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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A2087 ~ Peter Raises Dorcas.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

Imagine how it would be if the pastor of your church raised someone back to life after they had died. Even when they explained that the raising was done through the Holy Spirit in Jesus' name and authority, wouldn't this shake many Christians' understanding of how God's power could work through them? Today's *Bible Adventure* is an account of the apostle Peter who does this very thing.

Prior to that happening, Luke wrote in Acts, Chapter 9, of the Bible that after Saul of Tarsus had become a devoted follower of Jesus Christ, there was peace for Christians in Judea and Samaria. The apostle Peter went to visit some of the churches established by believers who had fled from Jerusalem to escape persecution that followed Stephen's martyrdom.

One of the churches Peter visited was located in Lydda, a city north of Jerusalem. There Peter healed a man named Aeneas through the power of the Lord Jesus, with the result that the people living in Lydda and those around the surrounding plains turned to the Lord. Aeneas had been bedridden for 8 years and was paralysed. Peter said to him: "Jesus Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed." And immediately, Aeneas did so. His healing was instant and complete. The good news spread.

While Peter was still in town, there were problems in the town of Joppa, about 18 kilometres or 11 miles to the northwest of Lydda.

DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound](#).

Around 35 AD, a godly Jewish woman who was named Tabitha in Hebrew and Dorcas in Greek, lived in the seaport of Joppa. This place is now known as Jaffa and located south of Tel Aviv. Many Jews living outside Judea had two names, one Jewish and one Greek or Latin. The Apostle Paul was called either Saul or Paul. Luke mentioned this woman's two names, as the early church had so many converts from other countries, that Christianity could no longer be considered a sect of Judaism exclusive anymore to just Jewish people.

Dorcas was the one and only individual woman in the New Testament to be called a disciple of Christ. She appeared to be a wealthy widow who occupied her time helping the poor and needy. Dorcas was also dearly loved in her church. She wasn't famous as a prophetess; neither was she a preacher. Instead she was a woman full of good works and did charitable deeds.

The people loved Dorcas because she cared for them and demonstrated her love in practical ways. When she became very sick, her fellow believers were deeply concerned and they sent for Peter. Undoubtedly they had heard about Peter's healing the paralyzed Aeneas, and this may have given them a hope that the apostle could heal Dorcas too.

By the time Peter arrived, he found that Dorcas had already died. At her death, the disciples at Joppa had prepared her body for burial and placed it in an upstairs room. Ritual mourning followed her death and many friends all wished to show their respect and affection by openly grieving for Dorcas. Mourning the loss of a loved one was not a restrained activity in the ancient Middle East. People showed their grief by wailing, crying and tearing the upper part of their woven garments. The more noise, the more it showed the dead person was loved.

Even in their grief, her friends wanted Peter to know what a wonderful woman Dorcas had been. Acts says: “All the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.” Peter was moved to pray for her restoration. As Peter prayed, he may have remembered a promise that Jesus had made: “I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.”

Following the example Peter had seen Jesus use in resurrecting Jairus’ daughter, Peter sent everyone away from the upper room and prayed. When he rose from prayer, he turned to Dorcas’s body and called to her saying, “Tabitha, arise!” She opened her eyes and sat up. Then she took Peter’s hand to get up. This is the first reported resurrection performed by an apostle, resulting in many becoming believers throughout Joppa.

What incredible joy Dorcas and the church there must have experienced from this event! Now again, Dorcas could apply herself to the service of others. Her ministry had involved more than distributing clothing. She must have been so caring and so involved in the lives of those that she helped, that her gifts were gratefully accepted by all who received them. Dorcas had the gift of giving herself, even as she gave the clothing she made for others. And people loved her for who she was herself, and not just for what she did for them.

Serving others wins a great reward here as well as in heaven. Look how those Dorcas cared for loved her! We can get so caught up in accumulating material things that we seem to have no time to love one another. Yet loving relationships fill the heart as no possessions can.

The benefits of this miracle went far beyond Tabitha and her circle of friends who mourned the death and then rejoiced at her restoration to life.

