

Approaching God

Read this portion of Psalm 18 and begin with an opening prayer

I love you, LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. (Psalm 18:1-2)

The psalms repeatedly call God a refuge, because we so constantly need it. Habitually turning to God for refuge is the only real support we have in life. Take a moment to reflect and pray over the reality of God's ultimate refuge for those he came to die for. We love, because he first loved us.

Acts 9:31-43

Passage Introduction: The Ministry of Peter

As we turn our focus from Saul's conversion to Peter's ministry, we must remember just how rapidly the church was growing. Judea and Galilee were explicitly Jewish; Samaria was ethnically half-Jewish. And yet, the book of Acts gradually turns our attention from Jerusalem to narrate the spread of the gospel to non-Jewish lands. After the stoning of Stephen, Christians scattered throughout the Roman Empire armed with the gospel, ready to give an account for the hope that was in them (1 Peter 3:15). And so as they went, the church grew.

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.

Use the space in the margin to jot down notes, or themes/ideas that stand out as important.

Acts 9:31-43 - 31 Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers. **32** As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the Lord's people who lived in Lydda. **33** There he found a man named Aeneas, who was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years. **34** "Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat." Immediately Aeneas got up. **35** All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord. **36** In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. **37** About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room.

38 Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!" **39** Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas

Notes:

had made while she was still with them. **40** 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. **41** 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. **42** This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. **43** Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.

Questions for Reflection & Meditation

- Take a few minutes to think carefully about the passage. What are some things this passage reveals about God (the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit) Try to list as many as you can.
- What are the effects of the healing Aeneas?
- When has a seemingly small errand, job, or opportunity of obedience for the Lord turned out to be more significant than you thought?

Key Takeaway:

What does today’s passage show you about a need you have in your life? What do you need to do or become in light of this truth? How can you begin to petition God for it?

Close in Prayer:

Spend some time thanking God for those whom the risen Christ has used to bring the gospel to you. Ask God to use you to be apart of bringing this beautiful news to someone else.