

# Bringing Your House to Spiritual Victory

by Carter Conlon

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*God desires to bring spiritual victory to every family, and this can be achieved by being a spiritual leader, demonstrating humility and openness to correction, and trusting in God's power to bring deliverance.*

**Duration:** 52:58

**Scripture:** Psalm 139:23, Jeremiah 29:11, Matthew 6:33, Acts 10:30

**Topics:** "Household Salvation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of showing compassion and living out one's faith rather than just talking about it. He uses the example of Cornelius, a man who was known for his acts of compassion and his consistent prayer life. The preacher also shares personal experiences of witnessing God's faithfulness and the power of prayer. He encourages believers to believe in the transformative power of God and to be consistent in their faith both at home and in church. The sermon concludes with a reminder to not play games with God and to be genuine in one's relationship with Him.

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## Transcript

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You are welcome to make additional cassettes of this message for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission, existing copyright laws apply. Acts chapter 10, if you'll turn there please with me, Acts chapter 10 about a man called Cornelius.

He brought his own house to spiritual victory and in fact he and his household were the first Gentile converts to Jesus Christ. You understand that from the time of Abraham the gospel, as we know it, the message was really just for the Jews and of course the Jews after Calvary thought it was still just for the Jewish nation. But God chose a specific man and I think that is something we need to take note of.

There was something about this man that God chose him to be the first man and the first house in the New Testament that was not Jewish upon which the Holy Spirit was about to come and salvation in Christ was about to visit. Acts chapter 10 verse 30, and Cornelius said, four days ago I was fasting until this hour and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house and behold a man stood before me in bright clothing and said, Cornelius thy prayer is heard and thine alms are had in remembrance of the sight of God. Send therefore

to Joppa and call hither Simon whose surname is Peter.

He is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the seaside who when he cometh he shall speak unto thee. Immediately therefore I sent to thee and thou hast done well that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

Now it can be certainly said today that this man Cornelius stood in the gap for his family. Now through his life generations of spiritual alienation from God were broken and I do believe that's a pattern. I don't believe that this account of Cornelius and his household is just one rather uncommon occurrence of grace.

I do believe that it's a type of something which God desires to do for every family that is here today. Peter when he opened his mouth in Cornelius' house the very first thing he said in verses 34 and 35 he said of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons but in every nation he that fears him and works righteousness is accepted with him. God is no respecter of persons.

That gives such hope to my heart today. That means he doesn't move because we're doing everything right. He doesn't move because all we have all of you know it's not a formula.

It's an issue of the heart. He says in every nation of everyone who fears God and works righteousness is accepted with him. That means not only in every nation but in every home.

You might be the least in your house as Gideon was but God can work through you and bring great deliverance to your family. If we took time today to go through the Old Testament scriptures you'll see the pattern over and over and over again where God reaches down and touches those with the least amount of influence. Those who perhaps are from a house that's far away from God and they themselves are the least authority in that house and yet it delights God to reach down and to touch those things that are nothing to bring to naught those things that are.

That's the hope of the gospel. That's what makes it such a wonderful thing to know God because it's not about having done it all right. You might say pastor you don't understand today my house is an absolute mess and I have been largely responsible to some degree for the mess that my house is in.

But God remember says to you that he's the restorer of everything that the moth and canker worm has eaten away. Everything the devil has come in and devoured God doesn't say well I'll just I'm the bandager of what the devil has done. No I'm the restorer.

I bring it back better than it was in the beginning. God Almighty is the one who can change all things. He can speak things into existence and he calls things that are not as if they are.

It's amazing when that finally gets into your heart something begins to stir inside your life. There's an incredible obligation given to everyone here who's the spiritual head of your home. Now that doesn't mean necessarily just the fathers because if the father's not living for God or if you happen to be a single mother it's the one who has that touch of heaven in their soul who has that living relationship with God.

In some cases it can be a son or daughter, can be a grandmother, it can be a grandfather who's here today. Maybe everyone else is backslidden or distant from God but you are the one now that is the connection to heaven for your family. And the issue is simply that through your life great deliverance can come to your family.

Do you believe this? I believe it with all my heart. I believe it I don't care how far away from God any of my distant relatives might be. I believe that through my life great deliverance can come to my family.

I've seen that in the last several years as God has been so faithful having had opportunity for example last November to speak at my father's funeral where many of my aunts and uncles and cousins and family members were gathered and being given opportunity in a Catholic church to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Justification by faith as the Apostle Paul said. God can do above and beyond all things that we can even think or ask.

You have to believe it or we end up poverty stricken Christians who are sons and daughters of the King. We have to believe that God can take our lives and He can make a difference to us. He can tear down strongholds.

