

## Tabitha/Dorcas, A Female Disciple and Her Ministry of Peace: Revisiting Acts 9.36-42

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**Abstract**

*In the New Testament the term *mathētria* (female disciple) occurs only once in Acts 9:36 and is assigned to Tabitha/Dorcas. The theme of disciples or discipleship have been examined abundantly by many scholars but the analysis on Tabitha or Dorcas on Acts 9.36-42 is still very limited. Many focus on Peter and few on Tabitha/Dorcas, even fewer analysis on the reason behind the identity and ministry of Tabitha. Luke, the author of Acts is known of elevating the margins and the women, thus the critical analysis of Tabitha or Dorcas is prominent. The research question is: Who is Tabitha or Dorcas, a *mathētria* who Peter raised from the death with the consequence of many turned to believe the Lord? The purpose of this article is to demonstrate the essence of a female disciple and her ministry of peace who then was raised from death. This article will employ the literature study and examine Tabitha as a disciple in several stage. First, the life and the death of Tabitha/Dorcas. Second, Dorcas' ministry of peace. Third, the raising of Tabitha by Peter that resulted in many believed in the Lord. The application and conclusion will be the closing of this article.*

**Keywords:** *Tabitha, Dorcas, Female Disciple, mathētria, Raise, Peter, The Acts of the Apostles.*

**Abstrak**

Dalam Perjanjian Baru istilah *mathētria* (murid perempuan) hanya muncul satu kali dalam Kisah Para Rasul 9:36 dan ditujukan kepada Tabitha/Dorkas. Tema murid atau pemuridan telah diteliti secara mendalam oleh banyak sarjana tetapi analisis tentang Tabitha atau Dorkas pada Kisah Para Rasul 9.36-42 masih sangat terbatas. Banyak yang berfokus pada Petrus dan sedikit pada Tabitha/Dorkas, bahkan lebih sedikit analisis tentang alasan di balik identitas dan pelayanan Tabitha. Lukas, penulis Kisah Para Rasul dikenal meninggikan kaum pinggiran dan para wanita, sehingga analisis kritis tentang Tabitha atau Dorkas menonjol. Pertanyaan penelitiannya adalah: Siapakah Tabitha atau Dorkas, seorang *mathētria* yang dibangkitkan Petrus dari kematian dengan konsekuensi banyak orang berbalik untuk percaya kepada Tuhan? Tujuan dari artikel ini adalah untuk menunjukkan hakikat seorang murid perempuan dan pelayanannya untuk perdamaian yang kemudian dibangkitkan dari kematian. Artikel ini akan menggunakan studi literatur dan meneliti Tabitha sebagai seorang murid dalam beberapa tahap. Pertama, kehidupan dan kematian

Tabitha/Dorcas. Kedua, pelayanan perdamaian Dorcas. Ketiga, kebangkitan Tabitha oleh Petrus yang menghasilkan banyak orang percaya kepada Tuhan. Penerapan dan kesimpulan akan menjadi penutup artikel ini.

