

AM Acts 10 Peter's most important sermon

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 13 September 2026

Preacher: Mr David Murray

[0:00] God's Word. And the book of Acts, chapter 10. Okay.

Okay. At Caesarea, there was a man named Cornelius. A centurion of what was known as the Italian cohort.

A devout man who feared God with all his household. Gave arms generously to the people. And prayed continually to God. About the ninth hour of the day, he saw clearly in a vision.

An angel of God come to him and say to him, Cornelius. And he stared at him in terror and said, what is it Lord? And he said to him, your prayers and your arms have ascended as a memorial before God.

And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon, who is called Peter. He is lodging with one Simon, Atana, whose house is by the sea.

[1:47] When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him. And having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Peter. The next day as they were journeying and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray.

And he became hungry and he became hungry and wanted something to eat. But while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth.

And it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. And there came a voice to him, rise Peter, kill and eat. But Peter said, by no means Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.

And the voice came to him again and a second time, what God has made clean, do not call common. This happened three times and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

[3:02] Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might be, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate and called out and asked whether Simon, who was called Peter, was lodging there.

And while Peter was pondering the vision, the spirit said to him, Behold, three men are looking for you. Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them.

And Peter went down to the men and said, I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming? And they said, Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who was well spoken by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by the holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say.

So he invited them in to be his guests. The next day he rose and went away with them. And some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him.

And on the following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and he called together his relatives and close friends. When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshipped him.

[4:31] But Peter lifted him up saying, Stand up, I too am a man. And as he talked with them, he went in and found many, many persons gathered.

And he said to them, You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean.

So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I asked them, Why have you sent for me? And Cornelius said, Four days ago about this hour I was praying in my house at the ninth hour.

And behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing and said, Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your arms have been remembered before God.

Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon, who is called Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner by the sea. So I sent for you at once and you have been kind enough to come.

[5:37] Now therefore, we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord. So Peter opened his mouth and said, Truly, I understand that God shows no partiality.

But in every nation among who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ, he is Lord of all. You yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed. How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.

He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil. For God was with him and we are witnesses of all that he doth, both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem.

They put him to death by hanging him on a tree. But God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people, but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

[6:55] And he commanded us to preach to all the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judged of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles.

For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?

And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. For they asked him, then they asked him to remain for some days. We thank the Lord for his word to us this morning.

Let's pray together. The Apostle Peter's first sermon, as you recall, was on the day of Pentecost.

That day when the Holy Spirit came to the upper room.

[8:15] Peter came to the church and Peter came to the church and said, Peter would never have thought in a million years that he would be addressing a Gentile Roman soldier as his brother in Christ.

We cannot underestimate the importance of this episode, this chapter 10 written by Luke. The words of Jesus, I'm sure, would have been ringing in Peter's ears, all the disciples' ears.

That great commission which we all know by heart. Go into all the world and preach the gospel, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, of the Holy Spirit. And for Peter it starts with these two men.

These two men each see a vision. The Gentile soldier, Cornelius, he sees an angel. The apostle Peter, he sees a vision of a sheet full of animals that he's not allowed to eat.

Cornelius was stationed in Caesarea, a garrison city named after Augustus Caesar. Cornelius commanded a cohort of soldiers, a hundred soldiers from the Italian regiment.

[9:56] Now those who know a lot more than I do about these kind of things say that he is a kind of special soldier. He is an elite soldier and the troops that he's got from Italy are there especially to look after Caesar.

When Caesar is living in the palace there. It seems Cornelius has given up his false gods. And he is now a devout fearing man, a God fearing man.

Soldiers, all Roman soldiers or all soldiers who were dragged into the Roman army. They all carried small wooden gods.

They would sometimes carve them themselves or pay for them to be carved. But they all kept them on their uniforms or inside their tunics. And it's the same today.

I don't know if you know this. But soldiers are very, very superstitious people. Soldiers, when they go on tour. Recently, to Afghanistan or myself.

[11:07] When I joined the army. I was a Roman Catholic at the time. I didn't go. I didn't. It was just my birth faith. But my mother, before I went to Northern Ireland in 1972.