He can bring deliverance into the most destitute spiritually speaking of families. He can touch the impossible and make it possible. This is the God we serve.

Nothing is too hard for God. Absolutely nothing. Absolutely nothing is too hard for the God that we serve.

I believe that in many who are here today you will be the key to a spiritual awakening in your own home and it will begin this year. If you can lay hold of this you will be the key. You say like Gideon, me? God are you sure? Are you really speaking this to me? I am the least in my father's house.

I am the least esteemed. I don't have any authority. In the field there were 12 plowers and he was the 12th.

He was the last guy in line in other words. Everyone else was before him and he's kind of the kid of the flock as it is. And he said, God are you sure? And God says yes I'm sure.

I've called you and I'm going to make you a mighty man of valor. I'm going to infuse life and resources of heaven into you. It's not going to be something you have to do in your own strength.

The Lord says I'm going to infuse it into you Gideon. I'm going to give it to you. It's going to come from my hand and the might that you will possess comes simply from the fact that I have sent you.

Not from any other reason or any other purpose. So look away from yourself as Paul says and reckon yourself dead but alive through Jesus Christ to every purpose that God has attained for you. Now I want to firstly look at the things which can hinder the deliverance of your house.

Now I believe that God is able to deliver our homes, every one of us here today, into spiritual life in Christ. But there are hindrances. There are reasons why sometimes these things don't happen.

And if we're honest today, if we have the true spirit of God, I believe we will say like David, God search me, try me, know my heart and see if there be something wicked that I have made peace with. See if some way has formed in me that has become a hindrance to your life being manifested in my house and among my family and my kinsfolk. Firstly, when you are of poor reputation among those that are closest to you, this would probably be the greatest hindrance to the deliverance of your house.

I'm not talking about your reputation at Times Square Church. You can be the best worker perhaps that we've ever seen in the house. You can grab a broom and sweep like nobody else or stand up in a classroom and teach like nobody else taught.

You can have giftings of the Holy Ghost and many things and tremendous faith even to move mountains. But if you are of poor reputation among those that are closest to you, your life will become a hindrance to the deliverance of your own house. Acts chapter 10, again, the Bible says that Cornelius, when the angel had spoken to him, he called two of his household servants and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually.

So here are three people from his own house and he sends these people to the Apostle Peter to get him because he's been told that Peter's going to tell you words and by these words you're going to know the mouth or the voice of God. And so when they arrived at the Simon the Tanner's house in verse 22 and they said, now here's their report, Cornelius the centurion, a just man and one that fears God and of good report among all the nation of the Jews. Now this is the report of his household.

They said he's a just man, an honest man. He's a man that fears God. He has a wholesome fear of God, a wholesome reverence of God.

Cornelius doesn't play games with God. They've never seen this man play games with God. It's his own household that says this man fears God.

He is exactly the same way at home as he is in whatever place perhaps he chose to worship. There's no difference. And we have to ask ourselves today, can those of our household give us a good report? If our children go to school, for example, and if the teacher asks and says, what is your father, what is your mother like, what is your sister, your brother, what is your grandmother, your guardian, what is your grandfather like, what can they reply? This is an honest question we have to ask ourselves, beloved.

Are we a hindrance to our own house? Does God want to bring deliverance but is it possible that we are of poor reputation? We come to church and our children see us lift our hands and praise God, but then they see us lift our hands for other reasons at home. We point the finger to heaven and talk about the promises in church, but point the finger at home for different reasons. We lift our voice in adoration in the house of God and raise our voice for other purposes in the house among those that are closest to us.

We talk about charity and generous giving and almsgiving in the house of God, but go home and we strain at an ad and we are stingy and selfish. And I had a young lady come to me one time from this church and her father was in public ministry and she came and she said, my father is such a selfish man, I'm ashamed. She said he buys all these luxurious clothes for himself, there's nothing he denies himself and I don't even have mitts to go to school and I don't have any good clothes and my mother has nothing nice to wear and my father is in ministry.

I had another young man one time sit in my office, his father was a minister, a preacher of the gospel and this young man almost broke my heart, 17 years of age and he said to me, if the God that is of heaven is the God of my father, I don't want to serve him. I see my father in the pulpit, but I tell you, he said he's another man at home. You see, this man was a poor reputation among those of his own house and he preached the gospel, became a hindrance to his own family coming to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

God forbid, God forbid that in my life or in your life that we should become the very barrier that shuts our sons and daughters, our brothers and sisters out of the kingdom of God. If they make a choice to reject God, then let it be on their own heads, but let it be with a perfect knowledge of who God is. Let it be with a touch of heaven if they make that rejection.

