

"Peter's Ministry"

Part 2

Acts 9

Introduction: In our study last week we left Peter in Joppa where he had been called because a believer named Dorcus had died. Prior to this Peter had been moving about serving the Lord and God had then directed his steps to Lydda. It was there where he encountered a man by the name of Aeneas who was crippled with the palsy.

Notice Acts 9:32-33

God directed Peter to a man who had been crippled for eight years and this man was well known throughout the region.

Notice Acts 9:34-35

The healing of this man was used of God to turn two entire towns to the Lord. This was also used to build the reputation of Peter because of something that is about to take place.

Now as we come to the next verse the scene changes and we are introduced to Dorcus.

Notice Acts 9:36

We looked at Dorcus last week and we were able to see that she was a believer who was focused upon doing all she could to alleviate the pain and suffering in the lives of others. She was walking in the good works which God had set before her.

Ephesians 2:10

¹⁰ *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

Dorcus was consumed with serving the Lord through serving others and we know this because the verse tells us she was FULL of good works. She was not saved by her good works but her good works were the result of her salvation.

James 2:17-18

¹⁷ *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*

¹⁸ *Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.*

Notice Acts 9:37-38

Dorcus died and before she was buried, they thought to call for Peter since he was in the area. This was another divine appointment for Peter. God was doing something here which we shall see as we move on. What Peter is involved in here at the end of chapter 9 is not just about healing people and raising them from the dead, there is much more.

➤ **Peter's Travels**

Part 2

Notice Acts 9:39

Here we see more information on the good works of Dorcas. She made clothing for those in need.

Application:

I need to stop here for a moment and point out something that we all need to grasp. Many times, when we think of works which honor the Lord we think of preaching and teaching the Word of God or we think of helping someone through a spiritual battle by praying with them and sharing Scripture with them. These ministries are very important and they honor the Lord. But when I read about Dorcas I understand that works like making clothing for someone, making food for someone, driving a person where they need to go when they cannot, mowing someone's lawn, or helping with a repair on their home, all of these are important and are honoring to the Lord. Ironside said concerning Dorcas that "she had a consecrated needle." I want to point out to you that Dorcas made clothing and her labor with a needle and thread is recorded forever in the Word of God.

1 Corinthians 3:9-15

⁹ *For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.*

¹⁰ *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.*

¹¹ *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

¹² *Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;*

¹³ *Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.*

¹⁴ If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

¹⁵ If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Jesus Christ is the Foundation and we build upon the Foundation as we serve Him and use our gifts. Dorcus built upon the Foundation with her needle and thread which was put to use with her spiritual gift of helps. I do not know how this Truth makes you feel, but it makes me excited to know that what we consider to be "little things", (making a meal, sowing clothing, pounding nails, driving someone for an appointment, mowing grass, shoveling snow) are all seen by God as very significant works when they are done with the proper motivation, which is to glorify our Lord. This should make us want to be busy using our talents and abilities to glorify our Lord.

Hebrews 6:10-11

¹⁰ For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

Let us notice how important these "small deeds" are in God's eyes.

Matthew 25:34-40

³⁴ Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

³⁵ For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

³⁶ Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

³⁷ Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

³⁸ When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

³⁹ Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

⁴⁰ And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Let us get back to Acts again.

Notice Acts 9:39-40

Dorcus was surrounded by widows which possibly means she too was a widow. Peter made everyone leave and he then spoke her name and she opened her eyes and sat up. This may not have been the first time Peter did this.

Matthew 10:5-8

⁵ *These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:*

⁶ *But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

⁷ *And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

⁸ *Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.*

When Jesus sent the disciples out earlier, He told them to raise the dead, therefore it could be that Peter had done this before.

Notice Acts 9:41-42

This miracle had a great impact upon many in Joppa and therefore many believed in the Lord.

There were two specific purposes for Peter being in Joppa to perform this miracle.

1. **It was preparing Peter for what was about to transpire.**

In the next chapter the Gospel will go to the Gentiles. The area of Joppa had a significant population of Gentiles and then there is the last verse in Acts 9.

Notice Acts 9:43

Peter remained in Joppa with a tanner. A tanner was someone who was seen as unclean because of contact with animal carcasses.

Leviticus 11:39-40

³⁹ *And if any beast, of which ye may eat, die; he that toucheth the carcase thereof shall be unclean until the even.*

⁴⁰ *And he that eateth of the carcase of it shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: he also that beareth the carcase of it shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even.*

Notice the words of Morgan on how a tanner was viewed:

"The trade of a tanner was held in such supreme contempt that if a girl was betrothed to a tanner without knowing that he followed that calling, the betrothal was void."

God was working to strip away from Peter the tradition of Judaism. Peter was now under grace and it would take some time before the old practices would fall away.

Application:

When I read this, I am so thankful for God's patience in working with us. He will patiently take us through seasons of life to prepare us for something that we are going to face in the near future. I have watched God work in the lives of people as he would prepare them for a difficult time ahead. I remember a time when I had contact with a person who was so attached to their father and could in no way bear the thought of him not being around. God allowed their father to become ill and slowly get worse until the person I knew came to the point where they asked God to take him so that he would no longer suffer. Now I know that not everyone has that extended period of time with a loved one and in those situations, there is always grace.

2 Corinthians 12:7-9

⁷ *And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.*

⁸ *For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.*

⁹ *And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

God was walking Peter down a path to prepare him for what He was about to call upon him to do. God works the very same way today; be we often miss the training. Peter's path was not difficult here in Joppa but there are times when God prepares us that the path is very difficult and can be very painful. But let us understand that God never wastes His moves as He works with us. Our responsibility is to submit and to trust Him.

1 Peter 5:6-7

⁶ *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

⁷ *Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

2. The miracles Peter did in this chapter established his credibility among the Gentiles.

God had given the sign gifts to the Apostles to show that their message was authentic. The miracles that Peter did in this chapter were meant for evidence of the authenticity of his message to the Gentiles.

The Apostles lived to see the sign gifts come to an end and they all ended before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Notice what the writer of Hebrews recorded:

Hebrews 2:3-4

³ *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;*

⁴ *God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*

The writer speaks of the sign gifts in the past tense and he also tells us the sign gifts belonged only to those who heard Jesus who were the Apostles. They do not exist today. There is absolutely no need for sign gifts today. We have record that the message of the Apostles was authentic. The message of the Apostles needed to be confirmed for two reasons:

1. There were false apostles.
2. They were the pillars of the church and part of the foundation.

Galatians 2:9a

⁹ *And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars,*

Ephesians 2:20

²⁰ *And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;*