

Perhaps they hoped that Peter could give some explanation as to why this tragedy had occurred. However Jesus planned to do much more through his disciple Peter.

Saturday, February 11, 2012

Daily theme: Some healings only take place with prayer.

Questions

Read Acts 9:39-42

1. How did Peter approach the situation?
2. What impact would a person rising from the dead have on a community?

Consider

It seems that Peter was moved by the grief of the widows. We know that Jesus was moved by the mourning outside the tomb of Lazarus, even though he had already told his disciples that they went to Bethany to call Lazarus from the tomb. Peter's command for them to leave indicated that he desired to be alone with God. After praying, Peter called Dorcus back to life. His actions remind us of what Jesus told his disciples regarding the healing of the demonized boy. Certain things can only be done through prayer. Quite likely during his time of prayer, Peter was able to discern Jesus' desire to restore Dorcus. It was up to Peter to follow Jesus' instructions to call her back to life. While Peter may have raised others from the dead before this, Dorcus is the first recorded resurrection accomplished through Peter. Dorcus alive had a great impact on the community. Her death had already impacted them with grief, then the other spectrum of the emotional scale was reached. If the healing of Aeneas had impacted Lydda and Sharon, then Dorcus' resurrection must have rocked Joppa. Calling someone back from the dead is obviously not a common occurrence. Even in the gospels, we only have record of Jesus raising three individuals: the official's daughter, the widow's son and Lazarus. This is the only time that we read of Peter raising someone from the dead. In Acts 20 Paul raised the young man Eutychus in Troas, which is the only record we have of Paul calling someone back from death. Luke wrote that many came to know Jesus because of Dorcus. Like in the case of Aeneas, people could not just write off Jesus' power. Every time they saw Dorcus they would have to somehow explain to themselves why she was alive after having died. Her life forced the people to make a decision regarding Jesus. Many concluded that Jesus was the Messiah and Savior.

Peter healed like Jesus did.

Acts 9:32-42

Sermon Series: You will be my witnesses.

Devotional Notes February 6-11, 2012

Monday, February 6, 2011

Daily theme: Jesus leads us to people who need to be found.

Questions

Read Acts 9:32-33

1. What does the fact that there were already disciples at Lydda tell us about the spread of the Gospel?
2. Why would it be significant for Luke to include this miracle?

Consider

We often think of the apostles like Peter and John going out and proclaiming the Gospel like they did in Jerusalem. However, here we see that Peter found disciples already at Lydda. The presence of disciples indicated that someone had already come and proclaimed Jesus in the community. In this case, Peter was not functioning so much as an evangelist, but as a teacher who was going to the disciples and teaching them. Being a disciple is more than believing in Jesus, but includes learning to follow Jesus. As an apostle Peter not only proclaimed the gospel, but taught the disciples what it meant to follow Jesus. This miracle is just the second healing miracle found in Acts. The first was found in Acts 3, when Peter and John healed the lame man outside the temple gate. This miracle probably took place several years later and outside Jerusalem. This miracle indicates that Jesus' power was working even outside Jerusalem and after the gospel had been proclaimed in Lydda. Jesus' power was not utilized to substantiate the gospel, because the gospel had already come to Lydda. In this case it served to encourage the believers and expand the kingdom at Lydda.

Tuesday, February 7, 2012

Daily theme: Jesus brings healing to body and soul.

Questions

Read Acts 9:34

1. After being paralyzed for eight years, how would you imagine Aeneas' life?
2. How is this healing different from the healing in Acts 3:4-8?

Consider

After being paralyzed for eight years, Aeneas, would probably have been discouraged, not expecting to be healed. He had probably resigned himself to spending the rest of his life paralyzed, not being able to work as he had before becoming paralyzed. His condition would have required assistance from family or friends, much like the paralytic that Jesus healed, whose friends brought him to Jesus. His only source of income would be begging from a people who likely

