



Told You So!

SERMON NOTES MAY 11, 2025

4th Sunday of Easter
Scripture: Acts 9:32-43

ACTS 9:32-43 (NRSV)

³² Now as Peter went here and there among all the believers, he came down also to the saints living in Lydda. ³³ There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden for eight years, for he was paralyzed. ³⁴ Peter said to him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make your bed! And immediately he got up. ³⁵ And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

³⁶ Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. ³⁷ At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. ³⁸ Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, 'Please come to us without delay.' ³⁹ So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. ⁴⁰ Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt and prayed. He turned to the body and said, 'Tabitha, get up.' Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹ He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. ⁴² This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. ⁴³ Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.

"Jesus is still transforming lives and bringing fresh possibilities as his followers stand among and alongside the helpless and hopeless calling them to rise!"

I. FISHING AND CATCHING!

- A. It's appropriate that Peter, the fisherman, would be found serving and experiencing the miraculous work of God in Lydda and Joppa...the very place where another wayward servant, Jonah, experienced his call, was swallowed by a large fish, and spit out right where he started to continue God's mission!
- B. In Luke 5:1-11 Jesus promises Peter and the other fisherman that they would be "catching people", even as they themselves had been "caught" by Jesus and given a new vocation.
- C. Peter now experiences and proclaims the Good News of Jesus in that through his "casting", others experience the risen Christ in transforming ways and come to believe!
- D. As Peter is "going here and there among the believers" he encounters Aeneas, a bed-ridden paralytic, in Lydda (near the Mediterranean coastline on the Plain of Sharon) and heals him by invoking the name of Jesus!
- E. Notice that Peter is moving among the "saints", those who already believe...the Holy Spirit is at work moving in and through the community of believers.
- F. At Peter's assertion, "Jesus Christ heals you, get up and make your bed," Aeneas obeys, and his rising becomes a witness to the non-believers in Lydda and Sharon and the residents "turn to the Lord!"

II. REELING THEM IN!

- A. At that same time, the faith community in Joppa sends for Peter, whose reputation as a healer has spread, to “come without delay” because a female disciple (Gr.-mathetria-the only use of the female word for disciple in the NT) named Tabitha (Gr.-Dorcas- which means gazelle) has died!
- B. Tabitha was a faithful follower of Jesus whose “good works and acts of charity” had been so great in the community, that the community was lost without her...especially the widows who stand weeping beside her death bed showing Peter the clothing that she had made for them.
- C. Peter sends everyone from the room, kneels and prays, and again as with Aeneas, says “get up” ... implying that it is indeed Jesus Christ who is raising Tabitha from death, not Peter!
- D. Peter then “shows her to be alive” and once again her presence is a witness to the faithful and the whole community and “Many believed in the Lord!”
- E. Peter’s power to heal is not magic, but the outpouring of God’s power because of his close communion with the Lord and he announces that the Lord’s healing power is available among those who believe!
- F. In response to the proclamation of the Gospel by the community of faith others turn and believe in the Lord!
- G. Luke wants his readers to hear that the Holy Spirit is moving not only through Peter, but through the early church community bringing healing and witnessing to the presence and power of Jesus Christ in the world.

III. A FLOCK OF FISH!

- A. Luke also wants to show that the power and presence of Jesus Christ is at work transforming lives, reversing the ways of the world and even of death, proclaiming that the Kingdom of God has dawned and is present in and through the church!
- B. What an extraordinary transformation has taken place in Peter’s own life. He has moved from fear, denial and desertion to being a bold prophet, healer, and witness to God’s Good News in Jesus.
- C. Yet Peter knows and acknowledges that it is God in Jesus Christ who empowers the proclamation of the Good News, brings healing, and provides the witness...the results are not Peter’s, or ours!
- D. Ours is but to live in communion with God so closely that God lives and works through us to bring proclamation, healing and witness to the world!
- E. **Do we truly believe that God still transforms the world, and even individual lives?** God still works in and through us, the church, to bring this transformation, healing and witness!
- F. **Do you truly believe that God has and is transforming your life and is working in and through you to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to offer witness to others and transform the world?**
- G. Even **you are called to “be caught” and then to “cast” where Jesus calls, “feeding Jesus’ flock”, expectant of what new and wondrous thing God will do!!!**