This record of Dorcas showed that women in the Christian community tended to hold to traditional family values and were helpful to their neighbours. This image countered accusations that the early Christians were troublemakers.

Whenever the apostles healed people or performed other miracles, we must understand that these were really done by Jesus Christ through His Holy Spirit.

Today, whenever Christians do the work of Christ, it's the Holy Spirit living in them. In any work that we do, the credit needs to go to God and His Son Jesus Christ, and not to us. People should praise God for the good works that He does and give Him the glory for doing so. We shouldn't look for praise from others over the things we do for Him because in Isaiah, Chapter 48, God is clear. He says: "My glory I will not give to another."

God brought great good out of Dorcas' illness and death for His own glory. As her lifestyle is recorded in the Scriptures, she's still remembered as a good example of a diligent, hardworking and generous person.

One Sunday evening in 1874, Charles Spurgeon, who was known as the Prince of Preachers, used as his sermon text from 1 Corinthians, Chapter 6, Verse 20: "God paid a great price for you. So use your body to honour God."

Spurgeon in his booming voice addressed the young men in the congregation. He told them to shun everything leading to lustful and indecent behaviour, which then progresses onto immoral actions. He said: "Your bodies were bought with your Lord's lifeblood and they are not yours to trifle with. Shun the strange woman and her company."

"Your bodies are not yours to injure by self-indulgence of any sort. Keep them pure and chaste for that heavenly Bridegroom who has bought them with His blood. And then your soul is bought too. It is so needful that it should be kept pure."

"Christ has not bought these eyes that they should read novels calculated to lead me into vanity and vice, such as published nowadays. Christ has not bought this brain of mine that I may revel in the works of blasphemy and filthiness. He has not given me a mind that I may drag it through the mire with the hope of washing it clean later."

Your whole manhood belongs to God if you're a Christian. Every faculty, every natural power, every talent, every possibility of your being, every capacity of your spirit ... it's all bought with Christ's blood. Therefore, keep the whole pure for Jesus, for it belongs to Him." If Spurgeon's advice was followed, young men molded their lives into godly examples for later generations to follow.

Some people leave a legacy that lasts down through the centuries that Christians of every generation are thankful for. Here's a story of a man most people in our generation have never heard of: Born in AD 296 to Egyptian Christian parents, a man named Athanasius was ordained to the ministry just when some heretical teaching was being promoted. These promoters tried to claim that Jesus Christ wasn't God.

Emperor Constantine called together a church council in 325 AD to settle the matter. Athanasius attended and strongly agreed with the council's decision. They said: "Jesus is God. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all divine – one God existing in three names. God became a man and died to provide for our eternal forgiveness."

Soon after this, Athanasius became a bishop and Constantine ordered him to allow the heretics to join his church. He refused. So determined he was that he travelled to meet the Emperor. He stood in front of the Emperor's horse, demanding that the order be retracted. That never happened. Instead he lost his position.

After the Emperor's death, Athanasius returned to his position but not for long. The heretics had him exiled again and he spent a number of years in Rome, where his teaching attracted crowds and his writings had an eager audience.

On his return thousands welcomes him; the city was ablaze with torches and his enemies retreated briefly. But ten years later as Athanasius was leading midnight worship, 5,000 soldiers stormed his church and the doors began to give way. Athanasius calmly asked his assistant to read Psalm 136, then he slipped out a side door and escaped to the Egyptian desert.

He was later restored to his church, only to be exiled briefly for a fourth time. He soon returned and ministered until his death at age 77. Today we owe enormous gratitude to Athanasius. He devoted his difficult life to protecting orthodox doctrine and defending the faith that God once for all gave to His people.

Like many devout Christians living for the principles of Scriptures, our name may soon be forgotten but our godly example is to be passed along to the next generation.

Whatever God has called each of us to do, we must do it with all our heart. Deuteronomy, Chapter 6, Verse 5, says: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength.” Show this in all that you do by remaining in Christ and following the Holy Spirit’s leading. Like Dorcas, may you too be known for your kind deeds and a faith in our miracle-working God, even raising people from the dead!

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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