**Kata Kunci:** Tabitha, Dorkas, Murid Perempuan, *mathētria*, Petrus, Kisah Para Rasul.

## INTRODUCTION

The term disciple or discipleship is very central in the New Testament. The evident is obvious in two ways, the numerous publications in the wide time range and the broad aspect related to disciples or discipleship (Anderson & Skinner, 2019; Auvinen-Pontinen, 2015; Best, 1977; Bock, 2012; Brock, 2014; Chan & Beuving, 2012; Cherry, 2016; Dever, 2016; Frankfurter, 1990; Hull, 2006; Hur, 2019; Isak Johannes du DuPlessis, 1995; Jr. & Peck, 2018; Kane, 2021; Longenecker, 1996; Ndaruhekeye, 2021; Nel, 2017; Ogden, 2011; Olofinjana, 2022; Onyinah, 2017; Porter, 2019; Shin, 2019; Shirley, 2008; Vanhoozer, 2015; Wilkins, 2015; Yiner Josue Huaycani Cotrado, 2020). In the New Testament, the twelve distinguished followers of Jesus were called as Jesus disciples, and the word disciple or disciples occurred more than 271 times, but the word *mathētria* (female disciple) appeared only once in Acts 9.36. Though there are abundant research on the topic of discipleship, the examination on Tabitha/Dorcas is still lacking. There are several research on Tabitha in Acts 9.36-42. Rick Strelan focused on the metaphorical use of the name Tabitha which meant gazelle as he argued that “the name of the disciple at Joppa, Tabitha, which means “gazelle,” not only reflects her character and her status, but can also be read as a metaphor in the narrative for fringe-members, such as proselytes, in the Christian community” (Strelan, 2009, p. 78), Daniel Belnap presented the connection of the clothes made by Tabitha with Christ (Belnap, 2012, pp. 347–356), while David E. Malick provided the three parallels with one of them was between Aeneas and Tabitha in Acts 9 (Malick, 2014, pp. 15–25), however, Eben Scheffler provided only a few analysis and focused more on the raising of Tabitha that recalled the raising of Jairus’s daughter and the widow in Nain in Luke’s Gospel (Scheffler, 2016, pp. 131–165), also J. David Woodington connected the episode of Tabitha with the episode of Cornelius and attempted to “demonstrate how the stories of Tabitha and Cornelius can be understood as narrativ examples of charity saving someone from death.” (Woodington, 2017, p. 635), and recently Michael Kochenash focusing on the two names of Tabitha dan Dorcas argued “that this oddity—as well as Luke’s seemingly curious verb selection—can be understood by reading the character of Tabitha as an allusion to Dido as presented in Virgil’s *Aeneid*.” (Kochenash, 2018, p. 2), he moved further by stating that “this allusion is suggestive of a Lukan literary strategy more broadly: using Roman images and themes as a framework within which his characters demonstrate the good news of the kingdom of God.” (Kochenash, 2018).

As presented previously, although the research on disciples or discipleship are abundant and covers so many aspects, however, the examination on Tabitha was limited and the analysis on the identity of Tabitha even lesser. Perhaps Tabitha is assumed to be merely similar with the general understanding of disciple thus is undermined. This article will attempt to give contribution to the scholarship discussion by examining the identity of Tabitha as a *mathētria*. The identity of Tabitha is indeed prominent that Luke recorded her names in Hebrew and Greek, also Peter raised her from death. The result of this episode is another obvious evident the significant of who Tabitha or Dorcas was. In short, the identity or character of Tabitha is likely the most important issue to be addressed. Therefore, it is legitimate to raise a research question of who is Tabitha or Dorcas (*mathētria*) whose ministry is significant that Luke recorded her impact to the people in Joppa to believe in the Lord? The aim of this article is to demonstrate the prominence of Tabitha/Dorcas’ life (and the death) as a female disciple, her ministry for the widows and particularly her ministry of reconciliation with the result of many people in Joppa believed in the Lord, served as a foundation for Christians and the church to witness the Gospel.

## THE DISCUSSION

### *The Literal Translation:*

<sup>36</sup> Now in Joppa there was a (female) disciple named Tabitha which when translating it is called Dorcas; this woman was full of good works and charity which she continually did. <sup>37</sup> And it happened in that times that as was sick she died; and washing, they laid her in an upper room. <sup>38</sup> And since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him imploring, “Do not delay to come to us.” <sup>39</sup> An arising Peter went together with them. Who when arriving, they brought him into the upper room; and all the widows stood beside him, keep on weeping and showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make when she was with them.<sup>40</sup> But Peter after sending them all out and laying the knees to pray and turning to the body he said, “Tabitha, arise.” And she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. <sup>41</sup> And giving hands to her he raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. <sup>42</sup> It became known all over Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

There is no specific structure in this episode but chronological narrative, but the examination will focus on Tabitha and not in chronological sense. However, it is interesting to notice that Luke began this episode by mentioning a female disciple and closed it with the Lord.

### **The Name of Tabitha/Dorcas**

The name Tabitha and Dorcas was mentioned in 36, 39 and 40. At the dawn of the episode Luke informed about Joppa, the city where Tabitha served the widows when Peter was in Lydda. The distance between these two cities is about 10 miles, the distance from Jerusalem to Lydda is about 20 miles (Barret, 1994, p. 482; Thomas, 2011, p. 272). This story also takes place after the story of Philip in Acts 8. Some of the important points about this geographic information is that the gospels had spread in Samaria and Judea as Luke records in Acts 1.8. The distribution of believers has indeed been quite wide from Judea (Joppa is part of Judea) to Samaria. The issues early church faced as recorded in Acts 6 also covered these two cities.

