Elements of Effective Evangelism (Part 2)

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[0:00] We have been studying the book of Acts.

We've been in chapter 10, and we've been going through now the conversion of Cornelius. And we've taken our time as we've gone through that.
If you remember a couple weeks ago that we began discussing the elements of effective evangelism as we see present in Peter's witness to Cornelius and to those whom Cornelius gathered in his house that day as the gospel first came to the Gentiles who would believe it.
So I'm going to read verses 34 through 43, and I want you to know that tonight we will cover verses 34 through 36.
So this is the second part of what will be, I don't know, more parts. We'll see as we go. So if you have your Bible, turn to Acts 10. I'm going to read, again, verses 34 through 43.
[1:11] So Peter opened his mouth and said, Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone 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 did, 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.
And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge 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.
[2:24] I want you to think for a moment that if you knew that your time on this earth was limited, say you found out that you had just a few months to live, I want you to seriously think about this.

What would take top priority in your life? If you knew that you only had a few months to live, what would take top priority in your life?
I know that for me, as I thought about that question as a younger man, my greatest concern would be for my family, would be for my wife and for my children. And I'd want to make sure that I took that time to communicate to them how much that I loved them and what my desire would be for them after my departure, how I would want them to continue on.
I would want to set everything straight as much as I could. I would want to put everything in order so that when that time came, they would be prepared as possible for it. Before Jesus left this world, having resurrected from the grave, he expressed his desire to his followers, his friends, who were also his precious children.
He wanted them to know that he would be with them always. He wanted them to know how he expected them to continue on before they would meet again, either in their death or in his second coming.
[3:51] And so in Matthew 28, 18 through 20, the Great Commission, we have that word from our Lord as far as what he expects his followers to do between the time of our either going to be with him or his coming to take us to himself.

Matthew 28, 18 through 20 says, And Jesus came to them after his resurrection. He said, So again, going back to my earlier illustration, if that was you and you had left that kind of instruction for your loved ones, especially your children, and you were to be able to somehow see that that instruction

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had been either ignored or disobeyed, how would that make you feel?
Well, I think at the very least it would break your heart, wouldn't it? When the Lord looks upon this section of his body, his church in the United States of America, and takes into consideration what his final command for his followers to be, what was for them to do, what do you think that he sees? And how do you think that he feels about how seriously we've taken his words and his final instruction to go and make disciples of all nations everywhere?
In fact, to make it more personal, if he was to speak to you directly right now, and if he was to ask you, Have you been sharing the gospel?
[5:45] Have you been discipling and teaching others to obey me? How much of yourself, how much of your time, your talents, your treasures, have you been pouring into this if he asked?

How would you answer? How would you respond? How would you respond? I think for many of us, we'd probably act like my eighth grade science class did when our teacher was absent for a week. And I'll never forget how he stood up in front of the class and he was adamant that we behave while he was gone. That we act as if he was still in the room, though he wouldn't be.
That we would study just as hard, that we would participate just as much, and that we respect the substitute teacher as if the substitute was him.
When he came back, he began class, I'll never forget, by holding up a note. And he told us that in his hand was a note from the substitute.
[6:49] But, he said, before I will read this note, I'm going to give you a chance to confess beforehand. And I remember we sat in awkward silence as he stood behind his desk and just kind of went back and forth, trying to catch our eyes and meet us eye to eye, which none of us wanted to do.

But before too long, that silence was broken as one student after another put up their hand and confessed to what they had done.
I stole marbles out of the cabinet. I wrote and I passed notes. I said I needed to go to the bathroom when really I just walked around the halls for about ten minutes.
I turned in my homework late and on and on and on it went. One by one. And about half the class, maybe more, confessed to things that the rest of us had no idea took place during that week, during his absence.
And finally, when the air had been cleared and everybody had gotten their sins off their chest, he read the note, which said, summarize, my memory is not that good, I can't totally remember, but Mr. King said, Mr. King, we covered these chapters, whatever those chapters were.
[8:10] The students learned these things, turned their assignments on these projects in, and overall, they were pretty well behaved. With that, he folded up the note, put it on his desk, and proceeded to teach the class.

