

# Back to Peter in Acts 9

One important rediscovery for the church in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformation was that salvation was by 'faith alone'.

But it is important to remember that the faith that saves alone is never 'alone'. It is always evidenced by actions.

Cf even the thief on the cross 'stood up for truth' when the other thief criticised Jesus.

In what way does your faith 'show itself'? In this passage from Acts chapter 9 we see several people working out their faith in God.

## Acts 9:32-43



As Peter travelled about the country, he went to visit the saints in Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, a paralytic who had been bedridden for eight years. "Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and take care of your mat." Immediately Aeneas got up. All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas), who was always doing good and helping the poor. About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!"

## Acts 9:32-43



Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them. Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called the believers and the widows and presented her to them alive. This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.

# Spread the word!

As Peter travelled about the country,

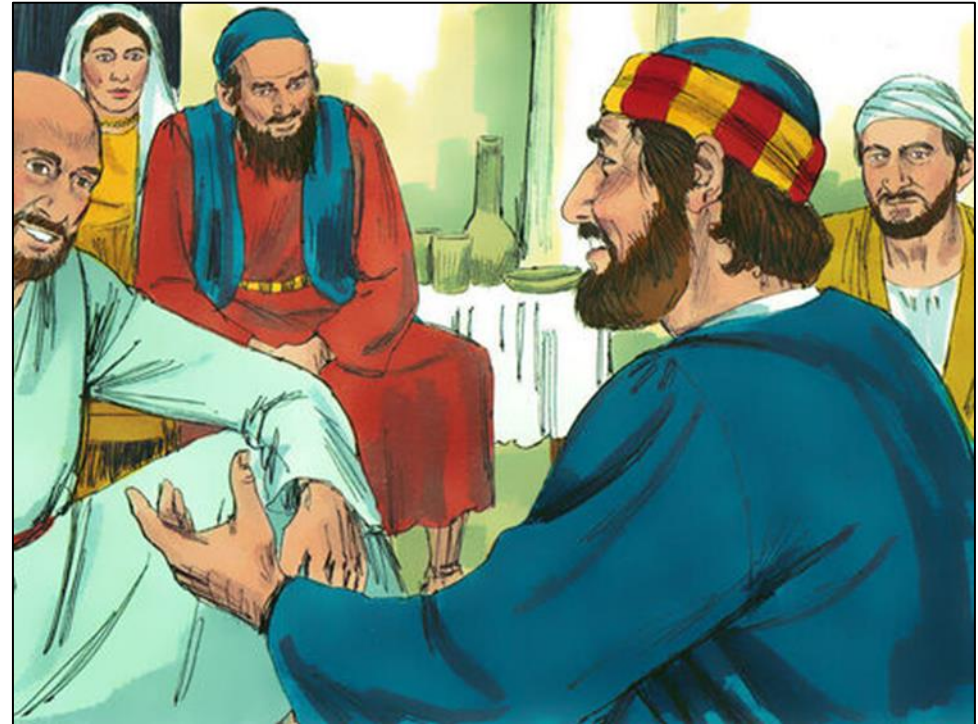
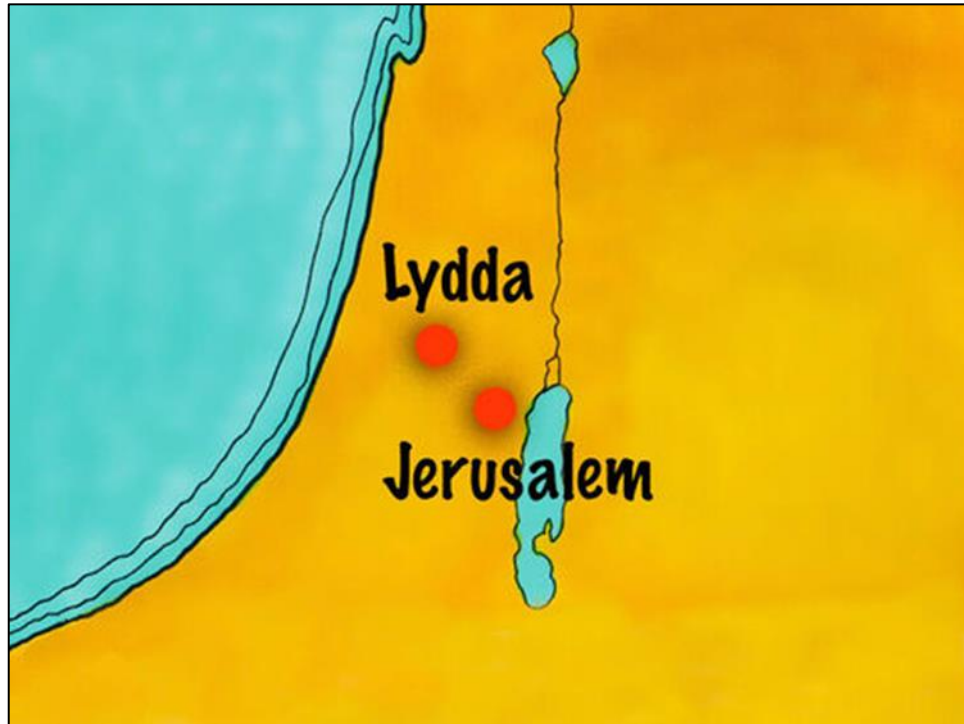
In the early days of the persecution, the apostles stayed in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1)

Now things have quietened down, they spread out sharing the message of Jesus the Messiah. The 'country' would be Judea, Samarian, Galilee and beyond.



