

Sermon Summary | Sunday 12th April 2026 | Acts 9.32-43

Easter can be easy to leave behind. We sing “Christ is risen” on Easter Day, but then quickly return to work, worry, tiredness, and the ordinary pressures of life. The danger is that Easter becomes something we believe about Jesus, rather than something that shapes how we live with Jesus. Acts will not let us think like that. It is the story of what the risen Jesus continues to do from heaven, by his Spirit, through his apostles, and in the life of his church. This passage is not mainly about Peter. It is about Jesus. The key line comes in verse 34: “Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you.” The risen Jesus is still at work.

First, the risen Jesus restores the helpless. In Lydda, Peter meets Aeneas, a man who has been bedridden and paralysed for eight years. Eight years is a long time to suffer, to depend on others, and to feel life narrowing around weakness. Then Peter says, “Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed,” and immediately Aeneas gets up. Luke’s emphasis is clear: the power belongs not to Peter, but to Jesus. Easter means that Jesus is not absent, retired, or merely remembered. He is the living Lord, present and active.

This does not mean that every Christian will be healed now, or that every illness will be removed in this life. The New Testament is realistic about suffering, sickness, struggle, and death. But it does mean that helplessness is not beyond Christ’s reach. Our culture prizes self-sufficiency: be strong, manage your life, fix yourself, stay in control. But many people know what it is to be stuck — in anxiety, guilt, sin, loneliness, exhaustion, or quiet despair. The gospel begins not with our strength, but with Christ’s mercy. Jesus does not say, “Pull yourself together, then come to me.” He says, “Come to me.”

Second, the risen Jesus gives hope in the face of death. Luke takes us from paralysis to something darker. In Joppa, Tabitha, also called Dorcas, is a disciple full of good works and acts of charity. She is not famous, but she is fruitful. She loves people in costly, practical ways. Then she becomes ill and dies. The widows gather, weeping and showing Peter the clothes she had made for them. It is a beautiful detail: her love was not abstract, and her loss was deeply felt.

The Bible never treats death lightly. There is no embarrassment about tears, no pressure to pretend everything is fine, and no shallow cheerfulness. Death is an enemy, and grief is real. Christian hope is not pretending death does not hurt; it is knowing death does not win. Peter kneels and prays, then says, “Tabitha, arise,” and she opens her eyes. This is not the final resurrection, and Tabitha will one day die again. But it is a sign, a foretaste, a glimpse of what Christ has secured. Death does not have the last word. Jesus does.

Third, the risen Jesus draws people to himself. Both episodes end in the same way: people turn to the Lord and many believe in the Lord. The miracles are signs, not ends in themselves. They announce that Jesus is alive and summon people to faith. The church is not here to gather admirers for itself, its leaders, its reputation, or its activity. It is here to bear witness to the living Christ.

This passage calls us not to leave Easter behind. Jesus is not simply someone who once rose; he is the risen Lord now. He restores the helpless, gives hope in the face of death, and draws people to himself. So whatever our need, we are to begin not with ourselves, but with Christ.

Questions for personal reflection

1. Where do I feel most helpless, stuck, weak, or unable to change — and am I honestly bringing that need to the risen Jesus?
2. In my griefs, fears, words, priorities, and ordinary faithfulness, does my life point beyond myself to the living Christ?