

Tabitha Did What She Could

I just opened my mail and most of the letters today were from different organizations and ministries asking for help. There are so many needs in our world clamoring for our attention. Wanting to make a difference and not able to meet every need can be overwhelming.

Acts 9 tells us the story of Tabitha, a woman from Joppa who was raised from the dead by Peter. This resurrection miracle is obviously amazing and it is usually what we think of when we think of Tabitha, but recently as I read the few verses describing her I was inspired by something else about her life.

When Tabitha died her friends came to mourn her showing Peter the tunics and other clothing she had made for them. They had been moved by the love Tabitha showed them through her sewing. She reached out and touched lives by picking up her needle.

I bring up Tabitha not because I think we should all become seamstresses (that's a relief!) but because she, like Mary of Bethany, did what she could. Tabitha may not have been a world class teacher of the Bible like her contemporary Priscilla, but she did what she could. The members of the body of Christ in Joppa didn't just need to be taught the Scriptures, they also needed clothes to wear!

Acts 9:36 tells us she was a disciple who “abounded with deeds of kindness and charity, which she continually did.” She abounded, her life overflowed with kindness and generosity. The word translated charity in this verse can also mean “alms

giving”. In addition to her ministry of sewing Tabitha gave money to help those in need. She had a caring heart that was moved to action. Her actions became her lifestyle. She did what she could continually.

I have a friend who exemplifies “doing what you can” by writing notes of encouragement. She reaches out and touches lives by picking up her pen. I remember one time when I was particularly discouraged and wanted to stop everything and just crawl under a rock. I turned to the Lord and sought his condolence and compassion, later that day I received the encouragement I needed when my friend “just happened” to send me a note that arrived that very day. It was exactly the encouragement I needed. My friend probably didn’t understand the importance of her simple action. She simply did what she could.

You too may feel overwhelmed by all the pressing needs in our broken world. The next time this happens, ask the Lord to show you what you can do. Then follow His leading, in your own way take up your needle and sew. The Lord doesn’t ask you to meet every need out there, just to do what you can.

Have you ever been overwhelmed by the needs of our broken world? What did you do with that feeling?

How does the example of Tabitha encourage you?

Ask the Lord if there is someone you can encourage today and how to do that.

How can you make abounding with deeds of kindness your lifestyle?

Will the Lord say of you, “She did what she could.” ?