Acts chapter 10 and verse 2 describes Cornelius. Now, there was a certain man, it says in verse 1, called Cornelius the centurion and it says in verse 2, he was a devout man. And in the Greek New Testament, it says he's one who showed piety towards God, towards parents or others.

In other words, he's a man who treated people with respect. That's what it really means when it says he was a devout man. He was a man who was tempered and kind in his words.

Oh, beloved, remember David the psalmist when he's talking about all that God had done for him. He makes a statement that in my early Christian years, I said, Oh God, I want that to be my life. Because David concludes all the things that God had done for him by saying, Thy gentleness has made me great.

God, you have been gentle with me. You've been gracious with me, oh God. And because of it, I've had a heart to approach you.

Because of it, oh God, I've known that even in my failure, I can come back to you because your gentleness, you've been tender with me knowing my frailty. And this man, Cornelius, was a man who the scripture says he showed piety towards God, his parents perhaps and others. He was a tender speaking man, reverent.

He was careful in his words, careful in his speech. Also goes on to say he was one who feared God. And of course, the word just simply means he had a holy respect.

He had a reverence for God. He didn't play games with God. His children knew where he stood, his kinsfolks.

When you saw Cornelius in the place of worship, he was the same man that you saw perhaps in the kitchen the next day at home or out in the marketplace. People were able to look at him from his own household and say he has a reverence for God. He fears God.

He doesn't play games with God, this man. There's nothing more tragic than mothers and fathers who play games with God. Don't think for a second there's not a judgment on that.

First of all, in your own heart because of the spiritual blindness, but your children see it. Our children are designed to follow us as we follow God. God put that in their hearts.

And if they see in us a game playing with God, there's a tremendous judgment that can come into our homes because of that. Beloved, don't play games with God. Be the same person at home that you are in church.

Be the same person. And if you're not, at least have the courage to admit it. And come to God because he says, let me change that in your life.

Let me make you the same person at home that you are in the house of God. Goes on to say in verse 2, he was one which gave much alms to the people. Alms in the Greek New Testament means that he was moved to acts of compassion because of the pity that's in his heart.

He's a tempered speaking man. He has a God consciousness. All of his day, he's not playing games with God.

He is moved when he sees people who are in distress to do something about it. Folks, I'm telling you, I know now after the years of being a Christian that children are not interested so much in what we say. It's tell us, show us now.

Show us. Don't tell us your doctrine. Show us your doctrine.

Show us and we will follow. And quite often, you see the situations where mothers and fathers are moving out with acts of compassion to their neighbors, acts of compassion to people around them. It can be a cup of cold water for a stranger, but just that compassion is in them.

And this is the type of a man that Cornelius was. And then, of course, he says it lastly in verse 2 that he prayed to God always. Acts chapter 10, verse 30, when he begins to speak to Peter, he says, And four days ago, I was fasting.

I was fasting. I was seeking God. And an angel came and told me to send for you.

But I was fasting. He was a man who prayed. He was a man who was committing his family, his life, his day, committing his future into the hands of God.

And this was the man that God chose to bring his house together and touch them in a very profound way. Secondly, a hindrance, a man who cannot be corrected and admit to his wrong will often find himself and his home out of God's favor, a person who cannot be corrected, a proud person. First Peter 5.5, Peter says, Be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble.

God resists the proud. God will resist the person who cannot be corrected. The person who has a piety as it is, comes to the house of God, but goes home and cannot be corrected.

You know, the strongest evidence of that is when those closest to you try, perhaps you can humble yourself in Times Square Church. And if Pastor Dave, Pastor Neil, Pastor Carter, Pastor Patrick preaches a message, it's kind of a safe environment. You can slip out with the hundreds, come to the altar and give an impression, at least that you love correction.

But the evidence of loving correction is when you get home and your husband or wife or son or daughter says, I want to talk to you about something in your life. Then all of a sudden, this rage rises up. How dare you? You see, there's a pride there.

You see, it's the people closest to us that know us the best. Everybody can put on a good front Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon and Tuesday. But beloved, it's when you get home.

And the evidence of true humility is, can those closest to you speak to you? Can they say there's something you're saying, there's something you're doing, there's a way you're treating us or interacting that we need to talk to you about? If they perceive you to be a person of God and then there's a resistance or pride and you say, well, no, you cannot be corrected. You find that not only do your own house begin to resist the gospel that you're speaking to them, but also God Almighty himself says, I resist the proud, but give grace to the humble. I want to encourage you.

One of the greatest gifts I believe that God can give to a Christian is an open and a humble heart that says, Lord, speak to me, speak to me, to whoever and whatever circumstance you have to. If I am grieving you, God, speak to me. When all the defenses finally fall down, we have nothing to prove to anybody

anymore, but no reputation to uphold, no stubborn image to try to maintain.

