

Tabitha and Workers 05-08-22

In Acts 9:36-40 we read of the raising of Tabitha from the dead by Peter. It is important to remind ourselves that miracles were to demonstrate authority (Hebrews 2:4, Mark 16:20, etc.), and it was rarely if ever about the one healed. But there is some question to this in Acts 9, when Peter was called for the purpose of raising Tabitha, and when we consider who Peter did NOT raise (Stephen, (later) James). What if Tabitha was raised because of her importance in the local church? If so, what was Tabitha's vital role?

Tabitha was not an elder or a deacon, not a preacher or leader in worship. Instead, we can only see one thing that defines her: Tabitha was a worker. Specifically, she made tunics and garments, generally she cared for the widows of the group. From this miracle we can infer that Tabitha's position is vital to the church.

What is a "worker"? Let us consider an example in 1 Timothy 5:10 of widows who are sustained by the church. It begins and ends with the description of her works: *"Well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work."* It then describes her works: raising her children (those we are responsible for), caring for strangers (brethren who visit); taking care of saints (our own brethren) and seeing to the afflicted (those who are in need). Workers serve others in common tasks, seeing to food, shelter, clothing, assistance, care, comfort, company, hospitality, generosity.

How important is it to be a worker? Consider Jesus' description of judgment in Matthew 25:35-36: *"For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me"*. All of these measurements are part of being a worker.

We need more workers. If someone owns a restaurant, they need cooks more than managers. The church needs workers more than anything else. The good news: all Christians are qualified to do this. It is not like elders, deacons or evangelists; this is a work open to all. But more important, it is a key matter of judgment, and we all need to be engaged.

How can I be a worker? First, determine to do more when asked. When God asked for someone to go to the lost, Isaiah replied *"Here am I! Send me."* (Isaiah 6:8). That is the attitude of a worker. If someone needs a ride – sign up! If something needs to be fixed – jump in! If someone needs food – bring it! Be ready to act when an opportunity is revealed. But why wait to be asked? Determine to ask for more to do. When there is opportunity – size it. Invite people into your home; call on those who are sick.

Finally, don't make excuses. If we allow ourselves to make excuses, we will never do what needs to be done. When we say *"my home isn't good enough"*, or *"I just don't have the time or money or ability"*, we are making certain we will fail to be workers. God wants people to desire to serve; He needs us to have a heart that seeks this.