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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A2090 ~ Peter's Sermon.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

In the last few hundred years of Christian church history, there've been several ways a man became a preacher. Some went to university first and then were given a church area to look after, whether they were a practising Christian or not. Others spent their early life learning the Bible and didn't obtain formal qualifications. They travelled on horseback around a route or circuit, visiting small townships and preaching to small groups of people along the way.

Many of these circuit riders were faithful to the calling of Christ but didn't become well known in the historical records. Many of them preached 6 or more times a day and never ran out of sermon material. How did they do this? Did they prepare one sermon and repeat it over and over again to each new gathering of people they met? It was their dependence on the Holy Spirit to guide them as to what they were to preach in each place, and this meant that they usually possessed very good overall knowledge of the Bible.

Is there a simple system for a young man to learn how to prepare and preach a sermon? One experienced preacher explained his approach to preparing a sermon that works. He took a blank sheet of paper and drew a line across the middle of the page. The space above the line represented the **explanation** of the text while the space below the line represented the **application** for today.

This simple approach helped him to separate his message into two distinct parts: first the diagnosis, followed by the cure. He believed that explaining a Biblical text was the relatively easy part, because church people often had considerable Bible knowledge of their own. His job as the preacher was to help with the harder part, the application of what the Biblical text was saying.

Another preacher said his approach to writing an inspiring sermon is to ask and answer a series of questions. Yet another has said: "Trust God! He is your resource and the Bible is your guide. Spend a lot of time in reading the Scriptures and God will provide the messages. Be clear of all known sin and often be in prayer."

In today's *Bible Adventure*, we look at the time when Simon Peter arrived at Cornelius' house in Caesarea. While here, Peter preached to an assembled group of Cornelius' relatives and friends.

DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound](#).

In Peter's sermon in Acts, in Chapter 10, Peter states one of the most important truths in the whole Bible: God doesn't show favouritism. God accepts equally all people who fear Him and do what is right.

The Old Testament prophet Micah wrote in Chapter 6 of his book: "He [the Lord] has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

Peter reminded Cornelius of what he already knew: John the Baptist had come to prepare people's hearts for the coming of Jesus the Messiah. John baptised Jesus and then God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and power. The Holy Spirit was seen descending on Jesus like a dove.

The apostles were witnesses to these things. Peter wasn't telling things he'd heard 2nd-hand but things he'd seen with his own eyes. Peter had spoken to Jesus after Jesus rose from the grave in a body and fully visible form. Peter explained that God had made Jesus to be the judge of all people, both those living and those already dead.

Jesus is also appointed to be the Saviour of the human race. Not only will He judge people's sin, He saves all repentant people from the punishment of their sin as well. Peter told his listeners that Jesus had commanded His disciples to preach to all people so that everyone who believes in Him may receive the forgiveness of their sins through Jesus' name.

This preaching showed that God through Christ now accepted not only upright Jews but upright Gentiles as well. All believers in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, slave or free, man or woman, are equal members in God's family.

Just as the Holy Spirit came on the disciples on the Day of Pentecost, so as Peter was speaking, did the Spirit come suddenly on Cornelius and his household too! Previously in Acts, Chapter 2, Peter had said to the Jews: "Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

But here, the Holy Spirit came on Cornelius and his household before they even had a chance to express their conversion and be baptised! The Holy Spirit comes to people according to His own plans and purposes and we must not try to make up rules for how He should act. If these people hadn't received the Holy Spirit in front of Peter and the Jewish believers with him, it's possible that none of them would have truly believed that the Spirit was really for the Gentiles too.

The day that Peter preached to Cornelius' household was an extremely important day in the history of the Christian church. On that day, the first Gentiles became Christians and were baptised in the Spirit of God. From then on, Christ was to be preached to both Jews and Gentiles. Peter's sermon set off another new beginning in the New Testament scriptures.

In Matthew, Chapter 16, Jesus gave Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Peter used the first key to open the door to Jewish people listening to him preach at the Temple about Christ; and many believed. Peter used the second key to unlock the kingdom of heaven to the Samaritans when he laid hands on them following Philip's preaching. Now for a third time, Peter opened up the kingdom of God for all believers of Christ around the world.

Peter's sermon wasn't about himself or filled up with words that were unnecessary. A Scottish preacher of the 1,800s said that when he started preaching, he knew very little about how to compose sermons. So he set himself to earnestly study how to illustrate the great truths of the Gospel, so that there should be no sleepers in the church, no wandering eyes but everywhere, an eager attention. He knew he couldn't convert his listeners as that wasn't within his power but he could command their attention, to awaken their interest, to touch their feelings and instruct their minds. And he was determined to do so.

At various times in various places around the world, revivals have started through the delivery of a great sermon. Revivals are usually preceded by faithful people sending considerable time in prayer asking for a revival. One of the best known sermons was preached by Jonathan Edwards in 1741, following a night of prayer by a group of women. His sermon title was 'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God' and became known as the most famous sermon in American history.

When Edwards rose to speak, he quietly announced that his text was Deuteronomy 32:35, "Their foot shall slip in due time." This 'hellfire and brimstone' approach was somewhat a departure from other sermons for Edwards. Of his 1,000 written sermons, fewer than a dozen are of this type.

Edwards spoke softly and simply, warning the unconverted that they were dangling over hell like a spider over the fire. He said: "O sinner! Consider the fearful danger. The unconverted are now walking over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that it will not bear their weight, and these places are not seen."

Edwards' voice was suddenly lost amid cries and the commotion from the crowd. He paused, appealing for calm. Then he concluded: "Let everyone that is out of Christ, now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a great part of this congregation. Let everyone fly out of Sodom."

Strong men held onto the pews and posts, feeling they were sliding into hell. Others shook uncontrollably and rolled on the floor. Cries of men and women were heard throughout the village, begging God to save them. Five hundred were converted that evening, sparking a revival that swept thousands into the Kingdom of God.

We praise God for such dramatic results from one sermon but we often aren't prepared to put in the hours of prayer behind the scenes to see God's hand moving in our town.

John Milton who lived in the 1600s left behind a letter that he wrote to a woman about listening to sermons. In modern-day language he said something like this: "It is a trial to live in a time where there are so many disagreements about Bible meanings and so much strange doctrine abounds. I hope and pray that you may not have itching ears, looking for the novel and error-filled teaching of men who are not sound in the faith.

I have known some who have gone to hear such men, not for the sake of moral improvement, but to hear what they had to say. They thought themselves too well established in the truth to be hurt by it. But the experiment, without being called by God to do so, is dangerous. In this way many have been hurt or overthrown. Error is like poison and its speed is amazing and we pray not to be led into temptation. We should take care not to run into it wilfully. If the Lord has shown you what is right, it is not worth your while to know how many ways there are of being wrong.

As a hearer you have a duty to try all doctrines before the Word of God. Faithful ministers will remind you of this. They do not wish to hold you to a blind obedience to what they say, on their own authority. They would not want to be lords over your conscience but helpers of your joy. Prize your liberty in the Gospel, which sets you free from the doctrines and commandments of men. Don't abuse it to purposes of pride and self.

There are hearers who make themselves and not the Scriptures, the standard of their judgment. They're more interested in criticism than in being instructed. They have a high opinion of their own wisdom as though they themselves are never wrong. I pray that God preserves you from such a spirit and guides you in all things."

We are to pray for our preachers and teachers that they will be true to preaching the truth about the Lord Jesus. In James, Chapter 3, Verse 1, it says: "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness." Let us prepare ourselves in the Word of God and rely on the Holy Spirit's counsel to present a message of hope and deliverance to all people who are willing to listen.

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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