We just want to be like Christ and say, God, speak to me, speak to me. Tell me what it is you want me to know about my life and about my heart. I always know when it's coming my way at home, because my wife gets that particular look at the breakfast table.

And she's always very gracious with me. She says, something I need to talk to you about. And then I know.

Now, years ago, something would rise up in me. I'd say, well, there's something I need to talk to you about, too, as well. But I guess as you get older, you get tamer.

Isn't that right, Pastor? You just get tamer and you say, what do you, what do you, what is it? I don't want to be ungodly. I don't want any area of ungodliness in my thinking or speech or conversation or action. And I'm grateful today for those closest who, if they see something developing, will speak to me about it.

I want to know. And I do believe that's the evidence of a godly heart, that we're not backing away and defending ourselves. Even if some, you know, quite often keep in mind that family members will quite often speak to you with a heated spirit.

The thing is, it's stewed in them. They might come to you with the wrong spirit, but they still might be speaking truth to you. Just about something in your life that has finally driven them to distraction.

And when it finally comes out, it comes out with all of the frustration that is built around it. You and I have got to have the grace to hear. The grace to hear.

And I do believe that Cornelius was such a man. For in Acts chapter 10, verse 25, it says, As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up.

I myself am also a man. So his first encounter with Peter is a correction, as it is. And Cornelius, of course, at that point said, Well, I'm really not a man.

Please, I'm not a man worshipper. I'm just doing it. This is our custom.

I was reverencing you as you came into my house. No, I believe that he truly took the correction. When Peter said, Stand up.

In other words, Cornelius, don't do this. You're not to worship men. You're to worship only God.

And lastly, and perhaps most importantly, you and I can be a hindrance to our own house coming to God when there is no sense of fresh expectancy in us. You see, our life in Christ must produce that expectancy. Faith is trust in a specific promise.

Now, I want to define the difference between faith and expectancy, as I see it. Anyway, faith is trust in a specific promise when God has spoken something and you've laid hold of it and you believe it. But expectancy is just something in the human heart of those who know God that say, Well, he hasn't spoken anything to me yet, but when he does, I know it's going to be good.

I don't know where I'm going tomorrow, but I know that God is in tomorrow and I know it's going to be good. It's another word really for a trusting heart that believes God for tomorrow. Certainly, we can say today that Cornelius didn't have the word of God.

He knew nothing about God. He didn't know anything about the way of salvation. There's not a single promise in the scripture that he was claiming as his own, but he was a seeker of God.

And when he heard that God's word was coming to him, he was able to gather his whole house because there was an expectancy in this man. We have to have that expectancy, beloved. We have to get up every day believing that as God is leading us, something good is going to come from his presence in our lives.

Some new gift is going to be given to us. Some new dimension will be added to our thinking or ability to talk about or live or act out the life of Jesus Christ that he is now birthed within us. There has to be that expectancy or we end up just religious people with a pile of theology that we're throwing at people.

I'd rather live in the presence of somebody who has that expectancy in their heart. Morning by morning, the psalmist says, new mercies I see. Morning by morning, every day I get up and oh God, I so expect you to do something.

I expect you, oh God, to do what is necessary in my life that your calling may be fulfilled through me. Acts 10, 24, the scripture says, and Cornelius called together his kinsmen and all his dear friends. So this man had an expectancy.

An angel had come and said, a man's coming. He's going to tell you about God. He had an expectancy that something good was about to happen.

And this expectancy in Cornelius enabled him to call together all his family and his close friends. They were all together. Verse 27 tells us, as Peter talked with him, he went in and found many that were come together.

I can see Cornelius at this time saying to his friends and family, listen, I heard something from God. I heard something. It's not just exuberance that arises out of presumption, but this is hearing something.

Beloved, I want to tell you something. When you're shut in with God and living with God, when you're not a religious fraud and God is able to get a hold of your heart, when you're not playing games and you're walking with God, there is an expectancy. There's something about you that God begins to do.

There's a light in your eye. There's something in your voice. There's something in your character.

The whole place around you can be in a tailspin and you can be sitting there with a calm confidence because you know, God is sitting in absolute control and you expect that he's going to speak something that is life. You expect it to come. There's a deep abiding trust in your heart.

And I want to tell you that is attractive. That's why new Christians oftentimes win more people to Christ than those that have known him for years, because new Christians don't know enough about the word to have lost their faith yet. New Christians just have an expectancy in God.

They have an expectancy. I'm changing. I'm not the person I was yesterday.

I remember when I first started sharing Christ, when I got sick, I didn't even know there was a man called Zachariah or Zephaniah or Malachi. I didn't even know they were in the Bible. I didn't have a clue, but I knew one thing.

