

Openings at Philippi

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 27 November 2022

Preacher: Rev Donald A MacDonald

[0 : 00] Sing to God's praise from Psalm 149. Praise ye the Lord, and to him sing a new song, and his praise in the assembly of his saints, in sweet psalms do ye raise.

Let Israel and his Maker joy, and to him praises sing. Let all that science children are be joyful in their King.

O let them unto his great name give praises in the dance. Let them with timbrel and with harp in songs his praise advance.

For God doth pleasure taking those that his own people be, and he with his salvation the meek will beautify.

Let us sing these verses, Psalm 149. Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord, and to him sing a new song, and his praise.

[1 : 40] In thee ascend the office is, in sweet shine to the rest.

Let his grace of God, and to him praises sing.

Let all that science children are be joyful in their King.

O let them unto his holy song, O let them unto his name give praises in the dance.

Let them with timbrel and with harp, In songs his praise advance.

[3 : 00] For God doth pleasure taking those that his own people be, And he with his salvation, And he with his salvation, And he with his salvation, Then he will beautify.

Let us unite in prayer. Eternal God, We thank thee for the throne of grace, And we thank thee for the one who is the intercessor of his people, The one who is the mediator between God and man, And through whom we are unable to enter into thy holy presence.

Just as in the Old Testament dispensation, Moses acted as a mediator between the Lord and Israel.

So much more importantly, Does the Lord Jesus Christ fulfill this role between thee, And those who come into thy presence.

And we thank thee that we can come through him, Into the majestic, glorious presence of almighty God, That we can come with the boldness of sonship into thy presence.

[5 : 00] And although many times we may feel afraid, And dispirited and discouraged, When we come before thee, We thank thee that thou dost encourage us to come, And that thou dost give uplift in times of despondence, That thou dost give encouragement in time of discouragement.

Grant, O Lord, Grant, O Lord, that we might today know the power and the presence of thy Holy Spirit, Working in our midst as we reflect upon a portion of thy word.

Grant thy blessing on the congregation at this time, In their history and development. Grant, O Lord, that as they meet on the evening of tomorrow, That be thy will, That there be a measure of unity in the congregation, As they gather together, And as they seek to nominate one, Who will lead them into the pastures of thy truth.

O grant, O Lord, That they may indeed have the mind of the Lord in this matter, And that they be guided by thyself, And that all that is done, Be done to the glory of thy great name.

Grant, O Lord, That thou wouldst bless every home and family associated with the congregation, Those present, Those unable to be present, Through thy restraint and providence, Those who may be under thine hand in illness, Those who may be frail and elderly, We commit to thy care and keeping, And pray that thou wouldst minister to them, In the solitude of their homes, Any who may be in residential care, Or in hospital accommodation, We commit to thee, Be near to any who may be mourning today the loss of loved ones, Grant, O Lord, That thou wouldst draw near to them, In their sorrow and in their grief.

[7 : 36] We remember the family of the cross-minister today, As they mourn the passing of a father and husband, Grant, O Lord, Grant, O Lord, That thou wouldst comfort them, In their time of sorrow and grief today, And be near to them, And to all who may be grieving today, Or who may be laid aside under thine hand.

Grant, O Lord, That as we come before thee, That we too may sing the new song. Thy servant could speak of a new song being put in his mouth, A song that magnified the great Redeemer God, The one who had brought him out of the pit and the miry clay, Set his feet upon a rock.

May we know the presence of this God in our midst today. Help us as we turn to thy truth. Lead us and guide us, we pray thee.

Cleanse in the blood. In Jesus name we ask it with forgiveness of sin. Amen. Now I know there is no Sunday school today, But there are one or two young people present.

So, although I had not intended to give a word to the young people, I think it's only fair that I do. At this time of year, It's not a time of year of which I am very fond, Because the days are so short, And you almost need electric lighting on all the time.

[9 : 31] We are to be grateful that we have electric lighting. And down in this community, You more than most are favored, Because you benefit from the usage of a wind turbine To make electricity.

And that in itself is a huge advantage. Well, just two weeks ago, I was sitting at my desk, And I was plunged into darkness.

I thought it was an outage in the whole community, So I wasn't alarmed. But then I discovered that the houses round about me, That they had light.

