

unsung HEROES

Part # 4:

Cornelius: Heroic Seeker

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An unsung hero defined is, "a person who makes a substantive yet **unrecognized** or unacknowledged contribution to a cause."

God provides us with unsung heroes to inspire us to allow Him the **opportunity** to do seemingly impossible things **through** our lives.

Central Point . . .

Heroic Seeker

The story of Cornelius provides one of the first stories of someone seeking ultimate truth from a completely unchurched background actually finding it by accepting God's gift of salvation. He provides the example of someone moving from being **aware** of God to taking intentional steps toward **embracing** a personal relationship with Him.

Acts 10:1-8 *There was a man named Cornelius who lived in Caesarea, captain of the Italian Guard stationed there. He was a thoroughly good man. He had led everyone in his house to live worshipfully before God, was always helping people in need, and had the habit of prayer. One day about three o'clock in the afternoon he had a vision. An angel of God, as real as his next-door neighbor, came in and said, "Cornelius."*

⁴⁻⁶*Cornelius stared hard, wondering if he was seeing things. Then he said, "What do you want, sir?"*

The angel said, "Your prayers and neighborly acts have brought you to God's attention. Here's what you are to do. Send men to Joppa to get Simon, the one everyone calls Peter. He is staying with Simon the Tanner, whose house is down by the sea."

⁷⁻⁸*As soon as the angel was gone, Cornelius called two servants and one particularly devout soldier from the guard. He went over with them in great detail everything that had just happened, and then sent them off to Joppa.*

Cornelius sought to fill the void in his life by practicing **religion**.

Cornelius found what he was truly seeking when he moved from being **religious** to a personal **relationship** with God.

Focal Point . . .

Journey of Trust

Like many of us, Cornelius was successful, respected and loved. But he wanted more...a **better** life.

The good news for him and us is that God **shares** our desire for a better life.

Jeremiah 29:11-12 *I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for. ¹²"When you call on me, when you come and pray to me, I'll listen.*

If we know God wants to make our lives better, then the question is...

What do we need to do to make that possible?

Jeremiah 29:13-14 ¹³⁻¹⁴*"When you come looking for me, you'll find me. "Yes, when you get serious about finding me and want it more than anything else, I'll make sure you won't be disappointed."*

To seriously search for God's plan and purpose for your life try the following steps . . .

1. Admit that our **efforts** alone will **fail** us.

Luke 13:22-25 *He went on teaching from town to village, village to town, but keeping on a steady course toward Jerusalem. ²³⁻²⁵A bystander said, "Master, will only a few be saved?" He said, "Whether few or many is none of your business. Put your mind on your life with God. The way to life—to God!—is vigorous and requires your total attention. A lot of you are going to assume that you'll sit down to God's salvation banquet just because you've been hanging around the neighborhood all your lives. Well, one day you're going to be banging on the door, wanting to get in, but you'll find the door locked and the Master saying, 'Sorry, you're not on my guest list.'*

2. Acknowledge **God's** effort to **save** us.

Romans 5:6-8 *When we were unable to help ourselves, at the right time, Christ died for us, although we were living against God. ⁷Very few people will die to save the life of someone else. Although perhaps for a good person someone might possibly die. ⁸But God shows his great love for us in this way: Christ died for us while we were still sinners.*

3. Allow God to **transform** us.

2 Corinthians 5:15-18 *And Christ did die for all of us. He died so we would no longer live for ourselves, but for the one who died and was raised to life for us. ¹⁶We are careful not to judge people by what they seem to be, though we once judged Christ in that way. ¹⁷Anyone who belongs to Christ is a new person. The past is forgotten, and everything is new. ¹⁸God has done it all! He sent Christ to make peace between himself and us, and he has given us the work of making peace between himself and others.*

Signs of a Better Life

When we place our trust in God to provide us a better life . . .

...we have **hope**.

Romans 15:13 *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*

No man is hopeless so long as there is the grace of Jesus Christ; and no situation is hopeless so long as there is the power of God.

Hope is recognized through . . .

Joy:

Luke 2:10

¹⁰ *but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news of great joy for everyone!"*

Peace:

John 14:27

²⁷ *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*

...we have **wisdom**.

1 Corinthians 1:23-24 *"...but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."*

...we have **faith**.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 *"My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, ⁵so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power."*

...we have **endurance**.

Colossians 1:10-11 *"And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance..."*

Turning Point . . .

Like Cornelius, we can spend a lifetime seeking peace with God **primarily** through our efforts.

The good news is that God is committed to doing **whatever** is necessary to bridge the gap that our **sin** places between us and Him.

Our challenge:

Believers – simply ask, *"Father God – Do I seek you my way, or yours?"*

Seekers – To invite Christ into your heart, simply pray,

Father God, I come before you today, asking you to save me. I invite your Son Jesus Christ into my heart to be my Lord and Savior. Please forgive me of sin in my life; cleanse my heart and my spirit. Father, I want to trust in your promises and accept that they are totally true. And with your help, guide me toward being the person you created me to be.

In Jesus' name -- Amen