As a young 18 year old. She gave me something that would protect me. She said. And it was a set of rosary beads. And I faithfully took them. And I put them inside my combat jacket. And I would always touch them. Just to make sure they were there. It's just absolute superstition. I used to say to the soldiers when I was a scripture reader. When I gave out Bibles. I gave out in 13 years probably. I don't know. My thousands of Bibles. And they would always say. Davey. Davey. I'm just going to put that inside my jacket. And I say. Look. A bullet will come. And it will go straight through the Bible. And it will go into your heart. [12:08] And kill you. You need to read it. And most of them. They would say. 10 years later. Look Davey. I've still got the wee Bible you gave me. And it would be brand new. It had never been opened. And so soldiers are very, very superstitious people. Cornelius. It seems has an influence among his own household. He prays regularly. He gives his money to the local synagogue. And all in all. It seems that. It seems that. Cornelius. Is a good guy. He's a good guy. He goes to church. He prays. And he puts his money. Into the church. And. Some might call Cornelius. A seeker. But at the moment. He's not. A Christian. He's not saved. Perhaps. I don't know. Perhaps. Deep down. He knows. [13:05] That there's something missing. I think. A lot of people think that. When they. Maybe get a bit older. There's just something. It's just not quite right. Perhaps. Deep down in his heart. He knows. That he's. That he's missing something. Even although he's gone to this church. He's gone to the synagogue. And so he prays continually. It's wonderful. His persistent prayers. Have pleased the Lord. And now. The Lord. Acknowledges his prayers. By sending. An angel. Cornelius. Is it all in all. Good man. He's a good guy. Why is that not enough? You know. When you. Talk to people. Most people. You talk to. Most people. Will say. Well I believe in God. I believe in God. I'll say. Well that's. That's. Good. What God? That's my next question. What God? Well God. God. And they really don't know. [14:07] What God. They believe in. Most of the people. Outside of church. Life. And so they don't know. So why is it not good enough? It's not good enough. Because. It's Jesus. It's. It's Jesus. Jesus. Who saves us. Through his death. And through his blood. And there are many. Many. Good. We use that word loosely. Many. Many. Good. People. Enthusiastic. Church members. Who pray. Give her their time. Give her their money. Just like. Cornelius. They're not saved. So I can testify to that. I'd be one of them. At one time. I went to church. When I met my wife Kay. And. I only went because she. [15:09] Told me. She never asked me. She would just tell me. And I went. And I sat. And when people stood up. To sing. I would stand up. To sing. And when they sat down. I would sit down. And. All I thought about was. I could be somewhere else. At the moment. One of the examples. Of this. Is the Pharisees. They are over. Enthusiastic. Church members. They gave. And they even. Gave a tenth of their herbs. From the garden. They prayed. In public. One lovely Pharisee. A lovely man. We know his name. Nicodemus. A good man. A really good man. A good. All in all good man. He ticked all the boxes. For being good. And yet. He was a poor lost soul. He did all the church. That required of him. And yet. [16:07] He was not in the kingdom of God. He didn't even know. What the kingdom of God. Looked like. He didn't understand it. He was a poor soul. And yet. He. He was a. Church goer. And Jesus. Used. Nicodemus. To tell the whole world. Jesus. Used. Nicodemus. To tell the whole world. That you must be born again. You must be born. By the spirit of God. There is more than just. Taking up a seat. In church.

There is more than just. Giving. Unless a man. Is born again. He will not see the kingdom of heaven.

I've got three sisters. And they are. Lovely people. I love them. As you would. Your sisters. You'd hope.

[17:03] I have tried. To speak to them. About this. And every time. I try. In fact. I have to be very honest.

With you. And say. I've given up. I've given up. Because it's just. A big. Fallout. I've tried. To speak to neighbours. And my neighbours now. Not them all. My neighbours now. Have. Totally. Rejected.

Me. And my wife. As. As neighbours. And all I said was. And this is to people. Who go to church. You need to be born again.

That's all I said. And since then. It's. It's not backfired on me. By any means. But it's changed.

[18:01] Things have changed. God's eternal plan. Of salvation. God. Must. Intervene. And when he does intervene. That's.

By the grace of God. When people cry out. Have mercy upon me. A sinner. God's answers.

Cornelius' prayer. By sending. The apostle Peter.

Although Cornelius. Was accepted. By the Jews. Probably because. Of his generosity. Although he was an outsider. He was still a Gentile.

It's hard for us. To understand the gulf. It's hard for us. To grasp the gulf. Between. Jews. Then. And Gentiles. It was bred into the Jew.

It was bred into the Jew. From birth. To hate the Gentiles. The Jews believed. And rightly believed.

