

Acts 9:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

Analysis

Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. The widows' grief and testimony to Tabitha's ministry establish the miracle's authentication while demonstrating genuine Christian community and practical love.

Peter arose and went shows immediate, willing response to pastoral need. Apostolic ministry involves availability and responsiveness to community crisis. No hesitation, no calculation of personal convenience—servant leadership prioritizes others' needs.

All the widows stood...weeping depicts profound grief—mourning exceptional benefactor. Their presence testifies to Tabitha's impact—these women knew her personally, experienced her care directly. The weeping wasn't performance but genuine sorrow over beloved sister's death.

Shewing the coats and garments provides tangible evidence of Tabitha's ministry. These weren't abstract testimonies but physical proofs—handmade clothing still worn. The phrase while she was with them (imperfect tense) indicates ongoing, habitual activity. Tabitha consistently served; her death left void in community care

structure. Reformed theology values such concrete expressions of faith—love demonstrated through practical service.

Historical Context

Ancient widows faced severe economic vulnerability—no social security, pensions, or systematic support. Extended family provided primary care, but widows without family fell into desperate poverty. Christian communities accepted responsibility for widow care (Acts 6:1-6, 1 Timothy 5:3-16), following biblical justice mandates.

Tabitha's garment-making addressed urgent practical needs while providing dignity through quality handmade clothing. The widows' testimony served dual purpose: honoring Tabitha while potentially requesting Peter attempt restoration. Their grief and testimony occurring around 38-39 CE provides window into early Christian community life—mutual care, practical love, deep relationships transcending mere Sunday assembly.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does practical service to vulnerable populations demonstrate authentic Christian faith?
2. What role do tangible evidences of ministry play in authenticating gospel impact?
3. In what ways should Christian communities structurally care for widows and vulnerable members?
4. How does genuine grief over deceased believers reflect the depth of Christian community?
5. What balance should exist between mourning death and maintaining resurrection hope?

Interlinear Text

ἀναστὰς δὲ Πέτρος συνῆλθεν αὐτῶν ὅν
arose Then Peter and went with him When he
G450 G1161 G4074 G4905 G846 G3739

παραγενόμενον ἀνήγαγον εἰς τὸ ὑπερῷον καὶ
was come they brought him into the upper chamber and
G3854 G321 G1519 G3588 G5253 G2532

παρέστησαν αὐτῶν πᾶσαι αἱ χῆραι κλαίουσαι καὶ
stood by him all G3588 the widows weeping and
G3936 G846 G3956 G5503 G2799 G2532

ἐπιδεικνύμεναι χιτῶνας καὶ ιμάτια ὅσα ἐποίει μετ'
shewing the coats and garments which made with
G1925 G5509 G2532 G2440 G3745 G4160 G3326

αὐτῶν οὖσα ἡ Δορκάς
him while she was G3588 Dorcas
G846 G5607 G1393

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 10:7 (Parallel theme): The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot.

Ephesians 4:28 (Parallel theme): Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

1 Thessalonians 1:3 (Parallel theme): Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;