I'm not what I was yesterday and I'm not going to be the same again tomorrow. An expectancy was in my heart. An expectancy is attractive.

It's that that fruit of that first love relationship. This is Jesus. I'm not willing to take communion with you.

I'm not willing to take your promises in your very life within me and trade it off for some form of dead religion. I'm going to live in that expectancy that you're about to do something in my life. We look at the scriptural illustrations, for example, Joshua.

Please don't turn there. I'll just share it with you. Joshua chapter six.

He said to the people as they were going into Jericho, he said, pass on and compass the city. And in verse 10, he says, the day I bid you shout, then you should shout. Oh, there had to be an expectancy as the people just simply obeyed.

This man had a word from God. They walked around the city. We don't know how it's going to happen, but it is going to happen.

There was an expectancy in their hearts, even though they were not the ones directly given the word. It was given to Joshua. In Judges, we see Gideon, as I spoke of earlier, taking 10 men of his servants and doing as the Lord had said to him, God had called him to bring deliverance to his house and said, first, you've got to tear down that altar of Baal that's in your father's backyard.

You've got to tear down that old altar. And so Gideon took 10 of his servants. Oh, a risky venture for sure, knowing that the full wrath of this village perhaps was going to come upon them.

But there was an expectancy in Gideon that God was going to do something. It wasn't given to the 10 servants. It was given to Gideon and Gideon, because that expectancy was being birthed in his heart, was able to gather these 10 servants from his own house around him to do something that was extremely risky to do.

Beloved, when your children or those close to you begin to see you and I casting down old altars, something begins to stir in their hearts. Not when it's what we say, it's when we begin to change old ways of speaking, begin to be cast down old things that we used to. All of a sudden they come home and say, hey, how come dad's not a couch potato on Sunday morning or Sunday afternoon any longer sitting and looking at some useless football game? But dad's going to church now and praising God.

What's bringing about this change that I want to tell you today? It's time to tear down the old altar. It's time to get rid of it and throw it out of your house. For the sake of God, for the sake of your families, I appeal to every spiritual head of every house.

Tear down the old altars. I don't care how long it's been that way. Tear down those old altars.

God is calling you to bring your family out of darkness and into the love and light of Jesus Christ. I think of the book of Ruth when Naomi told Ruth to go and humble herself at the feet of Boaz and to do something that was personally and culturally very difficult to do. I believe that Ruth obeyed Naomi because, in part,

there was a sense of divine expectancy in Naomi's voice.

Ruth had no word from God for herself. Naomi had the word. And there was an expectancy in Naomi.

Chapter three, verse one, Naomi tells Ruth, I have been seeking rest for you that it may be well with you. I've been seeking God for you. And this is what God is telling me to tell you.

Beloved, we have to have an expectancy for our children. We have to have it. You and I both.

Do we have God's word yet for them? We have to have something from heaven as we begin to intercede for the good of those around who may not yet know the presence and power of God. God will begin to speak to our hearts and we will begin to speak into their lives. So important for those who are in positions of spiritual authority to begin to speak into the lives of your family around you.

Begin to tell them what God will do for them. Begin to tell them if you would just obey God speaking to my heart. And there are some simple things.

If you will obey, God's blessing will come on your life. And of course, because of Ruth's obedience, she ended up grafted into the lineage of Jesus Christ. Can we say, as the Lord spoke through Jeremiah in chapter 29, 11? I know the thoughts that I think towards you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you an expected end.

Can we say these words to our children? Beloved, it's time. It's time that we get on the offensive, spiritually speaking, and begin to get hold of God and ask God, what is your mind for my son? What is your mind for my daughters? What is your mind, O God, for my brother, my sister, my mother, my father? And as we get that mind, begin to speak that into their lives. I remember sitting beside my father just a short time before he passed away.

And for many, many years, he seemed to be very close to the gospel of Jesus Christ. But I remember saying to him that I have a promise in my heart. I've been praying for you for 22 years and I have a promise in my heart from God that I will see you saved before you die.

Now, he was a month away from eternity at this time. And for the first time, I suppose, ever, he listened to me. I said, in three minutes, I'm going to tell you one more time what salvation is.

And I told him and just left it at that. He listened. The next time I saw him in the last, perhaps conscious hour of his life, I led him to the Lord.

And it was an amazing thing to see God do the miraculous, the best Christmas I've ever had in my entire life, to see my father and to know my father today is in heaven, not an ambiguous conversion, a conversion. I led him in a prayer from Genesis to Revelation. I wanted to be sure right through the Bible.

It was an amazing thing to see my father finally bend his knee to God. Cornelius said to his family, a word from God is coming. And by it, we will all know what to do.