And we didn't. So that meant an inspection of fuses on the fuse box. Nothing seemed to be out of place. Until we discovered that there were one or two other homes out, And it was some fault in the cable.

But when you are plunged into darkness, Then you really appreciate light, don't you? Because light dispels darkness.

[10 : 42] It makes it go away. And the Bible has much to say about light, And about darkness. And the Bible tells us that light came into the world.

And it was rejected by the darkness. Now darkness could be taken or understood in several ways. You might think of darkness as just the absence of light.

And that's what happened when we had our blackout recently. We had no light. So we were in darkness. But the Bible speaks of darkness in other ways.

It speaks of darkness as being the state of mind and heart that belongs to everyone by nature, As sinners before God.

And we require light to take away that darkness. Now, if I can give you a simple illustration.

[11 : 50] You know when you are in school and there are things you don't understand. And then the teacher explains it to you. Or your parents explain it to you.

And then you understand. And you wonder why you didn't understand that before. It's because your mind has been illuminated.

Your mind has been enlightened. And you begin to understand things that were deeply puzzling to you. Well, that's something like what happens to people who are brought to faith in Christ.

Their minds and their hearts are enlightened by the truth. And through the truth. As God brings the light of the truth to bear on minds and hearts.

And you come to see yourself as if you were seeing yourself in a mirror. But this time in the mirror of the Bible that shows you what you are and who you are.

[13 : 04] Shows yourself in a true light. But also shows you the one who is the light of the world. So that you are attracted to him.

May God grant that he be the light of your life. And even although the days are short. And there is much darkness.

That you may have the light of life shining in your life and heart. Let us again sing to God's praise from Psalm 119.

Psalm 119 at verse 101. Psalm 119. Psalm 119.

My feet from each ill way I stayed. That I may keep thy word. I from thy judgments have not swerved. For thou hast taught me, Lord.

[14 : 06] How sweet unto my taste, O Lord, are all thy words of truth. Yea, I do find them sweeter, far than honey to my mouth.

I through thy precepts that are pure, do understanding get. I therefore every way that's false, with all my heart to hate.

Thy word is to my feet a lamp, and to my path a light. I swore and have, and I will perform, to keep thy judgments right.

Let us sing these verses. Psalm 119, verse 101. My feet from each ill way I stayed.

That I may keep thy word.

[15 : 13] I from thy judgments have not swerved. For thou hast taught me, Lord.

How sweet unto my taste, O Lord, are all thy words of truth.

Yea, I do find them sweeter, far than honey to my love.

I through thy precepts that are pure, do understanding get.

I live for any wither's cause, with all my heart to hate.

[16 : 26] Thy word is to my feet a lamp, and to my path a light.

I swore now, and I will perform, to keep thy judgments right.

Let us now read from the scriptures of the New Testament, from the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, and chapter 16. Book of the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 16.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 5. 5. 6. 6. 6. 7.

7. 7. 8. 8. 8. 8. 9. 9. 9. 10. 10.

[17 : 35] 10. 10. 10. 10. How would Paul have to go forth with him. 11. 10.

11. 11. 11. 11. 12. 12. 13.

13. 14. 14. 15. 15. 15. 15. 15. And so were the churches established in the faith and increased in number daily.

Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Messiah, they assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not.

And they passing by, Messiah came down to Troas, and a vision appeared to Paul in the night. There stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us.

[18 : 52] After he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

Therefore, loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracea, and the next day to Neapolis, and from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia and a colony.

And we were in that city abiding certain days. On the Sabbath we went out of the city by a riverside, where prayer was wont to be made.

And we sat down and spake unto the women which resorted thither. The Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

And when she was baptized and her household, she besought us, saying, If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there.

[20 : 18] And she constrained us. Amen, and may God bless to us that reading from his truth. Let us again sing to his praise from Psalm 86, and at verse 11.

Psalm 86 and verse 11. Teach me thy way, and in thy truth, O Lord, then walk will I.

Unite my heart, that I thy name may fear continually. O Lord, my God, with all my heart, to thee I will give praise, and I the glory will ascribe unto thy name always.

Because thy mercy toward me in greatness doth excel, and thou delivered hast my soul out from the lowest hell.

Let us sing these verses. Psalm 86, at verse 11. Teach me thy way. Teach me thy way, and in thy truth, O Lord, then walk will I.

[21 : 49] Unite my heart, that I am. Unite my heart, that I am. In misery and content body.