After providing the information of geographical background, Luke recorded the identity of the *mathētria* (female disciple) with two names Tabitha in Aramaic and Dorcas in Greek. The study of the two names is important because it can relate to other aspect. For Strelan, the name Tabitha reflected not only character and status, but was a metaphor for those who were marginalized such as proselytes in the community of believers (Strelan, 2009), while Kochenash argued that the name Tabitha is an allusion to Virgil Dido, thus juxtaposing the expansion of the kingdom of heaven with the Roman empire (Kochenash, 2018). Both examinations of Strelan and Kochenash are questionable, as they are too far move from the text. When paying attention to the context of the previous few chapters, Luke's two names in Aramaic and Greek was more appropriate to mean that Tabitha/Dorcas was a female disciple who served Greek and Hebrew-speaking widows as Tannehill when compared Tabitha with Lk. 4.25-26 assumed that Tabitha was being stretched to think beyond personal benefit to consider non-Jewish widows (Tannehill, 1994, p. 345). Concerning the two names Tabitha dan Dorcas, the interesting fact to notice is this, in verse 36 both names Tabitha dan Dorcas was mentioned sequentially, but in the following verse 39, Dorcas was mentioned and followed by the name Tabitha in verse 40. The order of name in verse 39 and 40 is the reverse order of the verse 36. These two names fitted better the essence of a female student who served impartiality. Three reasons that can be put forward are: first, the number of the church in Acts 6.1 was said to have increased many times over, so it seemed that the spread of widows was also inevitable. Thus, the problem between the Hellenist and the Hebrews were noticed by both parties. Second, although the term widows in Acts 9 does not mention clearly the widows of Greek and Hebrew, the term widows itself was in the plural parallel to the previous episode in Acts 6 and the two names Tabitha and Dorcas. Third, the spread of the gospel is said to have reached Samaria through Philip (Acts 8). It is most likely if the connection of the names Tabitha and Dorcas was understood better in a closer context that is most appropriate and this is certainly contrast to the arguments of Strelan and Kochenash who understood it too far from the nearest context.

In the Old Testament the name was inseparable from the existence of the owner of the name and the ministry of the owner of the name related to. The change name from Abram to Abraham is a clear evident of whom the name was related to. The same issue is apparent in the identity of Jacob whose name was changed by God to Israel. The most obvious is the name Daniel which was named by the chief eunuchs of Babylon as Belteshazzar, Hananiah as Shadrach, Mishael as Meshach, and Azariah as Abednego (Dan 1:7). All the new names attributed to them was related to the identity of Babylon instead of Judah.

In Lukan writings there are two evident recorded in term of these two names. In Luke 5:3-5 the name Simon mentioned but turned to Simon Peter in verse 8. The most obvious is verse 10 that revealed Simon who was fisherman was called to be the fisher of man. In Acts, the second book of Luke, the name Saul before his conversion turned to Paul after his faith in Christ. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament witness that the change of name is inseparable with the the ministry. Therefore, it is plausible to conclude that the name Tabitha dan Dorcas pointed to her ministry to both widows who spoke Hebrew and Greek. The ministry of Tabitha / Dorcas in making peace between the Hebrew and Greek widows will then contrast to Strelan, Kochenash.

### **The Life and Death of Tabitha/Dorcas**

The identity, life, and death of Tabitha was recorded in verse 9.36-37. Although Luke did not provide clear information on who was Tabitha/Dorcas, but she was almost certainly part of the early believers recorded in Acts 2.40-47. There are three reasons that can be argued. First, in Acts 2.47 records three things: believers live their lives praising God, they were having favor with all the people, and God added to their number day by day those who were being saved. Important note is that Luke shrewdly used the word Lord (*kurios*) instead of God (*thēos*) who added to their number, whereas the more appropriate word God (*thēos*) should be used in this account than Lord (*kurios*). This word Lord (*kurios*) in Acts 2.47 is the same word Lord (*kurios*) Luke used at the end of his episode about Tabitha/Dorcas in Acts 9.42 “many people believed in the Lord.” This similarity is certainly not a coincidence when referred to the way Luke wrote his two books in Lk. 1.3 “having investigated all things accurately”, also Luke was a doctor who used to pay attention on detail. Second, the attitude of sharing with one's own property as a community possession is parallel to the word “alms” in Acts 9.36. The third reason is that a life of early believers that is lived with joy and sincerity in Acts 2.46 is also parallel with the word “full of good works” in Acts 9.36. If there was no sincerity dan joy, Luke would not use the term full of good works which implied many good works that consistently performed.

