

Lectures on the life of Peter

Part 10

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[00:00:00] Let us turn to the fifth chapter of the Acts, the Acts chapter 5, we read from verse 1. But a certain man named Ananias, with the father his wife, sold the possession, and kept that part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet.

But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep that part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias, hearing these words, fell down, and gave up the ghost, and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in, [00:01:06] and Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which are buried by husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost.

And the young men came in, and found her dead, and carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

We go back just briefly to touch on the closing verses of chapter 4.

We closed the last meeting referring to verses 32 and 33, and I'll just read that portion again.

[00:02:02] And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul. Neither said any of them that all of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and bought the prices of the things that were sold, and made them down at the apostles' feet. And distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, which is being interpreted the son of consolation, a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land sold it, and bought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

We just read the 32nd to 37th verses of Acts chapter 4.

[00:03:05] And we were noticing as we closed the last meeting that verse 32 gives us inward unity.

And verse 33 gives us outward testimony.

And these two things need to go together.

If we want to give a good outward testimony, beloved, we must have inward unity.

And I believe there's nothing that spoils the outward testimony of an assembly like the lack of inward unity. And if there's a lack of inward unity, we should be exercised as to why that is, and seek before the Lord the means of remedy in that.

It tells us here they were of one heart and of one soul.

And because of that, neither said any of them that all of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common. [00:04:02] You know, the communists, when they like to quote scripture to prove their point, they'll take up this verse that this doesn't mean that private ownership was done away with.

It just means that under those circumstances in which they found themselves with so many Jews from other countries there in Jerusalem needing to be cared for, the Lord so worked on the hearts of those who'd been converted and who had possessions that they very gladly sold what they had so that they could provide for their brethren who were in need. It was a lovely spirit of true fellowship among the saints of God. And we need a little more of that spirit, the spirit of seeking the good of one another and the practical communion one with another and seeking to work together. It's a great thing for the saints to work together. And you know, one of the difficulties that we have in our assembly so often is that we don't live near one another. [00:05:06] We live scattered.

That's one of our big problems in the Los Angeles area, and I think it's a lesser problem with you here, but still it becomes a problem. And so that often the only times we see one another is when we get to the meetings together. Well, we have found that up there that we need more meetings to get together in a social way, but not just only in a social way, but combining that with a time of spiritual fellowship. That's why we started these quarterly Saturday afternoon meetings. We feel it's an opportunity for the saints to get together and have fellowship together and enjoy the word of God together. Now here, that's what we find. And so there was great power given to the apostles. With great power they gave witness to the resurrection and great grace was upon them all. And then it tells us about Barnabas. [00:06:02] Barnabas had some land and he sold the land and he laid the money at the apostles' feet so that they could distribute it where there was need. Now, you know, wherever God works, Satan is working.

And Satan comes in with counterfeits.

And so we find very soon this lovely testimony that was being given, this blessed inward unity that led to this good outward testimony, Satan sought to spoil it.

And he does it by working on the hearts of this man and his wife.

When they saw that Barnabas laid the money at the apostles' feet and maybe others did the same

and they saw that these were well thought of because they did that, they thought, well, we're going to put on a good appearance before the apostles too. [00:07:04] We're going to sell some land and then we'll keep part of the money for ourselves. But we'll make them think that we're giving them all that we've got for it. And you say, well, what was wrong with that? Didn't they have a right to keep part of it to themselves? Yes, they did. That's what Peter said. He said down there in, where do we get that now?

In verse 4, he said to Ananias, Whilst it remained, was it not thine own? And as it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Where hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. What Peter says is, that was money that God had made up of land and money that God had allowed you to be responsible for. And it was for you to make use of it as the Lord laid on your heart. [00:08:04] Now, if you wanted to give some to relieve the needs of the saints and you needed some of it for your own needs, that was all right.

But where the deceit was in this, was that they made up that they'd given it all.

They pretended that they were giving all the money to the Lord when they're only giving part of it and keeping part for themselves. That's why Peter says that you've lied to the Holy Ghost.

What they were really doing was they were denying the presence of God by the Holy Spirit in the midst of the assembly.

And this really was the same sin as Achan committed.