O Lord, my God, with all my heart, To thee I will give praise, And I the glory will ascribe unto thy name always.

Because thy mercy toward me, Because thy mercy toward me, In greatness doth excel, And sin.

Underiau God, with all my heart, And I shall gesture, And I shall complete my soul out from the lowest hell.

Let us now turn back to the passage that we read. The book of the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 16.

[23 : 24] And we may read again at verse 11. Acts chapter 16, reading at verse 11. Therefore, loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis, and from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony.

And we were in that city abiding certain days. And I'd like to take as my text, We Came to Philippi.

We Came to Philippi. I'd like to reflect for a short while on three thoughts arising from the direction of travel that was taken by the Apostle Paul, accompanied by Silas, and also Timothy, who were his companions, as reported for us by Luke, who is the author of the book of Acts.

We came to Philippi. The first thought, an opened door. The second thought, an opened heart.

And the third thought, an opened home. An opened door. We have already read together of the way in which the Apostle came to bring the message of good news into the continent of Europe.

[25 : 15] They may not have looked on it in that way, but this was the first entrance of the proclamation of the Gospel into the continent of Europe.

It was not the direction in which the Apostle intended to go, but this was the direction that God had appointed for him to go.

And if we just pause for a moment to digest that piece of information. It was not the Apostle's intention to come to Europe, but God had appointed that he come to Europe.

The Westminster Confession of Faith has a chapter on God's providence, chapter 5.

It's well worth reading. And in that chapter, the final paragraph reads like this, As the providence of God doth, in general, reach to all creatures.

[26 : 27] So, after a most special manner, it takes care of his church and disposes all things to the good thereof.

After a special manner, his providence takes care of his church and disposes all things to the good thereof.

Not sure if the Apostle Paul knew that when he was traveling the road to Troas, but he certainly knew it afterwards.

There is much that is so deeply mysterious about the providence of God, isn't there? Many things that we do not see taking place until they happen.

Much in the providence of God that we do not understand. Think for a moment of all the steps in your own life until the present.

[27 : 35] The number of steps, the number of happenings in your life that you did not at all anticipate when you set out on the course of life as a young person.

The number of different turnings in the course of your life. Do you remember how the psalmist speaks of God's ordering of providence?

The way, thy way, he says, is in the sea, and in the waters great thy path. Yet are thy footsteps hid, O Lord, none knowledge thereof hath.

No one, but no one can trace footsteps in water. The moment you lift your foot, the imprint is erased. And that is the picture that the psalmist gives us of the mystery of God's dealings in providence.

I don't know how many of you are familiar with the writings of William Cowper, but he wrote these words in one of his hymns, God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform, Plants his footsteps in the sea, And rides upon the storm.

[29 : 00] Deep in unfathomable minds Of never-failing skill, He treasures up his bright designs, And works his sovereign will.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, But trust him for his grace, Behind a frowning providence, He hides a smiling face.

So, in a special manner, God takes care of his church. Now, there are times when the Lord permits his church To be small, To be apparently weak in the world.

But his church will remain until the end of time, A bush burning, And not consumed. Just like the image that Moses saw in the desert.

Well, in this context, We see what means the Lord used to influence the mind and the heart of the apostle. It was a vision in the night.

[30 : 14] A vision appeared to Paul in the night. There stood a man of Macedonia, Prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us. There was no hesitation, Or doubt, Or questioning, In the mind of the apostle, But that this was divine guidance, As to the next step in the road.

Their direction of travel, Had been divinely changed. How do we know? Well, Luke writes, Of the interpretation and conclusion, Drown by the apostle, Surely gathering that the Lord had called us, For to preach the gospel unto them.

And that, They may have been discussing, Even questioning, As to how, Or which direction they were to travel, Given that their original plan, Was no longer feasible.

And maybe you can follow that, In steps that have been, In your own life. The Lord closed off every avenue, Which they had intended to pursue.

They came up against closed doors. And closed doors can sometimes be so final, So forbidding.

[31 : 47] They came up against closed doors. Now this door was being opened, Through which they had not intended to go.

A way opening up that had not been their intended direction of travel, But very evidently, A way divinely appointed by God.

If you follow their course, They had been traveling, Roughly southwest to begin with, And the Holy Spirit had forbidden them to preach.

