

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 4



HEALING AND RAISING THE DEAD

Scripture Text: Acts 9:32-43

After Paul's departure for Tarsus, the Jerusalem church enjoyed a period of quiet and freedom, prospering spiritually and in numbers.

Peter went throughout all quarters contacting the saints, getting together for spiritual talk, prayer, and exhortation. This is good. It encourages, strengthens, and builds us up. Doing so, we grow in grace and knowledge and skill in God's work. Paul wrote to forsake not the assembling of ourselves together, but to exhort one another (**Hebrews 10:25**).

The lesson today sets forth a number of important truths. One is that God often chooses people of low estate, according to worldly standards, to fulfill some important work. Dorcas was not a person of high position. She appears to have had neither wealth nor learning. She was skilled in sewing and had a deep concern in her heart for the poor. Because of this, God used her to do a great work in His kingdom.

MEMORY VERSE: *And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.*

—Acts 9:42

DAILY READINGS:

- Mon.—**James 1:1-17** Looking to God.
- Tue.—**2 Chronicles 7:12-22** Healing for the land.
- Wed.—**Psalms 41** Healing for the soul.
- Thu.—**Hosea 14** Healing for backsliding.
- Fri.—**Luke 4:16-27** Healing for the brokenhearted.

Devotional Reading: **Ezekiel 37:1-14** Making dead souls live.

Aeneas Healed

Acts 9:32-35 Peter passed throughout all quarters. He went out from Jerusalem to visit the churches, probably evangelizing as he went. **He came . . . to the saints . . . at Lydda.** There he found Aeneas, bedfast eight years with palsy —paralysis. We would call it a hopeless case. **Peter said . . . Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed.** He could not do this in his unhealed condition. He did not question the fact that he had not done this for eight years; **he arose immediately**—no hesitation. This was proof of his healing. **All that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him**—everyone was present and all saw the miracle—**and turned to the Lord.** Many souls were saved.

When God works miracles and the church acts as pleases Him, people are awakened by the nearness and power of God. They are convinced, realizing this is the God they have offended and the God they need. God does the same now as then.

The Death of Dorcas

Acts 9:36-38 There was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha in Hebrew, or Dorcas in Greek. She was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. In thinking about Dorcas, we need to give special thought to the last three words in this verse, **which she did.** Some people think about Christian service, dream about it, write about it, or preach about it; Dorcas performed it. **She was sick, and died.** They washed her and

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laid her in an upper chamber. They knew what to do next. **Lydda was nigh to Joppa. The disciples had heard that Peter was there.** They probably had heard of Aeneas' healing. **They sent . . . two men, desiring him . . . to come.** In this, we see the faith of these ones at Joppa.

Dorcas Raised

Acts 9:39-41 Peter arose and went with them. Peter might have had thoughts as to why he should trouble himself with the dead when so many of the living needed his attention. But when the call came, he went without delay on what might have appeared to him a fruitless journey. On Peter's arrival, they took him to **the upper chamber: and all the widows**, in whose behalf Dorcas had labored so faithfully, were gathered **weeping**. They loved her. They showed **the coats and garments which Dorcas made**. Possibly they were wearing some, perhaps others were there not yet distributed. They may have asked why a good woman like this should be taken away and there be left a multitude whose passing would scarcely be missed. **Peter put them all forth**—to be alone with God, no dividing of attention, no unbelief to hinder, no desire for show, no long, loud praying, but simple asking. He **kneeled down, and prayed**—contacted God. Then **turning . . . said, Tabitha, arise**. Life came back in, the heart beat, and the blood flowed, the cold body warmed. **She opened her eyes . . . sat up**. Peter **gave her his hand, and lifted her up**. People who follow this pattern—solitude, silence, and prayer of faith—now as then cause mighty spiritual power to operate in their lives. He **called the saints and widows**—the church people and needy ones she had helped. He **presented her alive**. We can only imagine the glorious time they had for God's great work.

Good works are the adornment of godly women rather than jewels and costly clothing (**1 Timothy 2:9-10**). Dorcas wore this adornment. She was a disciple, and she was loved by the church and those she helped. She pleased God. Along with giving us the example of this godly sister, He commands us to help the poor and needy. We are to **do good unto all men, especially** to those of the church (**Galatians 6:10**). Giving should be done with no show nor boasting (**Matthew 6:3-4**). As we show our love for our brother, we show our love to Jesus (**Matthew 25:34-40**). By good works, we bring glory to the Father. This is the saint's chief desire. The Church of God, to measure to God's standard, must be full of good works.

The Effect

Acts 9:42-43 It was known throughout all Joppa. As Aeneas' healing was known, so was Dorcas' raising. **Many believed in the Lord.** It is not what we have that counts in God's sight or how much we give. His interest is in how we use that He has given. Let no one say that his gifts are too meager to be used in God's work. If Dorcas had a place in the Kingdom of God, you and I have a place. As her humble gifts were helpful in God's work, ours will be. But let us be sure we have the compassionate heart of Dorcas and her loving faith in Christ. Then our works will be good works as hers were.

JUST A THOUGHT

The temple of God must be richly adorned—the temple of the heart.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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