

LEAVING A GAP THAT MATTERS

The woman we're going to learn from today is a very minor character in the Bible. We don't know much about her.

Her Hebrew name was Tabitha; in Greek it's Dorcas.

Both words are translated the same in English: "Gazelle" or "_____."

She lived in Joppa – the ancient seaport for Jerusalem.

We don't know anything about her birth, her family, how old she was when she died or how she came to faith in Christ.

But her story teaches us a very important lesson: more important than being famous is being _____.

Acts 9.36-39: In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. 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!" 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.

WHAT WE DO KNOW ABOUT DORCAS:

1. DORCAS WAS A _____ OF JESUS CHRIST.

Acts 9.36: In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas), who was always doing good and helping the poor.

The Greek word used to describe her is *mathaetria*.

This is the only place in the New Testament where we find this word in its feminine form.

Usually you would expect the word "believer" or "servant."

A disciple was a student.

In the context of first century Judaism, it referred to someone who had studied not just a teacher's ideas, but also a teacher's _____.

Another translation for the word, even better, is "_____."

Dorcas was a follower of Jesus.

The verb *manthanoo* has the original meaning of "to direct one's mind to something."

Acts 9.36: ... She was always doing good and helping the poor ...

Acts 10.38: “God anointed him (Jesus) with the Holy Spirit and he went around doing good ...”

Matthew 25: I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you took me in. I was naked and you clothed me. ... For whatsoever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.

Dorcas was a disciple of Jesus Christ – she studied his teachings and his life and she _____ her life after his.

2. DORCAS WAS _____.

Acts 9.39: 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.

WHAT KIND OF GAP WOULD THERE BE IF YOU WENT TO BE WITH THE LORD TODAY?

Why did they send for Peter?

- A. Possibly they believed Peter would _____ Dorcas from the dead.
- B. Maybe they wanted him to conduct the _____.
- C. They just wanted someone like Peter to _____ about Dorcas and her life.

3. DORCAS HAD EXPERIENCED HER OWN _____.

In all likelihood, Dorcas was a widow herself.

When we suffer, it’s so easy to turn inward and to say, “No one understands what I’m going through; no one knows how I feel.”

Instead of saying “no one knows how I feel,” Dorcas looked at others who were suffering and said, “You’re not alone, because I understand.”

We usually want to help people based on our _____ and strengths.

But we will have the greatest impact on others when the help, comfort and lessons we offer come from the times when our struggles were deep and long, not from the times when our successes were quick and easy.

2 Corinthians 1.3-4: Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

People often ask to know God’s will for their lives.

Sometimes the answer is found in our _____.

4. DORCAS WAS _____.

1 John 3.18: Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

Love is more than emotions felt.

Eventually, love is something we give, something we _____, something that is practical and that meets a need.

You have some ability, some gift God has given you, some skill you have developed, some expertise that others need.

And God expects you to share it with others who are hurting.

Making a big name for yourself while you're here doesn't compare to leaving a big hole in the hearts of others when you're gone.

And the way you do that is love.