# The Saints

he went to visit the saints in Lydda.



Going north west he visits the ‘saints’, an early name for (living) believers. It is what we are called to be (Romans 1:7).

# A good day!

There he found a man named Aeneas,  
a paralytic who had been bedridden for eight years.

How did he 'find' Aeneas?

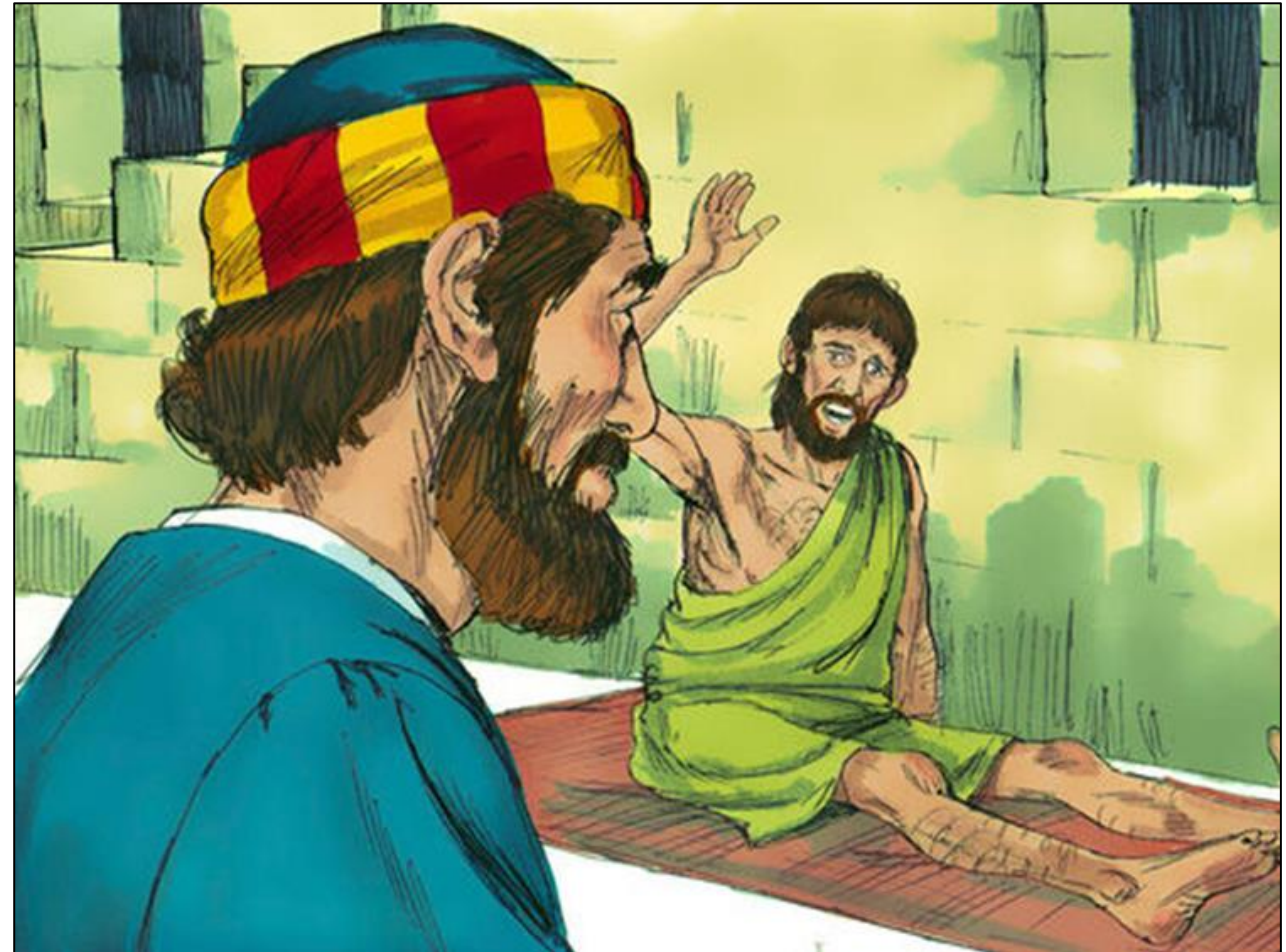
Was he a fellow believer?

Somebody told Peter?

Friend's concern – asking for prayer?

A sorry state to be in – totally  
dependent on others with a long-  
term disability.

'A difficult case' – for man



# Spirit prompted faith

"Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you."