[19:01] That God. Had favoured them. So much. That everybody else. Who wasn't a Jew. Were just dogs. The Jews. Were so full of racial pride.

And hatred. They developed. A tradition. To keep them apart. No orthodox Jew. Would ever enter. The house of a Gentile. Even a God fearing Gentile.

And even the wonderful. Apostle Peter. He would be brought up. To despise Jews. To despise Gentiles. And here he is. On his way. To a Gentile house.

Something. Had to happen. Not just these two men. To be in the same room. But for their hearts. To be together. For their hearts.

To be together. Something had to happen. You see. Cornelius. Needs to be converted. And there is a sense. I think. I believe. There is a sense.

[20:03] Peter needs to change. He needs to change. His mind. And he has changed his mind. Through the vision. And so.

A God. Centered. Change of heart. In both of these men. Peter. So. Peter is staying. With a. Converted Jew. Named Simon. Simon.

The Tanner. Simon. How do we know he was a Jew? Well. His name is Simon. And he has had a complete change of heart. He is now a Tanner.

Before. Before he was converted. He wouldn't be able to touch. Animal flesh. But now he is. He is a changed man. And Peter is in his house.

Which leads to the vision. That Peter has. The Lord brings a sheep full of animals. To Peter. The law forbade him. To eat what was in the sheep. And he was a good Jew. He obeyed the law.

[21:00] And he did not eat the food. But. In the vision. God commands Peter. To kill. And eat. What God has made clean. Do not call. Common.

This is. This is a massive turning point. In the life of Peter. It's huge. And the life of the new church. Verse 17. No wonder. Peter is perplexed.

That's an understatement. Peter was perplexed by the vision. The vision changes everything. The vision is verified by the Holy Spirit.

Verse 19. God was working in both men. Simultaneously. At the same time. The same Holy Spirit. At work in the hearts. Of both of these men.

Peter made. The 30 mile journey. From Joppa. Up to Cornelius. Where he lived. And the 10 of them.

[21:54] There was 10 of them. Jews and Gentiles. Walking together. I just wonder how that went. These Jews and Gentiles. Walking along together. And as they were making their way.

Cornelius was gathering his family. And friends into the house. I wonder. If Peter. Was like me. Nervous. Going to a new place.

And he got to the house. As he crossed the threshold. He's greeted by the man of the house. I'm not the man of the house. My wife's the man of the house. She wears the trousers. You know. People say. Well my name's on the outside of the door. But I wonder if Peter. Was nervous. As he crossed the threshold. Of the house of Cornelius. And the shock. And the shock. As Cornelius greets him. And bows down before Peter. Just days before.

[22 : 51] A lady called Dorcas. Chapter 936. Had died. And Peter prayed for her. And she became alive. She opened her eyes. That was only days before this.

This episode. And I was just thinking. Peter has just prayed over a dead woman. And she's became alive. That could have really went to Peter's head.

When you think about it. Peter might have said to himself. I'm the man. I am Peter. The apostle. I have just raised.

He could have said that. He could have. But he didn't. That incident could have went to his head. But Peter knew who he was. He's a sinner saved by grace.

And a humble servant of God. And with a house full of people. Peter introduced himself. I asked then.

[23 : 53] Why have you sent for me. Those standing before Peter. Men. Women. And boys and girls. Ready. They've gathered there.

For one reason. They want to hear. What Peter has to say. They come. In anticipation. They come with ears.

To hear. I wonder this morning. Another Sunday. Another. Church service.

I wonder if you came. In anticipation. I wonder if you came prepared. I wonder if you prayed.

This morning. For the preacher. Who needs all the prayers. That he can get. Before I was converted.

[24 : 57] I. As I said. I went to church. Church. Not prepared. No anticipation. To hear. The word of God. And so.

I think. It sounds like. They were. The perfect congregation. They came in anticipation. They came to hear. The word of God. Preached. I think.

Every. Minister. Would. Appreciate. If. Somehow. He knew. That his congregation. Had came. In anticipation. To hear.

The word of God. Imagine. A friend. That you know. Not to be a Christian. And invites you. Into their house. That's happened to me. When I was a scripture reader.

Invited. Into someone's house. A South African guy. Him and his wife. He was brought up. In the church. In South Africa. There was a. When I was a scripture reader. There was lots of South Africans.

[25 : 58] In Edinburgh. South Africans. Fijians. Africans. I found. The South Africans. Were. More. Church.

