



Women of the Bible

Tabitha/Dorcas

Acts 9:36-42

Her name means a gazelle or deer. We don't know a lot about her personal life, other than what she did for her city. When we meet her, *Grace* has already found her. It seems likely that she lived alone but that she evidently was widely loved (Ex.: Martha's house; Mary's town in Luke 10; John 11). She is a caretaker of the whole town. She is no doubt loving, caring, generous, and sensitive to others. If you have these same traits, along with being insightful, you and Dorcas could have been good friends. Possibly the most often observed not-so-good trait is that many people with these good traits can also be a bit possessive or overly accommodating. We don't necessarily see that in Dorcas. It's the difference grace makes.

HER PERSONALITY:

She employed her spiritual gifts for the needs and care of others.

She was sincere and warm-hearted—and no doubt well loved.

She was generous, friendly, and self-sacrificing.

She was well-meaning and driven to be close to others.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM DORCAS:

- Women are **disciples** too. Acts 9:36

Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas:

- Our **legacy** is being written as we live. Acts 9:36b, 39

*. . . this woman was **full** of good works and almsdeeds which she did.*

. . . all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

It is important to not just live for self.

Interestingly, she was not remembered for anything she *said*, only for what she did.

- Good works are **needed** in the Christian life. James 2:26

*"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so **faith without works is dead** also."*

Her active, living faith *moved* her to perform good works.

It is easy to be full of words and not so much full of works.

- God's **resurrection is for real!** Acts 9:37-38; John 5:25

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

The Apostle Peter had performed a lot of miracles but he had also faltered (Matthew 14:22-32). It required faith on Peter's part that he could raise the dead; it required faith on Dorcas's friends' part.

What do your friends think of your faith?

The body of Tabitha wasn't anointed for burial. Instead, her body was only washed. This means that the disciples didn't have any intention of burying Tabitha yet.

- There is awesome **power** in prayer. Acts 9:40

Peter had no power over death, but prayer and faith in God did.

Today, you might wonder, why don't we see more earth-shaking miracles. Why don't we see good people being spared from debilitating diseases? Why don't we see people coming back from the grave? Why don't we see natural calamities stopped before they ever come near us? Some prayers God answers and some He doesn't. Why? Because He is working out a greater purpose. In the case of Tabitha/Dorcas, God didn't heal her while she was sick. Her death accomplished His purpose: many more came to believe.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM DORCAS:

- Saints are God's **living**, breathing people. Acts 9:41

And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

Saints are people who:

- 1) believe in God
- 2) do His commandment
- 3) follow His will
- 4) have committed their lives to the work of God

- Godly people are not exempt from **trials**. Acts 9:37; Hebrews 10:32

*But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great **fight of afflictions**;*

Well, while it is true that blessings await those who know God and have a relationship with Him, it is equally true that trials and difficulties are also part of the Christian life. You learn lessons in trials that you learn no other way.

- All the **glory** belongs to God. Acts 9:39-41

Peter put everybody out before he kneeled down to pray. Peter refused to create any show of vainglory or self-promotion. As a result, God received the glory.

- Everyone has a **role** to play. Ephesians 4:11-13

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

There are things each of us can't do.

We must choose to do the things that we can do.

Ill.: I'm reminded of a scene that played out during one of our ladies' luncheons in which we re-created the setting of Little House on the Prairie and scripted a scene in the one-room schoolhouse. My granddaughter, Juliet, was young and we had tried to talk her into having a speaking part, but she insisted that

she couldn't do that. However, in the middle of the scene the day of the event, she kept trying to get the attention of her mother Meredith (who was playing Nellie), loudly whispering, "I want to say something. I have things to say." Meredith had to shush her, saying that it was too late to decide.

Seize the moment. Everybody has a part to play in God's plan. For the story of Tabitha, the women washed Tabitha's body (how would you like your neighbors washing your body, yikes; yet that was the way back in the day); the disciples took action—men were sent to find Peter; Peter prayed and asked for God to intervene.