It's a remarkable thing to me that we find in the beginning of Israel's history [00:09:03] when they get into the land and the beginning of the church history here, we see the same thing.

What did Achan do?

He stole, or he took rather, of the spoils of Jericho a goodly Babylonish garment and some silver and some gold.

And what was he going to do with that?

What would a man like Achan need to have that Babylonish garment for?

To make him appear more important than the rest of the people. You see, if Achan had put on that Babylonish garment, which was, I suppose, a kind of a priestly garment connected with a Babylonish idol, a crypt, people would have thought that he was much more important than he really was.

And that's exactly what we find here with Ananias and Sapphira. They wanted to be more important than they were.

Pride filled their hearts. [00:10:02] The same thing that led to Satan's fall. What they were really doing was glorifying themselves. Satan was going to glorify himself instead of glorify the Lord. Ananias and Sapphira were going to glorify themselves instead of glorify the Lord. And the condemnation of Babylon in the book of Revelation is she has glorified herself.

You know, the Lord said that when the Holy Spirit came, the Lord says in the instructions on the coming of the Holy Spirit in the 16th chapter of John, he said, He shall glorify me.

Now, the Holy Spirit always leads us to glorify Christ. He never leads us to glorify ourselves. Now, the Holy Spirit led Barnabas to glorify the Lord.

But Satan led Ananias and Sapphira to glorify themselves.

So we see in Ananias and Sapphira, Satan is seeking to introduce the principle [00:11:02] into the assembly that later on we see full-blown in professing Christendom and that is going to result finally in the destruction of Babylon the Great and it says the Lord is going to destroy her because she glorified herself.

Now, this comes home to our own hearts in this way. Do we allow pride to fill our hearts?

Do we try to appear more devoted than we are?

Or do we want a place greater than what the Lord has given us?

The word of God says, God resisteth the proud and he giveth great to the humble.

So this is a very important lesson right in the beginning of the church's history. And it says here, as a result of the rest no man doth join himself. The power of the Holy Spirit was present in the assembly and Peter was given discernment to see what these people were up to. [00:12:04] And both of those people fell down dead. We might raise the question, were Ananias and Sapphira truly converted? Maybe they were.

Perhaps they were truly saved and this was a sin unto death. Because there is a sin unto death. It's possible for a Christian to be ready for heaven, to be fit for heaven and not fit to live on earth. Fit for heaven because they're covered by the blood of Christ but not fit to live on earth because they're bringing dishonor on the Lord's name. But scripture doesn't exactly say whether they were converted or not. It could be they were.

It could be it was just a false profession. But it lets us see that they were there in the assembly of the saints.

If they weren't converted, well then they were spuriously there. And if they were really saved, which is possible, well then God, the Holy Spirit was making very plain that he wasn't going to allow in the assembly of his people [00:13:01] that which would bring dishonor on the Lord's name. Notice the result.

It says in verse 14, And believers were the more added to the Lord multitudes both of men and women. This is the first time we have women mentioned. We have 3,000 on the day of Pentecost. We have 5,000 further on.

And now we have multitudes, it says, both of men and women.

Possible there were women with the others too but they're not mentioned. But here it mentions

women being saved as well as men. And the Lord was working in a marvelous way.

Verse 15 says, They brought forth a stick into the streets and laid them on beds and couches that at least a shadow of Peter passing might overshadow some of them. It seems that the Lord was using Peter in a very special way.

Peter was heading up the Lord's testimony to these people and the Lord caused these miracles to take place [00:14:02] so that these Jewish people in Jerusalem would realize that what Peter was doing, he was doing it in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. You saw the other night, it's the name of Jesus of Nazareth, the very crucify that caused that lame man to be healed.

