

Youth Teaching Resources

May 12, 2019



Easter Season (April 21-June 2)

Resurrection Realities

Acts 9:1-20 (RCL 1-6, 7-20) – “Blind Devotion”

Acts 9:36-43 – “Shocking Faith”

Acts 11:1-18 – “Stunned Silence”

Acts 16:9-15 – “Eager Acceptance”

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Find links and videos related to this lesson.

Shocking Faith

Acts 9:36-43

YOUTH Teaching Guide

by Jeremy Colliver

This youth teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Baptists Today*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Baptists Today* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Baptists Today* so they can prepare before the lesson.

PARENT PREP

We are to offer life to people. Most of the time this means offering them the living Jesus through our thoughts, actions, and words. This seems the hardest to do with our own students at times. Maybe we are too close and know too much about them, but it can be hard and we still have to offer life. When parenting your students, how do you offer them life? How do you help them discover their purpose? How do you reveal to them new opportunities of life? Sometimes the answer is not to provide an answer but a question for them to answer on their own.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Fellowship

Before the session begins gather several stories that would fit under the category “weird but true.” Begin your session by challenging your students to guess whether the stories that you are about to read are true or false. After you have finished reading through all of the stories, facilitate a discussion by using questions like the following:

- 1) What other stories have you heard that would be “weird but true”?
- 2) Which of these stories was the most unbelievable to you? Explain.
- 3) Which of these stories was the most believable to you? Explain.
- 4) What biblical stories sound unbelievable to you?
- 5) Does the story have to be true to have meaning?

Information

Transition to the next section of the session by reading Acts 9:36-43. Allow the students to ask any initial questions they have about the text. As you answer their questions, you may want to provide some of the information found in Tony's commentary to answer their questions. When the students have had an opportunity to share their initial thoughts, continue the discussion by facilitating a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) What do we learn about Tabitha from the text?
- 2) Why did they call on Peter?
- 3) What other biblical story does this passage remind you of?
- 4) What was the result of Tabitha being raised from the dead?
- 5) Why do you think this story was remembered and told?

If your group would like to dig deeper in their discussion, share some of the insights that Tony provides in the "Digging Deeper" portion of his commentary. You may want to use some questions like the following to facilitate your discussion:

- 1) How did Peter become a go-to disciple for this group?
- 2) What role were the women playing in this passage?

You may also want your group to discuss "The Hardest Question" if they would like to continue their discussion on this passage. Tony poses the following question to consider as "The Hardest Question": Who is the main character in the story?

Transformation

Conclude your session by showing the clip "A Higher Purpose" from the movie *Lucy*. If you are unable to show the clip, summarize it to the best of your ability, and then facilitate a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) What had happened to Lucy?
- 2) Why was she questioning her purpose?
- 3) What does the doctor say what her purpose should be?
- 4) Have you ever questioned what your purpose is to be? Who has helped you discover your purpose?
- 5) How do you know if your purpose is what you are meant to do?

Close with a prayer thanking God for the new life, and new purpose, that we receive in Jesus.

Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartlege

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Peter takes the stage—Most of Acts 9 is devoted to the conversion of Saul, the beginning of his ministry, and his move to Antioch (9:1-30). With Saul’s conversion, persecution of the church appeared to decline: v. 31 says “Meanwhile the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and was built up. Living in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.”

Luke’s account shifts to Peter as the main character at 9:32, reporting that he visited the village of Lydda, where he prayed for Jesus to heal a paralyzed man named Aeneas, a miracle so impressive that “All the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord” (9:35).

This brings us to today’s text, in which Peter remains the main character.

Joppa—Ancient Joppa was an important port on the Mediterranean: recall that Jonah reportedly set sail from Joppa (Jonah 1:3). The town still has a small port to serve yachts and fishing boats; the concrete breakwater is built over ancient underwater foundations. Joppa’s location is just a few miles south of modern Tel Aviv. Known today as



Jaffa (Arabic) or Jafo (modern Hebrew, pronounced Ya-fō), the town has grown to become a large southern suburb of Tel-Aviv, so integrated with the city that the area is now called Tel Aviv-Jafo. The picture above is taken from modern Jaffa, looking north toward the high-rise buildings of Tel-Aviv.

Not for men only—Luke describes Tabitha as a “disciple,” using the feminine form (*mathētria*) of the term used for male disciples (*mathētēs*). This is the only time the female form is used in the New Testament, but not the only instance of women being portrayed as disciples of Jesus.

Luke typically gives more attention to women and the poor than other New Testament writers: Tabitha was both a woman and a widow.

Digging Deeper *continued*

An unusual miracle—The story of Peter raising Tabitha from the dead is unusual in at least two respects. First, there is no mention of Jesus, as in earlier miracles involving Peter, who typically made a point of calling on the name of Jesus when seeking healing for others (Acts 3:6, 9:34). Second, the emphasis on Tabitha's goodness is unusual. No other miracle story elaborates on the character or good deeds of the person in need of healing. This story is told as if to impress the reader with Tabitha's generosity, as if she were healed because she was worthy of it.

Setting the stage—The story of Tabitha's resurrection closes with a note that Peter remained in Joppa at the home of a man named Simon, a tanner. This strikes us as unusual, because the work of a tanner was smelly and not considered kosher. This sets the stage for the next chapter, in which Peter receives a vision regarding what foods are considered clean and unclean.

It is interesting to note that Jesus had referred to Peter as "son of Jonah" in Matt. 16:17. In the story of Jonah, he was instructed to set out from Joppa to go and preach to the Gentile residents of Nineveh. In chapter 10, Peter will set out from Joppa to preach to Gentiles in Caesarea.

The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartlege

The Hardest Question is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Who is the main character in this story?

When reading Acts 9:36-43, who strikes you as the main character? We might argue for Tabitha/Dorcas, who stands out as a pillar of the church in Joppa, a generous and charitable woman of the first order.

We might also consider Peter, who is brought from Lydda in hopes that he might bring healing to Tabitha's lifeless body and succeeds in doing so, with the result that many believe.

One might also contend that the main character in the story is the believing community, first introduced as the beneficiary of Tabitha's good and important works, then as united in mourning over her death. Members of the community then took the initiative of sending for Peter, and after Tabitha's resurrection, Peter called for the "saints and widows" to witness her renewed health. No doubt the community was then involved in spreading the word, so that many others came to faith.

Looking at the story this way reminds us that the church is called to be a community of healing for each other. Whether we are responding to the physical needs of poverty and illness, the emotional needs of loneliness and loss, or the spiritual needs of confusion and failure, we can bring hope and healing and renewed life to persons both inside and outside of the community of faith.

Miraculous healings are few and far between, but when our family of faith surrounds us with love, fewer miracles are needed.