

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	ὃν	
arose	Then	Peter	and went with	him	When he	
G450	G1161	G4074	G4905	G846	G3739	
παραγενόμενον	ἀνήγαγον	εἰς	τὸ	ὑπερῶον	καὶ	
was come	they brought him	into	G3588	the upper chamber	and	
G3854	G321	G1519		G5253	G2532	
παρέστησαν	αὐτῶν	πᾶσαι	αἱ	χῆραι	κλαίουσai	καὶ
stood by	him	all	G3588	the widows	weeping	and
G3936	G846	G3956		G5503	G2799	G2532
ἐπιδεικνύμεναι	χιτῶνας	καὶ	ἱμάτια	ὅσα	ἐποίει	μετ'
shewing	the coats	and	garments	which	made	with
G1925	G5509	G2532	G2440	G3745	G4160	G3326
αὐτῶν	οὗσα	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;