And so the Lord is letting the people see that it's through that name and in that name that these miracles are done. People are healed and souls are saved. Now the result, it says in verse 17, The high priest rose up and all that were with him, which is the sect of the Sadducees, and were filled with indignation and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors and brought them forth and said, Go stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. When they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning and thought that the high priest came and lay with him and called the council together [00:15:01] and all the sons of the children of Israel and sent to the prison to have them brought but when the officers came and found them not in the prison, they returned and told, saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety and the people standing without before the door but when we opened we found no man within. Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priest said these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would go. No wonder they doubted, God was working. You notice, I pointed this out before, you notice here that the chief opponents of the testimony of the apostles are the Sadducees. Now in the Lord's ministry, in the Lord's ministry from the baptism of John until right up until his death, his chief opponents were the Pharisees. You notice right through the gospel it mentions the Pharisees but the chief ones who opposed the Lord were the Pharisees because the Lord exposed their hypocrisy. [00:16:02] But here it's the Sadducees. Now why did the Sadducees come to the front so importantly after the Lord's resurrection? Well for one thing, the high priest was a Sadducee and the Sadducees denied the resurrection. They didn't believe there was a resurrection. It tells us that, it says, The Sadducees say there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit but the Pharisees confessed both. And that's why later on when Paul saw an opportunity to divide those who were opposed to him in Jerusalem, he says, I'm a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee.

And he lets them see that he believed in the resurrection of the dead and it was the resurrection of the dead, the Lord's resurrection that was called in question. So the Pharisees took Paul's side and the Sadducees were against him. Now here, the Sadducees are opposing Peter and the other apostles because they're preaching the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The great testimony of the apostles is the resurrection. [00:17:03] They explain that the Holy Spirit has come down because the Lord has been raised up and ascended to heaven. And every time they preach, something is said about the resurrection. And then the Sadducees denied any such thing as a resurrection. And you know that's what many are doing today. They deny the resurrection. You take Jehovah's Witnesses, they deny the resurrection. Or they'll say they don't deny it. Or they'll say, well, no, we believe that Jesus rose, but it was only a spiritual resurrection. Beloved, there's no such thing as a spiritual resurrection. If the Lord didn't rise bodily, he didn't rise at all.

And so for them, the Lord is dead.

They have a dead Christ.

There's no such thing as a spiritual resurrection. The resurrection in the Bible is the resurrection of the body.

Every person on this earth that dies is going to be raised again.

[00:18:01] The Lord Jesus rose in the same body in which he died. And every person who has died is going to be raised up again.

And you say, well, how can God raise up people who have been dead a thousand years? Well, that's just a foolish question. Because God is omnipotent and he is able to raise persons up.

The identity will be there. Even these bodies that we're in now, the doctors tell us that this body that I have now, it's not the same flesh as I had seven years ago. The body keeps on changing. But the identity's there, right through. And the identity will be there in the resurrection. We'll know one another in the resurrection. They knew the Lord. Their eyes were holding that they shouldn't know him at first, but then they knew him. So they found the pharisees were so disturbed because they preached the resurrection.

But the Lord brought them out of jail and said, now you go and, or the angel of the Lord says, you go to the temple and tell the people all the words of this life. And no wonder they wondered where through this thing would go. [00:19:04] And so they say there in the 28th verse, did we not straight, not me straightly command you that you should not teach in this name? And behold, you filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. You notice how they don't want to use the Lord's name. They said, this name, your doctrine, and this man's blood.

They don't say, didn't we tell you not to preach in the name of Jesus? And now you filled Jerusalem with your Christian doctrine and you intend to bring the blood of this Jesus of Nazareth upon us? They don't say that. They don't even want to take the Lord's name on their lips. You see?

They're opposed to it.

And what does Peter answer? Peter and the other apostles answered and said, we ought to obey God rather than men.

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus.

You see?

They ring the changes on the resurrection. [00:20:02] You Pharisees, you Sadducees don't believe in the resurrection. But we obey God rather than men.

And the God of our fathers, the God of the Jewish fathers raised up Jesus. His youth flew and hanged on a tree.

Their guilt in the crucifixion of the Lord. And they're cut to the heart, it says. And they were going to kill them. You see?

And when the word of God goes home, it either convicts people of sin or else it cuts them to the heart and makes them angry.

And we find that here. Those who heard Peter preach on the day of Pentecost, it says they were cut to their heart.

[00:21:02] And they said, what must we do? Whether dead or what must we do? They wanted to be saved.

These people are cut to the heart. The very word that is salvation for some, it makes others angry.

You know, they say that when Wesley used to send out his preachers, when they came back, he'd say, did anyone get saved?