Now, how is not disclosed, Apart from the fact, That we're told they were forbidden. Then they tried to travel north, But that route also was closed off.

And we're told the Holy Spirit did not allow them. And again, How that was made known is not disclosed.

[32 : 49] So they continued, Roughly northwest. And they came to Troas, Which is located on the coast. It was actually, At that time, A major port, On the Aegean Sea.

And there, The Lord unveiled to them the next step of their journey, By sending the vision in the night. And the vision in the night, Was a real plea for help.

When they crossed over to Macedonia, There was no one to meet them. You might have thought, Given the impassioned plea of the vision, That someone would have met them, To welcome them to Europe.

But we're not told of any, Who were, Formed a welcoming committee, Or party of any kind. Who was the person in the vision, Issuing what has become known, As the Macedonian cry.

Some are of the view, That Paul was searching for this person, During the time he spent in Macedonia. Some are even of the view, That it was Luke.

[34 : 07] And that is where he met Paul. And they base that, On the wee passages in the text. Say verse 10, You have the, First of the wee passages, We endeavor to go to Macedonia.

Others say it was the spiritual women, Who were meeting for prayer. Some that it was even Lydia. But we're not told. What we are told is, That the apostle and his companions, Came to Philippi, In response to the plea, Which they considered, To have ultimately issued, From the Lord.

And Luke tells us, That were in that city, Abiding certain days. Given the kind of man, Paul was, It would appear, That he would spend, Part of that time, Assessing, The place.

Seeking to gain knowledge, Of the habits, And practices, Of the local population, But above all, Wrestling in prayer, For the blessing of the Lord, On their visit to Philippi.

And during, Their time there, They had obviously discovered, Where a prayer meeting was held. So that we are told, In verse 13, On the Sabbath, We went out of the city, By a riverside, Where prayer was wont to be made.

[35 : 42] And we sat down, And spake unto the women, Which resorted, Or gathered there. Looking for worshippers, Would have been a logical step, For the missionaries.

If you have been in a place, Where you have never been before, And you are a believer, One of the, First priorities, May be, If you are there, On the Lord's day, Is to find a place of worship.

Now today, With the advantage of technology, It's much easier, Than having to physically, Trips around, Looking for a place, Where you can worship.

The practice of the apostles, Of the apostle Paul, We know, Was to go to the synagogue, If one was there. But ten Jewish men, Were required, For a synagogue, To be set up.

Were there not ten Jewish men, In Philippi? Or if there were, Did they wish to remain, Unidentified? Again, Were not told.

[36 : 58] But an open door, Brought them to Philippi, Unto a prayer meeting, Held in Europe, The purpose of God, Was being outworked.

It worked. That brings me to my second point, An opened heart. We are told, That amongst, This small gathering, Of women, Met for prayer, Was one by the name, Of Lydia.

A certain woman, Named Lydia, A seller of purple, Of the city, Of Thyatira. The fact that she's known, As Lydia, May not actually be, Her proper name.

You know how we tend, To name people, From the area, To which they belong. This woman, We know, Belonged to the city, Of Thyatira, In the kingdom of Lydia.

But Lydia, May not have been, Her proper name. From the book of Revelation, We learn, That there was a church, In Thyatira, One of the seven churches, In Asia, To which a letter, Was sent by the Lord.

[38 : 09] It was a church, Known among other things, For its love. I know your works, Your love. Some would contend, That because, Her personal name, Is unknown, That this woman, Is either, You odia, Or sintiche.

Remember, Paul mentions them, In the letter, That he wrote, To the church, At Philippi. Women, Who were obviously, Highly regarded, By the apostle.

You may remember, How he speaks of them, In the letter, To the church, At Philippi. Women, Who have labored, Side by side, With me, In the gospel. I do not find, Biblical evidence, To support, Such a view.

We are told, Of the work, That this woman, Was engaged in. She was a seller, Of purple goods. It is the view, That this cloth, Was a most, Expensive cloth.

I suppose, Given that, Harris Tweed today, Is sold at the high end, Of the market, Rather than, At the lower end, Of the market, That purple, Could possibly, Have been the equivalent, Of Harris Tweed cloth.

[39 : 35] In those days, You would not expect, A poor person, To be clothed, In this cloth, It was most expensive, Aimed at the top end, Of the market.

