

St John's and St Martin's at home study material for Easter 2013

ACTS Ch 9 36-43 Who cares?

Meeting Tabitha, or Dorcas, if you prefer her Greek name. In both languages her name means Gazelle. And Simon!

- 36 Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was *devoted to good works and acts of charity.*
- 37 At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs.
- 38 Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, "Please come to us without delay."
- 39 So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. **All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them.**
- 40 Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, "Tabitha, get up." Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up.
- 41 He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive.
- 42 This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.
- 43 Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.**

Tabitha was a seamstress of some considerable skill. Imagine our world without such a skill:



Sweat shop, or wealth creation?



A stitch in time? The woman of Dagenham

Tabitha was also a carer, devoted to good works and charity (v36):



Harjinder Caines (53), of Harlow, said she has been left exhausted by her role as full-time carer for 18-year-old Kevin, who suffers from cerebral palsy and epilepsy.

<http://www.harlowstar.co.uk/Home/Harlow-mum-exhausted-by-caring-for-her-disabled-son.htm/>

Thoughts to ponder

- Did Dorcas the Gazelle burn herself out running after other people? What brought this beautiful creature to near death?
- What does verse 39 suggest to us about those widows? Who'll make their clothes now?
- Peter "put them all outside" v 40 . Sometimes a great crowd of people fussing or meddling can be the death of us! Please, I just need space to breath!
- How good are we at discerning when enough is enough?
- Do we gain more from this story if we agree it doesn't require to be understood literally?
- How do we care for the carers?
- Does our Church do enough to support those who care in our community, particularly those who care for relatives at home, including child carers? (Children who care for adults)
- What does Resurrection mean in this context...miracle, or a call to us to do something?

And let's not forget Simon!

He worked with the skins of dead animals. His was a world of filth and stench. Hardly surprising he was one of society's outcasts, and untouchable (**Leviticus Ch 11, 39-40**) . But he appears not to have been beyond the reach and touch of Peter. Peter has just had a pretty spectacular encounter with things at Tabitha's house. Peter the carer...or miracle worker (depending on how you read it!) needs to step out of the limelight. His host (the outcast) serves dinner and pours a drink. .."so, how was your day Peter?"



Is there room in our church for Simon, and Tabitha?

- Close by thinking about those we unwittingly or deliberately exclude from our journey, and by reading the prayer in the URC Prayer handbook 2013 p 45