Or did anyone get angry?

And if no one got saved and no one got angry, he'd say, well, now you'd better go back to your trade because you're not preaching the gospel right. He figured that if they really preached the gospel as they should, some people would either get saved or else they'd get angry. It would either bring them to Christ or else they'd manifest their opposition to it. Well, that's what we find here. We find that many were saved, but the leaders got angry.

And they were going to kill the apostles, but the Lord has one who stands up for them. Gamaliel says, well, now just a minute. [00:22:01] And Gamaliel was a very prominent man among the Jews in Jerusalem. Paul says later that he sat at his feet. He was a teacher. He was a rabbi. And he taught, and Paul will learn a great deal from him. He says, just a minute now, says Gamaliel. If this is of God and you oppose it, you'll be fighting against God. And if this is not of God, it'll die out.

So just leave these men alone. And they listened to what Gamaliel said. So the Lord overruled him.

But the work might continue on.

And it says that even though they commanded them, it says in verse 40, to him they agreed.

And when they called the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus and let them go.

And they departed from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple and in every house [00:23:01] they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

Peter was carrying out from the other apostles what they already said before. We ought to obey God rather than men. Now, you might wonder when it says that they beat them and yet they departed rejoicing.

If you got beaten, if you and I got beaten for the name of Christ, just because we were giving testimony to him, do you think we could go away from there rejoicing? I believe we could.

In fact, another brother and I had an experience of this very thing at once when we were down in Columbia. We got stoned by a mob led by a Catholic priest.

They stoned us.

And one stone hit me on the head and cut my head and the blood started running down and that brother who was with me got hit on the face. And anyhow, the Lord miraculously preserved us.

[00:24:02] I don't know where it might have ended, but the Lord sent a horrific downpour of rain and that caused the people to disperse and enabled our horses to be brought and we got away. But do you know, the Lord filled our hearts with a great joy. As we drove away from there, we just were filled with joy.

It was something that you have to go through to explain, you have to go through it, you need to understand it. That the Lord should give you such joy in your heart even though you had been persecuted for the Lord's sake. Not that we were really hurt, but we could have been rather seriously hurt and I don't think we would have made any difference. We felt joy in our hearts and we felt pity for those poor people who were deceived and led on. And the result of that very afternoon's happening was that a man who was there was saved and afterwards came into fellowship in an assembly there. So God works still today when his people are persecuted.

[00:25:04] And I have no doubt that things like that are happening in countries like Russia and China where the Lord's people have to suffer for the name of Christ. Now I want to turn over to the 8th chapter.

We have in the 6th chapter the appointment of the deacons for caring for the funds. Peter's name isn't mentioned there although it does mention the apostles. In the 7th chapter we have the stoning of Stephen. When we come over to the 8th chapter we have the persecution that broke out after the stoning of Stephen. Just read a verse at the beginning that says and Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time, or on that day it really is in the New Translation, [00:26:03] on that very same day there was a great persecution against the church, which is Jerusalem.

And they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria except the apostles.

And devout men carried Stephen to his burial.

I wonder who these devout men were.

I believe they must have been some devout Jews, godly Jews who hadn't yet become Christians because all the Christians were scattered. And certainly it wasn't the apostles. They stayed in Jerusalem. But no Christian would have dared show himself. And so the Lord saw that there were among the Jews some devout Jews who gave Stephen a proper burial.

They carried Stephen to his burial. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church entering into every house and hailing men and women and committing them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word, announcing the glad tidings.

[00:27:03] And Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them. Now we find without reading it all that the whole city turned to the Lord. Down in Samaria.

You know, the Lord in Samaria, in the fourth chapter of John the Lord said, I sent you to reap that on which ye bestowed no labour.

Other men laboured and were entered into their labour. And he mentioned about one sowing and another reaping. And I like to think that in the fourth of John the Lord sowed the seed in Samaria. And here in the age of Acts, Philip goes down there. The Christians are all scattered from Jerusalem.

Philip was one of the seven deacons chosen to care for the widows. Well, the widows are all scattered too. That work was finished.

There was nothing to be done anymore. So what does Philip do?