And I say that because only you and the Lord know how seriously you've taken his final instruction to make disciples. Only you and only he know how serious you have been in obeying that command.
And may we, while we still have time, be found diligently, prayerfully, and seriously taking his instruction to heart. God has prepared Peter and Cornelius for this divine appointment, and we've covered that to this point.
Peter, we've seen, he will be the Lord's instrument to begin spreading the gospel to the nations. That would mean that it would go to the Gentiles, of which Cornelius was one. This group of people, who really incorporated all other groups of people besides the Jews, who had not yet heard and believed the gospel.
These people whom the Jews thought were beneath them were going to now be included as a part of God's people, as a part of God's church. Cornelius, we know, he feared God, that he prayed, that he gave to the synagogue, but in order to be saved, and despite whatever good works he had done, he had to hear the gospel.
[9:44] He had to believe in Jesus Christ in order to be saved, so that his sins could be forgiven, that he too could receive eternal life. And so, if you remember, Cornelius receives this vision from God, a messenger, an angel is sent to him that tells him to go and retrieve Peter and to bring him back, that he will tell him these good words, this good news concerning Jesus Christ.

And so, that has happened. And now we see that Peter is there, that they have entered Cornelius' house, and there they find that Cornelius has been busy during this time, where he sent this party to

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go retrieve Peter.
He has called upon his closest friends, he has gathered his relatives to come to be there when Peter arrives, that they would hear what God had to say to him.
So, the study, like the one from a couple weeks ago, is focused again on the elements of evangelism. The elements are present in Peter's witness to the Gentiles, who were gathered in Cornelius' house, and hopefully, again, as we take seriously our Lord's command to make disciples, they will be present as we share the good news of Jesus Christ when we give that witness as well.
So, the main idea for tonight's study is the same as last time, which is that the Lord desires that his disciples make more disciples.
[11:08] The Lord desires that his disciples make more disciples. To make more disciples, we must be willing to go, share, and teach those whom God brings to faith in Jesus Christ.

Whom God brings to faith in Jesus Christ. And so, last time, we covered the first two elements, which we'll go over here quickly, which is number one in your outline that's been provided to you, which is that we must have a submissive will.
A submissive will. And that point comes from verses 19 through 33, where if you remember, Peter, who is praying on the top of Simon the Tanner's house, receives a vision as well.
And in that vision, a blanket unfolds with clean and unclean animals, and he hears the words to kill and to eat, and he hears that repeatedly three times. He's perplexed by what he has heard.
And then at that moment, Cornelius' party is there, knocking on the door, asking for him. And so, all of this is going on, and he realizes that God is sending him with these men.
[12:16] And so, though he's perplexed, though he's not quite sure what God has in store as a result of this meeting, he didn't express any kind of indication that he preferred God to call someone else to go do it.

We don't have any word from Peter where he says, you know what? I know I've got, you know, 10 other guys that could be doing this, could be doing it just as well as me.
He didn't do that. He didn't ignore the vision that he saw or the people who visited to grab him. He didn't disobey the Lord's command. He was willing, and he made himself available to go, which meant that he dropped everything.
Whatever he had planned the rest of that day or that week, he was going to go. He had a submissive will. And so, we must too. If we're going to share the good news, if we are going to be disciples who make disciples, then we must have a submissive will as well.
We must be willing to go to the people whom God calls us to. We must be willing to share and open our mouths. Second element that we saw that was essential is a salvation presentation, verses 34 through 36, which we'll get into more in depth about what that salvation presentation includes tonight.
[13:28] So, when Peter arrived at Cornelius' house, he first, we see, established a rapport with him and those who had gathered. He asked Cornelius some questions about why he had been called there and he learned that it was God who had directed Cornelius to fetch him and bring him back.

Now, what the Lord had commanded him to do had become more clear. It was clearing up in Peter's mind that God was going to save these people, that God was going to save these Gentiles, these people whom the Jews, like Peter, had despised.
And now he understands that these people who they thought once were beyond the ability to be saved would become his brothers and his sisters in Christ. They would be his spiritual equals.
So, third now, the third element that we see here present in Peter's evangelism is to examine your audience. Examine your audience.
Have a submissive will. Give a salvation presentation as you do that. Examine your audience.
Verses 34 through 35. Again, it said, So Peter opened his mouth and said, Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.
[14:47] You'll know if you study the book of Acts as we've been doing that Peter's sermon here is unique amongst the other sermons recorded in this book.

