

The Life of Dorcas

(Acts 9:36-43)

*Faith
Without Works
Is Dead*



James 2:14-17

14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,

16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," **but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body**, what does it profit?

17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

James 1:27

“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

Matthew 25:31-46

35 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in;

36 'I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

42 'for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink;

43 'I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'

Ephesians 2:8-10

8 For by **grace** you have been saved through **faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

9 **not of works**, lest anyone should boast.

10 For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Acts 9:36-43

36 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.

Acts 9:36-43

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 down 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.

Acts 9:36-43

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.



The Working Faith of Dorcas

Her Name

- “gazelle; doe; young deer”

Her Skill

- Seamstress

Her Faith

- “*A certain disciple*”
- Good Works & Charitable Deeds
“*almsdeeds*” (KJV)



Acts 9:36-43

“Her life was spent in doing kind and charitable actions.” (TCNT)

“this woman was given to good works and acts of mercy at all times.” (BBE)

“Her life was wholly devoted to the good and charitable actions which she was constantly doing.” (Weymouth)

“She was always doing good and helping the poor.” (NIV)

“this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did.” (NASB)



Dorcas Society

A **Dorcas society** is a local group of people, usually based in a church, with a mission of providing clothing to the poor. Dorcas societies are named after Dorcas (also called Tabitha), a person described in the Acts of the Apostles (Chapter 9, vs. 36).



The Working Faith of Dorcas

A Talking Faith

(James 2:14-17)

14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone **says** he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,

16 and one of you **says** to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?

17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.



The Working Faith of Dorcas

A Working Faith (James 2:18-26)

18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, ***and I will show you my faith by my works.***

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?

22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and ***by works faith was made perfect?***

23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.

24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.



“What is in your hand?”

Moses (Exo. 4:1-5)

- “a rod” = God’s authority/power

Dorcas

- “a needle” = loving benevolence

You & Me

- “a Bible ... a checkbook ... a car key”
“a spatula ... a pencil ... a bulletin”



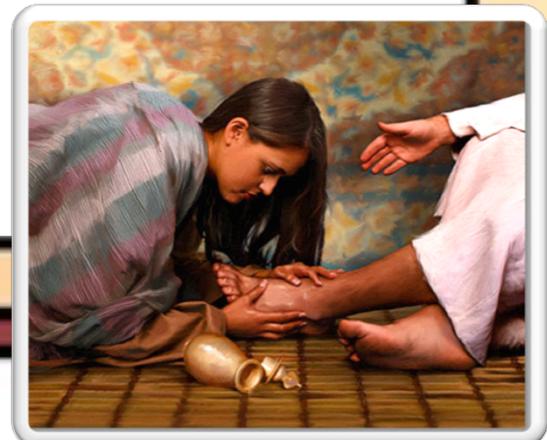
Mark 14:3-9

3 And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having *an alabaster flask* of very costly oil of spikenard.

Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head.

4 But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, "Why was this fragrant oil wasted?"

5 "For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they criticized her sharply.



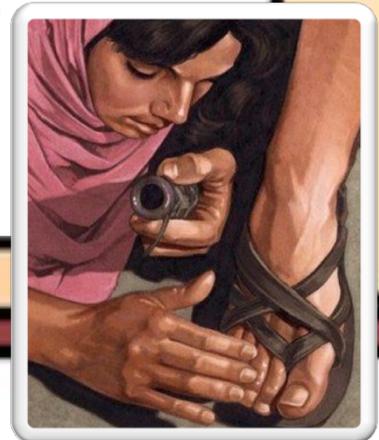
Mark 14:3-9

6 But Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? ***She has done a good work for Me.***

7 "For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always.

8 "***She has done what she could.*** She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial.

9 "Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, ***what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.***"



What Can't A Woman Do?



Have Authority Over Man (I Timothy 2:11-15)

“11 Let a woman learn in silence with all submission.

12 And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.

13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

15 Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

Public Leadership Role (I Corinthians 14:34-35)

34 Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says.

35 And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.

What Can A Woman Do?

Priscilla (Acts 18:2-26; I Cor 16:19)

*“he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers.
“with the church that is in their house”*

Lydia (Acts 16:15,40)

“come to my house and stay”

Anna (Luke 2:36-37)

“served God with fastings and prayers night and day”

Mary Magdalene, Joanna & Susanna (Luke 8:2-3)

“provided for Him from their substance”

Martha (John 12:2)

“they made Him a supper; and Martha served



What Can A Woman Do?



