



Introduction

Acts 9:36
Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

- Tabitha lived in Joppa, a town about 35 miles northwest of Jerusalem.
 1. Solomon used this seaport to receive timber used in building the Temple.
 2. Joppa was also the place Jonah ran to catch a boat to Tarshish.
- Acts 9:36 calls her by two names.
 1. Tabitha was her Aramaic name.
 2. Dorcas was her name in Greek.
 3. Both of these names mean "Gazelle."
 - a. Not uncommon to associate an animal with a person's personality
 - b. A fitting name for her because of her swift feet to help others
- We have no record of her words, but we do have record of her servanthood.
- She most likely was widowed or a single woman serving in the church.

A Disciple

- She is the only woman in the N.T. explicitly identified as a disciple, and it is the only description used for her.
- Disciple = A learner, a follower, and one who is determined to be like the teacher.

- The needs around her not only moved her heart, but she also moved in response to what she saw.
- The Bible says she was “*full of good works.*”
 1. She was saved to serve.
 2. She worked in a quiet, sacrificial, and unassuming way.
- Verse 39 helps us understand one of the ways she served.
 1. “*...shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made...*”
 2. She was a seamstress who made beautiful garments the woman were proud to wear.
- Small things done with great love will change others.

I Peter 4:10

The Death

- The author of Acts simply tells us she became sick and then died.
- The disciples heard that Peter was in the neighboring town of Lydda and sent for him.
- When Peter arrived the ladies showed him all the custom clothing she had made for them.
 1. Each one was unique because Tabitha saw them as individuals.
 2. They were literally clothed in her compassion.
- Peter asks them all to leave and cleared the room.
 1. Peter no doubt remembered the event of Mark 5:35-41.
 2. Jesus healed a girl after he asked everyone to leave except for Peter, James, and John.

I Peter 4:10

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Acts 9:39

*Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, **and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made**, while she was with them.*

I Peter 4:37

And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber.

The Deliverance

Acts 9:40

But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise.

And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

- This is an amazing episode in the life of the early church.
- Peter took her hand and said, “*Talitha koum!*” which means “Damsel, I say to thee, arise.”
- She opened her eyes and sat up, with her life restored to her.
- Peter then called the believers and presented her to them, alive.
- We don’t hear what happens next, but there is no doubt she went back to normal service.

Application

Acts 9:42

And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.

- Why was *she* raised from the dead?
 1. Why not Stephen?
 2. Why not other great leaders in the church?
- Most of us would see the need for a great teacher, a financial contributor, or a miracle-worker to be raised.
- God had a whole different perspective in mind.
 1. He didn’t do it for Tabitha’s benefit.
 2. He didn’t do it for their benefit.
 3. She was raised because God did not want compassion to die in the church.
- Serving others has a way of breaking through cynicism and softening hard hearts.
- The ability Tabitha had was availability.
- Ability without availability is a liability to God.