

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for August 11, 2013

The Raising of Dorcas
Acts 9:36-43

The raising of Dorcas is the second of two miracles that begin the final section of this book as the church expanded its mission toward the remotest part of the earth (Acts 1:8).

1. The report of Dorcas (9:36-38)

Tabitha is Dorcas' Aramaic name, and by using her Greek name (Dorcas), Luke underscores the movement of the gospel toward the Greek-speaking world. Unlike Aeneas, she is described positively with deeds of kindness and charity speaking to her acts of mercy through charitable giving.

The washing of the body and delaying the burial represented Greek cultural practices.

Joppa (modern day Jaffa) was about 12 miles from Lydda. This is the same port town where God began to compel Jonah to go to Gentile Nineveh.

Their request for Peter's presence was phrased in a formal fashion, indicating a respectful request, more than an urgent demand. Luke did not specify the purpose for Peter's presence.

2. The resurrection of Dorcas (9:39-41)

The weeping by the widows demonstrated they had no idea that Dorcas would be raised from the dead.

The middle voice of the word "showing" indicates the widows were wearing the garments and was included to demonstrate the ways that Dorcas had given to the needs of the poor. We all have certain abilities that can serve the needs of others and the more we serve, the more connected we become to others.

This resurrection is different than the resurrection of Jesus. Dorcas was raised from the dead by Jesus; Jesus raised Himself from the dead. Dorcas was raised in her existing body; Jesus was raised in His resurrection body. Dorcas would later die; Jesus would never die.

The details of this resurrection echoed the resurrection of the official's daughter, including

- Putting out the crowd from the room (Matthew 9:25)
- Taking her by the hand (Luke 8:54)
- Speaking certain words (Mark 5:41)

The ministry of Jesus Christ continued through Peter and Peter's revelation in Acts 10:9-16 would be authoritative for the church.

3. The response of the people (9:42)

As was seen with earlier miracles, news traveled and many believed in the Lord (Acts 5:12-14; 8:6-8; 9:33-35).

4. Peter resides with Simon the tanner (9:43)

A tanner was someone who worked with dead animals. This was considered to be an unclean occupation by Jews (Leviticus 11:39-40). This detail was included as a precursor to the vision to Peter regarding the ceremonial "uncleanness" of the Old Testament.

While Peter was willing to go beyond Pharisaical restrictions on contact with those considered unclean, he would require a vision from the Lord to fully embrace the New Testament ministry (Acts 10:9-16).

Staying with a tanner was one step closer to eating with a Gentile (Galatians 2:12). Eating with a Gentile was one step closer to both Jews and Gentiles united in the church.

May God move us to relate to all mankind for the sake of seeing them not perish but have eternal life.