Scholars. Than. Being born again. Perhaps. So. I was invited. Into someone's house. And later on. They came to a Bible study.

And. Both of them. Were converted. Big Harry. His wife's name was. Dandelion. Lovely couple. So. Verse 34.

Peter. Starts. His sermon. The first sermon. Exclusively. To Gentiles. And he starts. By telling the folks. That he has learned.

Something new. That there is no. Partiality. God shows. No. Favouritism. God. Shows. No. Favouritism. Doesn't matter who you are.

[26 : 52] Where you come from. What colour you are. What your background is. What you've done. What you've done. From now on.

Peter will not judge people. For who they are. Race. Nationality. Or class. Because it says there. In. In the. Brackets.

Jesus. Is Lord of all. It might be. Hard for us. To grasp the enormity. Of this occasion. The Gentiles. Being taken. Into the church of God.

The new covenant. The new testament. The new covenant. The barrier. Between Jew and Gentile. Was. About to come down. Cornelius.

Gentile. Status. Was acceptable. So. There was no need for him. To be a Jew. To become a Jew. Like Peter. Peter.

[27 : 51] Peter starts his sermon. As he preaches Jesus. In these. In this text. From verse 34. To verse. 43.

Jesus. Preaches. Peter. Preaches. Jesus. He preaches. The life of Jesus. He preaches. The death of Jesus. Jesus.

He preaches. The resurrection of Jesus. And he preaches. Jesus coming back. Again. Peter starts. With the life of Jesus.

And his baptism. How Jesus. Was anointed. Not like one of the kings of old. With oil. But with the Holy Spirit.

With the power. Of the Holy Spirit. The gospel. A simple. Simple. Gospel. Message. About Jesus.

[28 : 51] Nothing else. So when you're in Tesco's. Or. Wherever you are. And you meet an old friend. And. They say. How's things?

Well. Yeah. Things are going well. Still involved with the church. So I didn't know you were involved with the church. Yeah. Yeah. I've been a Christian quite a while. You know. Well. How did you become a Christian? Well. Jesus. There you are.

That was just a wee lesson. In. Very. Basic. Evangelism. The life of Jesus. Well. Tell me about the life of Jesus. Well. He was born of a virgin.

In a stable in Bethlehem. I've heard about that. That's something to do with Christmas. Well. Sort of. He grew up to be a man. And guess what? He was a man.

But at the same time. He was fully God and fully man. Oh really? Well. He was fully God and fully man. He couldn't sin. He wasn't sin. He never. He never sinned.

[29 : 47] Not like us. We're both sinners. Sure we are. Well. I suppose we are. And then he tells them about the death of Jesus. And uses.

Language that we don't use. He was. He was nailed to the tree. We don't use that kind of language. We say he was. He was crucified on the cross. But Peter uses the word tree.

And there's a reason he uses the word tree. Because in the Old Testament. Being crucified on the tree meant. You were a traitor. You were. You were a convicted man. Of course we know that Jesus wasn't a convicted man.

He died for us. And so. He talks about. The death of Jesus. That's quite a thing isn't it?

That Jesus died for me. For me. He died for me. Especially for me. On the cross.

[30 : 51] He had me in mind. When my sin. Which I hadn't sinned in. Before the foundation of the world. He died for me. He died to set me free.

He died to rescue me. From God's wrath and hell. He did that for me. What a wonderful Jesus we have.

And so he talks about the. Death of Jesus. And he talks about the resurrection of Jesus. How Jesus rose from the dead. He was crucified on the Friday. And he rose bodily.

Have to say that. There are many many people. Who call themselves Christians. Who don't believe in the bodily. Resurrection of Jesus. They say that he rose spiritually. He was spirit.

Not true. He rose from the dead bodily. And he is still bodily. Incredibly. In heaven. Sometimes.

[31 : 51] When I go to my bed at night. And I put my head on a pillow. I can't quite. Get my head around that. But it's true. Jesus. Rose from the dead bodily. Ascended up to heaven bodily.

And he is still there. Bodily. He is fully man. And fully God. Nothing will change for Jesus. In all eternity. He will be a man.

When we see him. And he is waiting for the trumpet call. There is going to be a day.

And we don't know when that day will be. There is going to be a day when a trumpet will sound. And that will be the cue. I say that loosely.

For Jesus. To come back. For his church. For you and I. If you are in that church. This morning.

There is a lot that Peter said that day.

