

What Would God Remember Me for?

Acts 10:1-8 (New American Standard Bible)

10 Now there was a man in Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort, ² a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and made **many charitable contributions** to the Jewish people and **prayed to God continually**.³ About the ninth hour of the day he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had just come in and said to him, “Cornelius!” ⁴ And he looked at him intently and became terrified, and said, “What is it, lord?” And he said to him, “**Your prayers and charitable gifts have ascended as a memorial offering before God.**” ⁵ Now dispatch some men to Joppa and send for a man named Simon, who is also called Peter; ⁶ he is staying with a tanner named Simon, whose house is by the sea.” ⁷ When the angel who **spoke to him left, he summoned two of his servants and a devout soldier from his personal attendants,* ⁸ and after he had explained everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Introduction

God knows and remembers everything we do and say to each other. How do I know? Because God’s Word says so. Remember Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 25? Whatever we do or don’t do to each other will be remembered and quoted by the Messiah on the Day of Judgment. Based on our deeds, Jesus the King will decide our eternal destination.

⁴⁰ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it for one of the least of these brothers or sisters of Mine, you did it for Me’ (Matthew 25:40). Not just what we did matters eternally, but what we didn’t do also matters. ⁴⁵ Then He will answer them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it for one of the least of these, you did not do it for Me, either.’ ⁴⁶ These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” (Matthew 25:45-46).

We know that all the digital data saved in the computer can be retrieved years later, right? We, then, shouldn’t be surprised with a truth that all our deeds and words are also recorded in God’s books and can be retrieved later. All our deeds and words are recorded in the books stacked in front of God’s throne and God will refer to them on the Day of Judgment. John the Apostle testifies in Revelation: *And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them; and they were judged, each one of them according to their deeds* (Revelation 20:12-13).

Content

Have you ever wondered what God would remember you for? I have. In fact, here's the right answer to that question. He remembers everything you do and say and will repay you according to your deeds, both good and bad. Jesus says to all the churches. *Know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds* (Revelation 2:23).

Folks, I pray that all the bad things you and I have done will be forgiven and not remembered by God. Wouldn't you? It is crucial for us to be forgiven of bad things we have done. All in Jesus' name. Here are the promises of God's forgiving our sins. *"Come now, and let us debate your case," Says the Lord, "Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall become as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool* (Isaiah 1:18). *"I, I alone, am the one who wipes out your wrongdoings for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins* (Isaiah 43:25). *As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our wrongdoings from us* (Psalm 103:12). All in Jesus' name. To all, God offers His forgiveness and the removal of their wrongdoings from them. All through Jesus and in His name only. Amen?!

Of course, that means, if anyone rejects God's offer and doesn't repent of their sins, their wrongdoings will remain and be remembered by God. Revelation 18:5 talks about the sins of Babylon in the end times: *⁵ for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her offenses.*

I sincerely pray that everyone of us believe in Jesus the Savior so that our sins may be forgiven in His name. Amen?!

Today's text shows us one man whose name was Cornelius. It also tells us about two things God remembers for him: prayer and charitable gifts. The angel told Cornelius in verse 4: ***Your prayers and charitable gifts have ascended as a memorial offering before God.***

Prayer: Cornelius was a centurion, a Roman army officer in charge of a hundred infantry men. He was a godly man and feared the Lord along with his household. According to his custom, one afternoon, he was fasting and praying to God. God sent him an angel in a vision. Before I proceed, it is a good idea to check out the Jewish prayer times in Jesus' time.

The godly in Israel in those days observed two prayer times: 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. These prayer times correspond to twice-a-day sacrifices in the Temple. In Exodus, the LORD God

commanded Israel saying, *Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two one-year-old lambs each day, continuously* (Exodus 29:38). Twice a day. One in the morning and the other at twilight. Interestingly, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ also corresponds to the Jewish prayer hours. Christ the Lamb of God was crucified at 9 a.m. (Mark 15:25) and expired at 3 p.m. (Mark 15:33).