Well, Philip found out in the meantime [00:28:01] that the Lord had given him a work to do. He could preach. He was an evangelist. Philip, the only one in Scripture, is called an evangelist. So Philip goes down to Samaria and preaches the gospel. You see, this is the first time the gospel has been preached in the Samaritans. Up till now, the gospel has only been preached as far as the record goes, has only been preached to Jews. It hasn't really spread outside of Jerusalem except some that were there on the day of Pentecost had gone back to their Gentile cities but we don't have any record of that in the Scripture. So we find now, for the first time in Scripture, the gospel is going outside of Jerusalem. It's going to the despised Samaritans who were a kind of a mongrel people. They were a mixture of Jews and people that had come to be sent down there from Assyria at the time of the Ten Tribes were carried away, captured, to Assyria. And the Jews always despised them. And also they had a kind of a rival religion. [00:29:04] And they still have it, you know. There are still Samaritans who have their worship there on Mount Gerizim, up in Samaria. And the Lord explained that to the woman that Jerusalem was the center and not Samaria. Now, when it goes down there to preach and many souls are saved and it says in verse 14, Now, when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost. For as yet he was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost. Now, you might say, Why did Peter and John have to go down from Jerusalem [00:30:01] to Samaria and lay hands on these people before they received the Holy Spirit?

We don't find that the apostles laid hands on the day of Pentecost in order to receive the Holy Spirit. In fact, Peter said on the day of Pentecost, Be baptized and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Well, I believe that the reason for this was that had the Samaritans who were converted received the Holy Spirit in independence of the apostles of Jerusalem, they would have continued on in Christianity as a separate group as they had done in Judaism.

And this was to preserve the unity of the assembly. You see, beloved, the unity of the assembly of God is a very important truth. Now, we have learned something of the importance of this truth, the truth of the one body. And as we go through the Acts, we find how important it is. [00:31:02] You've seen back there the inward unity was connected with the outward testimony. Satan sought to break up that inward unity by what happened with Ananias and Sapphira. But God came in so that the unity was preserved. Now, if the Lord had allowed these Samaritans, the Holy Spirit, apart from the

apostles Peter and John coming down, there would have been a danger that they would have just continued on and said, well, now God has given us the Holy Spirit in Samaria. And even though it's the same as in Jerusalem, but he's given it to us independently of the brethren in Jerusalem. So we'll just continue on and we'll be the church in Samaria and we won't have anything to do with the church in Jerusalem. You see, that would have been independent. The apostles come down from Jerusalem and when they lay hands on them they receive the Holy Spirit. And so the unity's preserved. These in Samaria are in fellowship [00:32:01] with those in Jerusalem.

They continue on together as one assembly.

Now there's an assembly in Jerusalem, now there's one down in Samaria. So the work is continuing, but it's one work.

It's a united work.

The truth of the one body of Christ. The saints of God united to one another and united to the head in heaven by the same Holy Spirit. This is a precious truth. You know, we're not united to one another by faith. We're united by the Holy Spirit. This is something in the New Testament that didn't exist in the Old. In the Old we find saints. We find people who are converted. People who are believers in the Old Testament like Abraham was.

Then we find when God called out the nation in Israel, many people in Israel who were saved, and we find many people who were not too. We find sons of Delia, but they were all members of a nation, the nation of Israel. But now we find it's a different thing [00:33:02] altogether. The body of Christ composed first of Jews, then of Samaritans, then Gentiles come in, and today the church is composed mostly of Gentiles saved from various countries, from various races, from various languages, from various peoples, but all one in Christ. The church of God is what we might call a supranational body composed of people saved out of all nations but linked up with Christ who's the head in heaven. Isn't it a lovely thought? It's really a wonderful thought when you think of it. And so the unity is preserved. And we get this Simon the sorcerer here. He had made a great profession, you know, and when he saw that his power was gone, he wanted to get the power of the Holy Ghost. And he offered Peter money, really, that he might give him the power that when he laid hands on people [00:34:02] they'd receive the Holy Ghost. And Peter discerned what this man was up to.