Sermons that he gave, in fact. To this point, all of his other messages that Peter had given were delivered to a Jewish audience. But these, again, these are not Jewish people.

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Even still, this message differs in some ways from Paul's sermon to other Gentiles in Lystra in Acts chapter 14. One day get there in Athens when he was there in Acts chapter 17.
Not all Gentiles shared the same views and understandings of God. And so, some of these sermons that we'll see are different, at least in their introduction. In Athens, Paul, if you remember, was sharing the gospel with men who had a background in polytheism, the belief in many gods, and also philosophy.
So his approach was to point to an altar of an unknown god. God. That, if you remember, they had so many gods that they were afraid that maybe there's one that we've forgotten. And we don't want that god to take offense that we've forgotten him and we don't want that god to smite us as a result of that.
[15:59] So Paul used that as a doorway to begin to share to them the true god whom they were ignorant of, the true and one and only God. So God began, or so Paul began his address there by referring to that unknown god in order to reveal to them the one true and living God.

In this case, Peter came to the knowledge by asking questions as I've already talked about, by establishing a rapport with Cornelius' house and later with Cornelius himself that Cornelius, he understood, was a family of monotheists.
They believed in one god, that they worshipped and feared the god of the Jews. So it wasn't necessary for him to begin like Paul did with countering polytheistic views which the Gentiles, many of them, especially Romans, did have but not so with Cornelius and his family at least.
Peter's sermon at Cornelius' house basically followed the pattern of prior sermons to the Jews but with several significant differences. One is found at the very beginning when he stresses that God shows no favoritism, that he accepts people from every nation and again expressing that Jesus is Lord of all.
This emphasis here is on the universal gospel in particularly how it is suited for a message for Gentiles who thought that they were on the outside, who thought that they could not be saved, maybe, at least if they were like Cornelius understanding that he is not a Jew and had not converted to Judaism.
[17:37] Peter began by stating what the Lord had come to show him that God does not discriminate between persons based on their ethnicity or their social status or their prior religious observances.

Peter being a Jew knew that God had told Abraham that in him all the nations of the earth would be blessed. In fact, that promise is repeated four times in Genesis.
This meant that believers of all nations would claim Abraham as their spiritual father. Interestingly, in the sermon at Solomon's Colonnade in Acts chapter 3, Peter had quoted the words that God had spoken to Abraham when God said to him, and through your offspring all the families of the earth will be blessed.
But still, what's interesting is at that time, Peter had not fully understood or fathomed the depths of that divine promise. But now he is aware of it as he looks into the eager and attentive eyes of these Gentiles who have gathered in Cornelius' house whom he had been sent by God to preach the gospel to.
So, examine your audience means first gathering information about their beliefs. If you're going to be an effective evangelist, if you're going to effectively share the gospel, then you need to know the people whom you're talking to.
[19:03] You need to understand what their beliefs about God are. Do they believe in God? What do they believe about God? Do they believe in many gods?

Do they believe in no God at all? What are the circumstances that have brought you two together? It requires you examining all these things, asking them these questions and figuring that out.
Then you'll know where to start. Somebody who doesn't believe in God, you're going to start somewhere differently than somebody who does believe in God or somebody who has gone to church, someone who is familiar with the scriptures.
You're going to start in different places. Again, knowing these questions, knowing the answers to these questions will help you know where to begin. For those who don't believe in God, I'll tell you that the best question that I've found to ask people who say I don't believe in God is to ask them this question.
When or what happened in your life? what was it that made you believe that there was no God? When was it? What happened?

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[20:10] When was that time? Because, you know, I don't think that, you know, it's until your teenage years maybe where people start to really wrestle with that question. Maybe sooner. But you ask them, what was it?

