

CALL FOR SIMON!

Act 11:13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter;

Act 11:14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

Cornelius saw an angel, but the angel could not share words with him that could save his soul. Many people would love to see and encounter angels but that would be no different than desiring to see a great chef make a fantastic meal on TV when you are hungry – it may be look good, but it is useless as far as your hunger goes. Angels are mighty beings – their power is truly mesmerizing. “And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth” (Revelation 10:1,2). Despite such formidable presence, angels are not commissioned to preach the Gospel as Christians are. Why is this, we may ask. The biggest reason is experience. “Call for Simon” (or substitute with your own name) means call the person who knows about sin and a transformed life through the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus spoke words by which Simon was saved. The words of Jesus never left Simon. Now Simon had to come because the words of Jesus were in him, not the angel. When did the words of Jesus enter into Peter? Literally on the Day of Pentecost.

Act 2:2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

Act 2:3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

The words of Jesus for salvation has entered into us as tongues of fire. Thankfully, the tongues of Jesus’ fire did not enter Peter alone, but divided and entered all the 120 gathered in the Upper Room. We who have received the Holy Spirit can now be the tongue of Jesus. In order for that to happen, one must believe that God is One, his name is Jesus, be baptized in Jesus name and then the Holy Spirit or fire of Jesus will find you (Acts 2:38). It is from this fire that words of salvation can be heard. Angels do not have this fire because they haven’t sinned and cannot experience the beauty of salvation as we do. When it comes to evil angels, we are forbidden from hearing a word of what they say because the source is Satan, the father of lies. “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.

When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44).

“Call for Simon” tells us so much about the way in which Jesus is building his church in the world today. “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). Simon represents all Christians today. He was bold and strong yet denied the Lord; he was rich but gave up all for the Lord; he was hasty and impulsive yet was the only man to walk on water after the Lord; he heard the Lord preach non-violence and yet packed a sword and applied it on the ear of the High Priest’s servant – Simon is all of us – all our strengths, weaknesses and contradictions. But we are also Simon, the man whom Jesus chose to deposit his words of salvation. The world must call for Simon because the words of Jesus are in him. When one has the words of Jesus indwelling, heaven and earth will call your name. First, Jesus called Peter when he was praying in Joppa. “And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat” (Acts 10:13). Later, the angel mentions his name to Cornelius – and, finally, Cornelius mentions his name. Such is the importance of salvation that our names cannot be hidden or obscured – the tongues of fire did not enter into us to stay quiet or be anonymous: “Call for Simon!”

***Jonah 1:1** Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,
Jonah 3:1 And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying,*

Simon Peter shares a surname with another man who also did not fully understand the meaning of “Call for Simon”. This man was Jonah. Why call for Jonah? Because the words that could save 120,000 people from destruction was deposited in Jonah. This is a great responsibility brothers and sisters. When these words of salvation are deposited in us, we cannot travel wherever we want, and we cannot sleep comfortably where we choose. In short, we cannot do anything without responding to the call “Call for Simon” first. We must always be watching and praying so we can respond to this call. Think of yourself as someone who is a first responder – someone who may be a firefighter, police officer, paramedic or part of a search and rescue team. You are on your toes and respond immediately when a distress call comes in. It is a matter of life and death. In the same way, salvation for the lost is a matter of life and death. Let us consider ourselves spiritual first responders from this moment on. Don’t worry about the traffic jam, weather conditions and other difficulties that may affect your response time. God is able! Remember Philip?

Act 8:26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.
Act 8:39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.
Act 8:40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

We know that God did the same for Elijah. The word of salvation must be given priority. It will reach those who are in danger, injured or dying. “Call for Simon” is a distress signal for the Christian to respond to immediately. God has his own sirens and ways of facilitating our journey to Cornelius or Nineneveh just as drivers play a crucial role in facilitating the timely and efficient response of first responders by yielding the right of way and making way for emergency vehicles when necessary. Isn’t it interesting that both Jonah and Peter were in Joppa and were reluctant to share the word of God to foreigners? “But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD” (Jonah 1:3). As the alarm blares throughout the fire station, echoing off the walls, it’s a signal for action. Firefighters, who moments before might have been resting or engaged in routine tasks, spring into motion with practiced efficiency. The urgency in the air is palpable as they swiftly don their protective gear and helmets, readying themselves for the task at hand. The image of firefighters sliding down the pole is not just a dramatic spectacle; it’s a testament to their readiness, their dedication, and their unwavering commitment to serving and protecting their community in times of need.

Ephesians 6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;
Ephesians 6:15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

In this sermon, we are reminded of the importance of responding to the call for salvation, just as Peter was called by Cornelius to hear words of salvation. We learn that angels, while mighty beings, are not commissioned to preach the Gospel like humans are. The sermon emphasizes that the words of Jesus for salvation enter into us like tongues of fire, empowering us to share the message of salvation with others. We are likened to Simon Peter, chosen to bear the words of salvation, and urged to respond to the call for salvation as first responders, just as firefighters respond to distress signals. The analogy of firefighters sliding down a pole underscores the urgency and commitment required in answering the call for

salvation. Finally, we are encouraged to be spiritually prepared, wearing the armor of truth and righteousness, and ready to share the gospel of peace with others. May we respond immediately to “Call for Simon!”