

## Good Fruit from Life in Jesus

✦ Legacy of blessing (vv.36-39)

✦ Legacy eternal (vv.40-42)

In the name of God’s own Son, dearly loved children of the Father:

Driving to a meeting a fellow pastor asked, “Did I ever tell you about the day I died?” “No,” I replied, “but you have my attention.” He had a heart attack, then woke up with the doctor leaning over him, “Good, you’re back. We thought we’d lost you.” He’d been several minutes in his cardiac arrest, so I asked him, “Did you have that sensation where you were looking down on them working on you?” “No, it wasn’t anything like that. I could not see what was going on down here, but I had the most awesome sense of peace that I’ve ever known, a feeling of complete freedom to be out of this earthly body. Everything we have learned about dying in the faith believing in Jesus was confirmed.”

He was enjoying **Good Fruit from Life in Jesus**, something we want not only for Moms on Mother’s Day, but every day for Dads and singles, youth and children too. We want a...

✦ Legacy of blessing (vv.36-39)

So why does God let things like that happen? And why this? *In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was always doing good deeds and acts of charity. At that time she became sick and died. After they had washed her, they laid her in an upstairs room.*<sup>1</sup>

**Good Fruit from Life in Jesus** – Tabitha was known as a disciple of Jesus Christ, literally “*full of good deeds.*” Yet not one of her good works brought her closer to Christ. She was like a baby resting at her mother’s breast, by faith in the arms of God’s grace. How can you come closer to God than right next to His heart by believing in His only begotten Son? Because Christ redeemed her with His holy, precious blood, Tabitha kept saying, “Thank-you!” to God for declaring her “Not guilty!” in Christ. It’s like Jesus told us in last Sunday’s Gospel, “*I am the Vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him is the one who bears much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.*” (John 15:5) We show our gratitude to God by loving our neighbor. Good works were Tabitha’s whole life of thanks and praise to God. Saved by grace through faith, *we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared in advance so that we would walk in them.* (Ephesians 2:10)

Question: Why tell us that they washed her body, then laid her upstairs? Bible critics have been trying to convince everyone that the Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, John – were written centuries after Christ by churchmen asserting their power. But there are thousands of problems with that, because thousands of manuscripts and fragments exist from the lifetime of eyewitnesses. Besides, novels making fiction look real weren’t invented until the 1800s. Details like this shout, “Eyewitness!” while also heading off the charge, “~~She wasn’t dead.~~” Oh, yes, she was. They washed her body; she didn’t wake up.

Two of the brothers journeyed to nearby Lydda to bring the Apostle Peter to help their sister. Throughout the New Testament we see our Savior’s love and purest affection between men and women in His church. They urged Peter, “*Come to us without delay!*” The next time you’re feeling guilty and unworthy of God, ask yourself, “Why Peter?” Didn’t he deny his Lord despite warnings? Yet here he is serving as one of the Lord’s Apostles. Jesus doesn’t just give second chances. He keeps forgiving us and restoring us day by day. In Revelation he says, “*Look, I am making everything new!*” (Revelation 21:5)

---

<sup>1</sup> EHV ~ Evangelical Heritage Version (<http://wartburgproject.org>) © 2019. NPH: 800-662-6022, Amazon-Kindle, LOGOS.

Be careful who you call for help. Some counselors will tell you it's too late for God. Like the ones who told the synagogue ruler, ***"Your daughter is dead. Why bother the Teacher anymore?"*** But Jesus told Jairus, ***"Don't be afraid. Only believe."*** (Mark 5:35f) Peter with James and John witnessed Jesus taking the dead girl's hand and saying, ***"Talitha, koum!"*** (***"Little girl, I say to you, arise!"***) She sat up and ate. Jairus' daughter was probably still alive at this time, a living, breathing **Legacy of blessing**.

***Peter got up and went with them. When he arrived, they led him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing him the robes and clothing that Dorcas made while she was still with them.*** Peter came in the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ our ***"merciful and faithful high priest."*** (Hebrews 2:17; 9:11) Many passages in Scripture, and Luke in particular – all speak of God's tender, loving care for widows and His expectation that God's people stand up for them. In fact, in Acts 6, the first Board for Lay Ministry was elected to ensure their widowed sisters were not neglected. We seek to do the same by asking our Elders Committee to contact "unrepresented women" like widows and single sisters before Voters meetings to ask what needs and concerns their brothers should address. Christ's loving care for His bride the Church is our example and power. (Ephesians 5:25) Love seeks a **Legacy of Blessing**.

### ✠ **Legacy eternal (vv.40-42)**

***"After Peter sent them all outside, he got down on his knees and prayed.*** Dr. Luke likes to show Jesus as a ***man of prayer***. (cf. Psalm 109:4) His disciples do the same. There's an old story about two pastors' wives talking while they sat mending clothes. One went on and on about their parish problems while the other listened quietly. Finally the one complaining asked, "Why doesn't your husband seem to have so many difficulties?" Her sister in faith and ministry answered kindly, "Maybe it's nothing more than the lesson of these trousers. I noticed you're mending the seat of your husband's pants. I'm mending my husband's knees." Prayer is a powerful gift of God because of God's invincible love for us in Christ. Let us pray to Christ the risen One. Troubles show His power and love to help beyond our imagination.

Not in anger, but firmly Peter had all the mourners leave the room. This miracle had to be done in the quiet of the soul's great Friend. Christ's love and power do come quietly, so naturally that we often miss the miracles of God's grace all around us. There is ***a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance.*** (Ecclesiastes 3:4) God's almighty power coupled with His infinite love was about to turn weeping to laughter, mourning to dancing. ***Then [Peter] turned toward the body and said, "Tabitha, get up!" She opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up.***

We usually say, "While there's life, there's hope," but afterwards? Peter believed in God who created our body and spirit, and has power to reunite them. Then our Lord was confirming the Gospel with miraculous signs. (Mark 16:20) Soon the big Day is coming when all the dead will rise, every eye will see him, and every knee bow before him. (John 5:28f; Revelation 1:7; Isaiah 45:23; Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:10) Are you ready for the Day when the Lord calls your name at the great resurrection of all the dead?

Peter ***gave her his hand and helped her stand up.*** Obviously, this is more than Peter just being a gentleman. But all you young men hearing this, see the great gift of insight from the dear Holy Spirit. One man in college just reached up and helped a young woman step down off the bleachers. Not a big deal; it was a long step down. Yet she remembered that from their first meeting for decades. Gentlemen, it's not rocket science. Treat her like a princess, like the precious treasure of God's special creation from the eye-witness account, Genesis 2. We're blessed with women who respect men. One woman scowled at a man holding the door for her: "You're just doing that because I'm a woman." He just smiled, "No, it's because I'm a gentleman." Peter ***called the saints and widows*** to stand beside Tabitha ***alive!***

Courage to love. Power to help and heal. It all comes from God who made us, then made us His own in Christ. ***"Surely goodness and mercy will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the LORD forever."*** (Psalm 23:6) ***"Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done."*** (Psalm 105:1 NIV84) Leave a **Legacy eternal**. Amen.