

## Who Gets God's Grace?

### An Incredible Story You Have to Hear:

Acts 10

### Two Things We Can Learn from Cornelius' Conversion:

Acts 10:1-6, 30-33

- 1 We should always pray for **MORE**, and never be **SATISFIED** with our spiritual walk.
- 2 We need to come to God's Word with a **HUNGER** to **LEARN** and a **COMMITMENT** to **OBEY** it.

### Three Things We Can Learn from Peter's Conversion:

Acts 10, Acts 1:8, 2 Peter 3:9

- 1 If God is putting **SOMEONE** on our heart, He is probably **WORKING** on their heart.
- 2 We can't expect to walk in the **SPIRIT** until we are willing to walk where the **SPIRIT** leads.
- 3 "I fear for the **SALVATION** of anyone who does not fear for the **SALVATION** of someone."

# Food for Thought

For the week of July 19, 2020

(Questions and Scriptures for further study & discussion)

*In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have adjusted the Food for Thought format so the questions can be used for group discussion as well as personal study and reflection.*

## WHAT'S YOUR HIGHLIGHT?

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or something that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

## WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

This weekend, we learned the story of Cornelius and his conversion. He started as a devout and God-fearing man who gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly, and along the way he found genuine salvation in Christ and became filled with the Holy Spirit. From Cornelius' example, which of the following disciplines from his life would be easiest and which would be hardest for you to engage in:

- Genuinely seek God's guidance and direction in your prayers.
- Become more disciplined in your study, leading and encouraging others to do the same.
- Invite one of your non-believing friends or family members to check out the messages at North Coast.
- Open your heart and mind to new ways that challenge you and help you to grow.
- Treat those who are currently outside your circle with genuine care and respect.

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. Our calling from the Lord – to share the Gospel with others – can sometimes be difficult to be consistently obedient. It can be made a bit easier when someone comes to us and asks us to tell them about Jesus, as in this week's story of Peter and his role in the conversion of Cornelius and his family. But what about the people who have either harmed us, betrayed us, mistreated us or are simply so wicked we don't believe they deserve God's forgiveness? Looking at the five disciplines listed above in "What's Your Story," what is a step you can take that will help to change your attitude to reflect a willingness in sharing God's love with these people?

Let's review the story of Jonah, but this time focusing on the part of the story we didn't learn about in Sunday school. It takes place after God had shown compassion on Nineveh – just as Jonah feared He might.

### **Jonah 4: 1-11 New International Version (NIV)**

But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. <sup>2</sup> He prayed to the LORD, "Isn't this what I said, LORD, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. <sup>3</sup> Now, LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live."

<sup>4</sup> But the LORD replied, "Is it right for you to be angry?"

<sup>5</sup> Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. <sup>6</sup> Then the LORD God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. <sup>7</sup> But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. <sup>8</sup> When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."

<sup>9</sup> But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

"It is," he said. "And I'm so angry I wish I were dead."

<sup>10</sup> But the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. <sup>11</sup> And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?"

What made Jonah so angry?

Is there an area in your life where you are angry with God because He hasn't responded as you had wanted?

The story of the plant teaches us that God reserves the right to be compassionate to *all* people, even those we think don't deserve His compassion.

Has there ever been a person or group who falls into this category for you?

What did they do to make you feel that way?

Do you still feel that way about them?

What makes it so hard for us to get past our hurt?

Is there somebody you know who's been severely mistreated and lived to forgive their oppressor?

2. One person who learned to have compassion and forgiveness for someone who could have been thought to be beyond God's compassion was Christian author and speaker Corrie Ten Boom. Here is her story:

*Corrie and her sister Betsie were confined in a Nazi concentration camp during World War II because they were caught concealing Jews. Corrie survived 10 months of inhuman and humiliating treatment at the hands of the Nazi guards, but her sister died because of the brutal conditions. After the end of the war, Corrie traveled the world telling the story of God's faithfulness during her imprisonment.*

*After one of her messages, a man approached her who she immediately recognized as one of the more brutal guards at the concentration camp. He identified himself as a former guard and then told her he had become a Christian since that time. He went on to share how he had experienced God's forgiveness for all the cruel things he had done there.*

*Now he was standing in front of her, his hand extended, asking for her forgiveness as well.*

If you were Corrie Ten Boom, how do you think you would have felt, or what would have been your thoughts at that moment?

### **The Rest of the Story (as told by Corrie in her book "The Hiding Place")**

*"And I stood there – I whose sins had every day to be forgiven and yet, I could not [forgive him]. Betsie had died in that place – could he erase her slow, terrible death simply by asking?*

*I had to do it – I knew that. The message that God forgives has a prior condition: that we forgive those who have injured us. I knew it not only as a commandment of God, but as a daily experience. Since the end of the war I had had a home in Holland for victims of Nazi brutality. Those who were able to forgive their former enemies were also able to return to the outside world and rebuild their lives, no matter what the physical scars. Those who nursed bitterness remained invalids. It was as simple and as horrible as that.*

*And still I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is not an emotion – I knew that too. Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart. 'Jesus, help me!' I prayed silently. 'I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling.'*

*And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. As I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes.*

*'I forgive you, brother!' I cried. 'With all my heart.'*

*For a long moment we grasped each other's hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. I had never known God's love so intensely as I did then."*

What stands out to you about this story?

How do you think it was possible for Corrie to extend forgiveness to someone who represented so much evil and hatred?

What do you think took place in Corrie's life prior to this encounter that allowed her to want to extend forgiveness and compassion to the guard at that moment?

Is there someone in your life who has either harmed, betrayed or mistreated you? If so, what steps might you take this week to begin to have compassion on them as God does?

If you'd like to view a short video of Corrie telling her story, check [out this YouTube link: https://youtu.be/p7x27AQ8gks](https://youtu.be/p7x27AQ8gks)



## NORTH COAST SUMMER SERIES & CLASSES

Check out our website for updates as more details! [northcoastchurch.com/classes](http://northcoastchurch.com/classes)

### ***Summer Study Series***

We have three incredible virtual events lined up this summer by each of our teaching pastors! You will be able to watch these free classes as they stream at the times listed below on our Facebook page and YouTube Channel. They will also be available on our website on the dates listed below so you can view them when convenient. No registration required.

- **Is God Evil?** with Pastor Christopher Hilken, Friday, August 14 at 7pm
- **An Open Conversation About RACE, Part 1** with Pastor Chris Brown, now available to watch at [northcoastchurch.com/conversations](http://northcoastchurch.com/conversations)
- **The Only Legacy That Really Matters: Parenting for the Long-Haul** with Dr. Larry Osborne, now available to watch at [northcoastchurch.com/legacy](http://northcoastchurch.com/legacy)

### ***Summer Classes – Register for these classes online at [northcoastchurch.com/classes](http://northcoastchurch.com/classes)***

We are putting together a great collection of virtual classes and webinars on a variety of topics that will be offered throughout the summer. Here are some of the classes we have planned:

- **Parents of Young Kids Parenting through Pandemic:** Wednesday, July 22
- **Parents of Teens Parenting through Pandemic:** Thursday, July 23
- **A Conversation about Marriage:** Friday, July 31
- **Self-Leadership:** Thursday, August 6

Check our website for more details on classes.



### ***Summer Connection Intro Life Groups***

New to North Coast or never been in a Life Group? Curious what being part of a Life Group is all about? Our last week of Summer Connection Intro Life Groups is this **Thursday, July 23**. This is a great opportunity to find out what Life Groups are like with minimum commitment. You can still register at [northcoastchurch.com/classes](http://northcoastchurch.com/classes)