



# THE EXHORTER

---

***“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40***

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. ([prchurchofchrist.org](http://prchurchofchrist.org))

June 18, 2017

## Jump Start # 1865

---

***Acts 9:36 "Now in Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha (which translated in Greek is called Dorcas); this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity, which she continually did."***

Our verse today comes from the powerful story of Peter raising someone from the dead. The person he raised was Tabitha or Dorcas. She became ill and died. The disciples sent for Peter. He came. He knelt down, prayed and said, "Tabitha, arise." Her eyes opened and she sat up. Many believed as a result of this.

There are lessons here for us.

First, resurrections are rare in our Bible. We may get the idea that hundreds and hundreds were raised. We may think that resurrections happened just about every day. They didn't. There are less than a dozen specific people that were raised.

Second, the people that were raised were believers. Tabitha was. Lazarus was. The synagogue official believed. Jesus raised his daughter. At the death of Jesus, several righteous in Jerusalem were raised. We don't find the Lord or His apostles randomly emptying cemeteries of everyone who was buried. You'd think, raising some heathen out of the torments of Hades would be a powerful witness to a community, but that didn't happen.

Third, the people that were resurrected were raised by a man of God. It was the Lord, the apostles, the prophets that did the raising. These people were committed to the Word of God as it was delivered. Around these resurrections were opportunities for people to believe the Gospel message. Many became believers because of what they witnessed.

Fourth, when people were raised, the Bible never records anything that they saw or heard on the other side. We don't read about any of them writing a book about "Heaven," as seems the popular trend today. Many of these modern accounts take place in hospital operating tables, without a man of God, prayers or calling upon the Lord. Many of these who claimed to have been raised were not followers of God's word. There are many problems with these modern stories. They don't match the Biblical records.

Fifth, many times prior to the dead coming back to life, the man of God actually spoke to the person. This is especially true of the Lord. This shows that He has all authority. Even the dead could hear and obey Him. This authority was passed on to the apostles. Our verse shows Peter telling Tabitha to arise and she sat up. She heard him. She obeyed him.

Sixth, the people who were raised, all died again. Jesus was the first to be raised to never die again.

(OVER)

In our verse today, Tabitha is described as a disciple who abounded with deeds of kindness and charity, which she did often. She made tunics and garments for others. What she did touched the lives and the hearts of the other disciples. She made a difference. There is no indication that she taught others. There is no books of the Bible that are attributed to her. She was not an apostle. She didn't preach. She didn't heal anyone. She didn't do any miracles. But, she continually abounded with deeds of kindness and charity.

She was kind and she was generous. Her spirit touched the lives of others. She made a difference. Imagine if we all could walk in her shadow. Imagine a church full of people who abounded in kindness and charity. Imagine people going out of their way to welcome a new family. Imagine the food that would be taken to someone who was sick. Imagine the kind words of encouragement to a young preacher. Imagine the pats on the backs given to busy shepherds. Imagine the smiles and the hugs from someone who was kind.

It is easy to look at this and think, so she made some clothes for others. Big deal! It was a big deal. It wasn't just the clothes that she made, it was her generous heart and her kind ways that were behind all of this. Every marriage, every home and every congregation has it's own tone or atmosphere. The people set that tone. Some places are cold and tense. You can feel it. You see it in the way that people talk to each other. You see it in a couple who are always picking on each other. Little jabs here and there. One wonders if they are like this around others, what is it like when they are alone? You see this in the members of a congregation. The judgmental stares. The cold eyes. The indifference and ignoring of new people. It's not healthy nor good. But with a Tabitha around, kindness abounds. She would be one that turns the tone and the temperature of a congregation to a much more pleasant setting. She would be one that you would want to be around. Can you imagine what it would be like to go out to lunch with a Tabitha? Forget what you ate, you would leave with a heart bursting with goodness, encouragement and love. You'd think to yourself, "I want to be just like her."

We all can learn much from Tabitha. Too many congregations are operated like a business. So formal and lack of feeling that you'd think you were in a rental car office rather than a church building. Kindness begins in the heart. It comes from one who has walked with the Lord. Jesus abounded in doing good deeds. He was the master of kindness. Far too many want to run to Jesus calling the Pharisees "hypocrites," forgetting the context, the time spent and the purpose of Him saying that. The Lord was kind to Zacchaeus. The Lord was kind to the children who were brought to Him. The Lord was kind to the embarrassed woman who touched Him from behind. He was kind to the bent over woman when the synagogue official blasted her.

Spend time with Jesus. It will smooth your rough edges. Kindness changes how we speak to one another. Calm down. Cool down. Put the daggers away. Be kind, even when correcting. Multiple times the N.T. tells us to be gentle, even when correcting. Kind. Gentle. Thoughtful. Encouraging. Helpful. Building up. Wanting the best from others. Don't drive people away. Not being mean, ugly or rude. Kind in our preaching. That doesn't mean being soft, but it does mean not to destroy someone. Kind in our announcements. Kind in our prayers. Kind in our talking to one another.

We do well to take two spoonfuls of kindness every morning before we left the house. Some might need three. The kind person thinks before he talks. He finds ways to build bridges and not burn them. He looks to himself as much as he does others.

The disciples sent for Peter, not just because of their own died, but a kind one had passed. Had she been an old grump, one wonders if Peter would have been called. They might have thought, let the Lord have her and give us some peace. But she wasn't that way. She was kind and they were better because of that.

It's hard to read this and not think, what if it had been you or me that had passed away in Joppa. Would the brethren had sent for Peter, or would they have hardly missed us? Are we making a difference? Do others see us as kind? Does the Lord see us as kind?

Things to think about, especially today.

Roger Shouse