

Lesson Text

Acts 9:36-43 (NIV)

³⁶ In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. ³⁷ About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. ³⁸ Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, “Please come at once!”

³⁹ Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

⁴⁰ Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, “Tabitha, get up.” She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive. ⁴² This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. ⁴³ Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.

Today’s Lesson Aims

- **Learning Facts:** To know that nothing is impossible for God!
- **Biblical Principle:** To recognize that faith is the foundation of prayer.
- **Daily Application:** Live a life of faith by putting others first!

Introduction

Call the Expert

Many court cases rely on the testimony of expert witnesses. Because of their education, training, skill, and/or experience, these individuals provide specialized knowledge in a particular subject area. For example, a forensic psychologist may be called to discuss a murder suspect’s mental state, a handwriting expert may testify in a forgery case, or a medical expert may offer testimony in a malpractice case.

Such experts are sometimes referred to as “hired guns” or “go-to guys.” These monikers are descriptive of their roles: they are the people to whom one turns in times of legal trouble. Peter was a go-to guy of a different sort in the first-century church—an expert who could address an issue of life and death.

Power Hour
Lesson
Summary for
February 18,
2018

**“Faithful
Disciples”**

Lesson Text:
Acts 9:36-43

Background
Scripture: Acts
9:1-19, 36-43

Devotional
Reading:
1 Peter 1:3-9;
1 Peter 4:7-11

Lesson Background

Time: about A.D. 35

Place: Joppa

Today's lesson takes place in the first decade of the church, sometime in the A.D. 30s. The death of Stephen (Acts 7) caused a scattering of Jerusalem church members (8:1). One of them, Philip, traveled to Samaria where he had success in preaching the gospel (8:5-8, 12). The 12 apostles were still in Jerusalem, and of those Peter and John made the trip to Samaria to assist Philip and confirm his work (8:14). There Peter had a dramatic encounter with a sorcerer named Simon, a man who attempted to buy the power of the Holy Spirit (8:18, 19). After rebuking Simon, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching in villages along the way (8:25).

Sometime after this, Peter went to Lydda, a village about 25 miles northwest of Jerusalem, to visit believers (Acts 9:32). There he healed a paralytic named Aeneas, causing many in the village and others nearby to turn to the Lord (9:33-35).

In today's lesson, Peter ended up in the seaside city of Joppa (modern Jaffa), 12 miles to the northwest of Lydda. Joppa was a walled seaport city built on a small ridge that jutted into the Mediterranean Sea. Its tiny harbor was the closest natural anchorage to Jerusalem, causing the city to become a bustling port by the time of Solomon (see 2 Chronicles 2:16). Allotted to the tribe of Dan (Joshua 19:40, 46), Joppa was the seaport to which Jonah fled to hire passage to a distant place in his attempt to escape God's call to preach to Nineveh (Jonah 1:3). Joppa was a Jewish city, and it had an established church of Christians of Jewish background. This thriving seaport is the setting for today's lesson.

What Do You Think?

- What one thing can you do this week to add to a godly reputation?
- In what ways can you help your church improve its grief support ministry?
- How do you navigate the tension between expecting God to intervene and realizing that He might not?
- What can your church do to capture the attention of the community for God's glory?

Points To Ponder

- Your good works do not go unnoticed. (Acts 9:36)
- God watches our faith in trying times! (vs. 37, 38)
- Always be ready to answer God's call. (v. 39)
- Always begin every task with prayer. (v. 40a)
- The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. (vs. 40b-41; James 5:16)
- The humble works of a true disciple draws others to Christ. (Acts 9:42, 43).

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Conclusion

Living Legacies

Here's a one-question test: What legacy of Dorcas remained after she died? If you answered "clothing she made for widows," we invite you to try again! Dorcas's legacy was more than clothing. When she died, her legacy was grateful people who had been objects of her kindness and for whom she had modeled the love of Christ.

Each widow was a living legacy. She had taught them by her life how to care for others less fortunate than themselves. She had given them an example to cherish. Peter brought Dorcas back from death, but eventually she died again. When that happened, her legacy was no doubt similar if not enhanced.

What sort of legacy will you leave? Perhaps you are thinking mainly in terms of money you have designated in your will for a Christian cause or organization. Before trying to build your entire legacy that way, consider two points: (1) that's not what Dorcas did, and (2) "The man who leaves money to charity in his will is only giving away what no longer belongs to him." The quote is from Voltaire; although he was certainly no friend of Christianity, there is some wisdom in his observation.

Our primary legacies will be the people we are influencing now for Christ, people who will remain to do the work of God's kingdom after we are dead and gone. How will people remember you? Are you a workaholic who never has time for others, or are you someone who can always be counted on to stop and help? Will your memory be of one who loved money the most or who loved people the most? Are you a self-giving parent, or do you model "me first" to your children? Most importantly, will you leave behind a legacy of faith?

Legacy of Evil

Domitian became Emperor of Rome in A.D. 81. His tendency was to grab more and more power for himself. His pretentious ways were seen clearly when he required visitors to his royal court to address him as "My Lord and God Domitian." Eventually, the Roman Senate could stand no more, and Domitian was assassinated. In a remarkable move, the Senate then voted a damnatio memoriae (condemnation of memory) against Domitian. His legacy became that of a hated tyrant.

May we leave legacies like Dorcas rather than Domitian!

Prayer

Heavenly Father, forgive us for not attending to the work of Your kingdom as You desire. Remind us that the legacy we leave will be that of people we have served in the name of Christ. Indeed, it is in His name (Jesus) we pray and no other. Amen.

Thought To Remember

- Let us build our living legacies as we answer the calls of those in crisis.

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Anticipating The Next Lesson: Next week's lesson is **"The Good Fight of Faith"** where we learn that our faith should be centered around God. Study 1 Timothy 6:11-21.

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