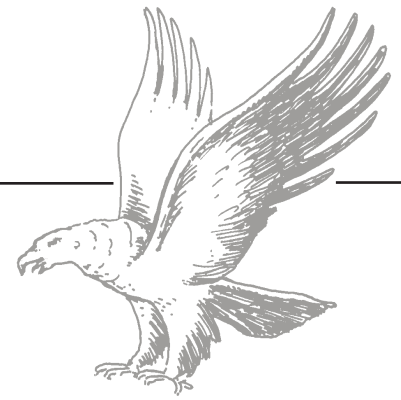


Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



July 17, 2016

Fashions by Dorcas

The garments created by an ordinary woman long ago may not have won any design awards, but they are still remembered today, primarily as tokens of a sharing, generous heart.

“At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. . . . And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them” (Ac. 9:36, 39).



The apostles performed many miracles throughout Judea in the early days of the church, but very few are recorded in history. The resurrection of Dorcas is one of them.

The description that Luke gives of Dorcas provides a strong clue as to why this miracle was preserved for posterity. Dorcas exemplified everything that was good and noble about the early Christians. She was “full of good works and charitable deeds,” apparently related to her talent for making tunics and garments. Was this a consignment business, a store front operation, or a sideline hobby? We don’t know. Neither are we told why, following her death, the widows wanted to show Peter samples of her handiwork. Was it the quality of her

craftsmanship? The vivid colors or the striking designs? Whatever the details, people two thousand years later are still talking about the fashions created by Dorcas of Joppa.

Let that sink in. Two thousand years from today, do you think anyone will be talking about the fashions of Christian Dior, or Tommy Hilger, or Ralph Lauren? Highly unlikely. Even the most popular fashions in any given generation will eventually fade away and be forgotten as the centuries roll on. After all, no matter the cost or the exotic material, it’s still only clothing, something to be used for a while and then thrown away.

Yet the clothing created by Dorcas is still remembered after two millennia—not because of the garments themselves, but because of the character of the one who made them. The clothing she created was an expression of her generous heart, and it was that spirit that left a mark on history.

The story of Dorcas and her garment benevolence serves as a lesson to us today. Whatever our chosen line of work, people will remember us not so

much for *what* we did, but for *why* we did it. If we devote our lives to enriching ourselves and building up a personal fortune, we’ll enjoy that wealth for a short while—then die and leave it for someone else to squander away. If we prefer to spend our time in the pursuit of pleasure, adventure, or fun, there are plenty of opportunities out there to find it. But when our minds and bodies wear out and the excitement turns into the drudgery of old age, what will others remember us for? Who will even care?

There’s another option: We could spend our time upon this earth as Dorcas did, using our God-given talents to build a life “full of good works and charitable deeds.” We may not become rich or famous, but our name will be remembered for what really counts: our unselfish service to the rest of humanity.

In the end, it was not the garments that made Dorcas so memorable, but the fact that she made them as a disciple of Jesus. True discipleship will always have that kind of impact. How is our discipleship transforming *our* lives and our work?

– David King