And so he says there to him in verse 20, Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gifts of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither path nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray, God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven me, for I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which he which he hath spoken come upon me. But it doesn't say that he repented. He just asked Peter to pray to him that these things mightn't happen. But it doesn't say that there's any repentance on his part. So we have no no indication in the Scripture that there was any real work of God done in this man's heart. That's a very sad thing to see, if you have cases [00:35:02] like that.

Neither path nor lot, for thy heart is not right. That was the trouble. And this is the important thing. What is our heart set upon? His heart was set on being important and making money. And he saw he'd lost that. He'd lost his importance, and he'd lost his money. His heart was not right in the sight of

God.

I just want to make this one thing, and that is that when they receive the Holy Ghost it doesn't make any mention of any special phenomena connected with it. It doesn't say they spoke with tongues.

And we noticed the other night that we only have three references in the Acts to speaking in tongues on the Day of Pentecost, in the House of Cornelius, and again in the 19th chapter. But we get all of these other people mentioned that they were saved and they were baptized, but we have no mention of their speaking in tongues. So I think this is very eloquent [00:36:02] to see that the speaking in tongues is not necessarily a cause. It wasn't even in those days a sign that persons had received the Holy Spirit.

Now let us turn over to the 9th chapter.

In the beginning of the 9th, or I should say at the end of the 8th chapter we have the continuation of Philip's ministry where he goes down into the desert and initiates a new conversion. In the 9th chapter we have in the first part the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, this great persecutor of the church who was the instigator of the stoning of Stephen and this great persecution that broke out after the stoning of Stephen that caused Philip to go down to Samaria and preach the gospel. The Lord saved this man.

And we have in the beginning we have the account of his [00:37:02] conversion given here and also in chapters 22 and 26 in the book of the Acts. But we have it here right down takes up the apostle Paul right down to the end of the 31st verse.

And from the 32nd verse we have something more about Peter. So I want to refer to that now. Chapter 9 and verse 32. And it came to pass as Peter passed through all quarters he came down also to the saints which dwelt of Lydda. And there he found a certain man named Enios, which had kept his bed eight years and was sick of the palsy. And Peter said unto him, Enios, Jesus Christ make us behold. Arise and make thy bed. And he arose immediately. And all that dwelt of Lydda and Sarum saw him and turned to the Lord. Now there was a certain disciple named Tabitha which by interpretation is called Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and arms, [00:38:02] these which she did. And it came to pass in those days that she was sick and died. Whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. And poor as much as Lydda was nigh to Joppa and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men desiring him that he would not be late to come to them. When Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber. And all the widows stood by him weeping and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them. But Peter put them all forth and kneeled down and prayed. And turning into the body said, Tabitha, arise.

And she opened her eyes and when she saw fit, she sat up. And he gave her his hand and lifted her up. And when he had called the saints and widows presented her alive.

And he was known throughout all Joppa and many believed in the Lord. And he came to pass that he carried many [00:39:02] days in Joppa with one Simon of Cana.

Now I believe that we get a picture here of Peter's ministry among the Jewish saints. What are called in scripture the saints of the circumcision. You see Peter was given a special ministry to feed the

lambs and sheep of the Lord's Jewish flock.

The apostle Paul was given a special ministry to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. The Gentiles are called in scripture the uncircumcision. The Jews are called the circumcision.

And it tells us that very plainly in the first chapter of Galatians that Peter was the apostle of the circumcision and Paul was the apostle of the uncircumcision.

And so we find Peter here fulfilling his ministry. What Peter's [00:40:02] doing here is that he is doing what the Lord told him to do at the time of his restoration in the 21st of John. When the Lord says feed my lambs, feed my sheep, shepherd my sheep. This gives us a little example of how Peter went around doing it. And in his two epistles you can read there the type of oral ministry that he gave to those people. So you like to link this portion up with what we have linked this up with Peter's epistle. Here we have Peter doing pastoral work. And in the epistle, his two epistles, we have the doctrinal instruction that he gave in connection with his pastoral work.

He goes down there to near the coast.

This is near Jaffa. Jaffa, you know, is the ancient name for Jaffa, which is the chief Palestine seaport, at least for the central part. And [00:41:02] the city of Tel Aviv is right near Jaffa. And it was apparently an important port even way back at that time. Middle and fair and near there. In fact, Sharon is the same word as Sharon in the Song of Solomon. It speaks about the rose of Sharon. And that's the plain. There's that great plain of Sharon. It originally belonged to the Philistine in the olden times. And that's the same word as Sharon is here. So, Peter goes down there and he sees this man that has been eight years foot of the pole.

