

Saturday - Sunday, June 30 & July 1, 2007

When God Has More in Mind

“The Thrill of Being Used By God”

Acts 9:32-43

INTRODUCTION

Open Acts 9:32

Pastor Wade on vacation; will return in a few weeks as Grandpa Wade.

Tonight consider “The Thrill of Being Used By God”

Briefly discuss significance of message title: “used by God” and how understanding this should “thrill” our lives.

1. God uses you to meet the NEEDS of others.

(Acts 9:32-35) As Peter traveled 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.

[Show slide of map]

Peter leaves Jerusalem traveling west through the Plains of Sharon and down towards the city of Lydda, 25 miles west of Jerusalem. A city populated by both Jews and Greeks.

A community of believers already existed due to the witness of those who left Jerusalem during the persecution seen in Acts 8 or maybe Philip’s ministry we read about earlier in Acts.

The purpose of Peter’s visit was to strengthen the church, to bring encouragement from Jerusalem, to continue the apostolic ministry Jesus had assigned to him.

While in the city Peter soon finds himself in the company of a man named Aeneas, a man who had been paralyzed for 8 years. It’s not clear if he was a believer or just happened to be in the area.

What is clear is that when Peter sees him, in the absence of any request either from the man or his friends, Peter confidently tells him, “*Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and take care of your mat.*”

Immediately the man, formerly unable to do what Peter had requested, got up. (cf. Acts 3)

We are told that everyone in the area who saw this former paralytic now moving about “turned to the Lord.”

What’s the big deal; the healing, the response to the healing?

Peter’s actions speak of the impact that one person can have when they are willing and available to God’s work.

Why would God use me?

- **NEEDY people are all around you**

*(Matthew 9:36) When He saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were **harassed and helpless**, like sheep without a shepherd.*

- **It’s EXPECTED of His followers** (Mark 10:45, 1John 2:6)

- **You POSSESS what others need** (2 Cor. 1:3-4, Mt.10:8)

*(2 Corinthians 1:3-4) Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, Who comforts us in all our troubles, **so that** we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.*

Are you someone who is willing and available to be used by God to meet the needs of others?

2. God uses you because you are a **“GIFTED”** person.

(Acts 9:36-41) *In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas), who was always doing good and helping the poor. 37 About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. 38 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!” 39 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. 40 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. 41 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.*

Our story now takes us 5 miles to the west to the coastal region and a seaport city known as Joppa, where another Christian community had been established. Place where Jonah sought to escape the mission God had given him so many centuries earlier.

Tabitha, a follower of Jesus, becomes sick and dies from her sickness. We are told that she was a servant, always doing good and helping the poor; a seamstress, making clothing for others.

The believers in this city send two men to beg Peter to come immediately. They seemed to think that Peter might bring something to help this woman who was already dead. Why Peter?

Peter comes, is given evidence of the good deeds that this woman had done and then dismisses everyone from the room where her lifeless body had been placed.

He gets down on his knees and prays. After some time praying he commands Tabitha to get up!

She opens her eyes, looks at Peter, he takes her hand and helps her up, and presents her alive to the community of believers in Joppa.

The place must have gone wild in celebration and praise.

Peter was used by God according to the spiritual gifts he had been given; to heal, cast out demons, to do miracles; resulting in people's needs being met and the inclusion of many into the Christian faith.

(Matt. 10:8) *Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.*

What does this have to do with me?

- **You are created UNIQUELY; you are an original**

(Psalm 139:13-16) *For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.*

- **You are GIFTED to make a difference** (Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire @ www.fbcmodesto.com/resources)

(1 Corinthians 12:4-7) *There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*

(1 Peter 4:10) *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.*

Are you using the gifts God has given to you as one of His followers in the lives of other people? If not, why not?

God uses you to meet the needs of others; He uses you according to the way He has gifted and enabled you and finally ...

3. God uses you to help fulfill His purpose in the world. (9:35, 42-43)

(Acts 9:42-43) 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.

(Acts 9:35) All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

- **Your life is meant to bring God GLORY**

(1 Corinthians 10:31) So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

- **Your life is meant to accomplish God's WORK in the world (Acts 2:47)**

Closing Comments

Closing Song