Note:- not 'will heal' but that Jesus was active then!

Peter recognises that it is Jesus who is the healer –not himself.



## Jesus Christ's words of power

"Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and take care of your mat."

Don't leave the mat for somebody to fall over!

You won't be needing it from now on.

Peter gives these instructions **before** Aeneas is healed!

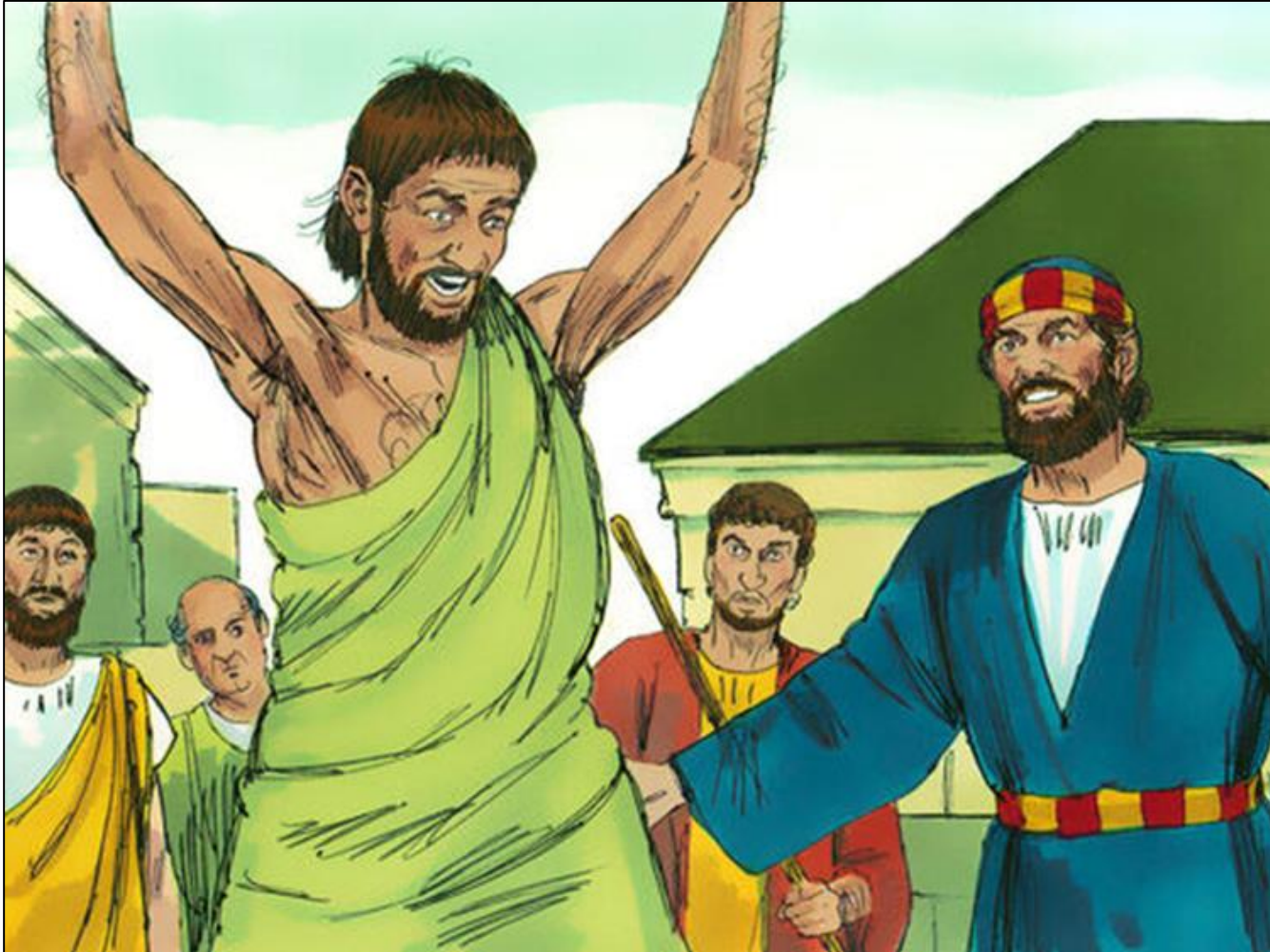
- Spirit prompted faith.





**It was a miracle.**

Immediately Aeneas got up.

