



# LEGISLATOR

## BREAKFAST AND BIBLE STUDY



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OKPRAY.org

### "I Need a Favor"

#### Acts 9: 36-43

"In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. 37 About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. 38 Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!"

39 "Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them."

40 "Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. 41 He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive. 42 This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. 43 Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon."



"Need a Favor" Jelly Roll

**"I only talk to God when I need a favor. And I only pray when I ain't got a prayer..."**

These lyrics from the hit song "Need a Favor" by country music artist, Jelly Roll, quickly topped the Billboard Country Airplay chart at number 1 and continues to resonate.

The vulnerable honesty of the lyric expresses a recognition of undeserved mercy. Jelly Roll's fans identify with desperate circumstances and unwarranted need of a Savior.

Divine "favor" stands in stark contrast to the shortcomings and failures that seem so pronounced in ourselves and others. But when God intervenes in our lives, it is always: *grace*: unearned, undeserved.

*God's grace is Favor toward the unworthy.*

In our scripture today, we are introduced to a disciple of Jesus named: Tabitha. Her life of generosity is a wonderful testimony of grace and indeed an example of the life of Christ!

We are told that she became ill and died. Her good deeds and loving kindness shined so brightly, that the emptiness and heartache is heavy. Her loss is grieved by friends and loved ones.

When these mourners are made aware that Peter is in a nearby town, they send for him, requesting he come immediately.

We don't know why Peter is called to come with such urgency, but it is important to recognize that this story occurs in a very specific 'post resurrection' context following the powerful prayer offered by God's people in Acts 4:

***"Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." Acts 4:29-30***

## Dig Deeper

- Grace gives us victory over sin!  
James 4:6 "But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."
- Grace gives us eternal encouragement and good hope!  
2 Thessalonians 2:16 "Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace."
- Fresh in the minds of the followers of Jesus, - Luke (the writer of Acts) records Jesus giving Life to those who are dead [Luke 7:11-17 and 8:41-42, 49-56.]
- This Story certainly recalls important historical reminders - recorded in Scripture: Elijah (1 Kings 17:17-24) and Elisha (2 Kings 4:18-37) Both prophets prayed for God to bring the dead back to Life & the result was: The Miracle of Life!



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The early followers of Jesus expected God to empower them to speak boldly and perform signs and wonders *in and through them* in the Name of Jesus!

We can benefit from the demonstration of faith and the lived expectation of God's people even when hopelessness and death abruptly interrupt our lives.

The early Church did not hesitate to ask the Lord's favor and that God intervene in ways that they knew were consistent with the nature of God through the witness of Scripture!

In this story, Peter is urged to come quickly. When he arrives, they show him the things Tabitha (the deceased) made with her own hands, clothing - likely for people in need.

Peter never indicates that resurrection would be on the front page of the *Joppa Times*, in fact, there is nothing particularly bold about what Peter does. He simply shows up, sends everyone out of the room, gets down on his knees and prays.

At some point during his prayer, Peter was prompted to speak to the dead woman:

***"Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive." Acts 9:40-41***

## Activation

I've needed a favor, on more than one occasion in my life. It is humbling to ask someone of something - especially if they don't owe you anything!

But, asking God for a favor should begin with asking *for* God's Favor. We need God's grace and mercy every moment of our lives and God is faithful.

We don't have the details of Peter's prayer and we don't know the expectations and prayers of Tabitha's friends. All we really have is the incredible result!

When we pray, it's good to acknowledge our God who has done great things. And, weather or not, God intervenes in the same way as He has in the past, we are still praying to the God who has done such great things!

This acknowledgment should empower our prayers, because our hope is not found in our shortcomings and failures, our hope is in our gracious and merciful God who loves us as His very own.

I have prayed really difficult prayers, including asking God to use me to be a blessing to the State and Nation. But after praying this prayer, I had to do something incredibly courageous: I had to actually allow God to use me.

Pray *prayers of faith*, but then *act on that faith* and *trust* in Almighty God to use you to accomplish His redemptive, life-giving purpose - in you and through you!

## Prayer

Lord, I need Your Favor. Forgive my sin. I am undeserving of Your blessings, but I recognize Your grace that invites me to commune with You. Speak a new word of Life in me and teach me to do the same in others.

Amen