



Near and Now

When My Calling is Behind the Scenes – Dorcas (Tabitha)

By Vicar Paige McGrath

Warm-up Question

Describe a time when someone gave a helping hand when you were in need.

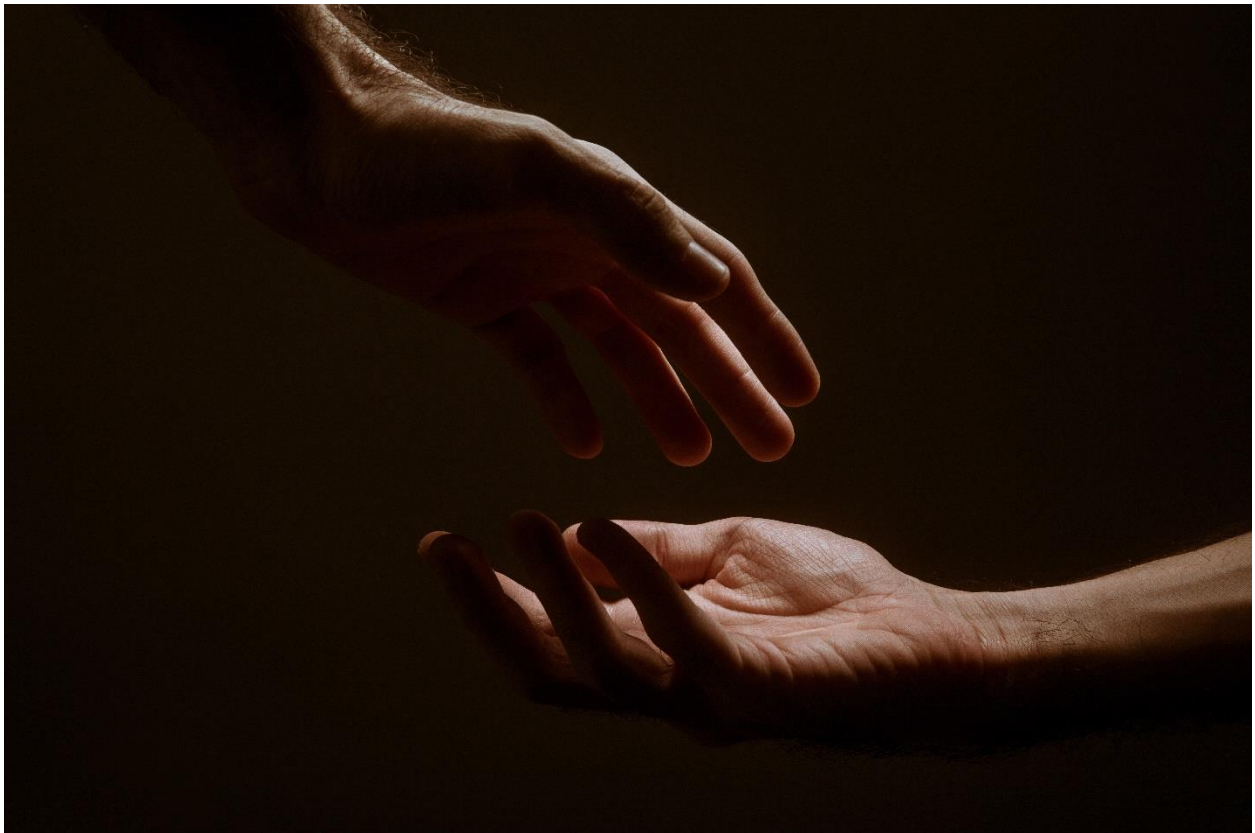


Photo by Jackson David on [Unsplash](#)

Discussion Questions

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

She Was Devoted to Good Works and Acts of Charity

Read [Acts 9:36-43](#)

Bible Story Reflection

Dorcas (Tabitha) is described as a disciple, devoted to her faith, which is demonstrated through her “good works and acts of charity.” The author of Acts even mentions that Dorcas makes clothing, perhaps with or for the widows with which she had been staying. Regardless of the recipients of her handmade clothes and other charity, it is clear that Dorcas was a faithful disciple whose call was behind the scenes.

Christians today are still called to give generously to those in need, to clothe the naked, and to do good works. Examples of this in modern churches are seen in quilting groups, church endowments, and volunteer groups that serve the community’s needs. If your call is behind the scenes, you may resonate well with these parts of Dorcas’ story.

However, this is not the only way Dorcas demonstrates her supporting role in ministry. When Dorcas becomes ill and dies, after the widows have gathered and are mourning, Peter is called. Peter comes to her bedside, and, in private prayer, he raises Dorcas from death to life again. Often, when we hear stories of resurrection in the Bible, we focus so heavily on the one who has performed the miracle, in this case, Peter. When a healing takes place, we tend to focus on the one who did the healing and conclude that we are called to be healers, too. Maybe you are, or maybe you are called to *be* healed. That is no less significant. Peter could not perform the miracle of raising someone from the dead without Dorcas’ need to be raised or her great faith that life does indeed come after death. Sometimes being called behind the scenes is about good works and acts of charity, and sometimes it’s about being healed, experiencing resurrection, and living a full and whole life.

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways does Dorcas’ faith resonate with your own?
2. How have the ministries in your church or community carried on Dorcas’ ministry of making clothes, charity, and good works?
3. What does being a devoted disciple mean to you?
4. How do you think Dorcas would describe her own call to ministry? To discipleship?
5. In what ways do you feel called to be healed? What areas of your life are in need of healing?
6. Define healing. What does healing look like? Feel like?
7. Dorcas’ community sent for Peter when she fell ill and died. Who are the people you call upon when illness, tragedy, or other difficult times arise?
8. Dorcas’ faith affected the lives of many for the better. In what ways have others’ faith inspired your own? How have you seen the ripple effects of *your* faith in action?

Activity Suggestions

Brainstorm ways you, your church, or community could increase their charitable giving or “good works” (aka faith in action). Choose at least one idea to carry out.

Take turns laying hands on one person in the group and praying for their healing. You may make specific requests of healing or accept general prayers for healing and wholeness of life. Consider including more universal prayers for healing to include healing of local communities, friend groups, nations, creation, etc.

Collect an offering among those gathered and decide on a local organization to give the collection. Alternatively, individually come up with a giving plan to support a non-profit in your community.

Prayer Concerns

Those who are mourning, those who have been widowed, and those in need of healing or increased faith.

Closing Prayer

Living in the hope of the resurrection and trusting that death does not win, help me, O God, to make Christ known in word and deed, each day of my life. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