When was it? What caused you to believe that God doesn't exist? Now, in verse 35, Peter makes a statement that unfortunately many have taken out of context.
If you read that verse, again, it says, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. If you read that without the surrounding context and without understanding the rest of Scripture and what it explicitly says, you could walk away from that a universalist.
Oh, I'm doing right. I'm doing good. God accepts me as a result of that. Well, we know that that's not true because, again, we're understanding the verse in context and we're understanding it compared to what the rest of Scripture says.
First of all, we know just from the context of this sermon in which Peter is preaching that Cornelius wasn't saved. If he was, again, if God had truly accepted him based upon his good deeds and the sincerity of his prayers, without his having expressed faith in Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior, then why would God send Peter to him at all?
[21:34] If he was saved, then there was no need for this meeting. There was no need for Peter to go and share the gospel. Secondly, if we keep on reading in verse 43, Peter explicitly says as a part of this message that everyone who believes in him, him being Jesus, receives forgiveness of sins through him.

So there is a clear, it's clear there that salvation comes through and only through Jesus Christ. You must believe in him in order to be saved.
What Peter is referencing here really is their eagerness for the truth. They are eager, they're striving, especially on the part of Cornelius to observe the law.
Peter is acknowledging the work that God has done beforehand in plowing up the earth and plowing their hearts in order for it to be ready and ripe for the seed of the gospel to be planted and then to take root in their heart and in their lives.
Again, salvation is of God. We are merely the messengers and sometimes as we go as messengers, we'll encounter eager listeners whose hearts have been pre-prepared by the Holy Spirit for us to come and share the good news with them.
[22:51] That's what's taking place here. So again, sometimes you'll encounter the eager, the Philippian jailer, you remember, will eventually get there. When he comes out, you know, and he's on his knees and he's pleading, what must I do to be saved?

Other times, we will encounter those who are disinterested or maybe show a little bit of interest. Again, going back to Paul in Athens, if you remember, after he went up to the Areopagus and he preached to them, some of them mocked him, yet still others said, we'll hear you again about this. So we're going to get different responses, but the most important thing is that we share the good news of Jesus Christ. Sometimes we'll have the eager and we'll share and the Lord will save them in that moment.
Sometimes they'll want to talk to us a little bit more, maybe they'll be saved, maybe they won't be, or sometimes we'll just outright reject what we have to say. And we should be prepared for that based upon, again, what Jesus said in his parables, especially of the soils.
Whatever the case, know your audience by examining them. And when you do that, I think truly that shows that you care. That you don't see them as, well, you know, in Sunday school class, in order to get extra points, or Awana, or whatever, I've got a check that I shared the gospel with somebody.
[24:09] So, you know, you knock on somebody's door, and have you ever heard of Jesus Christ? Do you believe in him as your Lord and Savior? Or something like that. You know, you're just not even caring about the person. And I'll tell you, if you actually show that you care about the person, they'll be more interested in what you have to say.

You've got to care about the eternal destination of their soul. Know that this is a person with a soul that is imperishable, that will spend its eternity either in heaven or in hell. And so what I have to say to you is very important, and I care about you.
Peter begins his sermon having examined his audience again by assuring them that salvation was available to their prepared hearts.

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Yet it was not enough for them merely to know of its availability, they needed to know how to appropriate the forgiveness of sins and deliverance from the just judgment of God against them. And so now Peter turns to the main theme of the gospel, namely that salvation comes through Jesus Christ. And in so doing, he brings us to the next element of effective evangelism, which is explain God's truth.
[25:19] Explain God's truth. Explain God's truth. All truth, true truth, belongs to God who is the source of truth.

And that truth was embodied in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. John 8, 31 through 32, says there, so Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, if you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.
And then in John 14, 6, we're all familiar with this verse, Jesus said, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
Right now, the world needs to hear the truth, because they are so desperate to exchange the truth of God for a lie. If you have your Bibles and you want to follow along with me as I read, I'm going to turn to Romans 1, verses 18 through 32.
And as I read this, many of you know what Romans 1, 18 through 32 says, but still, each time I read this, and then thinking about the world that we're living in now, the world more and more matches what's found here.
[26:42] It matched it pretty well before, but more and more so, and I'm talking primarily about our culture. It's just, it's a fitting description, and that's unfortunate.