A word is coming. I've been seeking God and God told me he's sending his word. And for Samuel one, 18, Hannah was praying.

And as the scripture says, as the promise began to be made real in her heart, she got up, went her way and began to eat. She was no longer fasting and her countenance was no more sad. She had a deep

abiding expectancy in her heart that God was about to fulfill something far beyond her own natural ability.

And of course, we know the story that the prophet Samuel was born to her and not only became the fulfillment of her personal desire, but fulfilled the desire of God to bring the nation of Israel for that season back again to righteousness. David, the king, stood before God. Second, Samuel chapter seven.

And he said, Who am I, O Lord God? And what is my house that you brought me to this place? There was that sense of awe. And then you'll see in the next verse, 19 expectancy. And he said, And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God.

But thou has spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And David said, As if it's not enough, O God, that you took me from following sheep and you made me king of Israel. But now you've spoken about my house for a great while to come.

Now, of course, it was a it could have been a physical possibility had Solomon walked with the Lord, but it was definitely a spiritual promise that was fulfilled through the lineage of David, of course, was born Jesus Christ. And then from that is born the church here today. So God's promise to David was absolutely true.

But he had an expectancy. Do you have that in your heart today? Do you have an expectancy for your house for the days ahead? If we know God, if we understand his power and don't have that, we're of all people to be most pitied in Luke chapter one. Go there with me very quickly so we can conclude Luke chapter one.

Mary had an expectancy. She had a promise from God that she was going to bear a child and this child was going to be the son of God. And in Luke chapter one, verse forty six, Mary said, My soul that magnify the Lord and my spirit is rejoiced in God, my savior, for he has regarded the lowest state of his handmaiden for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed for he that is mighty has done to me great things and holy is his name and his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

He has showed strength with his arm. He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their seats and exalted those of low degree.

He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich is set empty away. He has helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed. We are the seed now of Abraham and Christ forever.

Mary says, my soul magnifies God. He has given me a promise. It's so far beyond anything that anybody could ever ask for.

And this promise is now alive in me. And here comes Mary to visit her cousin Elizabeth and this expectancy that's now in her, that God is going to be faithful to her. God's going to be faithful to her house, even in spite of the fact that she knew the social consequences of perhaps being perceived as having been in adultery by those who no understanding of spiritual things before marriage.

She knew that there were dangers to be faced, but she had a trust in almighty God and an expectancy that out of the situation she couldn't fully comprehend that a marvelous deliverance was going to come. A marvelous deliverance for her own house, a marvelous deliverance beyond anything you could even think or begin to ask for. She came to visit Elizabeth, who's also experiencing a miracle of God.

And in verse 41, the scripture says it came to pass that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. I want to tell you expectancy is contagious. Something happens when you walk into a room and there's a person who by all intents and purposes, you look at them.

They don't seem to be any different. They seem to be in a difficult situation, but they're able to lift their voices and say, God has birthed something in me. God has given me a promise.

God appeared to me in the word. God is speaking to me. My soul magnifies the Lord.

I see my house and another generation living for God. I see children not yet born serving him. I see something in the future that only God can do.

And I rejoice in it. I rejoice in it because God touches those that are nothing. He touches those that are nobody.

He touches those that have no strength, no might, no power. And he raises them up to sit among kings and princes. My soul magnifies the Lord.

And Elizabeth heard Mary's voice and the baby in her womb leaped and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. The scripture says expectancy is contagious. You see, when you have faith in your heart, when you believe that God is good and his mercy endures forever, when you believe that all things work together for good to those that love God, when you believe that God's plan is the best, even if you don't understand it, when you're getting up every day saying, Lord, lead me, guide me, use me, glorify your life through me.

It's contagious. It's contagious. Everyone in your house will be touched by the grace of God.

Your sons, your daughters, your mothers, your fathers, they will be touched by God's grace. And God will use your life to bring your family out of spiritual darkness and poverty. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Acts 10 again, 33. Now it says immediately, therefore, he said, I sent Cornelius said to you and you've well done that you're come, he said.

Now, therefore, we're all here present before God. Cornelius knew it's not before man, it's before God to hear all the things that are commanded of thee. Now, keep in mind, this man Cornelius is a righteous man, a God seeker.

He's a man of praise and fasts and gives to people. He's a man of good report in his own house. He has an expectancy.

It's not been given to the rest of the house yet. He has it. And because of his expectancy, the house are gathered to hear the word of God.

It's because of your life that mothers and fathers and sons and daughters will come to Christ this coming year. Cornelius is able now to gather and his expectancy now has gathered a crowd who now have that same chance that God is about to do something. I remember when I first came to Christ.

