

## More Than Just Being “Good”

Ponder: What does God require from me?

Scripture: “a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people and prayed to God always” (Acts 10:2, NKJV).

If you aren’t being good, repent – quickly! And bring forth the fruit of repentance by mending your ways. God wants you to be good. Of that there is no doubt.

But is “being good” all God requires? If ever there was a “good” man, Cornelius certainly was. As to “goodness,” few, if any, of us could hold a candle to him. He was “devout” (i.e. religious) man And he directed his devotion toward the right object: he “feared God” (i.e. he held God in reverence). Not only that, but he led his household in that same worshipful devotion. Then our text tells us he “gave alms generously to the people.” While Cornelius was a Gentile, his charity was directed toward Jews (“the people” is used in contrast to the Gentiles). Finally, Cornelius “prayed to God always.”

What a good man! God Himself took note of him: “Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God” (Acts 10:4). So Cornelius must have been saved, right? No, that would be wrong! God’s holy angel told him to “send men to Joppa , and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved” (Acts 11:13-14). Good as he was, Cornelius was lost! Unlike so many today, however, Cornelius wasn’t trusting in his own goodness. When Peter taught him the gospel, he believed and obeyed (Acts 10:44-48).

Jesus taught that many sincere, “good,” religious people will be lost on Judgment Day. “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then will declare to them, ‘I never knew you: depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” (Matthew 7:22-23).

Yes, doing His will includes being “good”; but goodness won’t cleanse you from sin. Only Jesus’ blood can do that when you, like Cornelius, believe and obey the gospel, and then “walk in the light” with Jesus (1 John 1:7).

Song: “Nothing But The Blood Of Jesus”

Prayer: Almighty God, we want to be good, and we know You want us to be good. But please help us never to trust in our own goodness. We thank you for the blood of Jesus that has the power to cleanse us from our sins when we trust and obey. In Jesus’ name, Amen.