

Gentile Pentecost

I. Announce:

- A. **Slide1** July Wed night Series - *Praying Relationally*. Our Father. How to come to the throne of Grace Relationally. **Phrase by phrase of the Lord's Prayer**. This Wed night Jeff Thompson will be sharing on *Your Kingdom Come*.
1. **Jeff**, founder & CEO of MP. Has had the privilege of **bringing His Kingdom** to to **East Germany** (impressive dossier by KGB), **Russia** (40+youth Prisons, now not allowed back in), **Ukraine** (Konotop, *House of Love Center*, children w/sp needs), **Romania** (camps in *Georgia*), **Kosovo**.
 2. Come hear how, after we began in **the inner sanctuary of worship** (Our Father who are in heaven) & then **move out** into *missionary zeal*, anticipating His **kingdom of glory** & His **kingdom of grace**.

B. Prayer:

II. **Slide2a Intro:** *Gentile Pentecost*

- A. **Spurgeon** used to say, *Whitefield and Wesley might preach the gospel better than I do, but they cannot preach a better gospel*.
1. The **good news is good news**, not just **OK news**. Christianity is **life-changing**, not **life enhancing**.
- B. **Slide2b Outline:** *The Good News of Inclusion. The Good News of Impartiality. The Good News of Peace. The Good News of Jesus. The Good News of Grace.*

III. **Slide3 THE GOOD NEWS OF INCLUSION (24-33)** *read 23-33*

- A. **Slide4** After living through the **cold war** of the 1980s, I found myself in the early 90s with Jeff T going in **Russia** for my first time. I admit going in was a little **scary** in that all I knew was *Russians were bad, Americans good*. They were our arch enemy. **And then I met them!** Not only the farmers in the countryside **but** top officers in the **Ministry of Internal Affairs** that oversaw the prisons we were going in. **We ate w/them. We talked w/them. We laughed with them.** We were even asked to pray with 1, whose daughter was sick. **And what I left with was...we're NOT so**

different. They loved their families. They were just trying to get by. And there was no hatred towards us, **only genuine love & thankfulness, that we had come.**

1. **Slide5** Here, Peter **travels 30 miles north**, up the coastal road to **Caesarea.**

a) This is possibly the 1st time Peter has journeyed with Gentiles.

Maybe after 30 miles he says, *These Gentiles are **human** after all. We're **not so different.** What have I been **afraid of** all these years?*

b) Later Peter says, *kata-lam-bano* (vs.34) *I understand.*

c) *Nothing helps one's perspective like **spending some time with those we view as beneath us.***

B. (25,26) **I too am a man** - Like the sign on the *children's clubhouse* that read: *Nobody act **big.** Nobody act **small.** Everybody act **medium.***

a) *Everybody act medium/equal, is a fitting rule for any church.*

b) **Peter refused both** to be treated by Cornelius as if he were a **god**, **and** to treat Cornelius as if he were a **dog.**

c) *Again nothing helps one's perspective like **spending some time with those we view as beneath us.** Who are your Cornelius-type people?*

C. (28) **Unlawful** - this is contrary to ancient custom (*themis*) **i.e.** it is taboo, **but** it's not breaking an **OT law** (*nomos*).

IV. Slide6a THE GOOD NEWS OF IMPARTIALITY (34,35) read 34-43

A. **Jesus, an equal opportunity Savior.** No respecter of **persons** (34). No respecter of **nations** (35).

1. God offers Himself to **all people** who will **fear Him and do what is right.**

B. *God shows no partiality* - In the OT this phrase literally meant *"to lift the face."* In **Hebrew courts** the *defendants* kept their **heads bowed** so that the judge would not recognize the person **and** thereby be **biased.** [who are you biased towards?]

1. **Slide6b** Mark Twain, "**Travel is fatal** to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, **and** many of our people need it sorely on these accounts.

Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things **cannot** be acquired by *vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime.*"¹

2. Who are you biased towards?

V. Slide7 THE GOOD NEWS OF PEACE (36)

A. Peace is usually used in 3 ways in the NT: (1) **peace** between **God** and **humanity** (reconciliation). (2) **the subjective peace** of the individual believer (my Peace I give u). (3) **peace** between **human groups** who responded to Christ (Jew/Gentile).

