

Sermon Text from 2/3/13

...31 The church then had peace throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and it became stronger as the believers lived in the fear of the Lord. And with the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, it also grew in numbers.

Healing of Aeneas and Raising of Dorcas

32 Meanwhile, Peter traveled from place to place, and he came down to visit the believers in the town of Lydda. 33 There he met a man named Aeneas, who had been paralyzed and bedridden for eight years. 34 Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you! Get up, and roll up your sleeping mat!" And he was healed instantly. 35 Then the whole population of Lydda and Sharon saw Aeneas walking around, and they turned to the Lord.

36 There was a believer in Joppa named Tabitha (which in Greek is Dorcas). She was always doing kind things for others and helping the poor. 37 About this time she became ill and died. Her body was washed for burial and laid in an upstairs room. 38 But the believers had heard that Peter was nearby at Lydda, so they sent two men to beg him, "Please come as soon as possible!"

39 So Peter returned with them; and as soon as he arrived, they took him to the upstairs room. The room was filled with widows who were weeping and showing him the coats and other clothes Dorcas had made for them. 40 But Peter asked them all to leave the room; then he knelt and prayed. Turning to the body he said, "Get up, Tabitha." And she opened her eyes! When she saw Peter, she sat up! 41 He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then he called in the widows and all the believers, and he presented her to them alive.

42 The news spread through the whole town, and many believed in the Lord. 43 And Peter stayed a long time in Joppa, living with Simon, a tanner of hides.

Acts 9:31-43 (NLT)

(*Note, next weeks sermon will start off on v.43, and some huge implications it has... while it seems obscure, we'll hit on it next week.)

Observation (what does the text say?) **Interpretation** (what does it mean?) **Application** (what does it mean to me/us?)

Note: I would recommend that the group observe the text, observe the two healings, but really focus on the context of Acts 9:31 that sets the stage for these events, and discuss how 9:31 could/should look like for us.

Discussion/Topic Starters (Ice Breakers)

- If someone were going to try to encourage you, what is the best way they could do that? The worst way?
- : What things in the text strike you or jump out at you? Why?

v.32-43

- : Who was the primary focus of Peter's journey into Lydda?
- : How would you describe the faith/life of Tabitha? Why does she still get sick/die?
- : Compare/Contrast what/who instigated both of these healings (note: it wasn't the faith of either Aeneas or Tabitha).
- l: If Dorcas was already dead, why did the disciples send for Peter (v.38)?
Follow-up: Contrast this to your/our faith.
- : What are the effects of the healing of Aeneas? Of Tabitha?
Follow-up: How did God demonstrate His power, and what were the results of this?
- A: Do we believe that Jesus is still alive and active today like He was in Acts?
- A: Do we really believe, like in v.35, that we could see South Bend radically turn towards the Lord?

V31 The Context that lead to v.32-43,.... This is KEY!!!

- : According to verse 31, what happened to the church during this time?
- : Who strengthened and encouraged the church during this time?
- : How did the believers live?
- l: What does "Fear-of-the-Lord" mean?
- l: What does "encouragement/comfort of the Holy Spirit" mean?
- A: Do you/we tend to lean more towards "Fear-of-the-Lord" or "encouragement/comfort of the Holy Spirit?"
Follow-up: What does/could it look like to hold these two things in tension?
Follow-up: How can we respond to living out of these two things?
Follow-up: What could be the result if we live out of these two things (note: 32-43).

Recommended Follow-up:

- Read: Next week's sermon (2/10/2013) will focus on Acts 10. Take time prior to next Sunday to read & study the passage, pray through the passage, meditate on the passage, etc.

* As discussed in Riverside's HGLT (Home Group Leader Training), these guides are to be starting points for home group leaders to develop their own guides and approaches to leading group discussions. This is a resource tool, not a rigid "go through this guide word-for-word." There are intentionally too many questions for a single home group time. This guides rely heavily on a few other study guides; including: Serendipity NT for Groups by the Young Life ministry (ISBN is N/A), "Acts: Seeing God's Power in Action" by Phyllis LePeau (ISBN 9780830830077), "Acts: Seeing the Spirit Work" by John Stott (ISBN 0851113907), "Acts" by N.T. Wright (ISBN 9780830821853), "Acts" by NavPress (ISBN 0891091122), "Acts" by Blackaby (ISBN 9781418526429), "Acts: The Spread of the Gospel" by John MacArthur (ISBN 9781418508746), "Book of Acts" by Max Lucado (ISBN 0849953006).