

A WOMAN WITH AN OPEN HEART
Acts 16:11-15

Introduction:

1. The apostle Paul set out on his second missionary journey.
 - a. He was accompanied by Silas and joined by Timothy and Luke.
 - b. He visited churches he had established on his first journey.
 - c. The Holy Spirit forbade Paul to preach in Asia at this time.
 - d. He then tried to go to Bithynia but was also forbidden.

2. Paul and his party came to Troas on the shores of the Aegean Sea.
 - a. Two days' journey across the sea was the mainland of Europe.
 - b. A man from Macedonia appeared to Paul in a vision.
 - c. The man pleaded, "Come over into Macedonia and help us."
 - d. Paul concluded the Lord had called them to preach the Gospel in Macedonia.

3. They sailed to Neapolis and went overland to Philippi, a chief city.
 - a. Philippi was built by Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander.
 - b. A great battle for control of the Roman Empire had been fought here.
 - c. Octavian's and Anthony's army defeated that of Cassius and Brutus.

Discussion:

- I. THERE WAS A PLACE OF PRAYER BY THE RIVER.
 - A. Philippi was a Roman colony and a pagan city.
 - B. There was no synagogue in Philippi.
 1. Jewish custom required a synagogue to be built where there were ten Jewish men.
 2. Paul's custom was to teach first in the synagogue, but he learned of a place of prayer down by the river.
 3. There the missionaries found a group of faithful women gathered for prayer.
 4. Faithful women have kept the Lord's work alive in many places.
 - C. Paul preached the Gospel to these God-fearing women.

- II. LYDIA'S HEART WAS OPENED BY THE PREACHING OF THE WORD.

- A. Lydia was a native of Thyatira, a city known for its purple dye.**
 - 1. Purple cloth could only be afforded by kings and the very rich.**
 - 2. Lydia was a seller of purple, a successful businesswoman.**
 - 3. She most likely had never married or else was a widow.**

- B. The Bible says, “The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.”**
 - 1. Paul had preached the Gospel (Romans 1:16; 1 Cor. 15:1-4).**
 - 2. Faith comes only by hearing the Gospel (Romans 10:17).**
 - 3. Lydia’s heart was opened by the preaching of God’s Word.**

- C. What did Lydia do to “heed the things spoken by Paul?”**
 - 1. She was baptized along with members of her household.**
 - 2. There is no such thing as an unbaptized Christian!**
 - 3. Baptism is a command of God (Mark 16:15,16; Acts 10:48).**
 - 4. Bible baptism is a burial (immersion) in water (Romans 6:4).**
 - 5. Baptism is the point when the blood of Christ washes away our sins (Acts 22:16; Rev. 1:5).**

- D. Lydia’s household was also baptized.**
 - 1. Pedobaptists assume Lydia’s household contained infants; therefore they say this provides authority for infant baptism.**
 - 2. They make several unfounded assumptions:**
 - a. That Lydia was married.**
 - b. That she had children.**
 - c. That the children were infants.**
 - d. That the children were with her in Philippi.**
 - 3. A household in ancient times not only included family members but slaves and household servants (Gen. 14:14).**
 - 4. Infants are not candidates for baptism.**
 - a. They have no sin; therefore are “safe” (1 John 3:4; Matthew 19:14; Ezekiel 18:20).**
 - b. They are incapable of sinning, believing, repenting, or confessing Christ (Rom. 10:17; Acts 2:38; 8:37).**

III. LYDIA PRACTICED CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY.

- A. She invited Paul and his fellow preachers to stay in her home.**

“And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.’ So she persuaded us” (Acts 16:15).

- 1. That she could feed and house four men shows the extent of her wealth.**
- 2. There was no impropriety in this for her household lived under the same roof.**

B. Hospitality is a Christian virtue which is disappearing in our day.

- 1. Christians must be “given to hospitality” (Romans 12:13).**
- 2. Elders must be hospitable (1 Timothy 3:2).**
- 3. Peter commanded: “Be hospitable to one another without grumbling” (1 Peter 4:9).**
- 4. John forbade showing hospitality to false teachers.**

“If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds” (2 John 10,11).

- 5. Abraham showed hospitality to men who turned out to be angels (Genesis 18:1-18).**

“Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels” (Hebrews 13:2).

Conclusion:

- 1. Lydia was an outstanding woman.**
 - a. She was successful in business and supported a large household.**
 - b. She was a devout, Godly woman whose heart was receptive to hearing and obeying the truth.**
 - c. She showed her faith by caring for preachers of the Gospel.**
 - d. She is one of countless worthy women who have kept the faithful.**
- 2. The Holy Spirit chose to record Lydia’s conversion as an example for all ages to follow.**
- 3. Do you have a “good and honest heart” like Lydia?**
- 4. Are you willing to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died for your sins?**
- 5. Are you willing to be baptized into Him?**