Apparently, a kind of a paralytic. He hasn't heard the word for eight years. And Peter has faith to believe that the Lord is going to raise this man up. And he says, Aeneas, Jesus Christ make us behold. Arise and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

You notice that wherever the Lord [00:42:02] healed people, and wherever the apostles healed people in the name of the Lord, it was always a perfect work, and it was done immediately.

It wasn't like these who claim to be faith healers and half, and majority of the people that go there don't give any evidence of healing. And then when they say something about it, they say, well, you didn't have faith. There's not any question here of faith in this man at all.

It's Peter telling him that it's the Lord Jesus who's healing him. You see, this is the proof, as we said before, these were the proofs to these Jewish people that this work was of God. These fine gifts were given to prove that Christianity was a divine thing.

And this man is healed.

And no doubt he wasn't only healed in his body, he was healed in his soul. You never find the Lord healing people just for the sake of healing their bodies. Several instances we have the Lord telling them when he healed them [00:43:02] their bodies, to be past that their faith had made them whole, that they were saved. That woman that cuts the hair of his garment, she was saved. She wasn't just bodily healed. The Lord only healed the body to reach the soul. And no doubt that's what Peter's

doing here. He heals the body to reach the soul, and to reach the souls of others. And then there's this woman at Joppa, Tabitha, or Dorca.

A woman full of good works and arms deeds that she did. This woman is a lovely example for our Christian sisters who want to do something for the Lord. This is a woman who spent her time seeking to serve others. You know, we serve the Lord when we serve others. When we seek to help others, well then, we're showing the Lord's character. You know, God makes his sun to shine upon the evil of the good, and turns his rain on the just and the unjust. I was very surprised some years ago [00:44:02] when a brother said to me he's with the Lord now, and I'm sure he knows better, when he said that he didn't think it was right for a Christian ever to help an unconverted person.

Because you would be having fellowship with that unconverted person. That is, to help a neighbor, for instance, if he was in trouble. He didn't help his neighbor because he thought that would be a wrong thing. Now I think that is carrying out the principle, there is a right principle of separation from evil. But that's giving the wrong application to it. God expects us to help others.

It says, do good unto all men, especially to them who of the household are faithful.

While he's your neighbor and his car has gone flat on his car, and you go out and give him a hand with it, you're opening the door to be able to put a little word in there and to tell him about the Lord. God uses these things. A Christian should [00:45:02] be the first one to help others. We should help one another, first of all. And we should try and help, do all the good we can in helping others. And in that way we give a good testimony by our actions, but we shouldn't only leave it to our actions, we should follow it up by our words and use it as an opportunity to speak to people about the Lord. Well, that's what Dorcas was doing, apparently. She was full of good works and arms, as we did. It came to pass in those days she was sick and died. She died and they washed her and got her all in her burial and they sent for Peter.

He's quite near there at Joppa and Peter comes down in two men and he comes down to them. I suppose they thought that Peter would be able to preach at the funeral and give a message that the Lord had something better. It says, they were all standing around and weeping there and showing all the garments [00:46:02] Dorcas had made, what a feat it is. She puts them all out and he prays and the Lord came in and this woman opened her eyes and when she saw Peter she sat up and he gave her his hand and lifted her up and when he had called the faith and widow presented her alive.

What was the result of this? Many believed in the Lord.

Many believed in the Lord. The Lord was worth it.

The power of the Holy Spirit was manifest. God was saving souls and the Lord was using Peter among the saints, among the people of the circumcision, among the Jews saving souls and bringing them to Christ. Now I want to notice that in this chapter we have three times the word saints used and this is the first time that the word saints is used in the New Testament except in the [00:47:02] last chapter of Matthew where it says many of the bodies of the saints which slept arose and went into the Holy City after his resurrection. We have the word saints there. But apart from that and for the first time in the Acts we have the saints. We have mentioned here in verse 41 and we also have saints are mentioned in the beginning of the chapter here as I remember now.

