

May 8, 2022

Texts: Proverbs 2: 1-11; Acts 9:36-43

Title: "A Caring Woman"

Happy Mother's Day to all our mothers and grandmothers and mother-figures, and, those who have a mother. Parents, both mom and dads have what may be the most challenging job in the world. Where would we be without their love and sacrifice and perseverance. Of course, it's never easy to be a Mom.

In a TikTok video, a woman named Nicole DeRoy explains one of the challenges of motherhood. She says, "My kids wanted to know what it was like being a mom, so I woke them up at 2:00 a.m. to let them know my sock came off." Another mom on Twitter wrote, "Parenting is 70% me yelling, 20% asking the kids why they're yelling, & 10% trying to find where I left my coffee."

I don't think you can overestimate the influence of a parent on a child's sense of compassion . . . **and compassion is what being a follower of Jesus is all about.** Compassion is concern for the suffering of others and it's at the heart of our lesson for today from the book of Acts.

I read about a woman who told of falling flat on her face in December in the middle of an icy parking lot. As she was lying there trying to clear her head, another woman drove up and called out the window, "Are you hurt?" "No, I'm fine," the first woman answered. "Oh, good," the second woman continued. "Will you be leaving your parking space soon?" That person's compassion was as short-lived as a hummingbird's hiccup.

It seems that our world is less compassionate these days. But I don't believe

people's lack of compassion for each other that we see on the news is the final word for all of our society. I see compassion at work every day. But we do need more of it? Don't we.

Our reading for the day from Acts 9 is the story of a remarkable disciple of Jesus by the name of Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas) who, the reading states, "...was always doing good and helping the poor."

Someone once wrote that a truly great life can be summed up in just a few words like, "she was always doing good and helping the poor." Sadly, however, Tabitha became sick and died, evidently before her time. The other disciples in Joppa were so upset about her death that they sent for Simon Peter to come to them from a nearby town. As you remember, Peter was the leader now of the twelve apostles following Christ's death and resurrection.

When he got to Tabitha's house, he was taken upstairs to the room where they had lain her body. Among the mourners in that upper room was a group of widows. Widows and orphans were the neediest members of society in that day. These women were distraught. They were crying as they showed Peter the many items of clothing that Tabitha had made while she was still with them. Evidently, Tabitha cared deeply for the widows' needs. She saw a practical need and she filled it. And they weren't just showing Peter the clothes Tabitha made; they were showing Peter the love that Tabitha had for them. Tabitha was truly a caring woman. So, having listened to the women, Peter went to her bedside and knelt and prayed and he simply told her to get up. And Tabitha opened her eyes and sat

up. Whoa, surprise!

I'll bet that many of you had forgotten that Peter, by the power of God, raised Tabitha from the dead. What a remarkable story this is, and what a remarkable woman Tabitha must have been!

But what I hope all of us will see today is that living like Tabitha lived, with love and compassion for others, is the way Christ lived—is the only truly fulfilling way to live.

So the mission of Christ that we are about is to essentially translate compassion into action. Jesus' ministry didn't consist of simply telling hurting people, "I'll pray for you." Now that's a good thing but the further question is how we are following through with that statement from our prayers to actual in person ministry.

Jesus didn't stay somewhere and wait for people to come to him; he went to them. He went to the marketplaces and into people's homes. He preached to crowds in the countryside. He went where the needs were, and he took action to heal the hurts right in front of him.

Tabitha seemed to do that. She translated her compassion into action. **And because of the kind of life she lived, she will live forever.** Now don't misunderstand. I'm not saying that because Peter raised her from the dead, she will live forever. Tabitha would eventually die. But think of it, here we are in the year 2022 talking about a woman who lived two thousand years ago. Why? Because of the caring life that she lived. What a legacy she left us. As long as

people tell the Gospel story, Tabitha will not be forgotten. Such is the power of a positive influence. It never dies!

Does that describe your life right now? (funerals & the legacy of love that we talk about – often our mothers are among them) How will people describe you and I after we're gone? Well, I know this much, we were made to carry on the compassion of Jesus in this world, translating it compassion into action. And in doing so, we will have a great impact that is so badly needed today. Amen.