I remember the man who led me to the Lord, who was the most influential as it isn't me coming to Christ. There was an expectancy in this man. He told me, said, when you come to Christ, you're going to be a

new creature, a new creation.

The old things are going to pass. And he believed. I didn't believe it, but he believed it.

There was an expectancy in him that there was going to be a change and God was going to use my life. And it was contagious. I began to believe it, not because I read it in the Bible, because he told me God was going to do it.

He expected it to happen to him. It was a done deal. It was signed.

It was part of the bargain. He said, if you come to Christ, you're going to change. You're going to be a new person, a brand new man.

That expectancy is contagious, absolutely contagious. He gathered together and Peter opened his mouth and said of a truth, I perceive God's no respecter of persons, but in every nation, he that fears him and works righteousness is accepted with him. And then Peter begins to preach the gospel.

And he talks about in verse 38, God anointing Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and power went about doing good and healing all that are oppressed of the devil. And God was with him. Peter goes on to say, we are witnesses of these things, which he did.

Verse 40 says, God raised him up the third day and showed him openly, not to all the people, but unto witnesses before chosen of God, even to us who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people. And I want you to picture the scenario.

Peter is preaching the gospel. The word is coming. Cornelius is there.

His household is there. His neighbors are there. The expectancy in him is contagious.

It is. It has gripped the hearts because of this man's testimony in life. His family now are believing that God is about to do something.

And he commanded us, Peter says in verse 42, to preach unto all the people and to testify that it's he which was ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and the dead or the living and the dead. To him, give all the prophets witness that through his name, whosoever believes in him shall receive remission. Or that means the forgiveness of their sins.

A very key statement. You've got to picture this house. You've got to picture these people.

They don't have a Bible. They've never had a promise. All they have is Cornelius.

You have to understand they have nothing in their midst but a God seeking man, an honest man, a man with good reputation and report, a man with deep expectancy that God's about to do something for his home and his heart. That's all they have. They don't have a Bible.

This is the first words they're ever hearing from God. And they hear a verse and it says Peter is just preaching the gospel. He's just sharing with this house that whoever believes in Jesus Christ, who was crucified and rose again from the dead, will be forgiven of their sins.

And while, verse 44, Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. The Holy Ghost came. You see, the work was done.

The expectancy was in the heart. And the Holy Ghost comes and does what only God can do. The Holy Spirit comes and touches your children.

The Holy Spirit comes and touches your mother and father. The Holy Spirit touches your sister and brother, because through your life, God has produced that expectancy so that when the word comes, that hunger is there, that sense this is good and God is about to touch my life, begins to touch them. In verse 46 says, when they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

Amazing. They heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Amazing.

All these people in that room, family, neighbors, began to magnify God, began to glorify Him, began to praise Him. And the apostles, I think there were six that came with Peter, they were dumbfounded when they saw the gift of the Holy Ghost poured out on a Gentile family and community through the life of a man who was a God seeker. I believe that you are called and I am called to be the Cornelius of our households in 2004.

But if God is going to use us in the way He used Cornelius, there are some questions that we have to be able to answer. Questions of our reputation to those that are closest to us. And I believe there are people here today that you are of poor report in your own house.

But the good news to you today is God can change that today. God can change that. He can change it.

Even if the poor report has followed you for 10 years, 15 years, God can change it in a moment. The moment your heart opens and says, Jesus, I'm sick of this. I'm tired of it.

I'm sick of the selfishness, the raising my voice. I'm sick of the hypocrisy. I'm tired of pretending to be a zealous for God and a couch potato the rest of the week.

I'm tired of it. I'm tired of it. I'm tired of not reading my Bible.

I'm tired of being angry with my family. God, my reputation is poor. And because of it, there's been a hindrance.

Now, that doesn't apply to everybody, but it does apply to some who are here today. In other cases, we need to look and say, God, are there altars that need to be torn down? Are there places that my heart is given to? Am I proud? Is it an altar of pride, perhaps, that I can't be corrected by members even of my own house? What's my attitude towards those over me in the workplace? Can they talk to me about my work habits without me getting all in the knot about it? Am I genuinely humble? Am I leading them to Christ, or am I a hindrance? Is there something in my life that is making me a poor reputation in the workplace and in my community? When I walk down the street, when I go to the store, people know I'm a person who attends church, at least. But what is my real reputation among those who are closest to me? Do I fear God? Am I playing games with God? Do I genuinely fear him? Do I show piety towards others? In other words, am I a person who speaks temperedly to people around me? Especially those closest to me.

Do my family see me doing good deeds? Am I moved with compassion to do something about the plight of people who are without God or with God and in difficult circumstances? Do they see it in me? Do they see something? Am I moved to do these things? Do I pray? Do I fast? Do I take a day a week or a month and fast and seek God? Am I really seeking God in his mind for my house and for those who are closest to me? Am I burdened or selfish? Really, there's only two options. We're either burdened or selfish. And we

either care or we're indifferent.

