

## **Three Servants** **02-09-20 PM**

In John 13 Jesus gave us an important lesson on serving one another. This lesson demonstrated three important ideas: first, Jesus expects His disciples to serve (and to be known because they serve each other). Second, that no one is above serving anyone else. Finally, that no job is beneath us to serve another person.

A commandment to serve is clear. What is not so clear is the execution of that commandment. For this understanding we can turn to the Scriptures and see some important examples of servants.

First let us consider Tabitha (Dorcas). Her story is found in Acts 9:36-41. She was a saint in Joppa. When she died, the Saints there sought out Peter. When he arrived, all of the widows of the congregation showed him the things that they had been given by Tabitha. As a servant of the Saints, she had made them garments and tunics, assumedly with her own hands.

Next let us consider Lydia. We meet her in Acts 16:14, when she is converted by Paul. She was a businesswoman, a “seller of purple”, who had a business that spanned two continents. When she was converted, she insisted Paul and Silas use her home as their place of work.

Finally, we read very briefly about Phoebe in Romans 16:1-2. She is called a servant of the church (not the office a deaconess, which she would not be qualified to hold herself, per 1 Tim. 3). All we really know is that she was a helper to many, including Paul, and was coming to Rome and could be of help to them.

How did these three women serve? For one thing, it was in very different ways. It is clear Tabitha (although not in good health) had an ability or talent for sewing, and used that to provide for the brethren. Lydia had physical blessings which she used in the service of the Saints. Phoebe had a willingness to travel and to help. Maybe Phoebe and Lydia did not have talent. Maybe Tabitha did not have wealth. Maybe Lydia did not have time. The important point is that each of them had something they could use to the service of their fellow Christians.

*1 Peter 4:10 - As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

What is your special gift? Something we are blessed with, like time, health or wealth. Maybe it is something we are good at, like a talent to sew, or to write. Maybe it is something we are trained for, a work skill like law or accounting or plumbing or being an electrician. Maybe it is something we are able to do like working on cars or driving others. If we look at abilities in a broad way, we see that, just as the Bible said, we all have special gifts.

Are we good stewards of these gifts? Consider the parable of the stewardship of the blessings of God in Matthew 25:14-29. God expects us to use our gifts and abilities in service to His people.

*Romans 12:6-7 - Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching;*