

Grey 13 Men of Faith Rise up and Sing, Of the Great and Glorious King

Announcements: Lion's Fair(interview) JAAL meeting and Prayer time.

Offering

Prayer for children

Prayer Time

The next song we sing reminds us that because we have such a Faithful God, we too can be faithful in sharing His comfort with others.

Grey 14 Lord I come before your throne of Grace

THE GREAT ENCOURAGEMENT

As I mentioned earlier, if Matt 28:18-20 is called the Great Commission , then the words of Jesus prior to His Ascension in Acts 1:8 must be seen as the Great Encouragement.

It's the follow up to the command

I've read books of great Generals.....Give the order, then visit their troops before the battle and say.....This is what you are about to do and you will do it because.....

This is what we find Jesus-----The greatest Leader ever→Doing

Here we find Him saying.....You will be my witnesses...: Despite the way you may feel about yourself. Your abilities: The strength of the opposition and the magnitude of the task. Despite your unwillingness to venture outside of your comfort Zone:

Despite any hindrance that might be in you:→ It will happen

And You will be effective because you will receive power for the task.

And it did.....Those followers of Jesus in that early church did indeed become His witnesses. The Gospel was spread because of them

And we find one example that we can learn so much from, of that happening, in Acts chapter 10: The story of Cornelius

It begins with the account of a man, an important Roman, whom God wants one of His followers to be a witness to.

Acts 10:1-8.....

The Christian who had the job to do on this man was Peter. It could easily have been any one of the disciples or followers. If it happened today it could easily have been me or you.

In this case it was Peter

And Peter had an hindrance in his heart about witnessing to this Roman

Because of his background and culture he would not even go into a Gentiles house let alone speak to him about the Good News of Jesus.

His comfort Zone for being a witness was restricted to people just like him

- **I believe that we all have hindrances** in our hearts when it comes to being a witness for Jesus
- **Like Peter's....it may come from our background.....culture.....circumstances**
(Corrie Ten Boon)
- **May come from our personality: I'm shy.....I'm impatient.....**
- **May come from our knowledge base:I don't know enough.....I wouldn't know what to say**

Too often , unfortunately it's a case of being

- **Too busy**
- **Too lazy**
- **Uncommitted**
- **Disobedience**

God knew exactly what the hindrance was in Peter's heart and he dealt with it

Peter had a vision three times where he saw a sheet come down from heaven
"Do not call anything impure that God has made clean"

Then he woke to the news that 3 Gentiles were at the door asking to see him.

And God's Spirit spoke to Peter and said

Acts 10:19-20

"Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

Peter up to this point had no problem about being a witness

But this hindrance was a huge one, and it took a special act on the part of God to deal with it.

Our hindrances may not be as huge, but they still prevent us being what Jesus intends us to be

- **Like Peter. We need to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit**
- **Change what needs to be changed**
- **And be the Witness to Jesus that God says we are.**

The other part of the story however, is the truly encouraging part.

After Peter commits himself to overcoming his hindrance and becoming God's witness to Corne ;; he sees how powerfully God's Spirit has been, as still is at work.

We saw in our reading.....How God has gone ahead and prepared Cornelius **Not just** through the vision either...He had been preparing this man's heart over several years.

I strongly believe that God never sends without first preparing. We may not always see the proof of that at the time: but often we hear about it later

IN THIS CASE

The greatest proof of God's Spirit at work was apparent when Peter arrived at Cornelius' house.

- **It was full of people**
- **The Testimony of Cornelius** 10:30-33.....God was on a first name basis
- **Instant Response to the Gospel**

Peter began to do what Christ had told him to do

He began to bear witness to the death, resurrection and the power to save

He even mentioned in v42 that he was doing what Jesus had commanded him to do in the Great commission.

And before he had chance to finish.....God acted

10:44 *"While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message."*

Today as a church group we will be at the Lion's Fair

Even for me there will be hindrances I will need to overcome in order to be God's witness in that place, but I know that if by the power of the HS I overcome such hindrances, God will use me

What hindrances is God calling you to overcome so that you can be His witness in your home, neighbourhood, school, workplace, social group?

In fact is there some particular place God wants you to go for Him, one particular person He wants you to speak to about Him, that you have been blocking?

This story shows that when we acknowledge that blockage, and ask God to remove it, He uses us in such a way, that not only does He touch others by His Spirit, → He also gives us a whole new experience of Himself and His mighty power.

Grey 85 We'll walk the land

