

Preacher: *Evan Merewether*

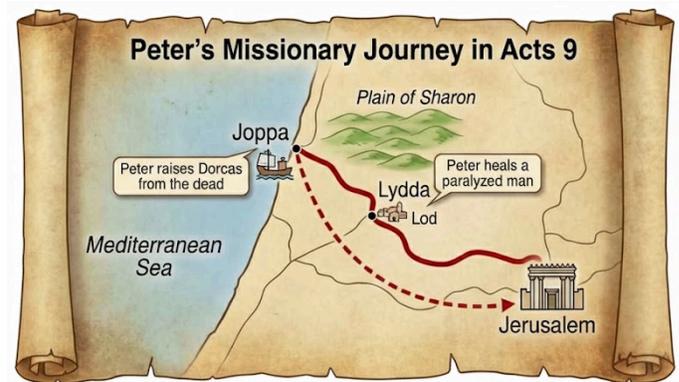
Date: *Sunday, 3/8/26*

Title: Healing the Sick

Text: Acts 9:32-43

At the end of the ninth chapter of Acts, Peter departs from the stone-paved certainty of Jerusalem, embarking on a pilgrimage that stretches toward the very fringes of the Jewish world. Leaving the limestone highlands behind, he descends over twenty-five miles, winding through the rolling vineyards of the foothills until he reaches the flat, fertile expanse of the Plain of Sharon. His first destination is Lydda, a vibrant commercial city sitting

at the crossroads of ancient trade routes. While there He discovers a waiting community of believers. Yet, he is called further west—a short, twelve-mile traverse through wildflowers and tall grass to the coastal city of Joppa. There, amidst the steep, mazelike streets and the salt-heavy air of the Mediterranean harbor, Peter sheds the mantle of a Jerusalem administrator to become a shepherd on the move. Peter was guided precisely to both cities where he could be used to perform the miracles that point people to the Lord.



Introduction

On this missionary odyssey, we encounter two different situations, both radically interrupted by the sovereign power of God.

First, we stand at the bedside of Aeneas, a man paralyzed and confined to his mat for eight long years—trapped in the stagnant air of a hopeless circumstance. Then, we are ushered into the mourning chamber of Tabitha, a beloved disciple whose life overflowed with service, but whose sudden death has plunged an entire community into the shadow of crisis.

In both narratives, we witness Peter stepping into the breach—not with his own strength, but wielding the authority of Jesus Christ to usher in restoration. Yet, what captures our hearts most is the expanding ripple effect of these divine moments. The healing of Aeneas did not merely liberate him from his bed; it turned the gaze of two entire regions towards God. The resurrection of Tabitha did not merely return breath to her lungs; it breathed fresh hope into the widows and believers who rested in the shade of her kindness.

These accounts whisper a profound truth: faith is never a solitary endeavor—it ripples outward to touch every shore around us. Whether through a sudden, thunderous miracle or the quiet, steady rhythm of doing good, God employs our lives to reshape our communities. Before we descend deeper into the text, let us bring this home. God often manifests most clearly in the epicenter of our crises. What is one "interruption" you have faced that surprisingly opened a door to growth or blessing?

Pray

Heavenly Father, just as You pierced the darkness in the lives of Aeneas and Tabitha with the light of Your power, we ask You to move in this gathering today. Grant me the humble authority to speak Your truth with clarity. May Your Spirit mold us, turning our own interruptions into gateways for growth that ripple outward to bless our community. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Preacher: *Evan Merewether*

Date: *Sunday, 3/8/26*

Faith in Action: The Healing of Aeneas

The chronicle of Peter's journey and the restoration of Aeneas stands as a shining model for the early church and a timeless blueprint for ministry. It illuminates the sacred intersection where divine power meets human compassion to birth community transformation.

Teach

Let's start this journey today by reading about the first leg of Peter's missionary journey in [Acts 9:32–35](#) *Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed. And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed." And immediately he rose. And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.*

1. We Must Go Where the Need Is

Church, we cannot remain content within the sanctuary of these four walls. The Scriptures recount that "Peter went here and there among them all" ([Acts 9:32](#)). He did not languish in the comfort of Jerusalem; he journeyed to Lydda to strengthen the believers. Like Peter, we are summoned to be proactive pilgrims. True ministry is not passively waiting for the world to come to us; it is stepping out into our surroundings with courage and relying on the Spirit to orchestrate our steps.