Romans 16:1 I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is *a servant of the church* in Cenchrea,

2 that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been *a helper of many and of myself* also.

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my *fellow workers* in Christ Jesus,

4 who *risked their own necks* for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

5 Likewise greet the *church that is in their house*.

What Can A Woman Do?



Romans 16:6

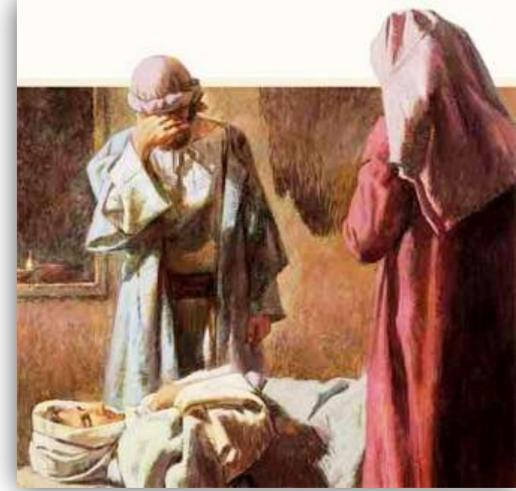
6 Greet Mary, who *labored much* for us.

12 Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have *labored in the Lord*.

13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and *his mother and mine*.

15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

The Death of Dorcas



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.”*

Impact on young church at Joppa

Impact on needy widows / orphans

What is my impact on this church?

The Death of Alfred Nobel



Hebrews 9:27 “For it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.”

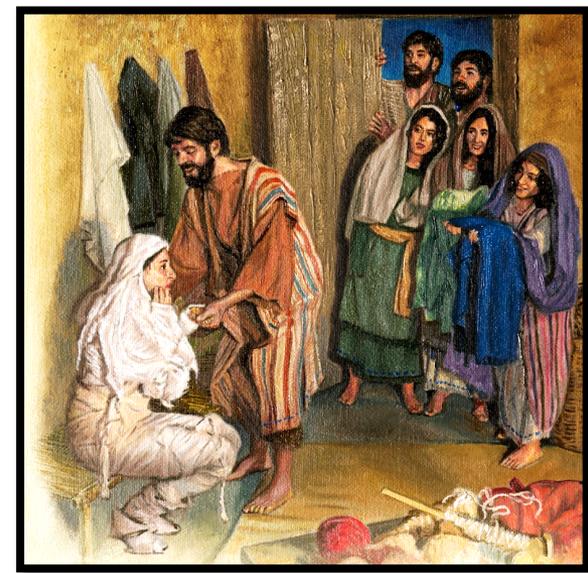
Nobel held 355 patents, including dynamite

Premature obituary called him “The Merchant of Death”

Wrote Last Will, establishing Nobel Prizes in 5 categories

The Nobel Peace Prize (every Dec. 10 – date of his death)

The Resurrection of Dorcas



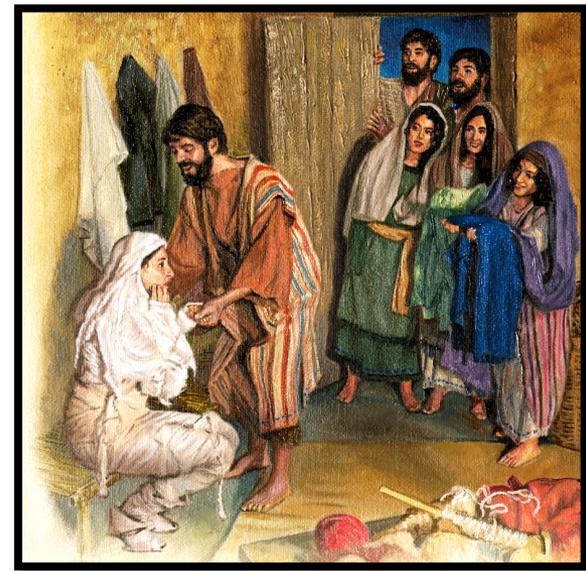
40 But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive.

Luke leaves us to our imagination (Acts 20:9,12)

John leaves us to our imagination (John 11:44-45)

Paul leaves us to our imagination (I Thess 4:13-18)

The Resurrection of Dorcas



42 And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord.

Acts 1

Luke's Purpose For Writing

1 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen,

3 to whom He also **presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs**, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

The Life, Death & Resurrection of Dorcas ... and You

A Glimpse Into Our Own Futures

John 5:28-29

"Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth -- those who have done good: to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

Faith without works is dead

Faith with works is alive