

MY BENEFACTOR MUST LIVE

**(GO BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY)
(ACTS 9:36-43)**

ADEOYE < EMMANUEL (Evangelist)

At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. ³⁷ But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. ³⁸ And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to them.

³⁹ Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. ⁴⁰ But Peter put them all out and knelt and prayed. And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

⁴¹ Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. ⁴² And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord. ⁴³ So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with Simon, a tanner.

Joppa, the modern Jaffa, is located on the seacoast, some ten miles beyond Lydda. The city is important in Bible history as the place from which the Prophet Jonah embarked when he tried to flee from God (**Jonah 1:1-3**). Jonah went to Joppa to avoid going to the Gentiles, but Peter in Joppa received his call to go to the Gentiles!

Because Jonah disobeyed God, the Lord sent a storm that caused the Gentile sailors to fear. Because Peter obeyed the Lord, God sent the "wind of the Spirit" to the Gentiles and they experienced great joy and peace. What a contrast!

It seemed so tragic that a useful and beloved saint like Dorcas (Tabitha=gazelle) should die when she was so greatly needed by the church. This often happens in local churches and it is a hard blow to take. In my own Evangelistic ministry, I have experienced the loss of choice saints who were difficult to replace in the church; yet, all we can say is, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord" (**Job 1:21**).

The believers in Joppa heard that Peter was in the area, and they sent for him immediately. There is no record in Acts that any of the Apostles had raised the dead, so their sending for

Peter was evidence of their faith in the power of the risen Christ. When our Lord ministered on earth, He raised the dead, so why would He not be able to raise the dead from His exalted throne in glory?

We usually think of the Apostles as leaders who told other people what to do, but often the people commanded them!

(For Peter's "*philosophy of ministry*" read **1 Peter 5**) Peter was a leader who served the people and was ready to respond to their call. Peter had the power to heal and he used the power to glorify God and help people, not to promote himself.

It was a Jewish custom first to wash the dead body, and then to anoint it with spices for burial.

When Peter arrived in the upper room where Dorcas lay in state, he found a group of weeping widows who had been helped by her ministry. Keep in mind that there was no "*government aid*" in those days for either widows or orphans, and needy people had to depend on their "*network*" for assistance. The church has an obligation to help people who are truly in need (**1 Tim 5:3-16; James 1:27**).

The account of Peter's raising of Dorcas should be compared with the account of our Lord's raising of Jairus' daughter (**Mark 5:34-43**). In both cases, the mourning people were put out of the room; and the words spoken are almost identical: "*talitha cumi*" little girl, arise; *Tabitha cumi*: Tabitha, arise."

Jesus took the girl by the hand before He spoke to her, for He was not afraid of becoming ceremonially defiled; and Peter took Dorcas by the hand after she had come to life. In both instances, it was the power of God that raised the person from the dead, for the dead person certainly could not exercise faith.

As with the healing of Aeneas, the raising of Dorcas attracted great attention and resulted in many people trusting Jesus Christ. During the "*many days*" that he tarried in Joppa, Peter took the opportunity to ground these new believers in the truth of the Word, for faith built on miracles alone is not substantial.

It was a good thing Peter tarried in Joppa, because God met with him there in a drilling new way. God's servants need not always be "*on the go*."

They should take time to be alone with God, to reflect and meditate and pray, especially after experiencing great blessings. Yes, there were plenty of sick people Peter might have visited and healed, but God had other plans. He deliberately detained His servant in Joppa to prepare him for his third use of "*the keys*."

It is significant that Peter stayed in the home of a tanner because tanners were considered "unclean" by the Jewish rabbis (see **Lev. 11:35-40**). God was moving Peter a step at a time from Jewish legalism into the freedom of His wonderful grace.

- **BE A SACRIFICIAL LAMB TO YOUR BENEFACTOR**
- **CALL FOR HELP TO SAVE YOUR BENEFACTOR**
- **CHANGE YOUR NAME**
- **BE PROACTIVE ABOUT YOUR BENEFACTOR**
- **DO THE UN DOABLE**

CONCLSUION: HYMN 7-EACH DAY I DO