2. We Need Each Other

Cast your eyes around this room. You are beholding "the saints" ([Acts 9:32](#))—your spiritual kin. Scripture employs this term to remind us that the road of faith was never meant to be walked in solitude. We are called to inhabit a deep, intentional fellowship, bearing the weight of one another's burdens. When we show up for each other in the gritty details of life, we are not merely being polite; we are mirroring the very compassion of God to a fractured world.

3. Faith Requires Our Feet, Not Just Our Feelings

It was insufficient for Aeneas to merely harbor a hope of healing; he was commanded to "rise and make [his] bed" ([Acts 9:34](#)). Friends, faith is not a dormant emotion; it is a kinetic participation! The text declares that "immediately he rose" ([Acts 9:34](#)). When the voice of God calls you to move, you cannot remain prone on your mat. True trust manifests as obedience—doing the very thing God has called you to do, in this moment, without the delay of hesitation.

4. It Is Not About Us; It Is All About Jesus

Let there be no ambiguity: Peter claimed no glory. He looked the man in the eye and declared, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you" ([Acts 9:34](#)). The power to rewrite destiny, to shatter addiction, to mend marriages, and to rescue souls does not spring from our intellect or vitality. It flows solely from the name of Jesus. Our role is simply to be the finger pointing to the Source.

5. Small Acts Can Cause Big Waves

You may perceive your ministry as little or unseen. Perhaps you feel set aside to an "overlooked" corner. But behold the result: "All the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord" ([Acts 9:35](#)).

Preacher: *Evan Merewether*

Date: *Sunday, 3/8/26*

God utilized a singular act of faithfulness in a modest town to pivot two entire regions toward Himself. Never underestimate the magnitude of what God can accomplish with your simple "yes." Your faithfulness in the quiet places can ignite a fire that transforms our entire city.

Illustrate

Imagine you are standing at the edge of a vast, glassy lake in the hush of an early morning. You stoop to retrieve a single, rough stone at your feet.

1. We Must Go Where the Need Is (The Trajectory)

The stone in your palm is dormant; it is safe, yet without purpose. For the stone to make an impact, it must leave the security of your hand (Jerusalem) and arc through the air to a specific, destined coordinate in the center of the lake (Lydda). Just as Peter had to traverse the miles to find Aeneas, the stone must "go" to where the water awaits.

2. We Need Each Other (The Body of Water)

The stone does not strike concrete or arid earth; it meets a body of water. The water represents "the saints." A solitary water molecule cannot generate a wave; it requires millions, bound together by surface tension (fellowship), to transmit the energy. The stone requires the water (the community) to receive it, just as Peter needed the saints in Lydda.

3. Faith Requires Our Feet (The Impact)

When the stone strikes, the water must move. It cannot remain static. This is the instant of obedience. The water is displaced—it "rises up" in a splash, clearing the way for the miracle. Aeneas could not remain on his mat; like the water at the point of impact, he had to react immediately to the event. Faith is that splash—the immediate, physical recoil to the call of God.

4. It Is Not About Us; It Is All About Jesus (The Velocity)

Examine the stone closely. It possesses no engine, no muscle. It is dead weight. If you merely released it, it would sink into the depths. The only reason it soars and creates an impact is the force of the Hand that cast it. Peter (the stone) held no power to heal Aeneas; the kinetic energy was derived entirely from Jesus (the Thrower). The stone is merely the vessel for the Thrower's might.

5. Small Acts Can Cause Big Waves (The Ripple Effect)

The stone is small—perhaps a mere two inches across. The splash it generates is fleeting. But long after the stone has settled on the lakebed, the ripples continue to expand. That single point of impact births concentric circles that travel outward, eventually lapping against the distant shores of Lydda and the valley of Sharon. A distinct, singular act of faithfulness in one specific spot has transformed the entire geography of the lake.

Apply

So how do we use the story of this miraculous event on our journey? Here are a few suggestions:

1. Am I Willing to Leave My Comfort Zone?

Preacher: *Evan Merewether*

Date: *Sunday, 3/8/26*

Just as the stone is safe but impotent in the hand, am I clutching the safety of my own comfort? Am I willing to be "thrown" into the messiness of ministry to reach the hurting, or am I waiting for them to find me?

2. Am I Connected to the "Body" of Believers?

A single water molecule cannot transmit a wave; it relies on the surface tension of the whole body. Am I living in deep communion with the "saints," or am I drifting in isolation? Do I lean on my spiritual family to help carry the energy of God's work, or am I attempting to shoulder it alone?