[32 : 51] We don't have it here. He will tell you how he knew Jesus. How Jesus calmed the storm. How Jesus fed the 4,000 and 5,000.

How Jesus touched the leper and he was healed. How Jesus touched dead bodies and they rose.

How Jesus was just a wonderful man.

How Jesus touched the leper. And so this is the sermon that Peter preaches to the people in the house of Cornelius.

And what's the reaction? You see there has to be a reaction. There has to be a reaction.

And this is wonderful. Verse 44. Mid-sentence. Preaching his heart out. Jesus.

[33:58] Life. His death. His resurrection. While Peter was still saying these things. The Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers.

Those who came with Peter. Were amazed. Well you would be. This is a house full of Gentiles. Peter preached.

The gospel. Faithfully. Life. Death. Resurrection of Jesus. Jesus. And he testified. That he would return one day and be judge of all.

And when the people heard it. The Holy Spirit came. On the 27th of September 1997.

Having never read a page of the Bible. Having only been to church because I was told to go. The Holy Spirit. Came into my life. I left that.

[35:03] Port Glasgow Salvation Army. A free man. A free man. The Holy Spirit fell on all who heard.

But you see. Peter didn't try and coax them. Peter didn't try and coax them. He didn't try and put pressure on them.

He didn't say. Say this prayer. Put your hand up and say this prayer. And while I'm saying this prayer. Close your eyes. In fact everyone close your eyes. Didn't say that.

All he did was preach the word. You see. God alone gives the spirit to us. The giving is the act of God's authority. His grace, love and mercy to poor sinners.

Sending the Holy Spirit. It's the same sending as Jesus has sent to save us from our sins. It's the same sending. He sends the Holy Spirit. It's all the work of God.

[36:05] The ministry of the gospel. Which is to be born again. The ministry of the Holy Spirit. The promise of the Holy Spirit. The fulfillment of the prophet Joel. Which Peter preached on the day of Pentecost.

Right there. In the house of Cornelius. How wonderful. Every good that we receive from God. Comes through the ministry.

Of the Holy Spirit. Through the ministry. Of the Holy Spirit. That we have faith. Faith to believe. Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

We have obedience. Towards God. The Father. It's through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. That we are holy. Striving for holiness.

Every day. As soon as we get up. As soon as we open our eyes. Striving for holiness that day. The Bible tells us.

[37:04] That without holiness. No one. Will see heaven. Not perfection. At all. We all know that. Jesus himself. Tells us to pray.

And ask the Father. For the Holy Spirit. Luke 11.13. We need the Holy Spirit. To enable us. To live the Christian life. Why? Because we are weak.

We are sinners. Saved by grace. We are so weak. If you are anything like me. You are weak. And the Spirit enables us. While the flesh is weak.

And if Jesus himself. In the baptism. Jesus. The Son of God. In his baptism. Is anointed by the Holy Spirit. How much do we need.

The Holy Spirit. To bring us. To completion. When finally. We die. Or the Lord comes back. We need him.

[38:01] Every day. We need to be praying. To the Holy Spirit. That he would help us. As we face this. Sin cursed world. As we face opposition. To the gospel message.

We need the Holy Spirit. And here is something wonderful. Peter declared. Now this is Peter. Born a Jew. Brought up a Jew. Can anyone withhold water. For baptizing these people. Listen to Peter. Talking about baptism.

Circumcision has gone for him now. He's totally changed. You could just imagine him standing there.

Maybe he's standing on a chair or something. I don't know. Can anyone withhold water. For baptizing these people. Who have received the Holy Spirit.

[39:01] What a day. Friends. What a day for Cornelius. And his household. And for Peter. How important it is to be born again.

How important it is to be born. By the Spirit of God. By the Holy Spirit. Not just to be a God fearer. Not just to be a church goer. But to be a Christian. To be saved. To know God. And to love him. For all that he's done for us. And we thank the Lord for his word. To us this morning. Let's pray. Father. Thank you for your word. Lord.

I pray that as. My. Poor. Pathetic words. Bumbling. Stumbling words. I pray Holy Spirit. That you'll add your power to them.

[39 : 59] And anyone here this morning. Who. At this point in their lives. Is not born again. By the Spirit of God. Lord. Would you speak to them. Would they open their hearts.

Their minds to them. The message of the gospel. And cry out. Have mercy upon me a sinner. We pray this in Jesus name. Amen.