

God Anointed Jesus for Everyone

Acts 10:34-38

Jan. 11, 2026 (Epi. 1-A)

St. Paul's Lutheran, North Freedom

Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him." (Acts 10:34-38 NIV)

In the name of Jesus, the Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

In the Old Testament, God had leaders anoint ones he chose for important positions. The leaders were to take a flask of anointing oil, which was a mixture of olive oil, a perfume called myrrh, and some spices, and pour on the person God had set apart for that task. Moses was told to anoint Aaron and his sons as the first priests of Israel. God told Elijah to anoint Elisha to succeed him as prophet. God told Samuel to anoint David as the next king of Israel.

The Lord God promised that he would send a special person to be the Messiah, meaning "Anointed One" in Hebrew, in those offices of priest, prophet, and king. We heard in the gospel reading how Jesus, at the age of 30, was anointed—but not with a flask of oil. God the Father anointed his Son with the Holy Spirit. In today's text, the apostle Peter shared that message with a Gentile, a Roman army captain named Cornelius. Peter learned, and we need to remember today, that God didn't just anoint Jesus for one set of people. **God Anointed Jesus for Everyone!**

Peter was an apostle chosen by Jesus himself. One day he received a vision of a large sheet coming from heaven. On it were all kinds of animals, both clean and unclean according to the Old Testament laws. A voice told Peter, "Get up, take and eat." "But some of those are unclean!" Peter thought. As he was wondering about the vision, messengers from Cornelius came asking him to come to his house. Normally Jews do not enter Gentiles' homes, but Peter did so. Cornelius related to him how he also saw a vision—a man telling him that God heard his prayers and told him to send for a man named Peter who will explain a new message from the Lord. So Cornelius said, "Now we are all here...to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us" (v. 33).

That's what led Peter to exclaim: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right." Peter understood the meaning of that vision. There is no difference between Jew or Gentile, ethnicities or races or nationalities: Anyone who does righteousness is accepted by God.

Peter's statement makes us realize how much we need Jesus as our Priest. We ourselves often show favoritism. We often make judgments about people before we really get to know them, just based on their skin color or the language they speak (they're Spanish-speaking, maybe they're into drugs, or they're Arabic so they must be jihadists and support terrorism). And when Peter talks about the one who "does what is right," can any of us really do righteousness? Jesus observed, "No one is good—except God alone" (Mk. 10:18). God does not show favoritism—he looks at the heart. And he knows that in our hearts we have not done what is right, enough to earn his favor.

But God anointed Jesus with the Spirit to be our Priest. Throughout his life, Jesus had the Holy Spirit and as the holy Son of God was without any sin. At his anointing, Jesus was selected by God to be the special Priest for the world. Priests were anointed to offer a sacrifice to atone for sin; Jesus was anointed to offer himself as a sacrifice. All the requirements for a perfect sacrifice were met in Jesus. He fulfilled the law perfectly, and as our substitute offered himself to pay for all peoples' sins. A summary of his work as priest is found in Hebrews 10:10: "We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

"For all." Now that Jesus made that perfect sacrifice, he continues to be our perfect priest, representing us and all sinners to his heavenly Father, interceding and pleading to God to forgive us. Because Jesus made the complete payment, you and I are assured: We are forgiven! And it makes no difference who you are or what you've done: God anointed Jesus as priest for everyone!

Peter reminded Cornelius what he had heard the past few years: "You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ," and how this had happened since the time John was preaching the baptism of repentance. After John baptized Jesus and God anointed his Son, Jesus as Messiah proclaimed this good news. This was the Messiah's office as "Prophet." Jesus could proclaim the message of God because God the Father sent him, and because Jesus is himself true God!

Peter highlights the gospel as being good news of *peace*. Thanks to Jesus, God and man are reconciled. Peter himself experienced that peace. After Peter had denied 3 times knowing his Lord during Jesus' trial, the risen Lord came to Peter and 3 times told him, "Feed my lambs; feed my sheep." Jesus appointed Peter and the other apostles to share the gospel of peace with others.

Now that good news appeared in a Gentile's home. Cornelius, this good news is for you! For God our Savior "wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). People of North Freedom, Baraboo, Reedsburg and elsewhere, this good news is for you! And whether you're of European descent or Native American, Asian or African or mixed, this good news is for you too. So let's not discriminate to whom we bring this message: God anointed Jesus as prophet for everyone!

Jesus, the anointed Messiah, did more than preach in his ministry; he also healed "all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him." Here Jesus was serving in his office as King. Jesus led the attack on our arch-enemy, the devil. You might say that Jesus was a one-man army against the devil. He single-handedly crushed his power with his sacrificial death and his coming to life in the grave, and he descended into hell to show the devil he won the victory. All of us who were under the power of the devil—all us sinners—have been healed, set free!

After Jesus rose, he ascended to God's right hand, returning to power and dominion. Jesus now rules all things in heaven and earth; he is, as Peter calls him, "Lord of all." Our Lord graciously rules by his Word, in our hearts. And he will return as King to usher in his kingdom of glory, the new heavens and the new earth.

When we call Jesus "Christ," we are expressing our faith that Jesus is the "Anointed One," for that is what the Greek word Christ means. It also happens at our baptism that God anoints us with the Spirit; we come to faith in Jesus. As baptized believers with the Spirit, let's trust in Christ as our anointed Priest, worship him as our King, and spread the Word about the Prophet of peace, for God anointed Jesus for everyone! Amen.