It is not clear from the text about the background of Tabitha/Dorcas, whether she was included in the first believers who was baptized after Peter's preaching, or she believed afterwards as those included in the members of the later believers “the Lord kept on adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.” As recorded in Acts 2.47. If the geographical distance, Luke record in Acts 1.8, and the time span between Acts 2 and Acts 9 are considered, it is almost certainly that Tabitha was part of those who believed later. However, both background of Tabitha/Dorcas implied that her life was as the first believers who continually did these four features: perseverant to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.

In verse 37 Luke informed that Tabitha/Dorcas was sick and died in those days. The references to those days are not very clear to Peter's days at Lydda (Barret, 1994), or the days of Tabitha's ministry to widows even though the two do not give a different understanding. Peter's days at Lydda do provide a context for the time of Tabitha's death which is also one of Luke's ways of explaining the occurrence of one event with another. The reason for Tabitha's death was obvious because of illness. Washing Tabitha's body was a common practice in preparation for burial at that time especially for the Jews (Bruce, 1988, p. 199). The record of the washing of Tabitha's body and then placed in the upper room is proof that Tabitha is indeed dead and ready to be buried.

### **The Ministry of Tabitha**

The ministry of Tabitha/Dorcas is recorded in verses 38 and 39b and is closely related to her identity as a female disciple which was demonstrated in the previous section. Some important things that need to be studied are: First, Luke informed that it was the widows who presented the results of Tabitha / Dorcas' ministry to Peter. Luke didn't



really provide detailed data on all of Tabitha's services which didn't seem to be his focus. Luke used two Greek words *chitonas* and *imatia* to describe the results of Tabitha's ministry. There are several meanings regarding these two Greek words, namely inner garment, and outer garment, but both have the meaning of clothing in general, so it is not special clothes that are made. Second, the result of Tabitha's service, namely clothes both inside and outside is most likely a common thing. The quantity produced is also not recorded by Luke but considering the context of life at the beginning of the first century, it almost certainly will not be too much. Third, although it may not be much in terms of numbers, but these three things recorded in verse 36, good works, giving alms, and continuing to do, can give explain the value of the clothing Tabitha/Dorcas made for widows. The main emphasis on the verb was continuous action which indicated Tabitha's consistency and number of doing good and giving alms. So constantly doing many good works and giving alms indicates time, effort, and money that Tabitha spent to serve the widows thus the wealth of Tabitha was implied. Making clothing as a manifestation of many good works is a logical consequence which is an evident to the quality of a female disciple Tabitha/Dorcas. It is likely Luke would like to reveal that Tabitha/Dorcas was a female disciple who wholeheartedly did continuously many good works and gives a lot of alms manifested in the clothes she made for the widows (Thomas, 2011).

Tabitha's ministry is so important that many experts have conducted studies with various emphasis, namely: Tabitha's character, her life full of good deeds and alms to others and those in need, even Tabitha even became an example for the church to pay attention to those in need in general and not only limited to widows (Barret, 1994; Bruce, 1988; Wiersbe, 1996). Most studies focus on character, good deeds, and giving alms to those who were marginal and although this is not wrong, it is surprising that there is no demonstration of the reasons behind her character and ministry of peace, although this was very important. The process that led Tabitha to do so many good things and to give alms seems to have been neglected. This section will demonstrate what many scholars have not paid much attention to.

The process of Tabitha/Dorcas being able to consistently do so many good deeds and giving alms that it touched the heart of widows can be divided into three phases. First, the perseverance of Tabitha/Dorcas in the life of early believers recorded in Acts 2.42 which were persevering in the teaching of the Apostles, fellowship, breaking the bread, and prayer. Tabitha/Dorcas was part of believers who consistently persevere in the teachings of the Apostles which was almost certainly sermons (Barret, 1994). A prominent emphasis is on the perseverance of the early believers. This teaching of the apostles is also probably the main reason Peter went to Lydda apart from his pastoral ministry. Notice that in Acts 6.4 Luke clearly showed that Peter and the other apostles wanted to focus on prayer and ministry of the word. Tabitha must also have been a believer who was devoted to these four features in early believers' life, especially the teaching of the Apostles. Continuing to do good works and giving alms as performed by the early believers must have become a pattern in Tabitha's life, so it is not surprising Tabitha was consistent to do good works and giving alms.

