

# THE FIRST 15

Tuesday, September 3, 2024

Today is Tuesday, September 3 and we are studying what the Bible says about doing good in the world.

## OPENING PRAYER

*As I approach these first fifteen minutes of the day devoted to the Lord, I pause and become still. I take slow, deep breaths and focus my entire being on the presence of God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I eliminate surrounding distractions, quiet the noise of my mind, and listen for the voice of the Spirit speaking to my soul. Blessed Lord, I worship and praise You in the quiet stillness of the morning. Help me hear the message You have for me today. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE

***In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. 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!" 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. 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." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Acts 9:36-41a***

## REFLECTION

Tabitha (also called Dorcas) was a disciple known for her good deeds. Tabitha has the rare and only occurrence in the Bible of a woman named as a disciple, a title normally reserved for men. She taught the faith, led believers and developed a ministry to the poor. She is poor herself. A widow without means. Tabitha gave her life to the work of helping others - vulnerable ones that had no one and nothing. She was a seamstress and made garments and coats for the poor to clothe them. Tabitha became ill and suddenly died. There was overwhelming grief in the small Christian community in Joppa. In their desperation, they called Peter to come.

Tabitha was known for always doing good and helping the poor, even though she had very little of her own. She prioritized her life in Jesus Christ above all else. The way she lived her life was a clear demonstration of the love, mercy and compassion that filled her heart. Tabitha's story causes me to ponder what I am known for? What is my reputation as a disciple of Jesus Christ? What does my life stand for? Do my actions reflect the love of Jesus I profess? If Jesus Christ is Lord of my life and if He is first in my heart, what has His Lordship changed about the way I live?

The disciple Tabitha is an inspiration to modern day disciples like me, as she dedicated her life to doing good and helping the poor. Even though her efforts may seem small, they were done with great love. She helped those in need and inspired those closest to her. I consider what percentage of my life is spent doing good and helping the poor. How could I increase that percentage? What are the obstacles or excuses that prevent me from doing more for others? Have I invited Jesus fully into my life and sought a heart of greater compassion? As the widows stood crying, they displayed the beautiful handmade garments Tabitha sewed as gifts for those in need. The women easily identified evidence of Tabitha's goodness. What can I point to in my life that is easily identifiable evidence of goodness and actively helping others? Tabitha was a seamstress and put her talent to use for good, what talents do I have that I could employ to bless others?

**Ask:** What do I want to be known for? If I suddenly died, like Tabitha, what would people point to as evidence of my love and service?

**Pause and Pray**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Holy and loving God, You are a God of mercy and compassion and You call me to reflect your love. Increase my desire to do good deeds and help others. Make me worthy of the title "disciple" so that I live my life as Your hands and feet in the world. I pray that the people around me will be able to clearly point to what I have done as evidence of Your love in me. Come into my heart and life. Transform me from the inside out. It is only through the power of Your sanctifying grace that I can even begin to have the inspiration to change my priorities and activities. Motivate me to use my gifts and talents generously for good in the world. Amen.*