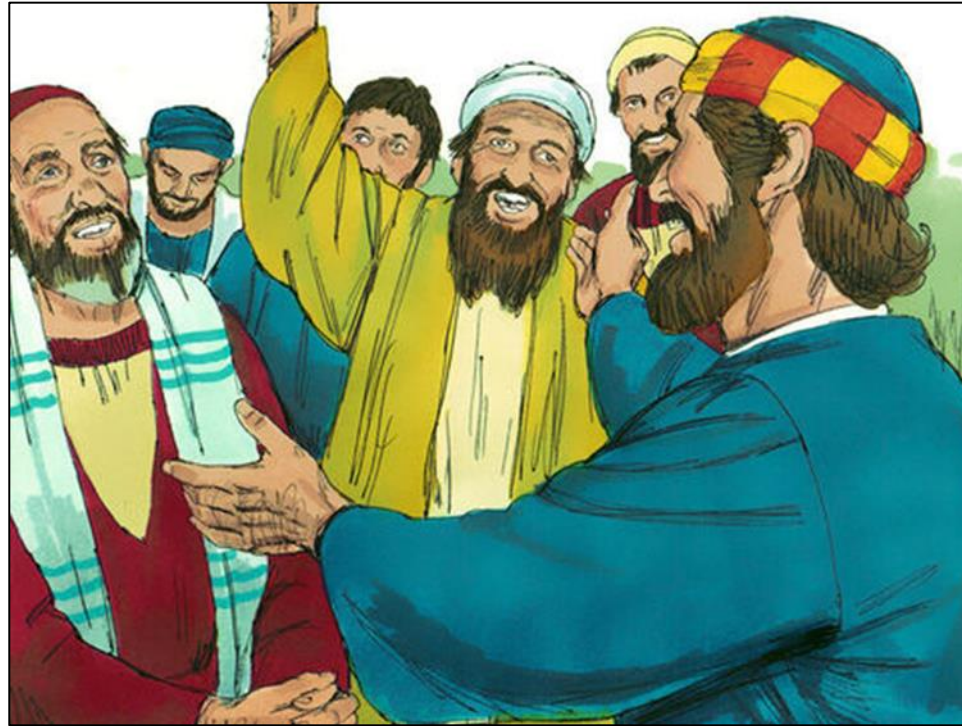


Jesus did it – and he is pleased to use his people in the process.  
Instant healing - sometimes the Lord uses a process.

# The Kingdom grows

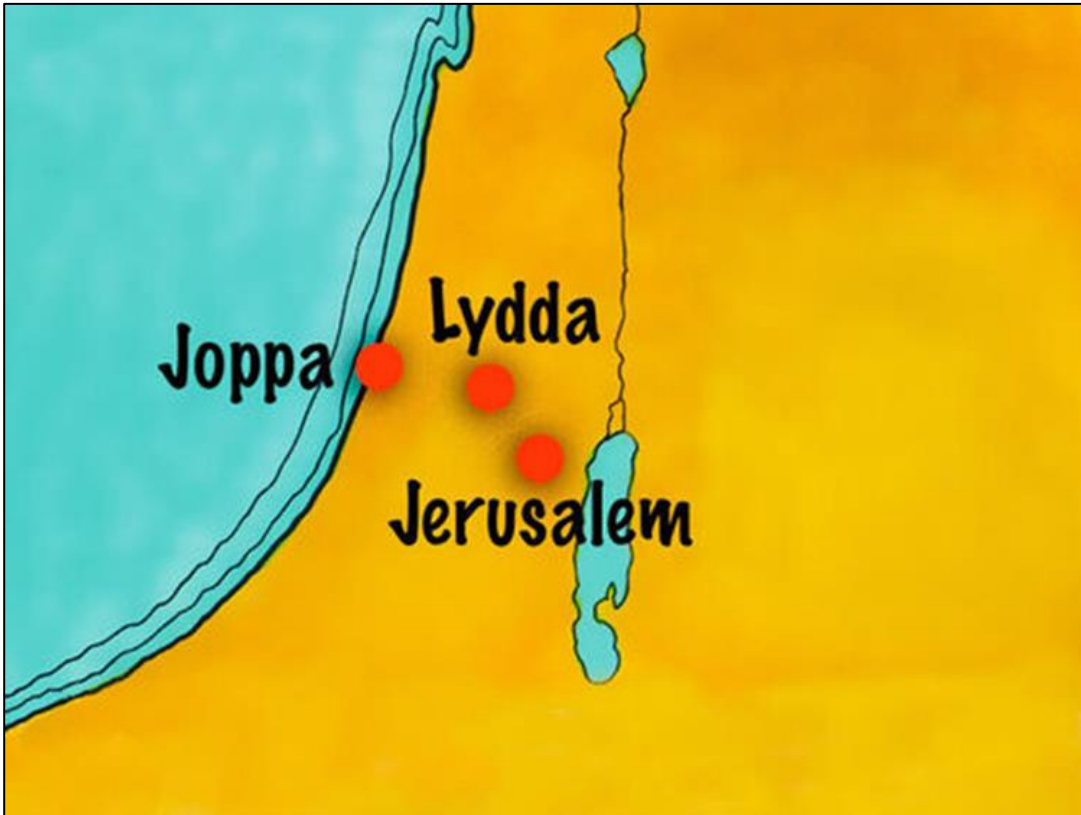
All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

( 'all' means quite a large number)



The people in the villages witnessed God at work and responded in faith. Someone (disciples) would have explained to them the way of salvation.

