

Theme: As You Are Going: The Church on Mission (Mt 28:16-20)

Title: – THE Fulfillment - Acts 10:24-48

Aim: W/out fulfillment, a vision is empty; it takes obedience, & God.

Intro: I'm always impressed by & jealous of those who can envision something & then build it or create it. An architect's design/blueprints become a house, or whatever. A coach's offensive or defensive design can become a successful, scoring play or the defensive stopping of an offense. Of course, every vision must be fleshed out, every design put together piece by piece. It takes work to bring a vision to fulfillment. Last week we read of THE vision given to Peter by God, which would change/shape Christianity forever. The vision was of the gospel going not just to the Jews but also the Gentiles, so that all the world could receive the good news of Jesus Christ. God gave a vision to Cornelius, a Roman centurion, to send from Caesarea to Joppa for Peter & request that he come & tell them what he had to say, which was simply the gospel. The God gave THE vision to Peter of a sheet filled w/all kinds of animals being lowered down from heaven. He was told to kill & eat, but Peter immediately replied, "No! I've never eaten anything unclean or common." God said to him, "What God has made clean, do not call common." The message wasn't about food (tho it applies) but about people. God the Holy Spirit told Peter that there would be 3 men looking for him & he was to go w/them w/out hesitation, making no distinction. God was changing Peter's heart toward non-Jews. God wanted the gospel to go forth to all. But what if Peter had said, "No!"? What if he had stubbornly stayed on that rooftop? What if he had said, "Gentiles? I don't care about Gentiles!" Yes, God could have, probably would have carried out His purpose thru someone else or by another means, but so much for THE vision God gave Peter. Theme: As you are going: the Church on mission. For Peter to witness/experience the

fulfillment of THE vision God gave him, he had to obey & it would take some work by both Peter & God. Acts 10:24-48 [READ]. As we walk thru this passage, there are some key points to consider & key points w/in the key points. 1) **As Peter obeyed & went, God went before him.** W/out distinction & w/out hesitation Peter went w/the 3 men from Caesarea. It's interesting that "some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him." These brothers were evidently interested in why Peter was going to Caesarea. He probably told them of the vision & they wondered what it was all about. They probably also were concerned for Peter, who had already been arrested w/John. Persecution had begun to be widespread. Maybe it was a ruse, getting Peter to come to Caesarea so they might arrest him, or worse. Maybe these men planned to attack him on the way. These brothers were curious bodyguards, the Holy Spirit moving them to go w/Peter. He needed witnesses of what was about to happen. The Holy Spirit also moved Cornelius to expect Peter to come (because God arranged it all) & to invite family & friends to gather to hear what he might have to say, which Cornelius didn't really know; he just knew it would be good. A key point: It's been said that 70-80% of people who attend church started attending after being invited by a relative or friend. Who have you invited to church lately? Some folks are waiting for your invitation. When Peter entered Cornelius' house, it seemed that Cornelius was a little star-struck. He "fell down at his feet & worshipped him." Peter, taken aback, said in essence, "Whoa! Don't do that! Get up! I'm just a man like you." Interesting that he didn't say "I'm a better man, but I'm not God." Another key point: sharing the gospel is just one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread. Peter needed Jesus just as much as Cornelius. We all need Jesus. Those who share the gospel are not better than those w/whom they share. It's just a matter of giving to someone what someone gave you – the truth about Jesus & salvation thru faith in Him. Peter wanted Cornelius & the

others to know that this was as new to him as it was to them. He wasn't used to associating w/Gentiles, let alone Roman soldiers. It was against Jewish law, & Peter was a good Jew. But Peter shared w/them what God showed him – don't know if he shared the vision he had or not, but the message he got from God was clear: "I should not call any person common or unclean. Another key point: God doesn't make junk. We make a mess of things, but God doesn't make junk. Whosoever will to the Lord may come. No one's too far gone that God can't save them. "So," Peter said, "here I am. Why did you send for me?" He still hadn't gotten the full picture, but he knew that God wanted him there at Cornelius' house. Cornelius related to Peter & the others from Joppa the vision God gave him, w/the angel, instructing him to send to Joppa for Peter & ask him to come. "God wants you to tell us something & we're ready to hear it." II) **So, Peter went to work –he preached the gospel.** Peter said, "I understand now that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears Him & does what is right is acceptable to Him" - which means He doesn't discriminate or prefer one person/group over another. Now, we know that God raised up the nation of Israel & set them apart, in order to bring Jesus into the world thru the Jews. So. there's a sense in which God preferred Israel, but only for the purpose of accomplishing atonement/redemption thru Christ. However, in regards to the recipients of that redemption, God intended all along that all who believe, Jew & Gentile alike, would receive salvation in Jesus' name. But what does it mean to "fear God & do what is right?" That smacks of works salvation, doesn't it? No, not if you consider the rest of Scripture. To fear God is to reverence Him, which certainly involves faith in Him. And what is doing right in God's sight? **Hebrews 11:6** tells us that "***W/out faith it is impossible to please [God], for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists & that He rewards those who seek Him.***" If anyone would draw near to

God, he/she must come thru Jesus, who said, ***“I am the way, & the truth, & the life. No one comes to the Father except thru Me”*** (John 14:6). Romans 1:5 & 16:26 speaks of “the obedience of faith.” If you want to please God & do what is acceptable to Him; if you truly reverence God, then you must embrace His Christ by faith. That’s a major key point! Then Peter spoke of “the good news of peace thru Jesus Christ” (peace w/God). He spoke of Jesus as “Lord of all” (including Cornelius & his invitees). He spoke of Jesus’ life during His 3-1/2 years of earthly ministry, beginning w/His baptism, how He was anointed by God the Father “w/the Holy Spirit & w/power,” working miracles of healing & deliverance. “We are witnesses to all He did.” He spoke of how the Jewish & Roman authorities crucified Jesus, but “God raised Him on the 3rd day & made Him appear...to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate & drank w/Him after He rose from the dead.” He told them how Jesus commanded/commissioned them to testify that Jesus is the Christ, “appointed by God to be Judge of the living & the dead.” And then the climax of his message: “Everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins thru His name.” Everyone needs to know that Jesus is Lord, that He is God’s Messiah, revealing God to us & making reconciliation w/God possible by dying on the cross for our sins & being raised from death as victor over sin & death for us. Everyone needs to know that tho we are guilty of sin & enemies of God, thru faith in Christ we receive forgiveness & eternal life. III) **God was already at work.** He was at work thru Peter but also in the hearts of Cornelius & those gathered. The Holy Spirit created faith in their hearts & they believed in Christ. He “fell on all who heard the word.” That was evidenced by their “speaking in tongues & extolling God,” showing that “the Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles,” as He was poured out on the believing Jews at Pentecost. God was making no distinction, but working in their hearts as He had worked in the others before. The

Jewish believers w/Peter were amazed. Peter didn't miss a beat, but said, "let's baptize these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have!" That was but the initial fulfillment of THE vision God gave Peter, & here we are, Gentile believers who have received the gospel message & believed in Christ, all because Peter & others throughout history have obeyed & done the work God has called each of us to do. THE vision has been passed down to us as well, but w/out fulfillment, the vision is empty. The commission is the same – go make disciples – w/purpose & intentionality. The message is the same – Jesus is Savior/Lord; believe in Him & have life in His name. We must obey & do the work, knowing that God will go before us & be already at work. He is still in the redemption business – His work, but we're His partners by design. As we are going, let's be a church on mission.