen to everything you have to say! **Did you Prepare for today.**

**3 in the afternoon. Sure are a lot of *threes* in this text.**

**Verse 31:** Bro. Jerry will never lie to you. Remember I told you that to say God doesn’t hear the prayers of lost people was not true. Well, look right here in verse 31. The Angel of the Lord said that Cornelius was heard in heaven. 11:14 says his family was lost. People who pray and do good works are being prompted by God to do those works. This is the mystery.

The Word says God’s eyes roam to and fro throughout the universe to see.

1. **Chronicles 28:9** “And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD **searches** every heart and understands every desire and every thought. **If you seek him, he will be found by you;** but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever.
2. **Proverbs 11:27**  
Whoever seeks good finds favor but evil comes to one who **searches** for it.
3. **Romans 8:27**  
And he who **searches** our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.
4. **2 Chronicles 16:9**  
For the **eyes** of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war.”

**Verses 28-33** are extremely interesting. Here lies the moment of truth. For the preacher, there is no greater moment. **Here is the possibility of salvation.** Here is where prayer, work, invitations, cards, letters, visits, circumstances, grace, sovereignty, the work of the HS all come to fruition. If you obey as Peter did, you will also do the right thing.

**I see this moment in the scripture as the same moment we are experiencing right now. The scripture is coming to life right in your hearing. Right now. This moment is happening. The scripture has left the page and is living.**

We are all here. We are in the presence of God. Are you listening to what God wants you to hear?

Sometimes I preach and as J.M. Boice says, *you think you are getting through, and you are not. Sometimes you think you are not and you are* – then there are times that I look out at you and I see God working – I hear him working – I feel God working – My spirit confirms His working.

**Quote:** “I call this grace in preaching... God makes it good.”

\* If it’s not good– God isn’t on the preacher. I love you enough that if God takes his hand off me, I will step aside.

I wish that every time I preach or share the Gospel that his presence would be there, my heart would be prepared and filled, that those who need a word would be filled and prepared, that sinners would be prepared and so humble they would listen to all God’s commands.

**Quote: Boice!** “When you go to church, do you want to receive a good message? If so, the best way is to come is with a prepared heart. I know that the preacher must be prepared too. But when God prepares the messenger as well as those who are to hear him,

then tremendous things happen, as they did in Caesarea in the household of Cornelius. (JM Boice p. 179 - Acts)

If I am correct, and I think I probably am... most of you didn't even prepare for the message today. I know many of you did. You asked God to reveal to you what you need to grow spiritually, to do evangelism, to help WBC, and to serve properly. Did you pray for a lost person or ask for a divine appointment this week?

God calls, God clarifies  
His grace is prevenient  
His grace is progressive.

Next week- I will share with you the **provisional grace** of God. It is converting or consummating.

### **Closing:**

All of this culminates into one thought as Peter gets ready to share this Gospel with this group.

In v. 34, he uses the word favoritism, the very fact that God does not show favoritism is why he can show us **favor (Grace)**.

Favor is another word for **Grace**. If God showed favoritism, we would all be lost! If he showed favoritism man would not get it.

### **Closing #2**

I draw your attention to verse 12 the KJV translates the Greek **ἐρπετὰ** - as creeping things. It is actually reptiles.

In his commentary on Acts – Ironside notes a special time at his father's death.

### **Illustration:**

Harry Ironside tells a personal story at this point. It concerns the death of his father. As his father was dying, he kept muttering something, and the family couldn't quite understand what it was.

But finally they got it. Mr. Ironside was thinking about this vision that Peter had and thinking about the sheet full of animals. He was saying, “A great sheet and wild beast and, and, and...” “He couldn’t quite finish it. A friend bent over and whispered, “John, it says, ‘creeping things’” (KJV).

“Oh yes,” he said. “That is how I got in. Just a poor good-for-nothing creeping thing, but I got in – saved by grace.”

**No favoritism. Even the creeping things found grace.**