The first hour of prayer: 9 a.m. (Acts 2:15). It was the third hour from sunrise according to the Jewish time. Remember the Pentecost story? 120 disciples were gathered and joined together in prayer in the Upper Room. They all got baptized by the Holy Spirit and began speaking in tongues. Non-believers accused them of drunkenness. Peter said, no, because no one is drunk at 9 a.m.! Obviously, the disciples were praying during the first hour of prayer ‘*Shacharit*’—the Hebrew word for ‘morning.’

The second hour of prayer was observed at 3 p.m. (Acts 3:1, 10:9). The Hebrew word for this hour is “*Minchah*” (gift-offering). It is known as the “hour of confession.” According to the Jewish time, it was the 9th hour. Six hours after the morning prayer. This is the same hour of prayer when Peter and John went up to the Temple to pray. On their way, they healed a beggar who was unable to walk (Acts 3).

So, let’s go back to Cornelius. Obviously, he kept the two prayer times. Daily. That day, he was fasting and praying in the afternoon. We don’t know what he was praying about, but he must have thanked God for the blessings and made confession of his sins.

I encourage all of you to imitate Cornelius to pray daily, at least twice a day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. I hope all of us do.

Almsgiving: The second thing the Lord was pleased with was Cornelius’s charity works. In fact, for centuries, the believers in Christ have done so on behalf of orphans and widows. Christ also commands in Matthew 5:16: *Let your light shine before others so that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven.* Following God’s command in the Old Testament, the Early Church started a soup kitchen for widows in Jerusalem. As a believer, Cornelius followed suit and often helped the poor in the community. He was well praised by the community people. But, more than anything else, his charity works were remembered by the Father in Heaven. If you are engaged in charity works, keep up the good work, folks. God remembers your good deeds.

But the story of Cornelius didn’t stop there. God remembered one thing Cornelius lacked. Salvation.

The Need of Salvation

God remembered that Cornelius needed Jesus. He wanted to bring Cornelius and his household to salvation through Jesus. His charity works and prayers were good and remembered, and God was very pleased with them. However, God said, Cornelius lacked the most important thing in his life. More important than prayer and charity works. That was, salvation. Salvation in Christ. That's why God sent his angel to Cornelius so that he and his household would hear the gospel message from Peter and be saved in the name of Jesus.

Salvation is a necessity for all people. Everyone needs salvation from the Lord. There are so many morally good people out there. God remembers their good deeds. However, they lack one thing. Salvation. No one is complete without salvation. In other words, all the peoples in the world need the Lord Jesus. We need Christ for the forgiveness of sins. He died on our behalf to wipe away our sins, once and for all.

Please understand the uniqueness of Christ that He alone is the Savior. No other names are given to us. *And **there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name** under heaven that has been given among mankind by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).*

That means, Jesus isn't just one of many possibilities to salvation. Neither is He one of many ways to Heaven. He was the only way to God the Father. Without Him, no one can come to the Father (John 14:6). If not so, and if our good deeds are sufficient to get us into heaven, which Cornelius already had, why did God send an angel to him so that he might hear the gospel of Jesus Christ? If Jesus was one of the many ways to salvation, why did He have to die on the cross? We all need Jesus and Him alone for our salvation.

Conclusion

King David prayed to the Lord: *Do not remember the sins of my youth or my wrongdoings; Remember me according to Your faithfulness, For Your goodness' sake, Lord (Psalm 25:7).* The same David also prayed: *Hide Your face from my sins and wipe out all my guilty deeds (Psalm 51:9).* Another Psalmist praised God, saying, *You forgave the guilt of Your people; You covered all their sin. Selah (Psalm 85:2).* Remember that your prayers and almsgiving ascend as a memorial offering before God. That's good. However, don't forget that you need Jesus, because only in Jesus, and in no other names, your sins are forgiven. Amen.