

2010 ACTS #11 CHAPTER 9 - MIRACLES ABOUND - AENAS AND DORCAS Acts 9:32-43

In our series on Acts we see the switch today
From the conversion and initiating ministry of the Apostle Paul
To the expanding ministry of the Apostle Peter.

In the debate over who was the greatest disciple
Peter or Paul, we discover,
The parallels between their ministries
Both healed cripples.
Both were arrested and put into jail
Both were miraculously delivered.
Both were treated like gods 10:25-26 14:8-18
Both gave a bold witness before the authorities.
Both had to confront false prophets 8:9-24; 13:6-12
We can't in reading the book of Acts end up saying.
I am for Paul
Or I am for Peter

There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men I Corinthians 12:5-6

God was showing that in all Christians there
Should be a unity of the Spirit
And a common recognizable work similar in each.
That produces the greatest glory to God.

We pick up on the Apostle Peter's visit to the saints in Lydda (Liida)
³²As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the saints in Lydda. Acts 9:32
Peter went there to strengthen the new church.
That had been started by Philip Acts 8:40
Remember now Peter was an Evangelist in his own right.
With 3000 being converted at Pentecost.
Even though he is the Billy Graham of the first Church.
He comes to Lydda to encourage the little church.

I. A FIRST MIRACLE

PETER finds a man there named Aeneas.

³³There he found a man named Aeneas, a paralytic who had been bedridden for eight years. Acts 9:33

Now note this is a paralytic
Who has been bedridden for 8 years,
This man didn't find him.
He found a man named Aeneas.

Aeneas probably was a Christian,
But being a Christian or non Christian we all face
The same trials and tribulation of this painful world.
Someone said: "Growing old isn't for sissies."
The Pickle cartoons portrays this so clearly.



Aeneas was paralyzed for eight years.
 We don't know what he could move.
 But we do know they didn't have computers,
 And lifting equipment. Or walkers
 Electric scooters, or
 Handicapped bathrooms
 Which meant he was a burden to himself and a burden to others
 And there was no prospect that he would ever get well.
 He had no hope.

Friends maybe that is just how you feel in your present circumstance
 Your never going to get well,
 And there is no hope.
 But we are not working with common God.
 Made out of wood or stone.
 Who is uninvolved and uncaring.
 But a resurrected Christ,
 Whose very name brought healing to Aeneas
"Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and take care of your mat." Acts 9:34

The healing was instantaneous,
 And the man was able to get up and make his bed.
 And walk.

Have you ever seen the muscles on a leg that has been unused for 3 weeks?
 The muscles hang in atrophy.
 Loose like withered tomatoes on a vine.
 Doctors tells us that if you lay in bed for two weeks,
 You will need therapy to walk again.
 That's one of the reason it is so important to get people out
 who have been Buried in Haiti earthquake as soon as possible.

This man had lain for 8 years on immovable legs
 With no therapy.
 And it says:
Immediately Aeneas got up (and walked). Acts 9:34

Friends, don't tell me about a powerless God.
 Our God is an awesome God.
 He reigns from heaven above.
 With wisdom power and love.
 Our God is an awesome God.

God cured him of paralysis and
 Probably depression and
 Any muscle weakness.
 Peter's first miracle had been the healing of a crippled man Acts 3,
 And now that miracle is repeated with Aeneas in Acts 9:

A grandmother was watching her grandchild playing on the beach when a huge wave came and took him out to sea. She pleaded, "Please God, save my only grandson. I beg of you, bring him back." And a big wave came and washes the boy back onto the beach, good as new. Grandma looks up to heaven and said: "But, he had a hat!" That's gratitude for you, isn't it?

Have you noticed that some people have a hard time being thankful being satisfied?
 I'm talking about you and me,
 God answers our prayer and we say ok I'm going to believe,
 But, but, what about this?

But not those in Lydda and Sharon.

All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord. Acts 9:35
 Just seeing him walk around convinced them that
 Jesus was alive and they needed to trust in him.

God used Peter to reach a city
 Who might God be trying to reach through you?
 Peter was following Jesus' order to feed the sheep,
 And he found bigger fish to fry.

