

Sunday, Aug 18, 2019

City Church Del Rio

Peter the Pillar, part 1, Acts 10:1-23

Introduction—The church has giants that are pillars of the faith. We read and study about them throughout the Bible. We have Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We have Moses, Joshua, and Caleb. We have Esther, Ruth, and Rahab. We have David, Solomon, and Daniel. We have Pricilla, Phoebe, and Lydia. We have Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Many, many giants of the our faith. Amazing men and women who have stood the test of time and we have seen the God that delivered our Messiah, by the lives our heroes have led.

The church movement of Acts has a a few Pillars that shaped what the body of Christ is supposed to look like, act like, smell like, and be like. One of those pillars is Peter. Peter, John, and James, were the inner circle and closest to our Lord Jesus. Jesus allowed them to see things only they were privy to see. We need heroes in our faith. We need to know how to relate to God by examine the lives of our heroes.

A Pillar is something that holds up the structure of a building. It is to ensure the building stands tall and doesn't crumble under pressure. That Pillar was Peter. After many blunders and mishaps, Peter is a Giant Pillar, that makes our faith strong! He learned from all his mistakes and became the rock upon which Jesus built His church! Peter has been holding up the faith through the generations by being a history maker. I love the term history maker, because it gives us a vision and a plan. If we don't make history while we are alive, then what are we doing here? Not just any history, but a history rich in faith.

Have you ever thought of yourself as a pillar for the faith? If not you, then who? I want to be known for knowing Christ and the power of the resurrection, so my legacy is all about His legacy! I have a large family that I am responsible for. If I don't do it, then who will? You have a responsibility to the name you claim to bear. Jesus can make you a pillar of the faith, just like Peter was.

Stand & Read—Acts 10:1-8

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. **2** He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. **3** One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!"

4 Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked.

The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. **5** Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. **6** He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea."

7 When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. **8** He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

Peter's Vision

9 About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. **10** He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. **11** He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. **12** It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. **13** Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

14 "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."

15 The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."

16 This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

17 While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. **18** They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

19 While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. **20** So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

21 Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?"

22 The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say." **23** Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

Pray

1. Church Pillars Are Called by God—verses 1-8

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. **2** He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. **3** One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!"

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7 When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. **8** He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

- A. A pillar of church is someone who God has called to be His voice-piece.
- B. Peter was going to be used by God because Peter knew how to talk. He didn't always say the right thing, but nonetheless, Peter used his gift of gab to glorify God.
- C. Peter wasn't afraid to fail, unlike many of us. If we think we will fail, too many times, we don't even try.
- D. If we are going to be a history maker, a change maker, or a difference maker, we cannot be afraid to fail, Amen!
- E. Were would we be without all the failed experiments that have gone wrong?

- F. The phone that you so dearly hold onto preciously day and night, would never be what it is today without numerous failed attempts.
- G. Who knows if Alexander Graham Bell had quit his crazy idea to talk to someone in enough city through a wire? What was he thinking?
- H. **Verse 1**—this man Cornelius what a non-commissioned officer who worked his way through the ranks to be in charge of 300-600 men.
- I. **Verse 2**—He and His family were born again Jesus flowerers. He was a giver, which is a spiritual gift, so He had the Holy Spirit inside of him.
- J. Non-Believers don't pray to God, only believers pray to God. So we know that God is working in this man's life.
- K. **Verse 3**—the Scripture text now becomes really interesting.
- L. Cornelius receives a vision from an Angel of the Lord. At 3 in the afternoon. Broad Daylight.
- M. God does His best work in the light!
- N. The angel calls out His name—Cornelius! Why are you telling pastor? Because the text has an exclamation point, didn't you take English in school? lol
- O. **Verse 4**—Cornelius stares at the angel with fear in his eyes. I think we would do the same, right?
- P. "What is it, Lord?" In this response Cornelius is worshiping the Lord, by calling the angel, Lord. The angel was a messenger of God, therefore his voice piece for God.
- Q. **Verse 4**—what a beautiful response. Your prayer and alms offerings are being given in honor to God.
- R. If you aren't sure that it matters whether you pray or not, or give, this verse says it all! When we give and when we pray, God is honored!
- S. **Verse 5-6**—The purpose of this vision is given now. The angel softened up Cornelius so he could drop this request on him.
- T. Send men to Joppa and tell them to go check out this guy named Peter.
- U. Peter is staying with a friend by the sea.
- V. Gotcha. I would have said, "WHAAAT?"
- W. When we seek out to be used by God and become pillars of the faith, we are going to given God sized tasks that only God can do, because all we can say is "WHAAAT?"
- X. Nonetheless, pillars answer the call, because God is in the pillar business. He is looking for people who will worship Him no matter what. Even when we are given directions to go and do something, when everything where you are at is going good.
- Y. **Verse 7-8**—Cornelius grabs a couple men and send them to Joppa because God told him to do it. Of course he explained everything to them.
- Z. His response to God was immediate. When God calls, that's the time to act!

