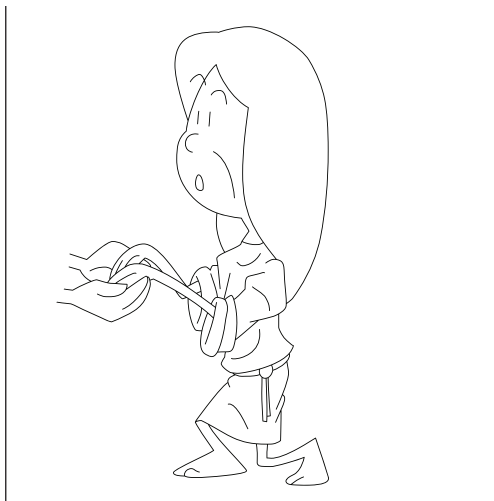


Peter brings Dorcas back to life

1



Colour me!



Acts 9:36-42

In Joppa there was a follower named Tabitha. Her Greek name was Dorcas, which means “deer”. She was always doing good things for people and had given much to the poor. But she became ill and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. Joppa wasn’t far from Lydda, and the followers heard that Peter was there. They sent two men to say to him, “Please come with us as quickly as you can!” Straight away, Peter went with them.

The men took Peter upstairs into the room. Many widows were there crying. They showed him the coats and clothes that Dorcas had made while she was still alive. After Peter had sent everyone out of the room, he knelt down and prayed. Then he turned to the body of Dorcas and said, “Tabitha, get up!” The woman opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet.

Peter called in the widows and the other followers and showed them that Dorcas had been raised from death. Everyone in Joppa heard what had happened, and many of them put their faith in the Lord.

Commentary

Like the other disciples, Peter had left Jerusalem when the religious authorities began to clamp down. He travelled through some of the towns along Israel's coastline, where he tried to do the sort of things that Jesus used to do, trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit. People were healed, and this drew crowds with whom he could then share the story of God's love in Jesus. When he heard the news of Tabitha's death, he didn't hesitate to go and see what he could do. Maybe he remembered the time when Jesus took him, along with James and John, into the home of Jairus, whose daughter had died. Jesus had trusted God to raise her from the dead then, so now it was Peter's turn to trust that the Holy Spirit would do the same through him.

There was clearly great affection for Tabitha, also known as Dorcas, who was well known in the port of Joppa. When she was brought back to life, it must have caused quite a stir. Once again, an amazing miracle opened up the opportunity to spread the message so that many people began following Jesus here too. The church in Jerusalem may have been temporarily silenced, but the gospel was bearing fruit elsewhere.

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Questions

- ▶ What impression of Dorcas's character do we get from the story?
- ▶ Why did Peter think that he could help someone who was already dead?
- ▶ How is this story like the one in which Jairus's daughter was raised to life?
- ▶ Why does God sometimes work through his followers to do miracles like this?
- ▶ Why don't more miracles like this happen?



Visual aid

Dorcas was clearly a brilliant seamstress and tailor. Lay out a selection of items of clothing, handmade if possible.



Activity idea

Bring together a variety of coloured materials, some in bright and others in duller colours. Now try telling the story using the different materials to represent the moods of the story—for example, happiness, love, shock, sadness, hope, mystery, joy, surprise and excitement.



Prayer idea

Miracles are given as signposts to Jesus and God's love. Use the separate letters of the word 'miracle' as a way of pointing to God's character, by thinking of a word that goes with each letter—for example, merciful, infinite, real, active, compassionate, loving and everlasting. Turn each of these words into a prayer of thanksgiving to God.

Key verse

Straight away, Peter went with them (Acts 9:39).

Old Testament story link

1 Kings 17:17-24: The prophet Elijah brings a boy back to life.



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