II. A GREATER MIRACLE

³⁶In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas^{F42}), who was always doing good and helping the poor. ³⁷About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. Acts 9:36-37

Did you ever notice that once you catch fish
 When others aren't catching fish.
 You become the center of attention.
 Everyone wants to be your friend.
 They want to know where are you fishing?
 What lures are you using?
 How deep is the water your in?
 What time of the day are they biting?
 I am guilty of this.
 And In about 10 hours we have a village of fishing shacks all around us.

Now we all know that Joppa is a city of fish stories.
 It is the place where Jonah fled from God. Jonah 1:103
 There was a story about a fish catching a man.
 Swallowed him up and.
 Three days later spit him out.
 Like a bad fur ball.

Jonah's disobedience scared the breathing daylights out of the Gentile sailors.
 Even today disobedient Christian still scare the world.
 The world knows how Christians are supposed to act.
 And it bothers them when they don't live up to their beliefs.

Jonah disobeyed but Peter obeyed.

And a whole different wind of the spirit was blowing.
 There is a storm of healing moving from Lydda to Joppa.
 12 miles and news flies fast.

³⁸Lydda 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!" Acts 9:38

What Peter found was a blessed saint in the church had died.
 It seems Dorcas was a caretaker of the widows.

³⁹Peter 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. Acts 9:39

It was a tragedy that a useful and beloved saint like Dorcas
 Should die when she was so greatly needed by the church.

Yet I myself have see this happen in the church and it's a hard blow.
 Its not easy to find someone so committed and dedicated.
 Selfless in their service.
 Supportive of the ministry.
 There are really needed in the church.
 They die.
 All we can say is:

The lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. Job 1:21

But you have to give the people of Joppa credit.
 They had seen this great God of Israel.
 create a storm big enough to sink a ship,
 And rile up a fish big enough to swallow a man,
 And then give him an indigestion big enough to cough him up alive 3 days later,
 This is the God
 Who could heal a sick woman.
 Even now a dead woman.

Friends:

Remember there has been no record in Acts of any of the Apostles
 Of any raising the dead.
 So sending for Peter was an evidence of
 their faith in the power of the risen savor.

They sent for peter.

In a recent interview, General Norman Schwarzkopf was asked if he thought there was room for forgiveness toward the people who have harbored and abetted the terrorists who perpetrated the 9/11 attacks on America. His answer was classic Schwarzkopf.

The General said, "I believe that forgiving them is God's function. Our job is to arrange the meeting."

Well the People of Joppa believed
that it was God's job to raise the dead.
And it was Peter's job to arrange the meeting.

And isn't that exactly what we as Christians are called to do.
Just arrange the meetings.
Between the living God and an unsaved world?

⁴⁰Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up.

God healed Aeneas,
God raised Dorcas from the dead,

Do you see how God is building the evidence on how
powerful a God he really is?
If Jesus could raise the dead when he was on earth away from the Father
How much more can he do now that he is with the Father.
Exalted to the throne in Glory

I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live even thou he dies;John 11:25

And Jesus doesn't just raise one person in Joppa,
Another in NY, or Borneo, or even Haiti.
Today Jesus raises every Christian who dies from the dead.
We often just want them raised to live here on earth.

But if we asked those who have died if they want to come back,
They would probably say no way.

Peter took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called the believers and the widows and presented her to them alive. Acts 9:41

Peter presented this woman back to the Widows
Friends, there was no government aid
soup supper
food stamp.
salvation army.

Or even a parish nurse
Dorcas was their aid.
Dorcas was the church.

I believe today that the church has an obligation to help people who are truly in need.
I am proud of UMC and UMCOR and it's
Ongoing consistent work in Haiti.

We were there
We are there
We will be there.

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. James 1:27

James added that last line

Because he knew that handling that much money
can be a great temptation and pollute a life.

So Peter took Dorcas by the hand after he spoke.
And saw the power of God raise her from the dead.

This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. Acts 9:42

When you and I live obedient to the word of God.

It has an affect on those around us.

And God will use your life and witness

To open doors

To change hearts,

To heal families

And to restore new life in a community

Give new hope to a country

where hope is gone

And the smell of death is in the air.

Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon. Acts 9:43

God detained him in Joppa,

To open the door to the Gentiles.

Next week in our study of Acts of the Apostles

we will see how God

Breaks down old tradition and superstitions

To open a new door to salvation.