## In Joppa



Not far away – at the coast (part of modern day Tel Aviv - Jaffa)

## First a man (Aeneas), now a woman

In Joppa there was a **disciple** named Tabitha  
(which, when translated, is Dorcas),

A woman of faith

Why is she called a 'disciple'?

Her name Tabitha (Aramaic) is given  
and translated for us into Greek  
(Dorcas, like Tabitha, means "gazelle").

She is represented here as being an  
older lady.



## Her faith in action

*she was always doing good and helping the poor.*



ALWAYS - consistent  
DOING GOOD – deeds  
done according to God's  
will  
HELPING THE POOR –  
showing God's concern for  
the vulnerable - unselfish

# It happens

About that time she became sick and died,



We are not given the cause of death.- old age weakness that led to infection?  
These things happen to the best of believers too.

# Respect !

and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room.

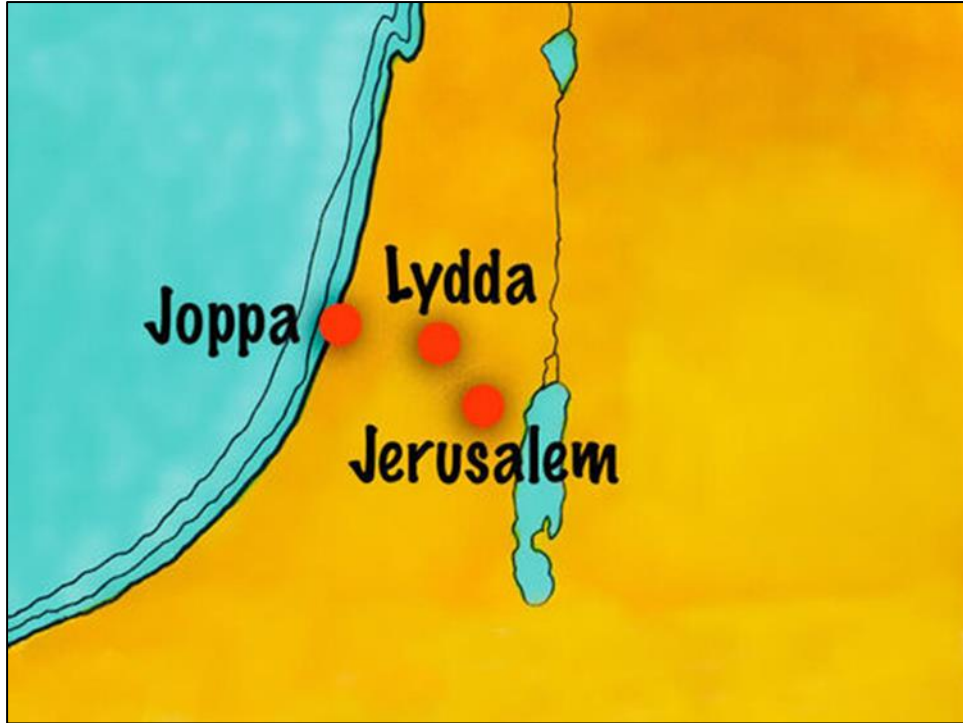


People treated her body with respect – our temple/tent

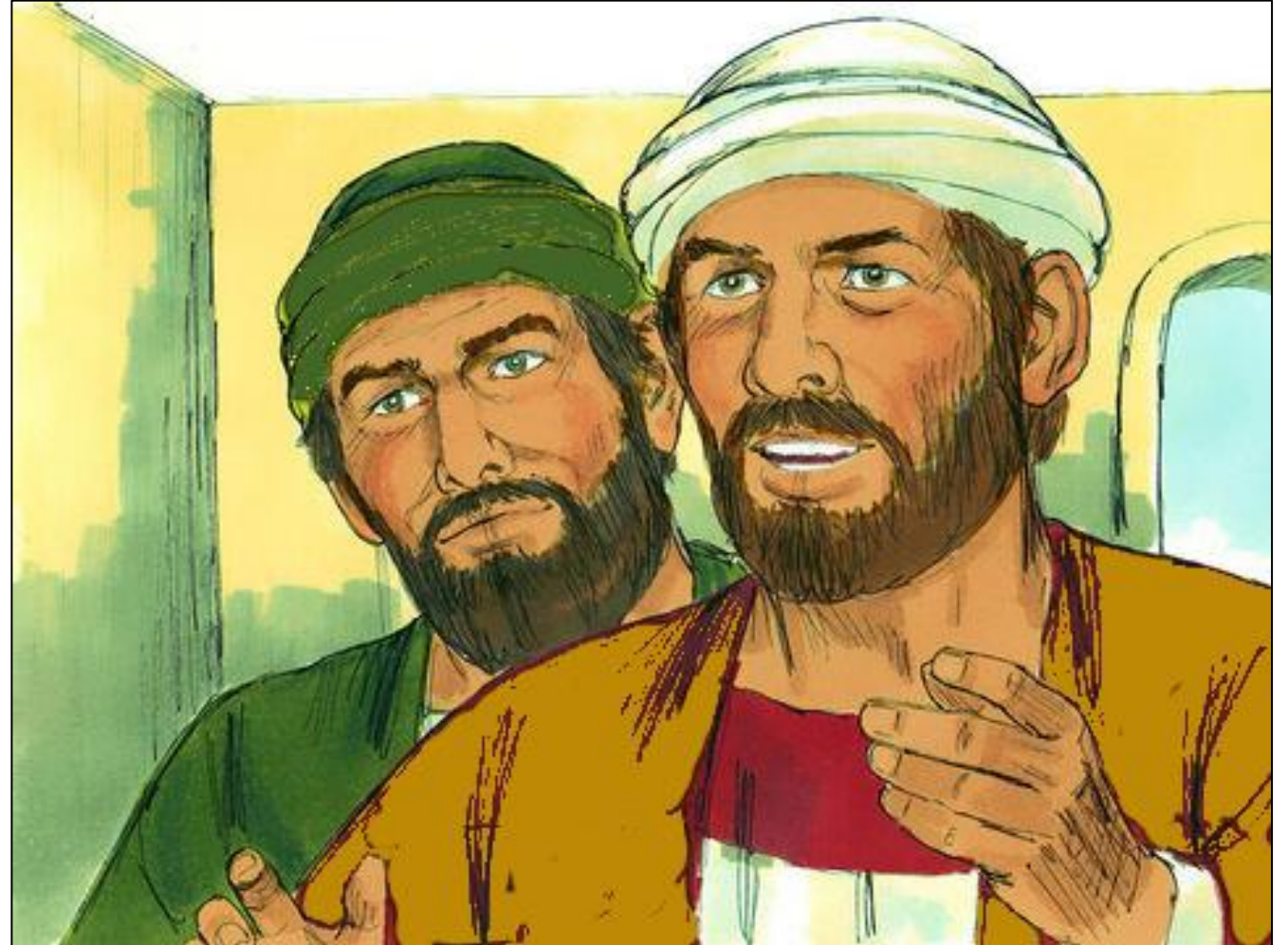
They placed her body upstairs rather than having a rapid burial (usually the case in these countries) cf. Acts 5 (Ananias and Sapphira)

## Send for Peter

Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him



Spirit prompted faith.  
Are they looking for a miracle?  
Had they heard about Aeneas?





## We need you there.

and urged him, "Please come at once!"



Why the urgency?

Perhaps the longer Dorcas is dead, they think it will be harder for her to come back.

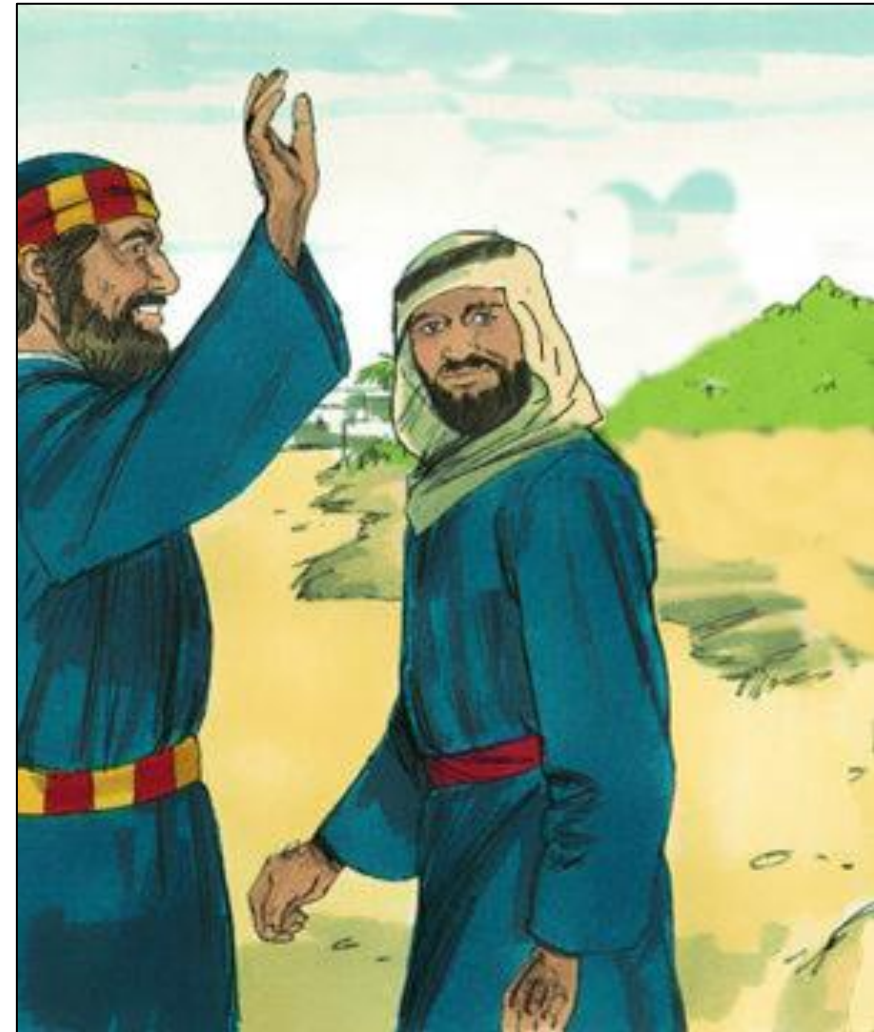
# This is an impossible case!

Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room.

Peter's willing response

They show him into the room.

What were they expecting?



## Great sorrow

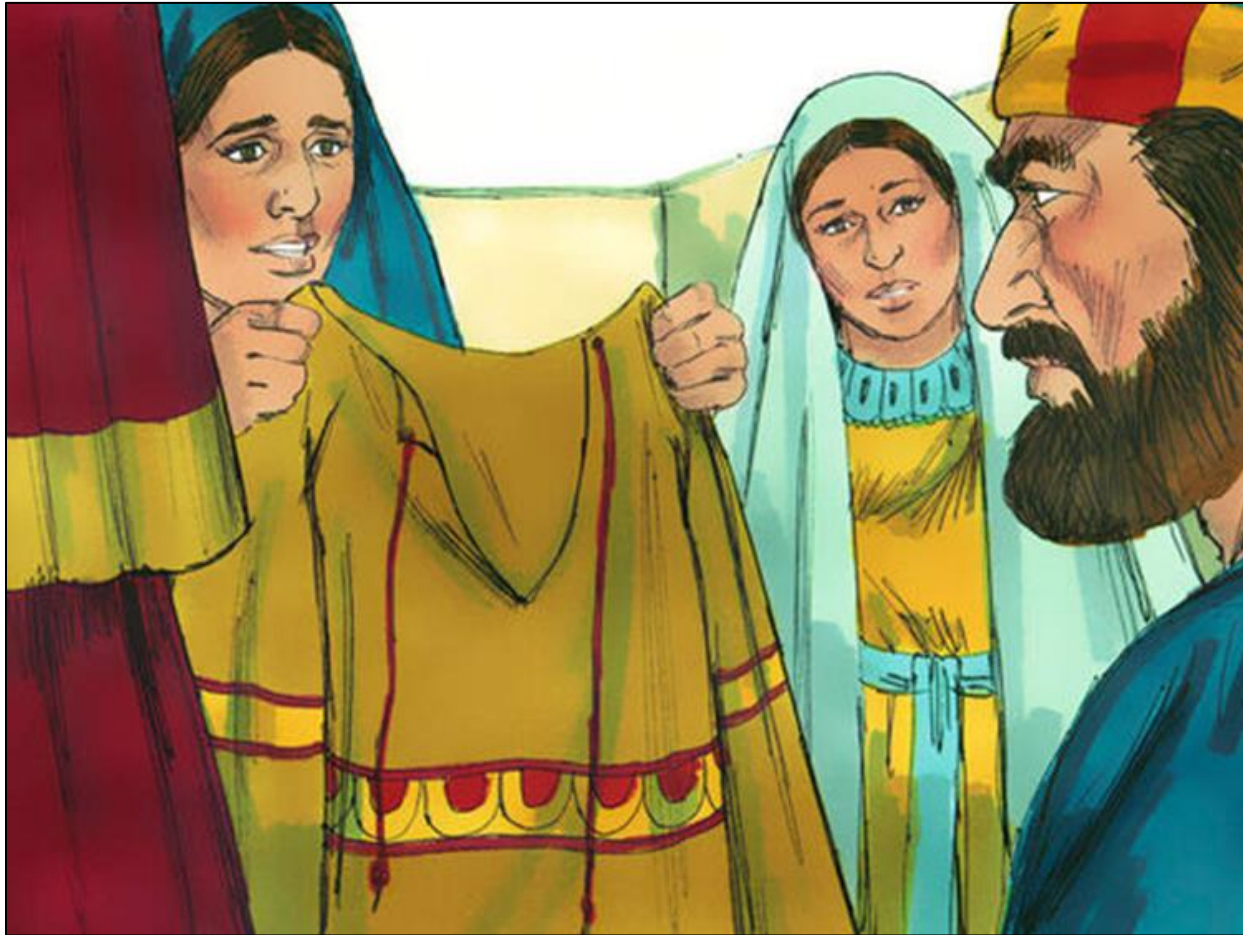
**All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.**

Dorcas was well loved. These widows weren't 'official' mourners. They were really sad to have lost such a dear friend.



## Look what Dorcas did for us

All the widows stood around him, crying and **showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made** while she was still with them.



They were simply showing Peter what a kind woman Dorcas had been to them and others.

# Everybody Out – please!

Peter sent them all out of the room;

He needed time to be alone and seek God's will.

Distractions are not needed.