Anyhow in two other places. Yes, the 13th verse in the 13th verse it says we have heard Ananias answer Lord I have heard by many of this man how much evil he has done to by saints in Jerusalem. We have the word saints mentioned there and there is one other place as I remember in this chapter I oh yes, in verse 32 in verse 32 it says Peter passed to all quarters [00:48:02] he came down also to the saints which loved me there and then we get the saints in verse 41. This is the first time the word saints is used in the Acts but it's used a great deal in the epistles and you know this is a good scriptural word to a good scriptural word to express what the Lord's people are. We are saints. It's one of the words. We are brethren that is brothers and sisters. We are disciples perhaps we don't use that word as much as we should. It's used in the Gospels a lot but not so much in the epistles as it's used at all but the truth of discipleship is one that we should not forget and we are saints and we are believers and the word saints is a good word it means those set apart for God those whom the Lord has set apart [00:49:02] for himself the Lord has sanctified and set us apart. That's just what the saints mean. Of course we know in certain so called Christian circles they only think of the saints as especially holy people that have died and gone to heaven they're the saints. They don't like to think of being saints on earth. But every true believer in the Lord Jesus is a saint so we need to realize what these various titles mean and live up to the truth of it. We are saints ones who are separated to the Lord. We believe him because we believe on him. We are brethren because we belong to the same family. We are brothers and sisters in Christ We are disciples because we are following the master and we are to be faithful in following him the one who is rejected and will be rejected too. So these are all titles that have to do with our Christian [00:50:02] testimony on earth. So may the Lord enable us to take home the truth to our hearts that we are saints of God Now this evening God willing we hope to go on with the fifth chapter and take up the conversion of Cornelians as we have in chapter 10 I'd like to point out that in these three chapters, chapters 8, 9, chapters 9, yes 8, 9 and 10 we have after the stoning of Stephen a man saved out of the three great branches of the human race you know the whole human race is descended from Noah. We are all descended from Adam but the race started again with Noah and Noah had three sons Shem, Ham and Jacob and I believe [00:51:02] it's right to say that the descendants of Shem belong to the continent of Asia the descendants of Ham to the continent of Africa and the descendants of Jacob to the continent of Europe the white races generally speaking are descended from Jacob the black races are descended from Ham the Jewish people and the Semitic people and maybe perhaps the Chinese the intermediate the brown races you might say or yellow races it seems that they are descended from Shem so you have these three branches of the human race now you have a man out of each branch saved here in the eighth chapter we have the conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch he is one of Ham's descendants from the continent of Africa it says [00:52:02] in the ninth chapter we have the conversion of Saul of Carthage he is one of Shem's descendants from the continent of Asia in the tenth chapter we have a Italian conversion a European from the continent of Europe a descendant of Jacob and it seems that we have in these three conversions a little picture that the gospel is now to go out worldwide the stoning of Stephen was the Jewish people saying to the Holy Spirit we don't want you they said to the Lord we won't have you they crucified him now then God sent them his Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit was working to convince the Jewish people of their sin that as a nation we might turn to the Lord but when they stoned Stephen they really said just as we refuse Jesus we refuse the Holy Spirit they couldn't stone the Holy Spirit [00:53:02] or they couldn't crucify the Holy Spirit as they had the Lord so they stoned the man who is full of the Holy Spirit and in doing that they say we refuse the Holy Spirit's testimony, well God says well the Jewish nation is now completely set aside it's not that many years afterward that the Jews were destroyed and the Jews met away captive among all nations where they've been ever since until a few years ago and then great majority of them still are among the Gentile nation so now the Lord says now the gospel is going out worldwide it's going out to the Africans, it's going out to the Asians it's going out to the Europeans it's going out to every nation under the sun it's going out to

every branch of the human race it's going out to whosoever will and it's still going out and thank God, it doesn't matter what country we come from what nation we belong to what line of knowledge descendants we're descended from God's gospel is the same it goes out to sinners [00:54:02] and every sinner who turns from his sins and accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour receives a full and free salvation what a privilege we have beloved brethren to proclaim the glorious gospel of God's grace to whosoever will may it continue to be blessed for ever and ever