

TABITHA AS A DISCIPLE

Oluwatobi S. Adewuyi

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Oluwatobi S. Adewuyi
Coordinator

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God bless you!

Topic:
TABITHA AS A DISCIPLE
Text: Acts :36-39

Father in Jesus name, eternal Rock of Ages, Lion of Judah, we bless Your name. May Your name be highly exalted in Jesus' name. Father, we ask for the forgiveness of sins. Father, forgive us in Jesus' name. As we go into Your Word tonight, Jesus Christ, speak to us in Jesus' name, and at the end of everything, let us have full cause to glorify Your Holy Name. In Jesus Christ's Mighty Name we have prayed. AMEN

Introduction

I welcome us all in Jesus Christ's name. Today's teaching will not be too long but precise and heart searching.

Bible Text: Acts :36-39

36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber.

38 And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them.

39 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.

Study

We read of the life of a woman who lived with a good testimony. A disciple named Tabitha, a Hebrew name. The Greek name is Dorcas. It appears that the Greek one is more common today than the Hebrew one. The meaning of her name in both languages signifies a doe, or hind, a deer, a pleasant creature. From this, we can also see that one's name, to an extent, can influence one's life. This woman lived at Joppa, which is now called Japho, a seaport town in the tribe of Dan. This was where Jonah took a ship to go to Tarshish. Some remarkable things were said of her, which become of a true disciple of Christ. She was full of good works and charitable deeds, which she did.

Let's see what she was called: a disciple. A disciple is one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another. From this, we can see that Tabitha did not only spread the doctrines of Christ by words, but she also made them reflect through her life. Jesus Christ says: **“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” — Matthew 5:16 (KJV).** Jesus Christ did not say, "Tell men your good works," but, "Let your light shine," so that your good works would be evidently seen. That was what Tabitha did.

Today, many are full of good words, but are short of good works. Whereas, to be full of good words is not the same as to be full of good works. This is why God is not glorified through their lives. As disciples of the Lord, our lives must show forth Christ's doctrines. When we are short of this, then we are not disciples indeed, but mere followers. We must clarify that today there are many more followers of Christ than disciples. In fact, the ratio is far apart. Some may be asking, "How can one be a follower and not a disciple?" There are significant differences between both.

A follower is someone who goes after or accompanies another person. Looking carefully into the ministry of Jesus, one would see that people followed Him for different reasons:

1. Some wanted to hear His teaching.
2. Some hoped to see miracles.
3. Some sought healing or food.
4. Some were simply curious.

Today, if we look into the church, we would still see these sets of people. The reason some are in the church today is because they want healing, miracles, and breakthroughs. Some are hungry, and they need food and shelter, so they commit themselves to a church they believe can and should cater for their needs. Some do not even know why they are in the church. They are only there because they feel that it is the right thing to do and because that is how they were brought up. All these are followers of Christ. Just as not everyone who followed Jesus was committed to Him, some stopped following when His teachings became difficult.

“From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.” — John 6:66 (KJV). This is how many people act today. Every true minister of God will, at one time or another, preach messages and teachings that will separate the followers from the disciples because the followers will find such teachings difficult. These men were called disciples but were not true disciples, therefore they find His teachings offensive. But the Scripture calls Dorcas a disciple, though a woman, yet a disciple of Christ. Women do not have the excuse of not living up to the profession of their faith, for they have been given power to become the children of God. **“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” — John 1:12 (KJV)**

Who, therefore, is a disciple?

The Greek word Mathetria was used in that verse to refer to Dorcas. This means "female pupil" or "disciple." It is related to the Greek word Mathetes, which means learner, student, or apprentice.

There are characteristics notable in a disciple:

1. Such a person learns from Jesus.
2. He trusts and obeys Him.
3. Such seeks to become like Him.
4. Such remains faithful even when it is costly.

The truth remains that true Christian living is costly. If a man cannot lose himself totally, that is, deny himself totally, such a person cannot be the Lord's disciple. **“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” — Matthew 16:24 (KJV).** From this, Jesus is making us see who a true disciple is: someone who denies himself, takes up his cross, and follows Him. It must be understood that every true disciple is a follower, but not every follower is a disciple. The life of Dorcas reflects some things which we must also check in our lives to see if we measure up to expectation. She was full of good works and charitable deeds. She:

1. Made clothes for widows and people in need.
2. Gave generously to the poor.
3. Lived a life characterized by compassion and practical service.

“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.” — Acts 9:39 (KJV).

Tabitha was a woman who proved her faith through her good works. A Christian without good works is not different from an unbeliever who gives himself to good works. One does not have faith; the other does not have works to prove his faith, which then makes his faith questionable. A follower only walks behind Jesus, while a disciple walks behind Jesus, learning from Him and allowing Him to transform his life. The difference between them is commitment. A follower may simply accompany or admire Jesus, while a disciple is committed to learning from Him, obeying Him, and becoming like Him.

Are you a disciple or just a follower?

Use this to run a check on yourself:

1. Do you put your own desires first rather than deny yourself?
2. Do you endure persecution, suffering, and rejection for Christ?
3. Do you submit your life to God's will even when it is difficult?
4. Do you follow Jesus faithfully, whatever the cost?

It is not simply about enduring life's ordinary hardships; it is about a deliberate commitment to Christ that may require sacrifice.

Tabitha was such a woman. Today, it is painful to see those who are merely followers of Christ ridicule the sacrifices of Christ's disciples, speaking ill of their labours, whereas they cannot do half of what these disciples have done. When it comes to sacrifice and selflessness for the sake of the gospel, it is very easy to talk down the sacrifices made by Christ's disciples than to commit oneself to such.

Let us start proving our faith in Christ through our good works, if indeed we are true disciples. Let men testify of this in us. Be a

Dorcas wherever you find yourself. Let people be able to testify about your good works and not evil things. It takes intentionality; it does not happen by chance. Always ask yourself whether you are just a follower of Christ or a true disciple.

We'd stop this teaching here. Do have a lovely day

Invitation

If you know that you are still living in sin and you are ready to repent and begin to live your life in strict obedience to God so that you can overcome every sin in your life to make heaven, please place your right hand on your chest and say this prayer with your mouth.

Say,

"Lord Jesus, I accept You as my personal Lord and Savior. I believe that You died for me and took away my sins so that I will not face the penalty of them. I surrender my life to You today, and I make a decision to obey and follow You. Come into my life now and accept me as Your child. Thank You for saving me, in Jesus Christ's name I pray, Amen."

Congratulations, now you are saved. If you prayed this short prayer, please WhatsApp **+2347067511039** and let me know that you have just been saved. I want to have a word with you. God bless you!

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Contacts:

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+2349028350180

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Edited & Compiled by

Joanna O. Adewuyi

Goodness O. Wande-Oloro

Media Team