It says, therefore, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.
Suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world and the things that have been made, so they are without excuse.
For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened. claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.
Therefore, God gave them up in the lust of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves because they, again, exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and they worshiped and served the creature rather than the creator who is blessed forever.
[28:01] Amen. For this reason, God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

We've been there for a while, and I think we've been in this next section for a while, but even more so now. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind, to a debased mind, to do what ought not to be done.
They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness.
They are gossip, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.
Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, and this is heartbreaking, they not only do them, but they give approval to those who practice them.
[29:22] I believe that according to Scripture, the greatest warning that the church should issue is not about the coronavirus right now.

It's not about racial injustice right now. It's not about the upcoming election. What we ought to be warning the world about right now and always is the wrath of God that is coming, that we are, I think, experiencing right now in our nation, that they will ultimately receive, that will be meted out upon them as unbelievers eternally for their rebellion against God as a result of their sins because they've exchanged the truth for a lie.
Jesus lived during a time of political unrest. He dealt with national tragedies and he saw injustice. In Luke 13, 1 through 5, this is what he had to say, I think, in regards to these things that we're seeing

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today.
They relate. It says, there were some present at the very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. So, apparently, this horrific thing was happening where Pilate had made sacrifices in their temple.
Some Galileans must have rebelled or were angry about that and so they slaughtered those Galileans right there in the temple as well. National news, headline news.
[30:53] And Jesus answered them, do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered in this way? No, I tell you, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

Were those 18 on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.
What is Jesus' primary concern about here? What's his primary concern? You know, he's not giving his political commentary about Pilate and how poor of a political leader that he is.
He's not, you know, even as tragic as the tower was that fell, he's still pointing people to what matters most. he cares more about their eternal souls.
And so he seems to redirect their concern with the parable that he shares immediately following those words in Luke 3, 6-9. It says, and he told this parable, a man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard and he came seeking fruit on it and found none.
[32:14] And he said to the vine dresser, look for three years now, I've come seeking fruit on this fig tree and I've found none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground? And he answered him, sir, let it alone this year also until I dig around it and put on manure.

Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good, but if not, you can cut it down. Maybe people care about what I think or what I have to say about what is going on in our nation right now in regard to COVID-19 and the protests and the riots.
Maybe they don't. Probably they don't. But throughout it all, I feel like it should have been and will continue to be my main objective as your pastor to prepare you for the day when you will stand before Jesus Christ and do all I can and know how to do in order as best as I can to prepare you for that.
And so I feel like the best way to do that is to explain God's word to you, to warn you and to warn myself and to warn unbelievers who hear this truth from God.
I do think that there can be and is a time to bring God's truth to light in regards to what we see happening and what we're experiencing right now.
[33:35] And it's appropriate at times to say, well, this is how Christians should respond. This is how Christians should think according to what God's word says right now. But you know what breaks my heart? You know what gets me angry at times as well?

Is to see Christians take to social media and even in conversations in passing who are more willing, who are more passionate, and who are more emboldened to express their thoughts and concerns on these issues things than they are to share the gospel.
I care more to tell you about my political thoughts right now or whether I think people should wear masks or not right now. And they're impassioned and they're bold and they almost are daring anybody to take the opposite side so that they can get into it.
Do we see people as emboldened and as courageous and as daring to share the gospel with people? That's what breaks my heart. And I'm sure that hopefully it breaks yours and I'm sure that it breaks the heart of our Lord that we seem to be so passionate about things that aren't dealing with his great commission to us to go and make disciples.
God is primarily concerned with our fruitfulness and so the question is are we bearing fruit? What does it mean to bear fruit? It means to make disciples. It means to live the Christian life.
[35:10] It means to point people to the truth that we have in God's word. Are you bearing fruit? I think he'll be more impressed with your willingness and your action in spreading the gospel than in your willingness and action in spreading anything else in this life.

We are called to be peacemakers and so we are called I believe to enter into conflict where there is conflict to bring peace but the peace that we seek when we enter into those conflicts is primarily peace between fallen man and their God who is holy, holy, holy.