assumed that his paralysis was a sign of some sin that he had committed against God. His life easily could have become one of waiting, going through the motions and without hope until death came and released him from his suffering. Then Peter found him. While there are similarities between the previous healing in Acts and this one, there are also differences. In both cases the men could not walk. Aeneas was paralyzed, but had walked at one point. In Acts 3 the man had been lame from birth, never having walked. In Acts 9 Peter commanded Aeneas to get up and make his bed because Jesus healed him, but in Acts 3 Peter literally pulled the man to his feet. In Acts 3 it was more Peter's faith in pulling the man up, but with Aeneas it was his faith to respond to Peter's command. In both cases it was Jesus' power that brought healing. The difference of the healings reminds us that there is no formula for healing, but Jesus brings healing in an individual way that is personal to the person involved. The fact that Jesus healed Aeneas would have greatly impacted him physically, but also would have brought healing emotionally and spiritually. If he had believed the lie that God had abandoned him, that lie was dispelled. God revealed his care for him and restoring his strength. If he believed he had sinned against God, then that sin was revealed to have been forgiven in his healing. Through this one act of kindness Jesus set Aeneas free physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Wednesday, February 8, 2012

Daily theme: A powerful testimony encourages others to follow Jesus.

Questions

Read Acts 9:35

1. What impact did this healing have upon the people?
2. Why does a healing cause people to trust in Jesus?

Consider

Even though the gospel had already come to Lydda, the healing had a powerful impact on the area. The people seeing Aeneas and knowing his situation were convicted by the power of Jesus manifested in his life, so they turned to Jesus. The miracle not only had an impact on the man, but it also expanded the kingdom in the two cities of Lydda and Sharon. Such a healing reminds us of the power of Jesus. When Jesus' power is revealed, we are confronted with the fact that we cannot explain it. When a person is healed through medicine, we have an explanation, but when a person is healed outside the normal means, people are forced to account for what happened. The healing forces people to come to a conclusion about Jesus. Is he really the Messiah? Did he really rise from the dead? If Jesus is dead and not the Messiah, then they would have to explain how his disciples heal people in his name. Peter didn't heal in his own power, but he was clear that he did so in the power of Jesus. If Jesus were dead, then Peter would not be able to heal in his name. The healing confirmed that Jesus was who he claimed to be and forced the people to arrive at a conclusion regarding him.

Thursday, February 9, 2012

Daily theme: Kindness to others testifies of Jesus' goodness.

Questions

Read Acts 9:36

1. How was Dorcus described?
2. What impact does kindness have on others?

Consider

Dorcus appears to have been one of those people who was greatly loved and admired by the community. Her kindness had become known to the people all around. So that her death would have been keenly felt by those who knew her, not so much that they would have missed what she did for them, but because they missed her. A person who displays kindness impacts people not only with her deeds, but also with her person. A kind person blesses both with action and being. The people of Joppa loved Dorcus for being Dorcus. Her departure would have changed the relational dynamic of the community. Others could replace what she did, but they could not replace her. This is what the people would have missed when she passed away. Her blessing to the community was more than the sum of her kind deeds. This is what they would have grieved, their relationship with her. Her kindnesses would have opened doors for relationships with her. Her kindnesses blessed others, but also opened doors for blessings through relationships.

Friday, February 10, 2012

Daily theme: In times of distress a leader provides comfort.

Questions

Read Acts 9:37-38

1. What do you think God was doing in allowing Dorcus to die?
2. Why do you think the people called Peter?

Consider

God's allowing tragedy is one of the great mysteries of God. Why does he allow tragedy to strike, particularly when he will later turn it around? In all the more than 20 healings described in the gospels and Acts there seems to be a variety of reasons why Jesus and his disciples healed others. Sometimes they healed because of faith of the sick person. Other times it was the faith of friends. At other times it was the compassion of Jesus or the desire of the apostles. Each healing is so different that we cannot come up with any formulas regarding healing. Every situation is different with its own reasons often only known to God, Jesus or the disciple through whom healing came. One thing that does seem to be consistent is the kingdom of God was expanded as a result of the miracle, because the power of God was manifested. We may assume that the disciples called Peter to raise Dorcus from the dead, but that seems unlikely. If they expected Peter to raise Dorcus then there would be no need to mourn. Like Martha and Mary who mourned outside Lazarus tomb, not expecting to see their brother ever again in this life, the disciples of Joppa did not expect to see Dorcus again. Nevertheless like the sisters called Jesus, the believers in Joppa called Peter. They probably did so, because they merely wanted comfort from this well-known follower of Jesus.