1. All *human barriers* are down **in Christ**.

VI. Slide8 THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS (37-43)

A. (38-43) **He covers:** *who Christ is, what he **did**, the power of the **resurrection**, **divine election** of those set free to believe, **and** the offer a **forgiveness of sin.***²

B. **How easy it is to preach the trivial.** We as pastors have our *pet peeves* and a whole corral of our *hobbyhorses*. In Christianity we like writing books about *what other people do wrong*. We love splitting up, and then splitting up again. We like focusing on our **differences** **rather than** building a bridge towards a **common ground**.

1. **Jesus prayed, I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one - as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me. 22 "I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. 23 I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.**³

2. We've forgotten Paul's admonition in Eph.4:3-6, **Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. 4 For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. 5 There is one Lord, one faith, one**

¹ Mark Twain, The Innocents Abroad / Roughing It.

² Lloyd Ogilvie

³ John 17:21-23

baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all.

C. (43) Go through **these 4 steps** of the Gospel Message *slowly*.

VII.Slide9a **THE GOOD NEWS OF GRACE (44-48)** read 44-48

A. Slide9b It's **G.R.A.C.E.** (God's Riches At Christ's Expense). **Not** G.R.A.Y.E. (God's Riches At your Expense).

B. Peter never got to finish his sermon. HS cuts him off mid-thought.

1. **And they simply responded in faith. No altar call! No invitation! They simply believed and were born again on the spot. It was a work of the HS, not Pete.** [they heard vs.43 and were saved]
2. Peter calls for **baptism**, pointing to a **full inclusion** into the Christian community.

C. **Mahatma Gandhi** shares in his autobiography that in his student days in **England** he was deeply touched by **reading the Gospels** and seriously considered becoming a **convert to Christianity**, which seem to offer a real solution to the **cast system** that divide the people of India. One Sunday he attended church services and decided to ask the minister for enlightenment on **salvation** and **other doctrines**. **But** when Gandhi enter the sanctuary, the ushers refused to give him a seat and suggested that he go elsewhere to worship with his own people. **He left and never came back.**
 Slide9c **"If Christians have caste differences also, he said himself, *I might as well remain a Hindu!*"**

1. **Do we have a Christian Caste system?** Oh it looks different from the Hindu one. [Brahmin to the Untouchables]
2. **Allan Emery**, in his book *Turtle on a Fencepost*, tells how as a wealthy man at age 45 he sold his family business and went to work for **ServiceMaster**. He says: my first assignment was to work for 2 weeks as a houseman at a large metropolitan hospital. I was to mop corridor's, empty trash containers, and clean ashtrays. **While not in the best condition** for this work, I completed the day's schedule. **The shock was not in the work but in the general rejection of me as a person because of**

my green uniform and the kind of work I was doing. Not a single person responded to my **Good Morning** except others in the housekeeping department. I have never before experienced **the caste system**.

3. Some draw a circle that **shuts men out**. Jesus draws a circle that **takes them in**.

D. Slide10a There is **no one** *the grace of God* can't **liberate**. [3 boxes]

1. **1st box** - we each have our own box of prejudice. **It's made strong with religious regulations, cultural biases and legalistic traditions.**
2. **2nd box** - we need to learn how to **open up** the **doors & windows** of our life...**so that...**
3. **3rd box** - **the good news message** can pour out to a *spiritually thirsty world*.

E. (47) Since **God** had accepted these Gentile believers (w/HS), **the church** must accept them too (w/water baptism).

1. We have the first **Gentile baptism**, the first **Gentile church service**, & the first **Gentile follow up class** (remained a few days). [like Bulgaria 1991]
2. **Peter** was **changed**. **His 6 Jewish buddies** were **changed**. **Cornelius** was **changed**. **His family** was **changed**. **His friends** were **changed**. **And The Kingdom forever** would be **changed**.

F. Slide10b Remember saints, The **good news** is *good news*, not just **OK news**. Christianity is **life-changing**, not *life enhancing*.