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Because we understand that man cannot live in peace with man if they don't first live in peace with God. We can't create heaven on earth.
This world is fallen. It is only when man has peace with God that I believe he will truly seek peace with his fellow man. And so we should think as we go through this, how can we disciple and make disciples during the pandemic?
Yeah, things have had to change but how can we still be about the Great Commission during this pandemic? How can we declare the truth of Christ and the peace experienced with God through this time of political unrest?
[36:32] That should be our focus. how can I point people to Jesus to see that they need to have peace with him and that peace comes only through Jesus Christ? Peter isn't interested in converting these Gentiles to Judaism.

He's not concerned with cultivating or turning them, converting them to his culture. He's not concerned with expressing how their Roman government has been oppressive to him and oppressive to his people and many other people.
people, he's concerned only with explaining the truth of God's word and of Jesus Christ to them. The truth that is embodied in Christ who is the source of truth.
And so then he begins to say to them as he's preaching, as for the word that he sent to Israel. So he begins by introducing the limited nature of the gospel's beginning with its unlimited scope.
That God sent the gospel message to the Jews to work it through the Jews and out to the rest of the world.
[37:43] He said that also that this is a preaching of good news of peace. The peace referred to here is the peace which Jesus Christ brings rebellious sinners against a God who is again holy, holy, holy.

This is a peace that the restoration, that results I should say with the restoration of mankind's relationship with God. And again, until that relationship is right, all other relationships will suffer.
Well how does this peace come? Romans 5.1 says, therefore since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Jesus does not bring us primarily a subjective inner peace of calm and serenity, but an external, an objective, an eternal, an everlasting, a real substantial peace.
God has declared himself to be at war with every human being because of man's sin and rebellion against his commands. Now that's a harsh truth, but it's a truth found in God's word.
[38:50] Romans 5.10 describes the unsaved, including us before our salvation, as being enemies of God. Romans 1.18, as we've read, explains that the wrath of God is upon the unrighteous and ungodly who, again, suppress the truth.

Romans 8.7 says that for the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's will, indeed, it cannot. Jesus said in John 3.36, whoever believes in the Son has eternal life. Whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. The great result of our justification through faith in Christ is that we are no longer at war with God.
We have been reconciled to Him, and we've been reconciled to Him because Christ has come, because Christ has lived the sinless life that we were incapable of living.
That Christ has been our sacrificial Lamb, that He was the unblemished sacrifice whose death satisfied the wrath of God for the sins that we've committed.
[40:06] When you're forgiven of your sins, it's not as if the slate is just wiped away as if they didn't happen. No, they were all poured out upon our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Christ, and then His resurrection, which sealed the fact that the payment that He made was received and that those who believe in Christ will one day take part in His resurrection as well.
Peter continues again by saying this peace, this peace comes through Jesus Christ. He is Lord of all. And so this is where, at least in regard to our study of these verses, this is again where we will end, but you know, still with more to say before we do that.
This is the crux of Peter's message. This is the point that he's been getting at, that Jesus is Lord of all.
That He is Lord of all. That He is Lord of the Jew. He is Lord of the Gentile. That He is the only hope that any of us have. And that while Jesus is a great friend, what a friend we have in Jesus.
[41:17] We sing and it's true. And He is that. And while Jesus is a great example for us to follow, there's no greater example for you to follow in your life. You don't really know Him as your friend.

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and you aren't truly following Him until you know Him first as your Lord. Until you know Him first as your Lord.
Then you know Him as your friend. Then you know Him as the example that you are willing to follow because you understand what He did for you.
Cornelius was a Roman soldier. And being a Roman soldier, he knew that he must follow Caesar. And if you remember, Caesar said that he was Lord.
And so this is what he's been told. And in a way, I feel like this is what God is working into Cornelius' heart as he hears Peter say, Jesus, He is Lord of all.
[42:20] You've believed, Cornelius, that Caesar was your Lord. You've probably even been commanded to say, Caesar is Lord. And after all, He is the most powerful man on the face of the earth.

