

**Episode:** God and His Family No. 16

**Narrator:** Young Tabitha

**Primary Scriptures:** Acts 10:32-43

**Story Summary:** Peter raises Tabitha from the dead

**Location:** Israel

**Time:** 35 AD

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Acts 9:36

Tabitha lived in Joppa, a seaport on the Mediterranean Sea. For many centuries Joppa had been a key port, but several decades before this story takes place, Joppa had been supplanted by Caesarea, a new deepwater port located about thirty miles north of Joppa. Because of circumstances beyond their control, many of the people of Joppa were poor.

Tabitha was a Christian who was *always* doing good and helping the poor, especially the widows. When she got sick and died, the people of the town were distraught. When they learned Peter was in a nearby town, they sent two disciples to urge him to come at once. He did come and he raised her from the dead. According to Acts 9:42, this became known all over Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

Imagine how the story must have circulated in town. Peter raised Tabitha from the dead, which is pretty amazing. But why her, why Tabitha? She wasn't an important politician or a rich business leader, or even a religious leader. No, Tabitha helped poor people. So, helping poor people must be very important to God and to the Christians.

That line of reasoning would have been natural to the Jews of the town. The Old Testament is filled with admonitions to help the poor and disadvantaged. Since God has rescued all of his people from their helpless position, he wants them to help others who are helpless or disadvantaged. In Deuteronomy 15:4, the Lord told the Jews that there was no reason for there to be poor people among them.

Early in the ministry of Jesus, he read from the scroll of Isaiah. He chose to announce his ministry with the words, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18).

In the years following, Jesus fulfilled that prophecy both spiritually and literally. Jesus instructs his followers to do take care of the poor and disadvantaged, too. Much of Paul's ministry was involved with gathering resources to help the poor churches in Israel. Peter acknowledged that he didn't have much money, but he could help the poor and needy in other ways. James demanded that the rich Christians treat the poor Christians fairly. Most people probably have a hard time with deep theological concepts, but nothing can be more profound than simply helping the poor and disadvantaged.