3. Does My Faith Create a "Splash"?

Faith is the water's immediate displacement at the moment of impact. When God speaks, do I respond with the immediacy of Aeneas rising, or does my faith remain passive? Is there a tangible "splash" of obedience in my life today?

4. Who Is Powering My Ministry?

The stone has no engine and is dead weight without the Thrower. Am I striving to serve in my own strength, or do I recognize that any impact I make is solely due to the force of Jesus' hand? Am I diligent to direct the gaze of others back to the true Source of power?

Faith in Action: The Healing of Tabitha

Back to the text we are studying today, we hear that Peter was next summoned to continue on his journey and go to Joppa. Acts 9:36–43 offers more than a miraculous historical record; it provides a timeless blueprint for the church today. Situated in the coastal city of Joppa, this narrative reveals how an individual life dedicated to tangible service can invite the transformative power of God into the heart of a community. It bridges the gap between personal devotion and corporate faith, showing us that our private acts of charity have public spiritual consequences.

Teach

I am excited to share with you the next section of scripture. With that, let's jump right into the text.

Acts 9:36–42 In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which is translated as Dorcas), who was always occupied with works of kindness and charity. At that time, however, she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upper room. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to urge him, "Come to us without delay."

So Peter got up and went with them. On his arrival, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood around him, weeping and showing him the tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

Then Peter sent them all out of the room. He knelt down and prayed, and turning toward her body, he said, "Tabitha, get up!" She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. Peter took her by the hand and helped her up. Then he called the saints and widows and presented her to them alive.

This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord.

1. A Life of Service and Good Works

Preacher: *Evan Merewether*

Date: *Sunday, 3/8/26*

First, we see in Tabitha a vibrant portrayal of faith expressed through action. The Scriptures tell us she "was full of good works and acts of charity" ([Acts 9:36](#)). Notice that her faith was not abstract; it was tactile. When the widows stood beside Peter, they did not recite her theology; they displayed "tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them" ([Acts 9:39](#)). We must remember that we are called to be active in good works—not to purchase our salvation, but as a direct reflection of our love for Christ. Like Tabitha, you possess unique talents gifted by God. Use them. A life of service weaves a legacy that outlasts the weaver.

2. Diversity and Community in the Church

Secondly, this passage unveils the beautiful, supportive network of the early church. When Tabitha died, the disciples did not retreat into isolated grief; they dispatched two men to Peter, pleading, "Please come to us without delay" ([Acts 9:38](#)). This is the strength of community—uniting in times of crisis to seek divine intervention.

3. Divine Power and the Continuation of Ministry

Thirdly, we witness that the power of the Gospel is both transformative and continuous. When Peter arrived, he did not lean on his own prowess. [Acts 9:40](#) says, "But Peter put them all outside, and knelt down and prayed." His first recourse was prayer, reminding us that seeking the face of God is the necessary foundation for all ministry. And then, the impossible unfolded. He spoke, "Tabitha, arise," and "he presented her alive" ([Acts 9:41](#)). This miracle stands as a potent reminder of our hope in eternal life and God's ultimate sovereignty over death. It proves that the mission of Jesus marches on through His church, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

4. The Impact of Witness and Testimony

Finally, we must recognize that miracles serve a purpose: to authenticate the message of Christ. The resurrection of Tabitha was not concealed in a corner. [Acts 9:42](#) tells us, "And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord." Her restoration served as a public testimony that ignited faith across the city. When God moves in our lives, it acts as a catalyst for others to believe. Our testimony—whether through quiet acts of charity or the witnessing of God's power—is meant to point the world back to the life-giving power of Jesus.

Illustrate

Return with me to that upper room in Joppa.

First, look at the Thread of Service. Imagine holding one of the tunics the widows displayed. It wasn't woven with golden thread or royal purple; it was likely rough wool, smelling of labor and love. Tabitha's theology wasn't written on scrolls; it was stitched into seams. Her service wasn't a theory; it was a garment that kept someone warm against the cold.

Second, look at the Circle of Community. Who is holding these coats? It is the widows—the marginalized, the forgotten. In that room, we see a community that crossed social barriers. Tabitha didn't just make clothes; she wove a diverse family together. The grief in that room wasn't solitary; it was shared, proving that her life had dissolved the walls of isolation that usually surround the vulnerable.

Third, watch the Posture of Power. Peter enters the chaos of grief, but he does not pick up a needle to fix the problem; he bends his knee. The coats proved she was kind, but kindness cannot conquer death. For that,

Preacher: *Evan Merewether*

Date: *Sunday, 3/8/26*

Peter needed a power that did not come from human hands. In the silence of that room, the "good works" of a saint met the resurrection power of the Spirit. The needle stopped, and the prayer began.