Illustration—21 "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

25 The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

26 Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

We are supposed to be worshiping God in all truth and with all power in the Spirit. That is who God is seeking to make the next Church Pillars. Men and Women who can hold up the church and not crumble under pressure. Truth seekers, change agents, and history makers.

Application—Are you being called by God to be a pillar of the church? A man or woman who can be what is needed to during times of chaos? Let God use you to in His church so your legacy will be remembered.

2. Church Pillars Are Available to God—verses 9-17

9 About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. 10 He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. 11 He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. 12 It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. 13 Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.”

14 “Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.”

15 The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”

16 This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

17 While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon’s house was and stopped at the gate. 18 They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

- A. **Verse 9**—Again, we see God working in broad daylight. God is about to reveal Peter’s new mission field. The Gentiles. Us.
- B. **Verse 10**—Peter is praying, and what usually happens when we pray, we get hungry. Peter’s praying and now he’s thinking about food.
- C. So, guess what. God gets him back on track. You see when we pray, we go into battle. Satan uses his sneak attacks to get us unfocused. Hungry can become hangry.
- D. God puts Peter in a trance. Now, a trance is half-conscious state. This was no dream, it wasn’t at night.
- E. **Verse 11-14**—God reveals an amazing vision. A large sheet and a bunch of 4 legged animals, reptiles, and birds.
- F. The sheet was being let down by the 4 corners to the earth. Now I prayed about that a lot and wondered, what does this mean God.
- G. I came away with nothin. I’m stumped by this vision. But God wants to teach us a lesson here. We can speculate, or we can give a informative answer by what it could be.
- H. Remember Peter is hungry, Peter is semi-conscious, and Peter is praying.
- I. The 4 corners represent from all of the world. Peter is going to preach to the Gentiles from all over the world. He is going to participate in fellowships where he will be offered food to eat.
- J. When you go to a foreign land you eat what you are served or you risk the chastisement of the indigenous people.

- K. God was preparing Peter to be able to allow foreign food into his diet.
- L. The voice says, “**Get up Peter, kill, and eat.**” Go kill a pig, go trap a lobster, go and partake of food you once were forbidden to eat.
- M. God is calling people that are available to Him. He will use whatever situation we are in to make sure His Kingdom is being fulfilled.
- N. **Verse 14**—Peter count believe what he was being asked to do. Surely you aren’t asking me, a Jew to go and eat bacon. I have never participated in food that was deemed unclean, unfit for consumption, and against God’s law.
- O. Oh, Peter was about to learn an amazement truth right here and right now.
- P. You see now that Jesus has come, we no longer are slaves to the law. Jesus has set us free form the law.
- Q. We live under grace, and grace alone.
- R. **Verse 15**—I believe is somewhat of a scolding by Jesus Himself. “**Don’t ever call anything I created impure, because I have made all things clean.**”
- S. When God makes His will known to us, we take everything back to the cross, where all things are made brand new. Amen.
- T. When you invite Jesus to be your Lord, you are now made clean!
- U. So when you talk bad about one of God’s creations, namely people, you upset our King Jesus. All things are clean by His blood.
- V. **Verse 16**—3 times Peter sees this vision. Whenever revelation happens 3 times, it is an absolute that it will happen. Peter will eat pork with the gentiles!
- W. **Verses 17-18**—The men Cornelius sent are now here to speak with Peter.

