

Acts 9:31-43

Introduction

Take 5 minutes to create a commercial that promotes peace in this world (groups of 4).

(This gets their idea for what peace is.)

Discuss their interpretations.

Teaching

Then, move into Acts 9:31.

9:31 – The conversion of Paul leads to the church experiencing a time of peace.

9:31 – Acts as a transition in the narrative that sets the scene for Peter to move from proselytizing Jews to the teaching of Gentiles (Cornelius in Acts 10)

Luke uses a particular word for peace here that you are probably familiar. He uses the Hebrew word SHALOM.

Shalom is more than the desire of your life to be more than hassle-free. It conveys a sense of total well-being, born of full health – physical, spiritual, emotional. Shalom means *completeness, wholeness, health, peace, welfare, safety soundness, tranquility, prosperity, perfectness, fullness, rest, and harmony, the absence of agitation or discord.*

Shalom comes from the root verb *Shalom* meaning to be complete, perfect and full.

The two people touched by Peter were bringing SHALOM to the people around them. Peter, therefore, brought SHALOM (completeness, perfection, fullness) to them

How do we know that these two people were ministering to others?

Dorcas is easy because the text clearly says that widows showed Peter her handiwork. Dorcas was meeting a very tangible need by creating undergarments and clothes.

Aeneas is a little more difficult. We can only ascertain that he was believer because Peter found him among the saints.

What is the result of these two peoples' lives?

After Aeneas' healing many people turned to the Lord.

First, through Dorcas' ministry preceding her death, she brought peace to those around her through the use of her gifts. She used the abilities she had to change peoples' lives.

Finally, Peter uses the spiritual gifts he has been endowed with to bring peace those around him.

Our mission here on Earth as Christians is to bring SHALOM to those around us. Heaven is a place of peace and we are to be bringing the future kingdom of Heaven to the world now by bringing PEACE to those around us.

All “End of Time” prophecy talks about Heaven being a place of peace. (Micah 4:3)

Jesus spoke quite often about the nature of the Kingdom of Heaven. For instance the Beattitudes are actual descriptions of the characteristics of the citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. Note his emphasis on “Blessed are the Peacemakers” (Matthew 5:9, 44-45)

Jesus himself is our peace.

We are to be like Jesus in that, as His emissaries, we bring His peace to the world.

How can we bring PEACE to this world?

Prepare through prayer

Examine the needs of those around you

Apply your gifts to the situation

Credit God with the outcome

Encourage others to follow

Discussion

These are just questions to be inserted at appropriate times throughout the class. If I get done too early, they will be fillers as well.

1. How do you define peace?
2. Discuss the difference between personal peace and national peace.
3. How can we resolve the apparent contradiction that the God of peace will crush Satan (Romans 16:20)?
4. What are some needs that you see around you?
5. How can you apply your gifts and abilities to the situation?
6. What was the “secret” of Peter’s power?
7. How is the staying of Peter with Simon an act of “peacemaking”?
8. Are all acts of “shalom-making” pacifists in nature? What are some examples of using “force” to bring wholeness or healing? Have you ever had to use force to bring peace? Explain.
9. What is the opposite of peace (shalom)?