Second is the awareness of Dorcas/Tabitha. The problems faced by the early believers were very complex in the form of oppression from the Jewish leaders and the Roman government, also the early believers who were not being politically or economically influential or influential people. Even the pagans who label Christians as superstitious and obstinacy (Ferguson, 1993, pp. 556–557). The majority of the early believers were marginals and this was in accordance with the reality of social class in the Roman empire where more than 98% of the population was poor and destitute (Jeffers, 1999, pp. 180–196). In the Greco-Roman social class, widows are categorized in the destitute group (Jeffers, 1999). With such a structure, it is not surprising that early believers were categorized as poor and even destitute. Poverty and destitution were problems that appeared as believers increase, and the problem of poverty could not be addressed with sermons, so the seven deacons were chosen for service to the poor and destitute. This social problem was not solved even Paul urged the congregation outside Jerusalem to help the church in Jerusalem many years after the episode in Acts 6. Tabitha/Dorcas was very aware of the life of the early believers which was full of threats in all aspects of life, economic, social, political, religious, and even death. Tabitha/Dorcas was sensitive to this specific problem of the widows. The reasons behind Tabitha's sensitivity must have come prominently from her perseverance to the life of the early believers, particularly the teaching of the Apostles. The perseverance in the word of God that led Tabitha/Dorcas to be aware of the widows need who were destitute class in the Greco-Roman era.

Third, Tabitha's wholehearted willingness to give herself. Tabitha/Dorcas is not only there to be friends or merely to be available, but she did more than just be present and available, she devoted her time, energy, funds, and even her heart to what she could do, to those widows. These widows may have been increasingly

marginalized, starting to be neglected, especially in the Greco-Roman social context, even though they were people who under God's law must be considered. Tabitha/Dorcas was aware of going unnoticed, not feeling the glitter of praise from people by helping these destitute widows. For our contemporary world what Tabitha was doing is almost something meaningless. The amount of clothes Tabitha/Dorcas made did help the widows in Joppa but was insignificant compared to the number of those in need. Even so, Tabitha/Dorcas did it anyway. The reason was clear, especially because of perseverance in the teachings of the Apostles which made a Tabitha/Dorcas devoted her whole heart, mind, money, and energy to the widows. The emotional testimony of the widows to Peter by showing the clothes Dorcas made for them was an evident of the impact of her sincere and joyful sacrifice. Again, this parallels with Acts 2:46. Moreover, just as the first believers had favor from all people so did Tabitha had favor from all the widows she served.

## **The Raising of Tabitha**

Tabitha's resurrection was the first resurrection that occurred after Jesus' ascension. Peter who is understood as the validator by resurrecting Tabitha is even believed to be the focus of this passage (Johnson, 1992, p. 180). This is not wrong but more important attention needs to be given to Tabitha. The question of who Tabitha was so that Peter resurrected Him even without using the name of the Lord Jesus as in the healing of the paralytic in Acts 3.1-10 is proof of the importance of Tabitha being resurrected compared to Peter who resurrected her. This section will demonstrate that the raise of Tabitha itself is more important than Peter who raised her.

There is at least two pieces of evidence that show Dorcas was more important or at least as important as Peter. What is interesting is the request of two disciples sent by the widows so that Peter does not delay coming to Joppa. In Greek this phrase employs the combination of  $\mu\eta$  and subjunctive *okneo*. The meaning of this combination is a prohibition to begin an action, this means that Peter was a person that used to respond immediately, and this was well known by the two disciples. The first evidence is found in verse 39 with three elements, namely the widows who constantly weep, presenting the clothing Peter constantly, and the name Dorcas that Luke used instead of Tabitha. The lamentation and constant display of clothing to Peter seemed to make Peter knew to do something to Tabitha. The value of Tabitha's good deeds and almsgiving to widows that Peter saw was very likely the basis for Peter to raise Tabitha (Woodington, 2017) even though Luke did not provide any information about this. Peter witnessed the power of God to the apostles to do miracles, even performed many miracles already. Miracles that recorded started from three thousand people who repent, the apostles who performed miracles, the healing of the lame man by Peter himself, also pray for the boldness to preach the word of God and perform miracles, the ironic death Ananias, even Peter's shadow is believed to be able to heal the sick, before Peter went to Joppa he had also healed Aeneas in Lydda. All the miracles of Peter were evidence of the Holy Spirit's power on him that he knew what to do with Dorcas even though the miracle of raising the death had never been performed before. However, Peter raised Dorcas/Tabitha by simply calling her name.

