

May 7, 2023

Day 1: Acts 9:32-34

As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the saints in Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, a paralytic who had been bedridden for eight years. "Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and take care of your mat." Immediately Aeneas got up.

Just after Saul's conversion there was a period of time when the persecutions of the church stopped and God was now expanding the church into areas that were non Jewish. Peter travels to a town halfway to Joppa where he begins to encourage the new Christians. Peter did not begin the churches he went to but he added to their knowledge and helped them reach new levels of faithfulness. Note that Aeneas was a believer before he was healed. He accepted Christ without any expectation that his physical problem would be taken care of. He knew his relationship to God was the most important thing in his life.

Question: What is the most important thing in your life right now?

Challenge: Make a list of what you think the benefits are of being a Christian.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:5-10

Day 2: Acts 9:35

All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

While it is probably not true that all of the people of that region turned to the Lord, certainly many did. I suspect that those who turned to the Lord (Jesus) were thinking about it anyway and the acts of Peter caused them to make a faith commitment. Notice that the people turned to the "Lord," not to Peter. Peter did not in any way claim powers to heal but instead healed in the name of the Lord Jesus. Because Peter gave the credit to God the people turned to God. We never want to have people think it is through our might that we do great things. The sin in that is not one of pride on our part, but of leading someone away from God.

Question: In Acts 2 how many accepted Jesus as Lord?

Challenge: Think back to the time you accepted Christ as Lord. What helped you make that decision?

Scripture: Acts 2:37-47

Day 3: Acts 9:36-38

In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas), who 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!"

Joppa is on the coast about 20-30 miles from Lydda. Tabitha is more than a new convert, she is a disciple. Tabitha went about her life (doing good) without believing that because she was doing good nothing bad would happen to her. Too often we perform acts of mercy so that we will not be afflicted. When this is the motivation then when affliction comes we often blame God for not protecting us.

Question: Can you name three people that are like Tabitha?

Challenge: Think of a time that you blamed God for something? How did you overcome this feeling?

Scripture: James 1:1-26

Day 4: Acts 9:39

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.

It is normal at a funeral to share memories of the person who has died. When the death comes unexpectedly the sadness is felt more keenly. But Peter sent them away because he did not come to a funeral but to bring new life. Just as the angels said to the women at the tomb "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" - so Peter sent them out because this is not a funeral. In our lives we need to tell the difference between a funeral and new life coming into the world.

Question: How do you feel when you go to a funeral?

Challenge: Can you think of an "ending" that was a beginning? What happened?

Scripture: Revelation 21:1-27

Day 5: Acts 9:40

Peter 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.

Peter sent them out so that he would not be distracted. If we are on a planning team at work or just trying to figure out a problem in our family, if we have no hope then we need to leave and let those with hope act. In our life we will not always be able to have hope. When we do not have hope let us have the ability to absent ourselves so that God's work can be done.

Question: Have you ever expected someone you know to die but they got better?

Challenge: Name five things that you want for yourself and five things that you want for others. Do any of these seem impossible to get?

Scripture: Romans 8:17-25

Day 6: Acts 9:41-42

He 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. This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord.

There is resurrection. Out of hopelessness God brings new life. All of this is beyond our comprehension. We do not need to understand but accept. We still find people today that are dead in their sins and see no way they can be helped but in some cases we see healing and know that it is the Lord doing the work. It makes us humble in our preaching and hopeful.

Question: What do you think it means to be dead in your sins?

Challenge: In our current time and culture what would cause many people to turn to the Lord?

Scripture: Acts 4:1-37