

Dorcas

“Loyal Followers”



“And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.” Acts 9:41

Has anyone ever heard of Dorcas? Who was she? Was she in the Bible? Dorcas is not well known as far as being in several books of the Bible, but the name Dorcas is well known in some areas for its symbolism. Dorcas circles have grown out of the story about her. These are many people who often go and do for others without much honor, if any.

Dorcas is only mentioned in the ninth chapter of Acts in a few verses. But, her story brought many to believe in Christ. The Bible tells us that Dorcas was a seamstress who made robes that she basically seemed to give away to those in need. She must have had some money in order to give away, but we don't think of her as being a rich woman. We have much the same story about Lydia. Both women served in what we would call minor roles, but their influence among the early Christians was great.

The story tells us that Dorcas died, and people mourned because she was so well loved. They washed her body and laid it in an upper chamber as was the custom, but the people wanted her to live. They had heard about Peter being near and that he was doing miracles. They were sure he could help so they sent two men to ask Peter to come to Joppa and restore life to Dorcas. Peter had been winning many souls for Christ by his preaching.

When he got to Joppa, he saw Dorcas. I have to think this would have taken a couple days because they had prepared her body and then thought about Peter. The Lord works in such mysterious ways that we can't comprehend, but He is always working with us regardless of the size of the task. This is so difficult to understand, especially when we think that the men had to go to another city and bring Peter back. The answer to that question is faith. Some things we will never understand.

We are told that Dorcas was full of good works and many loved her. When Peter arrived, he knelt and prayed and told her to arise. When she opened her eyes and saw Peter, she sat up. Then Peter took her hand and she stood. Then he called the people and they saw that she was alive and we are told that her story became known throughout Joppa and many came to believe in the Lord because she was brought back to life through Christ by Peter.

It is important to note that they people did not believe in Peter, they believed in Christ. In Matthew 5:16 we are told: "In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." We know that Dorcas was not a Christian because she did good works, but she did good works because she was a Christian. Works can't do it!!! We cannot buy salvation. We can't take good works to Heaven with us, but we can lead others to know God's amazing love and then we will see them in Heaven, equal with us. We cannot earn a special place and we cannot earn salvation. It can't happen!! But we can be a tremendous witness on this earth by the way we live and the deeds we do.

God gives each of us talents to use. Dorcas was just a seamstress, but evidently a very good one, and someone whom people loved. It sounds like she lived her life as a Christian should. But through her many came to believe. We are told to try to live our lives as God would want us to live. At work, or play, or any time, we are to seek to do God's will and lead others to Him. We pray "Thy will be done." But do we mean it? At work we should not be working to please the boss, although that is important, but we are working to please the Lord.

I was told a story recently by a young man who was asked to do an engineering job that he knew was dangerous. When he protested, the boss told him just to "Do It!" The young man did not, and then he was looking for another job. But, the Lord led him to another job and he was blessed. It was a better job, and the pay was also better. He was blessed because he sought to do God's will, not the will of his earthly boss.

In my life, I have met many people who are not famous, in fact, I never see their name in print. Some of them are in my church, but their names are not even on committees, but they are there to help. In our church, we have people who are never mentioned by name, but when something needs to be done, regardless of how lowly the task, they are there to help. They don't want their name known on this earth, but they know it will be in the Great Book. They are not doing their deeds to earn salvation; they are assured of their salvation, so they help others. What a paradox.

There are groups of women who have been organized over the years called Dorcas Societies. Their purpose is to serve humanitarian ideals, engage in various relief activities and their sole purpose is to show God's love to others and lead their lives the way they think God wants them to live. Dorcas is still having an influence today. Wouldn't it be wonderful if our influence to win others for Christ is felt after we are with our Heavenly Father?

Prayer: Our Father, thank You for all the people that have dared to witness for You to us. Sometimes, we don't say Thank You to them, and sometimes we don't even realize their influence until it is too late to say Thank You, but through Your love, they have helped us to know that Your grace will save us and that we cannot earn it. Thank You for that wonderful gift, the gift of Eternal Life. Help us to spread the good news to others. Help us to be like Dorcas and show Your love by the way we live and the words we speak. Amen.

1. Do you know someone like Dorcas?
2. What made her special? Her love? Her talent for sewing? Her witness?
3. How can we be like Dorcas?
4. All of us have been given talents. What talents do you have that you can share?

© Gail Kennedy Keffer