

Dorcas: Full of Good Works

⇒ Introduction:

⇒ **Read Acts 9:36-43**

- The Bible says very little about Dorcas, but it says enough to make her an example to all believers.
 - It was Dorcas who died and was raised from the dead at the hand of the Apostle Peter.
 - Let us notice several things about this wonderful woman.

⇒ **I. SHE LIVED AT JOPPA.**

- Joppa, whose name means "Beautiful", is an ancient town bordering between Dan and Ephraim on a sandy promontory between Caesarea and Gaza, and at a distance of 30 miles north-west from Jerusalem.
 - It is one of the oldest towns in Asia.
 - It was and still is the chief seaport of Judea.
 - It was never wrested from the Phoenicians.
 - It became a Jewish town only in the second century B.C.
 - It was from this port that Jonah "took ship to flee from the presence of the Lord." (**Jonah 1:3**)
 - To this place also the wood cut in Lebanon by Hiram's men for Solomon was brought in floats (**2 Chronicles 2:16**) and here the material for the building of the second temple was also landed. (**Ezra 3:7**)
- At Joppa, in the house of Simon the tanner, "by the sea-side," Peter resided "many days," and here, "on the house-top," he had his "vision of the lowered sheet." (**Acts 10:9ff**)
 - It bears the modern name of Jaffa, and exhibits all the decrepitude and squalor of cities ruled over by the Turks.
 - "Scarcely any other town has been so often overthrown, sacked, pillaged, burned, and rebuilt."
 - It is noticed on monuments B.C. 1600-1300, and was attacked by Sennacherib B.C. 702.

⇒ **II. HER NAME MEANS "GAZELLE."**

- This name seems very appropriate to her, for there are two outstanding characteristics about a gazelle:
 - 1. A gazelle personifies gentleness - Certainly this is an attribute that every person ought to have.
 - 2. A gazelle is fast and swift of feet - Dorcas was busy all the time.
- We should certainly copy this characteristic and work hard and stay busy.
 - Well has someone said, "An idle mind is the Devil's workshop." Dorcas did not live a dull monotonous life, wholly occupied with one phase of a woman's work.

- She did not limit her life to the kitchen, wholly occupied with household work: baking, sweeping, dusting, mending, and scrubbing.
 - She did all this, but she did more.
 - She had her own home to look after, but she went beyond her own home and looked after many others.
- ⇒ **III. SHE WAS "FULL OF GOOD WORKS."**
- ⇒ **Read Acts 9:36**
- o Notice especially the word "full."
 - Its usage here denotes something that is full to overflowing, something which is complete and lacking nothing.
 - These good deeds did not come along occasionally with long intervals in between.
 - Her life was a life whose branches were loaded so full of good works that they bent clear down to the ground.
 - She was constantly doing something for someone else.
- ⇒ **IV. HER HEART FELT FOR OTHER PEOPLE.**
- o The word "almsdeeds" in **Acts 9:36** indicates deeds which arise out of mercy and pity to those less fortunate.
 - o Dorcas had mercy and compassion on others, as we ought to do.
 - o The word "compassion" comes from two words which mean "to suffer" and "with."
 - o In other words, we ought to put ourselves in others' shoes and have compassion on them.
- ⇒ **V. SHE HAD MANY FRIENDS.**
- ⇒ **Read Acts 9:39**
- o Dorcas died.
 - Her busy hand was stilled, and the needle rested in the cushion.
 - This was a sad blow for all her neighbors and friends, and they felt sad at her going.
 - They washed her, and according to custom, laid her in an upper chamber.
 - People came in and stepped softly.
 - They had lost a friend, and they did not know if they would ever have another such friend.
 - Dorcas had friends, many friends.
 - o What a treasure it is to have friends!
 - The reason Dorcas had friends, however, is that she was friend!
 - The Solomon said that he "**that hath friends must shew himself friendly.**" (**Proverbs 18:24a**)
 - Have you been a friend to someone?
 - I do not mean, "Have you spoken to someone lately?" or "Have you been kind to me?" but "Have you done anything for someone?"

- Have you sacrificed something for another?"
 - This is friendship.
- ⇒ **VI. SHE HAD RISEN TO A PLACE OF GREAT PROMINENCE.**
- There was a town named "Lydda" not far from Joppa.
 - The disciples heard Peter was there, and they wanted him to know about the death of Dorcas.
 - Two men were sent to him, asking him to come to them.
 - Upon his arrival, Peter found Dorcas prepared for burial and lay out in the upper chamber where she was surrounded by a mourning company.
 - Dorcas never tried to become famous; but she did become so famous that the Apostle Peter took time to come to her and to raise her from the dead.
 - **VII. SHE CARED FOR WIDOWS.**
 - In **Acts 9:39** notice the widows that stood by weeping, showing the coats and garments that Dorcas made while she was with them.
 - She was a seamstress - and was careful to help the widows, making for them coats and clothing.
 - In the Bible, special attention is given to widows.
 - May the Lord help us to do likewise.
- ⇒ **VIII. SHE DID WHAT SHE WAS ABLE TO DO.**
- She could not be an apostle as was Peter.
 - Her gender prevented her from this.
 - She was not a public teacher or preacher, nor did she hold official position.
 - Maybe she could not even have led a prayer meeting for the ladies.
 - There were many things she could not do.
 - She could not prophesy like the daughters of Philip.
 - She could not lead in battle like Deborah.
 - She could not give her life for her nation like Esther.
 - She could not be a gatekeeper like Rhoda or the mother of Jesus like Mary.
 - She was just a plain unpretentious woman, but there in the solitude of her own home, there was one thing she could do.
 - She could see distress all around her.
 - She could help others.
 - This is something all of us can do.
 - Many lament the fact that they do not have enough money to give.
 - We can give of what we have.
 - What a wonderful world this would be if all of us would emulate Dorcas!
- ⇒ **Conclusion:**
- Dorcas fit the Biblical picture of a virtuous woman.

- Every lady should strive to be like this.
- Every single man ought to consider character when dating a girl.
- Every married man ought to be a godly husband who will foster such a virtuous spirit and conduct on the part of his wife.