

Dorcas

Acts 9: 36-43

36 **Abounding**

The NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon

Strong's Number: 4134

Original Word

plereß

Transliterated Word

Pleres

Phonetic Spelling

play'-race

Definition

1. full, i.e. filled up (as opposed to empty)
 - a. of hollow vessels
 - b. of a surface, covered in every part
 - c. of the soul, thoroughly permeated with
2. full, i.e. complete
 - a. lacking nothing, perfect

Word Origin

from (4130)

TDNT Entry

6:283,867

Parts of Speech

Adjective

Background and study helps: Lydda, twenty-five miles northwest of Jerusalem at the intersection of highways from Egypt to Syria and from Jerusalem to coastal Joppa. It was the capital of a toparchy, or administrative district, and had a predominantly Jewish population in an ethnically mixed region. It is the Old Testament city of Lod, near which modern Israel's international airport of the same name is located (1 Chron 8:12; Ezra 2:33; Neh 11:35).

Eleven miles farther northwest, in Joppa (the ancient seaport for Jerusalem, Josh 19:46; modern Jaffa), lives Tabitha, or Dorcas, a disciple famous for her kindness to the poor. She lives in the fear of the Lord (Acts 9:31) by adopting correct values concerning material things (compare Lk 12:33; Acts 10:2, 4; 20:35; 24:17). Dorcas becomes sick and dies. Funeral arrangements begin with the cleansing of the body with oil and rinsing it clean with water (m. Sabbat 23:5). Then she is placed in an upper room (compare Semahot 11:2). Outside Jerusalem, burial was not necessarily carried out on the same day, especially if the shroud or

the coffin needed to be prepared (Safrai 1976:776). Luke notes Lydda's nearness to Joppa and the sending for Peter.

Out of honor to such a saint, Peter does come. As he is conducted to the upper room, the noisy wailing of widows greets him. They are probably among the Christian poor Dorcas had helped (Acts 6:1; compare Jesus' special interest in widows in his teaching and ministry: Lk 4:25-26; 7:12; 18:1-8; 20:47; 21:1-4). In fact they are wearing some of her handiwork. Dorcas customarily made (epoiei, customary use of the imperfect [Williams 1985:167], not pluperfect as NIV) undergarments and outergarments--cloaks--for them (NIV robes and other clothing is less precise).

In Dorcas Luke gives us a model of Christian charity to the marginalized in society. Then orphans and widows were the most economically vulnerable (Lk 20:47). No government safety net was there to catch them. And today too, Christians must bring as much "shalom" as possible to those on the margins.

Peter's actions show his total dependence on God. Ordering everyone out of the room (Mk 5:40) and falling on his knees in prayer, he asks the risen Lord to apply his resurrection power to this corpse. Then turning toward the dead woman (literally, "to the body"), he issues the simple command Tabitha, get up. In a reversal of the first act of preparation for burial, closing the eyes of the deceased (m. Sabbat 23:5; Semahot 1:4), Dorcas opens her eyes and, seeing Peter, sits up.

What joy there must be as Peter, helping her to her feet, calls through the door to the believers (literally "the saints"), and especially the widows, to whom he presents her alive (compare Acts 1:3). News of the resurrection leads many to saving faith in the Lord, and Peter remains quite awhile in Joppa, in the house of Simon the tanner.

via [Acts 9 Commentary - Peter's Healing Ministry at Lydda and Joppa - BibleGateway.com](#).

Acts 9:36

1. Describe what sorts of things you think Dorcas was probably doing. Compare this verse with Acts 10:38.

2. If someone were to write such a verse about you, what would it say? Are you pleased with the statement? What could you do to improve on it?

Acts 9:37 -39

3. Why do you think the disciples of Joppa wanted Peter to come? What picture does this verse give of Dorcas's activities for the poor? Who does it appear she especially helped?

4. The help Dorcas provided was an essential part of her character. I like my first thoughts after having read this statement: the things Dorcas did were not a 'chore' for her. Being a part of her 'essential character' to me means that what she did came natural to her in the supernatural. She did not wring her hands and sweat drops of anxiety about trying to discover her 'gift' or what the LORD's will was for her life; she just did what she enjoyed. That is not to say that it was not hard work, not say that it was not tiring and that there were no obstacles to doing it; but her gifting in it gave her the motivation to steadily move through obstacles or perhaps a bad mood day when they came. (And you know they did – she was a woman with feet of clay just like you and me.)

So. Perhaps the key to us discovering our gifts and talents is to look at what we enjoy and start doing what we enjoy for the benefits of others. But I suspect you already are and you just have not stopped to think about it. That's the beauty of serving JESUS, we often are and don't even know we are.

She had the gift of helping. Even if you don't have that particular gift, are there ways that you can reach out to the needy, helping to meet their needs on your own or through your church or community?

Acts 9:40-41

5. Describe what you think the scene was like when Peter brought Dorcas back to her friends and neighbors.

6. Have you ever experienced such an event? What were the circumstances? How did you feel?

Acts 9:42

7. What sort of response did people have to Dorcas's miracle?

8. God was definitely glorified through Dorcas's life, death, and resurrection. **What if Dorcas had not been raised? Would God still have been glorified? How?** This is an exceptionally good question to ponder and discuss.



http://www.specialtyinterests.net/map_israel.html

The majority of the information (other than Scripture) for tonight's study came from *Women of the Bible* written by Ann Spangler and Jean E. Syswerda, published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan and copyrighted 1999.



<http://www.greatcommission.com/israel/2003001.jpg>

Joppa / Tel Aviv - Shoreline from Ancient Joffa - Jonah Fled From Joppa, Tabitha resurrected through Peter (Acts 9:24-36), Peter had vision at the home of Simon the Tanner (Acts 10)



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