Do I have a fresh expectancy? And that's what I want to close with today. And I know that Pastor Neal is going to continue it Tuesday night. But do I have a fresh expectancy in my heart? That I don't know what tomorrow holds, but I know God is good.

I don't have a promise for next month, but I know God does. And I expect him to give it to me. I don't know the future of my children, but God knows it.

And I know he's going to tell me what it is. And I'll be able to speak it into their lives. Fresh expectancy.

Do I have it? Do I have this freshness of God in my heart? This inward, you know, the Bible says the secret of the Lord is revealed to those that fear him. This inward secret. Like you're walking down Broadway and you know something that nobody else knows in New York.

You've got this secret. I've got the life of God in me. And what a day this is going to be.

And it could be the worst day of your life beginning. But you just know that by the end, there's going to be a change because God is in it. I've got this expectancy that God is going to speak to me.

God is going to bless my home. God is going to use my life. You see, Gideon had a choice when God called him.

He either got up or he stayed where he was. And it's that way with you and me. We have the choice to get up and move to what God is speaking or we draw back.

And we say, no, it can't be. I've made too many mistakes. My family is too far away from God.

Or perhaps I have too little influence. Oh, Pastor, you don't understand how religious my family is. Oh, God does.

He had a very religious family. He knows. He understands.

But he'll give you the strength and the grace. 2004 is going to be a phenomenal year for many here today. It'll be a phenomenal year.

There are going to be people stand on this platform and give testimony exactly as Cornelius must have. You're going to give a testimony of what God did. It's going to be miraculous.

I can make that promise to you today. And I hope that your heart has that expectancy. If the Holy Spirit is speaking to you today, Education Annex.

I think you can feel free today to perhaps join us if some of you want to come. Main Sanctuary Balcony. If you want to come to this altar and make that dedication of your life.

If there's altars that shouldn't be there, issues that the Holy Spirit needs to touch. You want to be that person that brings your house out of darkness and into spiritual victory. You say, God, I'm the Gideon.

I'm the least. I'm the weakest. But here I am.

And I believe, God, you're going to do something through my life this coming year. Let's stand together.  
Balcony.

You can make your way to either aisle. Main Sanctuary. Slip out where you are.

Make your way down to this altar. Let's pray together. And as I say quite often, let's believe God for a miracle.

You're going to be the miracle of God this year. Let's believe God for the miracle that he will make of your life. Lord Jesus, forgive me for everything in my life.

That makes me a poor reputation in my own house and among my friends. I ask you, Jesus, to take these things out of my life and change me. Give me a heart of faith.

Give me eyes of faith. A deep confidence in that you're going to do something. Supernatural and victorious in me and then through me to my house and among my friends.

Lord, I ask you where I'm deficient in character. That you change me. I yield my life to this purpose.

I don't want to play religious games with a holy God. This is foolish. I will only defeat myself and my own house.

I yield my life and I ask you, Jesus, to take the fear of full surrender out of my heart. And help me to give myself completely to your purposes. Help me to walk humbly before my own house and my friends.

Help me to seek you, to be kind, to pray and to fast. Open my eyes that I may see wondrous things in your word. Open my heart.

Give me a deep expectancy that you're going to use my life for your glory in this year coming. And deliver my family and deliver my friends out of the grip of darkness. Oh God, I believe that my mouth will be raised to you at the end of this coming year.

With absolute praise and absolute glory, my soul will magnify the Lord. Oh God, I believe that you will touch my house, my children, my family, my brothers, my sisters, my friends, and you will fill them with the Holy Ghost and they will magnify God. I believe it, I believe it, I believe it.

In Jesus' name. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. I believe in God.

I believe it with all my heart. I believe in God. God, I thank you.

I praise you. I glorify you! I glorify you, God! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! I glorify you! I glorify you, Jesus! I glorify you, mighty God! Thank you, Jesus! Thank you, Jesus! Thank you, Jesus! Thank you! Thank you, God! Hallelujah! I praise you! I bless you, God! I bless you for the souls that are going to be saved. I bless you God for the transforming power of the Holy Spirit I bless you God.

I bless you Lord for what you're doing at this all I bless you Jesus Testimonies of grace are here Testimonies of the miraculous are here. Oh God Thank you for what you're doing. Thank you God.

We have a deep expectancy in our hearts Lord my God We praise you. We bless you. We bless you Jesus.

We bless you. We bless you. We bless you Hallelujah, hallelujah Not one of our family going to hell not one Not one Hallelujah This is the conclusion of the message

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