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On the day of Pentecost, God made available the gift of holy spirit for all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. This truth, however, was not fully understood in a practical sense until almost fifteen years later, when God sent Peter to the house of a devout Gentile, Cornelius. As we consider the record of Peter and Cornelius, we will see how God worked in Peter's life to help him understand that since the day of Pentecost, the barrier between Judeans and Gentiles was broken down. And what's more, it had become available for all who have a heart for God to receive the greatness of the new birth and to evidence the gift of the holy spirit—something that is still true today.

For us, it may not seem like an unusual occurrence for one believer to go to the house of another. However, Peter's going to Cornelius's house was an unprecedented and significant event. At the time of this record, there was a big obstacle that needed to be overcome in order for Peter to be willing to go to the house of Cornelius.

Acts 10:28:

And he [Peter] said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew [Judean] to keep company, or come unto one of another nation....

Before the day of Pentecost, it was unlawful (according to Old Testament law), for a Judean to keep company with or come into the home of someone from another nation. In the minds of Judeans at this time, they were still separated from Gentiles that had not first converted to Judaism. They did not yet fully understand that the new birth and inclusion in the new Church of Grace was available to all. They believed that even socializing with a Gentile was unlawful; to bring them into the Church was totally unthinkable.

To help Peter understand that this mind-set was no longer correct, God showed him in a vision declaring that what He had cleansed, Peter should no longer call common or unclean. God was preparing Peter to minister to a Gentile and his household, which was so contrary to the culture of the day.

God looks on the heart of every individual, and He wants all those who have a desire to receive the new birth to have the opportunity to do so. God looked on the heart of Cornelius, a devout Gentile man, who faithfully worshipped and prayed to God.

Acts 10:2:

A devout man [Cornelius], and one that feared [respected] God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.

However, Cornelius was not yet born again. So God set things in motion for Cornelius to meet the Apostle Peter by arranging for Peter to come to his home. God's objective for Peter's visit was for Cornelius and his household to become born again and operate the power of the holy spirit by speaking in tongues. When Peter arrived at Cornelius's house, he inquired as to why they had sent for him (Acts 10:29). Upon learning that Cornelius and all in his house were gathered to hear the Word of God, Peter began to teach them truths regarding the Lord Jesus Christ and the power of the holy spirit (Acts 10:33-43).

Acts 10:44-46:

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost [holy spirit] fell on all them which heard the word.

And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost [the gift from God].

For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God....

The result of Peter's preaching was that all present believed and received the new birth, and they evidenced holy spirit power by speaking in tongues. God's purpose had been accomplished! It was then known that the barrier between the Judeans and Gentiles was gone and that it was available for Judeans and Gentiles alike to receive the gift of holy spirit. Today we have the privilege to share the same truths with others. God will work in us to find those who have a heart for Him.

The record of Peter and Cornelius shows us that after the day of Pentecost, there was no longer separation between any who have a desire for the things of God. As the Searcher of hearts, God knew that Cornelius, a Gentile, and his household would believe, and He worked in Peter to bring them the truth of the new birth, breaking down a cultural barrier to do so. Just as Peter did for Cornelius, we can lead others into the new birth and into evidencing the gift of holy spirit by way of speaking in tongues.

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