



Sit Up and Take Notice: Next Level Power
Acts 9:31-43

Intro: Meanwhile...

So we are well into our summer sermon series called Going Next Level: The Ripple Effect of the Gospel which is a verse by verse sermon series through Acts Chapters 9-13. We are taking each verse and skipping nothing. So in effect we are talking this portion of Scripture exactly as the Holy Spirit of God presents it to us in Scripture.

Personally, I like doing this. We definitely see the ripple effects of the Gospel. Remember, Jesus told his disciples that he was going to use them to bring the gospel from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria, and eventually to every part of the world.

Now so far in Chapter 9 we saw the very dramatic conversion of Saul. Drama is a good word to describe Paul. There are certain people who bring drama to life. Paul was one of them.

We saw his **dramatic** conversion and then afterward **lots of drama** as Paul's old friends are now trying to kill him. We left off last week with the Christians sending Paul away. They sent him to **Caesarea** and then back to **Tarsus** where he was raised.

Paul leaves and will be gone for several years and guess what? The drama dies down for a time.

Read Vs 31

31 Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

- So the Holy Spirit lead them out of a time to persecution into a time of peace and growth.
- The gospel was slowly, but steadily traveling throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria .

➔ Show map

➔ Culturally and geographically diverse area

The ripple effect of the gospel is often persecution followed by times of peace.

- Notice that being encouraged by the Holy Spirit the church increased in number.
- Almost like the front end of the wave is persecution and the back end of the wave is peace.

Read Vs 32-35

Notice the Power behind the restoration back to health of Aeneas.

³² As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the Lord's people who lived in Lydda. ³³ There he found a man named Aeneas, who was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years. ³⁴ "Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat." Immediately Aeneas got up. ³⁵ All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

- Setting the scene

- ➔ 5 years after Jesus gave the Great Commission.
- ➔ Peter traveled about the country.

Peter leaves the **mountains** (high country) surrounding Jerusalem (almost 4,000 feet)

Travels down to **Lydda** (100 ft)

From the high country (rugged) (mountainous)
Foothills (rolling hills) (Wine country)

35 miles from Jerusalem

10 miles from the Mediterranean Sea

Modern day **Tel Aviv**

- Peter was "traveling about the country" much like Jesus did.
- We might say that Peter was **on the move**.

- Here is just an observation: When Jesus gave the Great Commission, he told those 11 disciples to go into all the world and preach the Good News.
- For the most part, as far as we know, the eleven disciples the first 5 years stayed in Jerusalem. We are told this in Acts 8:1 "On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria."
- As far the book of Acts is concerned this is the first time we see Peter get out of Jerusalem so this is a very good thing.

➔ Vs 33 "There he found a man named Aeneas, who was paralyzed and bedridden for eight years."

If Peter had not gotten out of this comfort zone he would never have found Aeneas and Aeneas didn't have the capability to walk to Jerusalem to find Jesus.

Aeneas - we don't know for sure, but it very well could be that Aeneas was not a believer in Christ. Unlike Tabatha (who we are going to hear about next) Aeneas is not described as a disciple of Jesus.

He is paralyzed and has been bed-ridden for 8 years!

He was in a bad spot.

Peter was about to share the gospel with him.

³⁴ “Aeneas,” Peter said to him, “Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat.” Immediately Aeneas got up. ³⁵ All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

The gospel is what God does to save us. For Aeneas the gospel was “Jesus Christ heals you!”

// I can’t help but think of a miracle in Jesus’ ministry that was very similar. Jesus was in a crowded house and some friends of a paralyzed man cut a hole in the roof and lowered the man down to Jesus.

Do you remember what Jesus said? “Take heart, son, your sins are forgiven.”

Then after that Jesus said “To prove that the Son of Man has the authority to forgive sins Take up your mat and walk.”

Peter does a similar thing here. The power to do this, however is the same, Jesus!

The power behind Aeneas restoration back to health was Jesus!

- “Jesus Christ heals you.”
- Vs 35 “All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.”

To go to the next level, we need Jesus at the center.

Read Vs 36-42

Notice the Power behind the restoration back to life of Tabitha also known as Dorcas.

³⁶ In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she 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.

- So unlike Aeneas, Tabitha (also known as Dorcas) is a Christ follower. She is a disciple.
- “Always doing good and helping the poor.”
- She was talented in working with cloth and making clothes for people.
- Perhaps that is how she served the poor by making clothes for them.
- “She became sick and died.”

- ➔ Bodies are normally prepared for burial and buried the same day.
- ➔ Washed, wrapped in strips of a cloth.
- ➔ Rolled up in one large cloth.
- ➔ Burial spices of myrrh and aloes

God’s children are not immune from the pain of living in a fallen world.

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.

- The people were mourning their loss of her.
- Beautiful child of God who expressed God’s love through her life of service!
- They were not mourning for her without hope. As Christians they knew and believed they would see her again, but they mourned none the less.

Notice the power of Jesus working in our lives through our serving others with our God-given talents.

Application: So, part of our mission statement at Living Faith is serve. We are convinced that One die for all that we might live forever, therefore we...

Reach, Share, Grow, Serve

So if Living Faith Lutheran died as a congregation, would our community mourn our loss?

I really don’t think so.

How do we change that?

- ➔ Through service – service to God, service to others.

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.”

- Why does Peter have all of them leave the room?
 - ➔ Not told.
 - ➔ Could be that God would say “No” to his request to restore her back to life.
 - ➔ Sometimes ministry must be done in private.
 - ➔ Jesus often ministered in this way.

- Again, I can’t help but notice the similarity of another of Jesus’ miracles, one where Jesus restored a little girl back to life as recorded in Mark 5:21-43.

- ➔ Tells everyone to leave the room except Peter, James, and John and the girl’s parents.
- ➔ “Talitha kum!”
- ➔ She came to life an Jesus took her by her hand.

- Peter says “Tabitha, kum!”

Read Vs 40 - 42

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 for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive.

- The very people who were grieving the most (widows) were now overjoyed the most.

⁴² This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord.

Jesus was the power behind Tabitha's restoration back to life.

Jesus at the center once again.

Read Vs 43

⁴³ Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.

- I said before it would appear that God was getting the disciples to venture out of their comfort zone.

Peter (at this point) was one who did his best to keep the kosher laws of the Jews even though Jesus had fulfilled all law and set them free from it. Still, Peter did not want to be ceremonially unclean.

Yes, we are told that Peter stayed at the house of Simon the tanner.

Simon = a common Jewish name.

Simon Peter & Simon the Tanner

Probably a Christian because he readily welcomes Peter to stay with him.

It was against the normal, however.

Being a tanner was not a forbidden profession. The temple had items made from leather made from animal skins.

For a period of time, however, contact with a dead animal made a person unclean.

Strict Jews ordinarily shunned tanners.

We once again see Peter get out of his comfort zone and it is here in the Tanner's House that our text will pick up next week.

Notice the power of Peter getting out of his comfort zone to better share the gospel of Jesus with others.

Next steps

1. Identify your comfort zones. Ask God to help you get out of your comfort zone to find someone in need of Christ's healing.
2. Identify people in your circles who are going through tension, transition, or trouble. Bring Jesus to them.
3. Be a Dorcas. Come up with a plan to better use your gifts and talents to serve others for the sake of the gospel.