Does this mean, That this woman, Was herself rich? And that is certainly, The impression I have, Although, It is not stated.

But what does, Seem irrefutable, Is that this woman, Had come to give Judaism, A prominent place, In her own life, Living as a Jewish woman, Without actually, Being Jewish?

It is possible, That as a Gentile woman, She found much, That was attractive, In the practice, Of Jewish women.

She may even, Have been envious, Of some of their practices. And you may be present, Today, And that was true of you, With regard, To the lives, Of Christian believers.

[40 : 45] You may have wished, To be like them, When you were, In your unconverted days. You may even, Be present today, And that is the secret, Desire of your heart.

Yet, Despite, Despite, This woman's wealth, It is evident, That she didn't find, Deep satisfaction, For the desires, Of her heart, In her wealth.

She didn't find, The peace for her soul, That she craved, In her wealth, Or her work. And until this moment, She was still ignorant, Of God's way, Of salvation, In Christ.

Yet, She took obvious delight, In being, In the means of grace. She gave a place, To the practice, Of worship, In her life.

And that left her, Accompanying, These Jewish women, Who were spending, Time in prayer. Some are of the view, That because they met, By the riverside, That the river, Symbolizes, Their desire, For cleansing, And refreshing.

[42 : 04] But the river water, No matter, How cold, Or pure, Unable to cleanse, The uncleanness, Of their heart. Nor could it say, She had any, Spiritual thirst, That might exist.

So, Although, There was the practice, Of worship, In her life. It was outward. Yes, There was prayer, And formal worship. Other things too.

Do this, But cease, From the other thing. I suppose, There was a measure, Of satisfaction, In doing that. But, It wasn't a power, Or a force, In her life.

And so, Can I ask, How is it with you? Are you happy, To come and go, From the means of grace? Happy to do that, But, No evidence, Of the power of life, In your heart.

It is possible, That there was a deep, Secret desire. Even if, At that moment, She was still blind, To the way of salvation, In Christ.

[43 : 22] And maybe such a person, Is present today, In this service. You take a certain delight, In being present, In the means of grace.

But yet, A stranger, To God's way of salvation, In Christ Jesus. You may even be asking, In your own heart, How does one come, To a saving knowledge, Of Christ?

It is good, That you attend the service. Who knows, But that, What happened to Lydia, May happen to you, An arrow of truth, Piercing the armor, Of your heart, So that you cannot, But fail to be smitten, By the attraction, Of Jesus Christ, As Lord, And Savior.

What a story, You would have to tell, But it is possible, That you are also present, And you are saying, I don't want that to happen, Just yet.

It would spoil Christmas for me. Well, I'll tell you something, It would only enhance Christmas, It wouldn't spoil it at all. Well, Do not try to put off, The striving of the Holy Spirit, Lest he leave you, To your own devices.

[44 : 48] God changed the life, Of this woman, Not he did it from the inside, That's how God operates. Where Christ is placed, On the throne of your heart, Dwelling in you by faith, She was given to taste, Of the water, That would be a spring of water, Within her welling up, To eternal life.

For we are told, That the Lord, Opened her heart. What a blessed day, For this woman. She came to the meeting, In spiritual darkness, And she left, In spiritual light.

How do we know? Well, If her heart, Required to be opened, And it did, That means that her heart, Was closed, To the message. She was still under, The dominion, And the power of sin.

And we know from the Bible, That the heart is deceitful, Above all things, And desperately weak. That's the kind of heart, That we all have by nature. A heart that is disinclined, To give too much attention, To the word of God, Far less bowed down, Before the Lord.

But the Lord opened, The heart of this woman. No one else, Has the key, But himself. He alone, Is in possession of the key, That unlocks the heart, Of everyone.

[46 : 07] And he has a key, That can unlock your heart too. She was spiritually, Enlightened by the Holy Spirit, In applying the message, So that she was gripped, By the message, That Paul proclaimed, But above all, Enabled to trust, In Christ alone, For salvation.

It wasn't Paul, Who opened her heart. Although he was the preacher, But God, To him belongs, The power, And not to man. Her understanding, Enlightened, Her blindness, And ignorance removed, Before now, When in such meetings, She may have found, Her mind wandering.

To her business, Maybe, The cost of material, The worries of, Running a business, Future sales, Or even because, We know she had a family, Concerns about her family, Thoughts that can, Distract everyone, To a greater, Or lesser degree.