He had seen Jesus empty rooms where people were grieving. Was it because they couldn't believe she would live again and an atmosphere of unbelief wouldn't help him,

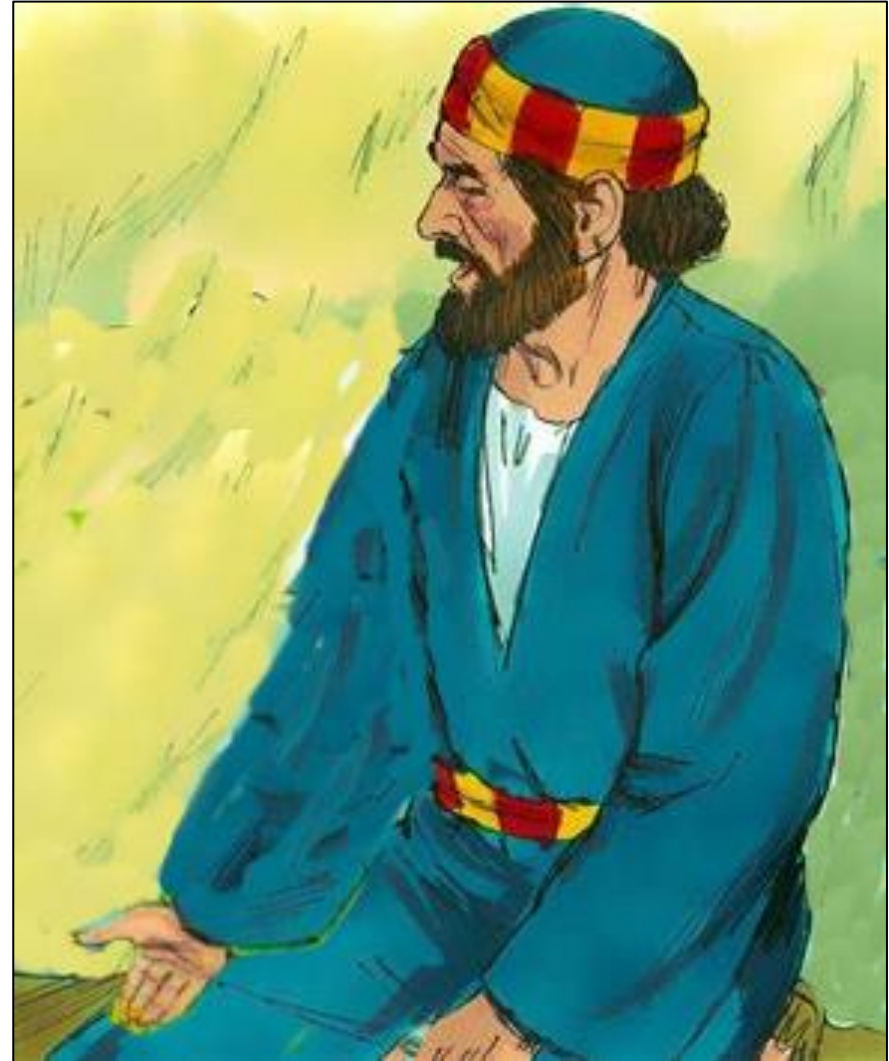
or possibly because this wasn't a show but something deeply private?

# Prayer – a conversation with our Maker

then he got down on his knees and prayed.

In a humble attitude of prayer.  
A physical acknowledgement  
of needing God to act.

What he prayed we are not  
told. It was a personal  
conversation with his mighty  
Saviour for wisdom and  
strength.



# Time to speak God's life giving word.

Turning toward the dead woman,



He had been facing away from Dorcas' body while he prayed – but now having sensed it was time to act – he turns.

## What is in a name?

Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up."

Speaking to her in Aramaic he said 'Tabitha cumi', which sounds very similar to the words Jesus spoke to the 12 year old girl when he raised her from the dead. – 'Talitha cumi' (Mark 5:41)

Of course the meanings are different but they sound so similar, and perhaps the words reminded Peter of Jesus' power on that occasion.





# Hello. Who are you?

She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up.



I don't know if she had met Peter before, but she probably had heard of him.

This an example of coming back from the dead since Dorcas would die again someday in the future and is like us, awaiting the final resurrection when Jesus returns.

# A helping hand

He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet.



She could have got out of bed by herself, but it's nice to be helped.

It was another instant miracle.

The power was from Jesus.

# Answered prayer

Then he called the believers and the widows and presented her to them alive.



We are not told what the believers had been doing outside. Any guesses?

The widows (are probably believers too) but they get a special invitation to join the celebration.

# Word gets out

This became known all over Joppa,  
and many people believed in the Lord.

Good news is worth telling.  
As a result, the miracle  
causes many to be open to  
responding to the Lord.

The Kingdom of God is  
growing.



## An important link to chapter 10

Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.

This isn't just a PS to the story. It is an important introduction to the next account with Peter. Also it shows that Peter is willing to associate with believers whose work would render them to be considered non-kosher.

Tanners who worked with animal carcasses were considered unclean.



This prepares the way for Peter's next discovery of faith.

*the only thing that counts is - faith working through love.*

Galatians 5:6