Finally, witness the Ripple of Testimony. When Tabitha opened her eyes and Peter presented her alive, the story didn't stay in the upper room. The doors flew open. The woman who had quietly sewn in the corner became the loudest sermon in the city. The coat she made was no longer just clothing; it became a flag of resurrection flying over Joppa. The text says "many believed in the Lord"—not because of the coat, but because the God who inspired the service had now displayed His glory.

Apply

Let us consider again how we are to use this miraculous event in Joppa to impact our journey. Here are a few suggestions for that too:

Am I weaving a tapestry of grace through tangible service?

Just as Tabitha's legacy was felt in the coats and garments she made, am I using my unique tools—whether a needle, a pen, or a listening ear—to stitch love into the lives of the vulnerable? Do my daily actions leave a physical warmth that others can hold onto?

Do I cultivate a community that bridges divides?

Tabitha's room was filled with weeping widows, showing a ministry that reached the marginalized. Am I building relationships that cross social barriers, ensuring that when crisis strikes, I am surrounded by a diverse body of believers rather than facing the shadows of grief in isolation?

Is my posture one of prayer in the face of the impossible?

When Peter faced death, he knelt and prayed. In my own ministry, when I encounter dead ends or hopeless situations, do I rely on my own strength, or do I kneel in dependence on the Spirit, trusting that the same power that raised Tabitha can breathe life into my circumstances?

Does my life serve as a beacon that points to the Lord?

The miracle in the upper room sparked faith throughout the entire city. Is my life a living testimony that ripples outward? When people witness my restoration and my walk with God, are they compelled to turn to the Lord because they see His undeniable power at work in me?

What about Acts 9:43? Thanks for asking because that is a great question. In Acts 9:43 we read *And Peter stayed for several days in Joppa with a tanner named Simon.* Why do you think it was important for God to include this statement in the bible? Is there some significance to the fact that he was staying with a tanner?

Staying with a tanner in biblical times was significant because it demonstrated a shift away from strict ritual impurity laws. Tanning was considered unclean for several reasons. First, according to Jewish tradition, tanners dealt with dead carcasses which made them ceremonially unclean. Second, the process of tanning generates foul, lingering odors that nobody likes. Because of the pervasive foul odor, tanners typically live outside the city limits and away from everyone else. When Peter stays with Simon, God uses this time to break down the strict laws that Peter had followed all his life. This becomes the first step down a road I don't think Peter wanted to go down. But that is a story for next week.

Preacher: *Evan Merewether*

Date: *Sunday, 3/8/26*

Apply

[Who are the 'tanners' in your life?](#) Who are the people or places you avoid because they feel 'unclean,' uncomfortable, or socially beneath you? How can God use our tanners to break down our prejudices to ensure the Gospel reaches everyone?

Conclusion

Today, we traveled with Peter from Jerusalem to the bedside of a paralyzed man in Lydda and ended up in an upper room of grief in Joppa. In both the book of Acts and in our own lives, we see that God often performs His greatest work in the middle of our interruptions. We learned from Aeneas that faith requires our feet—we cannot stay lying on the mats of our past when Jesus calls us to rise. We saw that our obedience, like a stone hitting the water, creates a splash that ripples out to change the entire community.

We also learned from Tabitha that a life of service leaves a legacy that outlasts death. Her story reminds us that our faith is not just a theory to be studied but a garment to be stitched—woven into the lives of the vulnerable through acts of kindness. Whether through a sudden miracle or years of quiet service, the common thread is that it is all about Jesus. Peter never took the credit; he pointed to the Source. When we step out in faith and rely on the power of the Holy Spirit, our simple "yes" becomes the catalyst for others to turn to the Lord.

Invitation

As we close, I want to ask you: Where is God calling you to "rise" today? Maybe, like Aeneas, you have been paralyzed by fear, doubt, or comfort, and Jesus is calling you to get up and make your bed. Or maybe, like Tabitha, God is calling you to pick up your "needle"—to use your unique gifts to stitch love into a broken world.

Do not let this moment pass as just another Sunday. The same power that healed Aeneas and raised Tabitha is available to you right now. If you need healing, if you need purpose, or if you are ready to be that stone thrown into the water for God's glory, I invite you to respond. Let's make this the moment where the ripple effect begins in your life.