

## The Funeral That Almost Was

Read Acts 9:36-42

### Introduction:

Name a “Tabitha” in your life. What was something you saw in that person that impacted your life?

*Answers will vary. Likely, the common thread will be selflessness and sacrifice.*

### Into the Text:

1. Your obituary is written long before any words are printed on a newspaper page or spoken at your funeral. It is written in your actions and attitudes and verified by all the lives that you touched. Tabitha had been writing her obituary her whole life. What did her obituary say?

*Look at verses 36 and 39.*

*Tabitha was simply described as a disciple. She apparently held no glorious titles in the church nor in society. But she loved her Savior and that showed in how she loved people. “She was always doing good” could literally be translated “she was full of good works.” Because she always loved Jesus and always loved people, it resulted in people always loving her. So when Tabitha became sick and died, it was tragic news. Hearing of the news, Pastor Peter immediately went with them and Tabitha’s eulogy was literally pushed in his face. He saw robes and scarfs and hats and undergarments. All made by the one who passed away. It was almost a beautiful funeral.*

2. One of the tricks of the devil is to get us to put off serving others generously until our lives are “just right.” How sad if this were an example of our obituary:

*“He always planned on helping the poor once he knew that he had enough for himself. She had every intention of getting involved in service to her Savior in church or in a community group once things settled down in her life. He would have been concerned with the problems in other peoples’ lives, but he had a lot of his own to work through first. She was always going to start giving a proportionate amount back to the LORD in her offerings once she had reached her financial goals in her life.”*

This text gives us many reasons why we will not want to put off a life of generosity. Scan this short account and give at least three reasons.

*V. 36a – Tabitha is a disciple, a follower of Jesus, who loved her and gave himself for her. This is the primary motivation for a life of generosity.*

*V. 36b – “Always doing good and helping the poor.” As someone blessed by God, just think of how many people you can be a blessing to who need our help.*

*V. 39 – Just think of the impact you can have on other Christians with your example.*

*V. 40 – We will want to be generous with our service because of the powerful God who serves us everyday and can supply all we give out!*

*V. 42 – The purpose of God’s miracles is the same purpose he gives for your generous good works (Matthew 5:16 and 1 Peter 2:12)—to confirm this message for others who don’t know his love.*

### **Applying It:**

1. We discussed Tabitha’s “Almost Obituary.” She was likely not one of *Time* magazine’s “100 Most Influential People of 35 AD.” It was a robe here. A penny there. A garment here. A crust of bread there. She may not have been able to give the world, but what she gave meant the world to those who received it. These were the people who were preaching at her funeral. More specifically, what do you want your obituary or eulogy to say?

*Answers will vary and they don’t need to be big philanthropic works! We can all give what we’ve been given. A famous preacher once said, “A good character is the best tombstone. Those who loved you, and were helped by you, will remember you. So carve your name on hearts, and not on marble.” (Charles Spurgeon)*

2. We just talked about what you would want said at your funeral. Here’s your chance to “eulogize” someone else in this church family. If you were asked to say a few words about someone else (your pick!), what “robe and other clothing” might you mention about their lives?

*Again, answers will vary, but the leader should be sure to emphasize the reason for a life of generosity. It is not for the recognition of others, but out of thanks to Jesus for all he’s done. Grace upon grace, he’ll highlight those things on the Last Day as well (Matthew 25:35–36), but that is not our primary motivation.*