Illustration—Your availability is vital to the Kingdom of God. You never know when God will give you a vision for His people and He will ask you to go and preach to a particular group of people. That is how we become pillars for God. We make ourselves available to Him.

Application—Are you available to God? Would you pray today and tell God that you will be available for whatever Kingdom task He has for you? Tell Him that you want to be a pillar for Him!

3. Church Pillars Listen to God—verses 19-23

19 While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three men are looking for you. **20** So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.”

21 Peter went down and said to the men, “I’m the one you’re looking for. Why have you come?”

22 The men replied, “We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say.” **23** Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

- A. Listening to God is necessary for His followers. There is no way to follow Jesus, when we are doing to talking. We must listen for His instructions in order to be in His will for our lives.

- B. **Verse 19-20**—Peter is continuing to try and make sense of this vision and while he’s doing that the voice speaks again and lets him know to go with the guys.
- C. **Verse 21**— Peter says, its me, I’m the man you have come here for, but why are you here?
- D. I want to pause right there and so we can see Peter’s humanity and his hesitance. God just told him to go with them, but Peter, to me, says what do you want.
- E. God wants us to go, and when we go, we can allow our humanity to get in the way. We must be careful so that, God can have all the glory once He gets us to where we are supposed to be.
- F. **Verse 22**—The men explain themselves, and after Peter asked them why they are there, the men tell Peter we are here to listen to you.
- G. **Verse 23**—Peter, then says oh in that case come on in, and let’s talk.
- H. Remember Peter isn’t shy about using his gift of speaking and talking and yakking.

Illustration—So, check this out: if you take all the letters in the word “**LISTEN**” you also have all the letters for the word “**SILENT**.”

- In 1 Kings 19, God communicated with Elijah: first came the strong violent wind, then an earthquake and then a fire ... but, Scripture says, God was not in any of these.
- God chose to speak with a still small voice, or gentle whisper.
- So, in order to hear God’s voice, we must quiet our hearts to listen.
- What does this mean? How do you practically apply it?
- **First**, we must be intentional in our focus which means that our time, and calendar, must reflect our heart’s desire. This means setting a regular time each day to get alone with God. This can be at home, on a walk, in your car, in the morning or evening, or whatever works best for you.
- A good tip is to find ways to: ELIMINATE THE DISTRACTIONS
- **Second**, we must listen with an open heart and attitude. This means being open and receptive to God’s guidance and instruction, and being willing to obey.
- Just like the prophets of the Old Testament, God is looking for ways to talk to you — and you will be encouraged to see how He brings favor when you bring an attitude of surrender rather than selfishness.
- **Third**, we must trust that God has a message that is personal—for our provision, protection and purpose.
- This means leaning into God during difficult or emotional days, as well as joyous or rewarding days. We must realize that God loves us and is the only one that can sustain us, and will provide for our every need.
- Putting our trust in Him demonstrates a listening and willing heart and ultimately reflects our love for Him.
- When we listen and obey we discover that life is full of promise and purpose and we become more confident in God’s plan for our lives.
- So...will you join me as we make a deliberate effort to quiet our heart to hear what God is saying to us today?
- ***“12 Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:12-13***

Application—Are you listening to God? Even today, maybe you have been here and you would be honest and say, I really don't listen for God. I am too worried about me, so I don't give Him a chance to speak to me. Listen to Him. He is speaking to you so you too can be a pillar for Him.

Pray