It's surprising that the name Dorcas Luke used intentionally instead of Tabitha in verse 39 didn't get any attention from scholars. This name Dorcas was very important indeed. The argument below is a novelty proposal on the name Dorcas. The name Dorcas is closely related to the problems of the Hellenist with the Hebrews on their widows. This problem appeared in chapter 6 which then made the apostles took decision to choose seven people who were full of spirits to serve the widows as a solution. The Greek grammar in Acts 6.1 showed the complaint was from the Hellenists to the Hebrews, so by using the name Dorcas in Acts 9.39 Luke would surely want to show that a female disciple by the Greek name Dorcas was the one who reconciled the complaints of the Hellenists and the Hebrews. Peter as the most influential apostle seemed to be aware of the importance of Dorcas' ministry which even went beyond just good deeds and alms, namely the ministry of peace or reconciliation. The name Dorcas was the evident of such a ministry of reconciliation, this is more likely the reason behind the raising of Dorcas by Peter. This is contrast to Woodington who connected the raising with the charity of Tabitha (Woodington, 2017).

Verse 40 recorded Peter raised Tabitha. Peter's act of kneeling and praying and then calling Tabitha to wake up (Tabitha qum) in Aramaic is very similar to what Jesus (Talitha qum) said when resurrecting a girl in Mk 5.41 (Bruce, 1988). Peter's request asking everyone to come out is similar with Jesus's expelled people when he raised

her (Mk. 5.40). These two similarities show the power of the resurrection of Jesus in Peter's perform so it makes sense that Luke had no addition in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Bringing Dorcas to the widows is an evident that Dorcas is now alive.

Luke ended this episode of Dorcas with two results, it became known in all over Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. In the first result, it is not very clear that the reference to the word "it". There are two possibilities, it could be to all event starting from Tabitha's identity, her ministry and resurrection by Peter, or just the event of Tabitha's resurrection alone. Tabitha's identity, life, death, and resurrection from the dead were inseparable whole, so both reference to this event is of course to all events about Tabitha/Dorcas.

The second result is that many people believed in the Lord. The word "Lord" which appears only once at the end of this story is indeed important. Peter did the miracle of the resurrection, but many people believed in the Lord instead of Peter. There are several implications of the word "Lord" at the end of Tabitha's episode. The first implication is that Tabitha was known by many people as a person who believed in the Lord Jesus through her consistency of many good works and alms. Second, Peter had also been known as a follower of the Lord Jesus who had performed many miracles so that Tabitha's resurrection was immediately understood by many people because of the Lord's power. Third, Luke's confirmation that the apostles were eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus were ministers of the word and this is in line with Acts 6.4 that the apostles wanted to focus on the ministry of the word. So even though the word God is placed at the end, it is eventually the most important word because all that happened to Tabitha and the miracles performed by Peter did not make many people diverted to believe in human greatness. It was easy for the crowd who heard of this incident to believe in Dorcas/Tabitha or especially in Peter afterwards, but Luke recorded clearly that it was in the Lord whom many believed in.

## Application

A critical analysis of Tabitha's story revealed the qualities of a true *mathētria* a female disciple. Even though the word *mathētria* is very odd, the oddity of this word served as an example for many Christians today. Tabitha's perseverance in the teaching God's word not only made her responsive to the difficulties of the lives of believers at that time, but also resulted in giving herself completely to serve the widows by making clothes for them, even more than all of this the most extraordinary thing was being a peacemaker for problems arose by the Hellenist to the Hebrews on the daily distribution of food where the widows in Acts 9.36-42 may be part of them.

Tabitha's persistence in God's word should be the basis for every believer to be salt and light, witnessing the righteous life that this world requires of the righteous. Tabitha was able to persevere because she believed in God, so every Christian should imitate Tabitha. Not only to every Christian, even to the church as an institution that was started by the Holy Spirit with Jesus Christ, the Lord is the head, it is necessary to imitate Tabitha to always base all services, especially deacon services, founded in the perseverance in God's word. So not only God's word is the basis but perseverance to God's word.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the analysis of the story Acts 9.36-42 are: First, Tabitha/Dorcas (*mathētria*) is a female disciple who believes in the Lord Jesus. Second, Tabitha/Dorcas persevered in the teaching of the apostles, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer, especially perseverance in the teaching of the apostles as a new believer. Third, Tabitha's perseverance makes her sensitive to the realities of believers' lives who are facing problems in various aspects, both internal and external. Fourth, the awareness of Tabitha/Dorcas led to a full self-giving to serve the poor and needy. Fifth, Even more, the ministry of Dorcas/Tabitha was a peace making for the problems of the Hellenist and the Hebrews widows. Sixth, above all, Dorcas/Tabitha, who was raised from the dead, then gave the impact of salvation for many people that they believed in the Lord.

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