

Peter Heals Aeneas and Raises Tabitha

(Acts 9:32-43)

Pre-Session Warm Up

Do you know what a spiritual gift is? These are God-given talents and abilities that enable you to help others and to bring unbelievers to faith in Jesus. God has given each Christian at least one spiritual gift. These are things like:

Faith, the power to have confidence in God's ability to do something even when everyone else doubts it.

Wisdom, the ability to understand a situation and to provide God's insight or advice.

Teaching, the power to explain the Bible so that others understand God's ways and grow in their faith.

Encouragement, the power to motivate people to do the right thing.

Mercy, the ability to show compassion for people who suffer pain.

Our human body has different parts that help our whole body work properly. If we are missing any part of our physical body, such as our arms, the other parts of our body have to work harder to do the work that the missing parts would do.

Just like our physical body, the Body of Christ is made up of believers with gifts and talents that help the church work properly. If every believer is using the gift God has given them, the Body works properly and the Church is able to work the way God has planned. A properly running Body of Christ will have believers that help each other and will be powerful in their example to unbelievers causing them to see that Jesus is the Savior of the world.

Opening Prayer

Father, thank You that You have given us spiritual gifts that we can use to be a blessing to others and to help unbelievers come to faith

in You. Help us to desire spiritual gifts and to recognize them in each other. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. (1 Peter 4:10)

Lesson

We have been studying the Book of Acts and we have learned how the Holy Spirit's power changed lives. We have seen believers boldly teach others about Jesus even though they could have been beaten and imprisoned.

In our last lesson we saw how Jesus changed the life of Saul. He once persecuted people who believed in Jesus and after he was saved, he began to boldly share the Good News with others. God saved Saul from his sins when he believed in the Lord Jesus Christ because He had a job He wanted Saul to do.

Acts 9:15

But the Lord said, "Go, for Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel."

God saved Saul because He wanted him to share the Good News with the Gentiles.

Notice that the Lord called Saul His "instrument". Every believer is an instrument God wants to use for His purposes. [Teacher, if possible, show the class a flute or recorder and talk about how the instrument plays beautiful music.]

You have to blow air through this instrument to make music. Without the air flowing through this instrument, it cannot be used for the purpose it was made. In the same way, each of us is like an instrument in God's hands. Just like this instrument needs air flowing through it; we need to have the Holy Spirit of God flowing through our lives to be useful for God.

At the end of our last lesson about Saul we learned that he was sent to Tarsus [show on a map] and the believers had rest from persecution. While Saul was in Tarsus, God was using that time to teach Saul and prepare him for the work God had chosen him to do.

Acts 9:32

Meanwhile, Peter traveled from place to place, and he came down to visit the believers in the town of Lydda.

[Teacher, show Lydda on a map.] Who did Peter visit in Lydda? (The believers.)

Acts 9:33

There he met a man named Aeneas, who had been paralyzed and bedridden for eight years.

What do you think it would have been like for Aeneas [Un-nee-uhs] to be in bed for 8 years? [Allow responses.]

Acts 9:34

Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you! Get up, and roll up your sleeping mat!" And he was healed instantly.

Peter had the spiritual gift of **healing**. This is a miracle that only God can do.

Notice that Peter pointed to Jesus, the One who had the power to heal Aeneas. Peter didn't say, "*I am the apostle Peter and by my authority and power I heal you.*" He knew that only Jesus Christ had the authority and power to heal. God used Peter as His instrument to speak to Aeneas and offer him the gift of healing.

Acts 9:35

Then the whole population of Lydda and Sharon saw Aeneas walking around, and they turned to the Lord.

When the people living in Lydda and Sharon saw that Aeneas was healed they turned to the Lord. Notice that when people saw Peter using the spiritual gift of healing, they turned to the Lord.

The same is true for you. When other people see you using the spiritual gifts that God has given you, they will see God's power at work and will want to turn to Him for themselves.

As Peter continued to visit with the saints in Lydda, there was a believer named Tabitha who lived in Joppa. [Locate Joppa on a map.]

Let's read how Tabitha used her gifts to serve the Lord.

Acts 9:36

There was a believer in Joppa named Tabitha which in Greek is Dorcas. She was always doing kind things for others and helping the poor.

Tabitha had the spiritual gifts of **serving** and **helps**. Helps is a diving power to assist people with special needs.

Tabitha became sick and died so they prepared her body for burial.

Acts 9:37

About this time she became ill and died. Her body was washed for burial and laid in an upstairs room.

When believers in Joppa heard that Peter was nearby in Lydda, they sent two men with a message for him to come quickly to Tabitha's house.

Acts 9:38

But the believers had heard that Peter was nearby at Lydda, so they sent two men to beg him, "Please come as soon as possible!"

Why do you think they sent for Peter? They had heard that God had given him the spiritual gift of healing.

Peter returned to Joppa with the two men and went upstairs to the room where Tabitha's body was placed.

Acts 9:39

So Peter returned with them; and as soon as he arrived, they took him to the upstairs room. The room was filled with widows who were weeping and showing him the coats and other clothes Dorcas had made for them.

Tabitha was always doing good and helping the poor. One of the ways she helped poor widows was by making them clothes.

When Peter was in the room the widows were crying and showing him the clothes that Tabitha had made while she was alive. As her body lay lifeless, her good deeds were being remembered.

Peter sent everyone out of the room (have widows return to their seats).

Acts 9:40-41

But Peter asked them all to leave the room; then he knelt and prayed. Turning to the body he said, "Get up, Tabitha." And she opened her eyes! When she saw Peter, she sat up! (41) He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then he called in the widows and all the believers, and he presented her to them alive.

Once again God used Peter as His instrument to perform a powerful miracle. Peter could not raise a person from the dead in his own strength. He could only raise Tabitha because the Holy Spirit lived inside of him.

Acts 9:42

The news spread through the whole town, and many believed in the Lord.

As we saw with Aeneas' healing, when people in Joppa heard that Tabitha was raised from the dead many believed in Jesus.

Acts 9:43

And Peter stayed a long time in Joppa, living with Simon, a tanner of hides.

Peter and Tabitha both used the spiritual gifts that God had given them to serve others. And, when people saw the power of God, their faith grew.

The moment you believe, the Holy Spirit comes inside of your heart and gives you spiritual gifts. When you use the gifts and talents God has given you others will be inspired to know Jesus.

[Teacher, spend a few minutes talking about the spiritual gifts that God has given to each of the students in your class. Explain how they can use their gift to help strengthen other people's faith.

A spiritual gift is an extraordinary power given by the Holy Spirit to all Christians. It's a supernatural grace which helps believers fulfill their calling as Christians and further the Kingdom of Heaven. God gives each of us spiritual gifts so that we can use them to make an eternal impact for his Kingdom.]

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, help me to know what my gifts are and then give me opportunity to use them for Your Name's sake and for Your glory. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

GAME CENTER

Use the following questions in a game or discussion:

1. Who was Peter visiting in Lydda? (Believers)
2. Why was Aeneas bedridden? (Paralyzed)

3. How long was Aeneas bedridden? (Eight years)
4. Who healed Aeneas? (Jesus Christ)
5. When the people living in Lydda saw Aeneas walking what did they do? (Turned to the Lord)
6. Why did Peter go to Joppa? (2 men came and asked him to come quickly)
7. How did Tabitha live her life? (Always doing good and helping the poor)
8. What did the crying widows show Peter? (The clothes Tabitha had made for them)
9. How did the people respond to Tabitha being raised from the dead? (Many believed in Jesus)
10. What can you do this week to use the gifts God has given you?