She may have found, A measure of satisfaction, In withdrawing from, Her worldly affairs, For a time, In the physical sense. But now, She was gripped, By the message.

The cares, Of this life, Were momentarily swept away. She could have listened, For a time, Because it was, A new voice, She heard.

[47 : 35] But as God, Opened her heart, It was no longer, The voice, Of a mere man, She heard, But the authoritative voice, Of one, Who was in possession, Of perfect knowledge, Of her heart.

One, Who was addressing, Her soul's needs, Through the preaching, Of his servant, The apostle Paul. This God, Able to show, What was in her heart.

He was able, To place, His finger, On her ignorance, Showing her her sin, Darkened state, And the unclean nature, That she possessed. The spotlight of truth, Shone firmly, And unrelentingly, On her life, Till she was brought, To trust, In Christ alone, For salvation.

And you know, The picture, Painted by Luke, In so few words, Is very vivid. A picture, Of a woman, Enthralled, Mesmerized, If you like, By the message, Of good news, As she drank in, The teaching of truth.

The strong walls, Of unbelief, In her life, Crumbled away, Just as surely, As did the solid, Thick walls, Of the fortified city, Of Jericho of old, Crumbled to the dust.

[48 : 58] Scripture, Demonstrates, How flimsy, And shaky, These walls are, In comparison, To the power, Of the almighty.

Every argument, Every, Every complaint, Every opinion, That once held, So apparently, Forceful, And strong, In opposition, To the truth, Is swept aside, As the message, Of truth, Flows, Into her heart.

The message, Is now, Like honey, To her soul. I think she could, Readily share, In the experience, Of the psalmist, When he stated, How sweeter, Your words, To my taste, Sweeter, Than honey, To my mouth.

The word, That condemned her, Also revealed, Where safety, Was to be found. Through the word, She was having a meeting, The first of many, With the savior of sinners, The Lord Jesus Christ.

And today, She is seeing him, As he is, At the right hand above. I don't believe, That anyone, Could belong, In the company, And fellowship, Of the apostle Paul, Without hearing, About Christ.

[50 : 30] Often he told, Of the Jesus, As one who had, Totally altered, And transformed, The course of his own life, In such a gracious way.

Just as one example, Remember how he wrote, In his letter, To the Galatians, For through the law, I died to the law, So that I might live to God.

I have been crucified, With Christ. It is no longer I, Who live, But Christ, Who lives in me. And the life, He says, I now live in the flesh.

I live by faith, In the son of God, Who loved me, And gave himself, For me. The life, I now live in the flesh, I live by faith, And the son of God, Who loved me, And gave himself, For me.

Such a person, Cannot, Be silent long, About Christ, And what he has done, For them.

[51 : 38] They need to tell, About this Christ. So this woman, No longer listened, Solely with a natural ear, But she now, Possessed, The ear of faith, Her ear, Had been opened, To the word, And having her heart opened, Her taste buds, Had tasted, Of the sweetness, Of the truth.

The obedience, Of faith, Had entered, Into her life. The joy, Of salvation, Filled, Her heart. She could now, Follow the experience, Of the psalmist, When he wrote, About the Lord, Saying, You have said, Seek my face.

And you remember, His response, My heart says to you, Your face, Lord, Do I seek. It certainly, Was Paul, Who preached, But it is always, God, Who gives the increase.

The Lord, Uses many messengers, But none able, To unlock, The heart, But God alone. And this woman, Began to find herself, Within the message.

I don't know, How well she knew, The Old Testament scriptures, But if she did, She may, Have, Found herself, Within this passage, I will give you, I will give you, A new heart, And a new spirit, I will put within you, I will remove, The heart of stone, From your flesh, Give you a heart of flesh, I will put my spirit, Within you, And cause you, To walk in my statutes, And be careful, To obey my rules.

