Acts 9:32-43
Full of Good Works

I. Introduction

A. After sharing the amazing conversion of Saul, Luke returns to highlighting the work of the Spirit through Peter.

B. The remaining verses of this chapter tell us of two amazing healings.


32 Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all parts of the country, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda. 33 There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. 34 And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed." Then he arose immediately. 35 So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

A. 9:32a – Peter travels down to Lydda, which is about 25 miles Northwest of Jerusalem.

1. Wherever you go in Israel, you either go up or down when traveling to or from Jerusalem.

2. Peter visits the saints that had formed there in Lydda, and it is here that we read for the first time in the New Testament that Christians are referred to as Saints.


1. The Lord had given instruction to the disciples to go out into the world declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ.

2. Here we see Peter fulfilling that work.

3. You may not have the ability to travel to a different country and engage in missions, but are you obedient to go as far as you can right here at home? Don’t worry about where you can’t go; rather, step out and go where you can.
C. 9:35 Peter reveals who Christ is through the powerful witness of healing a man who had been unable to get out of bed for eight years.

1. Peter boldly announces that the miracle that is about to be performed is by Jesus the Messiah.

2. Jesus, who had died, is now risen, and He is the one performing this miracle.

   a) How else can you explain these amazing accounts?

D. It is noteworthy that when Jesus performed miracles, he would ask the person to do something impossible, such as a lame man walking or a sinner living righteously.

1. Peter does the same here.

2. A meeting with Jesus brings about the ability to do the impossible.

3. There are not just changes to some physical disability, but also the ability to stop living a destructive life of sin.

E. 9:35 The result of this amazing healing is that the town of Lydda turned to the Lord.

1. Sharon is not a city but a region.

2. We are not given many verses on this revival, but it is nonetheless amazing.

3. There are many great works that the Lord does that we have little information on or maybe no idea about at all.

4. Just know that our God is alive and well, working mightily throughout this land.

III. Acts 9:36 Tabitha: full of good works

36 At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did.

A. Joppa is about 10 miles to the west of Lydda on the coast.

B. Full of good works
1. Tabitha didn’t just dabble in service; she was full of good works.

1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

   a) Her life was not noted because she was willing to clear her schedule once a month to help out around church; she was noted because of her total commitment to serve the Body of Christ.

2. She made clothes for the poor.

C. Serve with what is in your hand.

   1. She used the needle and thread that were in her hand for the glory of God and to the benefit of the Body of Christ.

   2. Moses used the rod that was in his hand.

   3. The Lord asked Moses a very simple question before commissioning him into service. That is an appropriate question to all of us this morning.

Exodus 4:2 2 So the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A rod."

D. The Lord wants us to be zealous for good works.

Titus 2:14 ...who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

E. The Lord wants us to meet urgent needs

Titus 3:14 And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

F. The Lord created us for good works.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.


37 But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room.

A. It is difficult when people that are loved and useful to the Kingdom of God pass away while others whose lives are full of destruction continue on.
1. We will never find adequate answers to these emotional questions.

2. The answer to our tough questions is found in WHO, not WHY!

V. Acts 9:38-39 Peter is called to come and pray for Tabitha.

38 And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to them. 39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.

A. This story is very similar to the healing of Jairus’ daughter.

B. Peter is following the example of our Lord Jesus.

VI. Acts 9:40-42 Tabitha is raised from the dead.

40 But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. 41 Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. 42 And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord.

A. This is an even greater miracle than the previous healing in Lydda.

1. Yet for the Lord, one miracle is no more difficult than another.

2. The Lord Himself has asked us whether there is anything too hard for Him to do.

3. The difficulty of a task is measured by the one performing the task.

4. With God nothing is difficult.

B. Now, that being said, it does not take away from the amazing work that God did.

C. Does God heal and raise the dead today?

1. I have never seen it, but the answer is yes.
2. We had a team over in Nepal on a medical missions trip, and they witnessed a baby who had died be raised up to life.

VII. Acts 9:43 Simon lodges with a tanner.

So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with Simon, a tanner.

A. Under Jewish law, tanners were considered unclean because they worked with the hides of dead animals.

B. Yet the more significant point is what follows in Chapter 10 when Peter is told to embrace the Gentiles, who were considered unclean, into the church.

VIII. Conclusion

A. Are you full of good works, or your own personal pursuit?