Three Great Victories of a Roman Army Officer
Acts 10:1-8, 44-48

Introduction:
A. A great day in world history: First Gentile convert to Christ.
   1. Jewish prophets had foretold it. (cf. Rom. 15:8-12).
   2. Jesus had commanded it. (Mark 16:15,16; Matt. 28:18-20).
B. A great day for Cornelius: A Roman Officer (Centurion).
   1. He may have shared in many victories as a soldier.
   2. He had shared in none greater than the three on this day:

Discussion:
   A. He was a good man.
      1. In devoutness – feared God, prayed (v. 2)
      2. In character – Generous (v. 2) and Just (v. 22)
      3. In reputation. (v. 22).
   B. He was a lost man. (11:13,14).
   C. One's goodness does not compensate for his sins.
      4. No one's goodness can compensate for a single sin or lack of obedience to Christ:
         a. “He may not have been baptized, but...”;
         b. “He may not attend church, but...”;
         c. “He may do such and such, but ....”

II. A Victory Over Racial and Religious Division. (vv. 34,35).
   A. Jesus had died to erase such division. (Eph. 2:12-16).
   B. Deep prejudices and divisions did not immediately disappear.
      1. It took a miracle to get Cornelius to send for Jewish teacher. (v. 3ff).
      2. It took a miracle to get Peter to go to a Gentile. (vv. 9-16,28; cf. Gal. 2:11-14).

      1. Not baptism alone.
         a. Preceded by teaching (vv. 33-43; Mk. 16:15; Matt. 28:19; Rom.10:17).
         b. Faith (Acts 8:36; Mk. 16:16).
         d. Confession (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10).
      2. Not baptism for its own sake - but “in name of Jesus” - to obey Him.
      3. Not baptism's own power - but the power of the resurrection. (1 Pet. 3:21)
   B. Water baptism rather than Holy Spirit baptism frees from sin.

Conclusion:
A. Let us preach gospel to good moral people as well as others.
B. Let us preach gospel to folks different from us as well as those like us.
C. Let us obey God in whatever we lack:
   1. If lack morality then become morally upright.
   2. If lack faith then become a believer; if lack repentance then...etc.
   3. If lack baptism then be baptized.