

IF NECESSARY USE WORDS

(Acts 9: 36-43)

Intro: If you had:

-Power.

-Inclination.

#To bring one person back from the dead.

\*Who would it be?

Would it be a hero of the faith?

-Peter.

-Paul.

-Mary.

-Martin Luther.

Would it be a political figure?

-George Washington.

-Abraham Lincoln.

Would it be a creative genius?

-Albert Einstein.

-Thomas Edison.

Would it be a sports hero?

-Jim Thorpe.

-Babe Ruth.

Would it be someone whose death was mysterious?

-Amelia Earhart.

#Did her navigator have her off course?

#Did she run out of fuel?

#Did she have mechanical problems?

Would it be a family member?

-Parent.

-Spouse.

-Child.

Would it be someone like Dorcas?

## I. Peter Brought Dorcas Back From The Dead.

### A. Who Was Dorcas?

1. She was a disciple.
  - a. Female disciple.
    - Greek term.
      - #Used only here in all of the New Testament.
      - Only one so described.
  - b. I told you last week.
    - Disciple here.
      - #Not one of "The Twelve."
      - \*Jesus' inner circle of followers.
      - #But any:
        - #Christian.
        - #Believer.
2. She was devoted to:
  - a. Good works.
  - b. Acts of charity.
3. Dorcas.
  - a. Mentioned only here in the New Testament.
  - b. She never says a word.
    - She's not a:
      - #Preacher.
      - #Teacher.
        - \*At least in the traditional sense.
4. Dorcas made her contribution with her actions.
  - a. Good works.
    - Making tunics.
    - Sewing other clothes.
      - #For widows.
        - \*In Joppa.
        - \*Perhaps for others.
      - #For people who couldn't afford to buy new clothes.
  - b. Acts of charity.
    - Greek word has the sense of financial assistance.
      - #Alms giving.
      - #Charitable giving.

### B. When Dorcas Died.

1. It was a real blow to her community.
  - a. Widows went into mourning.
  - b. Her fellow disciples sent for Peter.
    - From the town of Lydda.
      - #About 12 miles away.

2. We know why the widows would be in mourning.
  - a. They had lost:
    - Good friend.
    - Benefactress.
    - Key member of their community.
  - b. What would they do without Dorcas?
3. But we're not told why the disciples sent for Peter.
  - a. When two men appeared at Peter's door.
    - They simply said:
      - # "Come quickly."
      - \* Acts 9: 38.
    - He did.
  - b. When Peter arrived in Joppa.
    - He is simply escorted into the upper room.
      - # Where Dorcas' body was laid out.
    - But no one ever asks him to do anything.
  - c. Without words.
    - It is assumed Peter will know what to do.
    - Peter does know what to do.
      - # He kneels down.
      - # He prays.
        - \* Dorcas comes back to life.
      - # What else was there to do?
        - \* In the little bit we know of her.
          - + Dorcas seemed to be a woman:
            - = Few words.
            - = Great action.
        - \* When she died.
          - + It was a time for:
            - = Few words.
            - = Great action.
4. How unusual this story is in the Book of Acts.
  - a. There is a common pattern in Acts.
    - Dramatic act.
      - # Sermon.
    - Dramatic act.
      - # Sermon.
  - b. Acts 2.
    - God sent the Holy Spirit.
      - # Acts 2: 1-13.
    - Peter had a sermon.
      - # Acts 2: 14-36.

- c. Acts 3.
    - Lame man was healed.  
#Acts 3: 1-10.
    - Peter had a sermon.  
#Acts 3: 11-26.
  - d. Acts 7.
    - Before Stephen was stoned.  
#Acts 7: 55-60
    - He was asked if he had any last words.  
#Acts 7: 1.
    - Stephen had the longest sermon in the Book of Acts.  
#Acts 7: 2-53.
  - e. Acts 9.
    - When Dorcas died.  
#Acts 7: 37.
    - There are no:
      - #Sermons.
      - #Speeches.
      - \*At least none that are recorded.
    - Actions speak for themselves.
      - #Dorcas' actions.
      - \*Good works.
      - \*Acts of charity.
      - #God's action.
      - \*Raising her from the dead.
5. Saint Augustine once said:
- a. "Always proclaim the Gospel."
  - b. "If necessary, use words."
    - With Dorcas.
    - #No words were necessary.