But He's not Lord of all. Jesus is. Jesus is our great Lord of all. Jesus is the one who emptied Himself of heaven's divine privileges in order to become one of us, adding flesh to His deity.
He came to serve. He came to live. He came to die. And He is risen again. And tell me, can you think of a greater Lord than that who would humbly come, who would willingly die in your place for your sins, that you could have eternal life?
Can you name any other Lord willing to do that? Can you name any other leader in this world, past or present, who would be willing to do the same?
He's my Lord. He's your Lord. And He's given us commands which He rightfully expects to be obeyed. Are you eager and willing and desiring right now to be a part of His mission?
[43:49] Will you obey His command to make disciples? Will you share the good news of what He's done for you? What He's doing in you to make you more like Jesus right now?

And will you do so as passionately and as boldly as you may have done or are doing when expressing your opinions on this pandemic or defending or promoting your political beliefs?
We need, right now, the world needs right now. The United States of America needs right now more Christian witnesses.
And so this is what I think that we should be doing if we haven't been already which is what Jesus said in Matthew 9, 36 through 38. When Jesus saw the crowds, He had compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.
Then He said to His disciples, The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.
[45:02] And so let's be praying that we would be one of those laborers and that the Lord would send out more to share and declare the good truth, the great truth of who Jesus is and what Jesus has done.

and to warn about what not believing in Him and having faith in Him results with. So two concluding points of application.
First of all, care. Care about the people that you share the gospel with. Care about them. Because again, people are pretty smart and they know when you care and when you don't care.
And if you've been in a position where you know that as you're trying to talk to somebody and they're looking at their watch or they're just trying to say to you whatever as quickly as they can to get out of there, you know that they don't truly care. Don't do that.
Jesus cared. We must care. Care about the people that you share the gospel with. And here's the thing too. If you don't care, I can confess personally and I think some of you could say the same that maybe there has been times where you haven't cared like you should.
[46:10] If you don't care, pray that you would care. Pray that you would care. And then finally, declare. Declare the truth of Jesus Christ.

All your thoughts, your opinions, all of the feelings that you have, your motivations, everything should be filtered through the Word of God first.
And so some questions. As you think about whatever you'll post on social media or however you will interact with your neighbors or your coworkers or your families, I think this is important to always be asking ourselves these questions filtered through the Word of God.
Am I right to think this way according to God's Word? Right? Am I right to be angry about this? Am I right to feel stressed and depressed about this?
Am I right to feel joyful about this even? Always asking us those questions. Again, are my feelings in line with what God's Word says? Are my feelings right according to what God's Word says?

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[47:21] And if not, then I'm not feeling right. And then again, are my motivations pure? Are my motivations pure? Even in evangelism, am I sharing this news and desiring to do so with this person because I care about them, not just because I want to check off a box, but because I know that this is what the Lord has called me to do and I need to be passionate about doing it.

So again, consistently ask yourself these questions. And may we be found diligently doing what the Lord has called us to do. I'm going to pray and then James will come up and we'll go through the announcements and the prayer sheet and then we'll close.

Will you pray with me? Lord, we know that you have not simply asked that we go and make disciples, that we teach, that we baptize.

Lord, you've commanded it. This is your expectation of us. Your expectation as we would be like the tree in the parable that you said, a tree that bears fruit.

You expect your people to bear fruit. After all, you've given us your spirit. You've given us your word. You've given us every tool that we need to go about caring about your mission in this world.

[48:42] Forgive us that, Lord, too often we sacrifice that mission that we should be on for our own comfort. Lord, I pray that for each of us, I pray for me, I pray for each of us, Lord, that having examined Peter and the elements that were present in his evangelism, Lord, that we would do some serious introspection in prayer, that we would see, Lord, that this is something that isn't an optional mission for us.

Father, you've given us the truth and this world is suffering as a result of suppressing that truth and exchanging it for a lie. Lord, you have called us to let our light shine, to declare that truth, to point people to Jesus and to warn them about the consequences of not trusting in him as Lord and Savior.

God, ultimately we know that salvation is of you, it's of your doing, that we simply go and we simply share. And so, Lord, with the lives that you've given to us and the time that we have, would we be diligent, we pray, about doing what you've commanded us to do and that you'd be glorified as a result.

We pray for our church that as you look at Highland Park Baptist Church, you would see fruit and you would be pleased. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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