FAMILY devotions

Read: Acts 9:36-42

God's Love for a Faithful Woman of Love

> **Acts 9:40-41**
> 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. 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.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Tabitha was good at sewing. She liked to use her talents for others. Tabitha loved God. That's why she loved others and was dearly loved by those around her in return. We know this because the family of believers was very upset when she died. They sought help from Peter, a disciple of Jesus.

Peter had seen Jesus raise others from death, so he knew that God has complete authority over life and death. Peter prayed for God's power to perform a miracle. He knew it would happen if it was God's will. Peter said, "Tabitha, get up." And she did! God used Peter to raise Tabitha from death. There were witnesses who told all about it.

Do you ever wonder why God performed such amazing miracles in Bible times and not today? Why don't *we* get to see dead people come alive?

In a way, we *do*. We see it every day, right here in this family of believers!

How? Well, we know from God's Word that each one of us is born with sin. The Bible says that we are "dead" because of our sins. The Bible also says that "because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even though we were dead" (Ephesians 2).

So, *every time we confess our sins and look to Jesus for forgiveness, we remember an amazing miracle*. Just as Tabitha was raised from physical death, we are raised from our spiritual death in sin. It might not seem very dramatic, but this is *no small miracle*, and it can happen every day! When we have trouble seeing or appreciating it, we ask God to help us better understand what it is to be forgiven and renewed each day. As members of a family of believers, we remind each other of this amazing miracle.

In fact, let's do right now. Reread verse 40, "Tabitha, get up!" Instead of reading the word, "Tabitha," insert your own name. Then stand up! Do this for each family member, inserting his or her own name.

Like Tabitha, you are all standing, sins forgiven, loved and alive in Christ!

So let's get busy and use our talents to serve and love others!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- How did Tabitha use her skills to serve others?
- List two things you are really good at doing. Can you use them to help others around you?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- How do we go from being dead in sin to alive with Christ?
- Describe what it feels like to know that you are not dead in sin, that you are alive with Christ right now.

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Why is it easy to take for granted the fact that we are forgiven and renewed each day in Christ?
- How can we as a family encourage one another to appreciate being made alive with Christ every day?

Closing Prayer:
Lord Jesus, please make us truly sorry for our sins. Forgive and raise us up from spiritual death. Make us truly grateful for this everyday miracle. Raise each one of us to meet the challenges of each new day, fully confident of your love, your forgiveness, and your triumph over sin and death. Amen.

Hymn: CW 460:1,2 – How Can I Thank You, Lord

How can I thank you, Lord,
For all your loving kindness,
That you have patiently
Borne with me in my blindness!
When dead in many sins
And trespasses I lay,
I kindled, holy God,
Your anger ev'ry day.

It is your work alone
That I am now converted;
O'er Satan's work in me
You have your pow'r asserted.
Your mercy and your grace
That rise afresh each morn
Have turned my stony heart
Into a heart new born.