## II. If Necessary Use Words.

- A. Sometimes Words Are Necessary.
  - 1. We expect words about the Word.
    - a. On Sunday morning.
    - b. At other times.
  - 2. If I simply:
    - a. Stood up here.
    - b. Read the lessons.
    - c. Said:
      - “Enough said.”
    - d. Sat down.

#There might be some who would:

\*Applaud.

\*Say:

+ "Amen."

+ "Alleluia!"

#There might be others who would wonder:

\*"What's wrong with Pastor Norm?"

\*"Is he sick?"

\*"Didn't he prepare?"

\*"Has he gotten lazy?"

\*"Is he losing his marbles?"

3. There is a place for words.

B. But Actions Often Speak More Loudly Than Words.

1. God's actions.

a. First and foremost.

b. Not ours.

-Story.

#Man:

\*Died.

\*Went to heaven.

#St. Peter:

\*Met him at the pearly gates.

\*Said:

+ "This is how it works."

+ "You need 100 points to make it into heaven."

+ "You tell me all the good things you've done."

+ "I'll tell you how many points they're worth."

+ "When you reach 100 points, I'll let you in."

#Man said:

\*"I was married to the same woman for 50 years."

+ "I never cheated on her."

+ "Not even in my heart."

#St. Peter said:

\*"That ought to be worth a couple points."

#Man said:

\*"Two points?"

\*"Is that all?"

\*"Well, every week I went to church."

+ "I supported the church with 10% of my income."

+ "I served on the church council."

#St. Peter said:

\*"Terrific!"

\*"That's certainly worth a point."

#Man said:

\*"One point?"

\*"Geez, Louise!"

\*"I took groceries to church."

+ "For the Helping Hands Food Pantry."

\*"I donated the soap and shampoo."

+ "From my travels."

+ "To assist ex-offenders."

\*"That ought to be worth something."

#St. Peter said:

\*"Fantastic."

\*"That's good for another two points."

#Man said:

\*"Two points?"

\*"Is that all?"

\*"At this rate I'll only get into heaven by the grace of God."

#St. Peter said:

\*"Bingo!"

\*"100 points!"

\*"Come right in!"

c. God's doing.

-More than words.

#"I love you."

#"I forgive you."

-But God's action.

#Embodied in the:

\*Life.

\*Death.

\*Resurrection.

+Of Jesus.

#What we might try to do with:

\*Groceries.

\*Shampoo.

\*Money.

#God did with:

\*Cross.

\*Nails.

\*Empty tomb.

2. God's action.
  - a. Embodied in our actions.
  - b. Actions:
    - We maybe take for granted.
    - We don't always notice.
      - #Until something doesn't get done.
      - #Then we notice.
  - c. Actions.
    - Sometimes get recognized.
    - Sometimes don't.
  - d. When a longtime faithful servant isn't able to serve anymore.
    - There are some of us who notice.
    - I'm thinking about Shirley Bryant who has:
      - #Served on the altar guild.
      - #Assembled the Ascent newsletter.
      - #Helped put together the quilts for our high school seniors.
      - #Cooked for:
        - \*Soup suppers.
        - \*Pastors' Bible studies.
        - #Probably done other things.
        - \*I'm not aware of.
      - Always proclaim the love of God.
      - #If necessary use words.
    - e. When we have a new servant appear.
      - There are more of us who need to notice.
      - I'm thinking about Tom Gagliano.
        - #Not even a member.
          - \*Officially.
          - \*Technically.
        - #But he's a retired electrician.
          - \*When I asked him.
            - +If he would take a look at some of our electrical problems.
          - \*He said 'yes.'
        - #So if you notice brighter lights.
          - \*In the sacristy.
            - +Thank Tom.
          - \*In the stairwells.
            - +Thank Tom.
          - \*In the office.
            - +Thank Tom.
        - Always proclaim the love of God.
        - #If necessary use words.

3. God's actions.
  - a. Embodied in the life of Dorcas.
    - Good deeds.
      - #For the widows.
    - Acts of charity.
      - #For the needy.
    - Not only of benefit to the folks in Joppa.
  - b. Preview of heaven.
    - Those whose robes have been washed.
      - #Not by:
        - \*Dorcas.
        - \*You.
        - \*Me.
      - #But in the blood of the Lamb.
        - \*Revelation 7: 14.
    - Those who will never again experience:
      - #Hunger.
      - #Thirst.
      - #Pain.
      - #Death.
      - #Grief.

Concl: Here at this altar.

- In bread and wine.
- Preview of heaven.
  - #Our hands outstretched.
    - \*To receive the grace of God.

Always proclaim the love of God.

- If necessary use words.