[53 : 23] So, Despite the expensive nature, Of the cloth, That she manufactured, And sold, It couldn't hide, The sin-born nakedness, Of her shame, No clothing, Can do that, Except, The robe, Of the righteousness, Of Christ, Being imputed, To us, By faith alone, The Lord, Opened her heart, And often that's how, The Lord works, Through the preaching, Of the gospel, People converted, And brought into the kingdom, Of the son of his love, Without any great drama, From the outside, Any obvious drama, We're not told, Of any of the other women, Were aware, Of the change, That was taking place, In the life, Of this woman,

We're not told, Even if the word, Was blessed, To the lives, Of others, In that small audience, Apart from this woman, The Lord, Walking, Secretly, From the inside, In the life, And heart, Of this woman, An opened heart, An opened door, And finally, An opened home, We are shown the fruit, If you like, Of an opened heart, And part of that fruit, Is an opened home, This woman, Didn't go away, And attempt to hide, What had taken place, She had just undergone, A wonderful, Life transforming, Life transforming, Experience, And you, That's not something, That can remain hidden, Some people have tried,

But when Christ, Comes to dwell, In your heart, He will make, His presence known, Through your lifestyle, Through your speech, Through your practices, And so on, And so with this woman, There is the public, Act of obedience, She was baptized, She was aware, Of having been cleansed, Cleansing that could, Never be achieved, By the washing of water, But which the, The sprinkling of water, In baptism, Symbolizes, As sinners, Who come short, Of the glory of God, We require to be cleansed, The efficacy, Of the atoning sacrifice, Of Christ, Requires to be applied, To our lives, And you remember, How the apostle John, Affirms, The blood of Jesus' son,

Cleanses us, From all sin, The story is told, Of a young, Woman, From Ireland, Who was in ill health, She was advised, To spend, Some time, Beside the sea, And although, She suffered, From a physical ailment, She also suffered, From an illness, That no earthly doctor, Could cure, She was under, Conviction of sin, One day, Beside the sea, As she watched, The waves break, On the shore, She read, These words, From the Old Testament, Scriptures, Who is a God, Like you, Pardoning iniquity,

Passing over, Transgression, For the remnant, Of his inheritance, He does not, Retain his anger, Forever, Because he delights, In steadfast love, He will again, Have compassion on us, He will tread, Our iniquities under foot, He will cast, All our seas, Into the depths, Of the sea, Think about, Two weeks, After that, This young woman, Had passed, Into the eternal well, But they found this, Something that she had written, And it went like this, I will cast, In the depths, Of the fathomless sea, All thy sins, And transgressions, Whatever they be, Though they mount up to heaven, Though they sink down to hell, They shall sink in the depths,

[58 : 34] And above them shall swell, All the waves of my mercy, So mighty and free, I will cast all thy sins, In the depths of the sea, And here is this woman, And she says to the apostle, And his companions, You have judged me, To be faithful to the Lord, Come to my house, And abide there, And she constrained us, And the impression, Is created, She wouldn't accept, No, For an answer, She constrained them, So you see, Her home, Became not just a place, For hospitality, But it became a place, For worship, Until a more suitable, Place of worship, Could be found, Nor do I think, That the apostle, And his companions, Would have required, Any degree,

Great degree, Of constraint, Unless they were, Testing, Her purpose of invitation, Whether it was genuine, Or not, And there is no indication, That it wasn't, You know, If like many, Who are brought, Into the kingdom, Of Christ, And the world, She would, In all probability, Have many questions, In future days, And perhaps, The questions, Might have arisen, Pretty soon in her life, Especially, When she heard, The testimony, Of the damsel, Processed with a spirit, Of divination, Slave girl, Or when she heard, The testimony, Of the jailer, Their experience, Was so unlike, The experience, That she had, And she might be saying, Well I didn't have, That experience, I didn't have, Such a graphic, Dramatic experience,

I remember, As a very young believer, Being present, At I think, The very first question, Meeting, That I ever heard, In my, Home congregation, And, When I heard, The men speak, If some of them, Were, Somewhat similar, To my own experience, I felt, Greatly uplifted, And then I heard, Others speak, And they were, Totally different to me, And I felt, Downcast, And despondent, But so it is, And you learn, That everybody, Is not the same, Nobody is a clone, Of another, When it comes, To being brought, Into the kingdom, Of grace, But if she had, These questions, Might she not, Have derived, Much comfort, From the letter, That was sent, To the church, At Philippi,

And that would have, Been read out, When she would hear, Those blessed, And encouraging words, Read out, I am sure of this, That he who began, A good work in you, Will bring it, To completion, At the day, Of Jesus Christ, And although, Our beginning, Is important, What really counts, And what really matters, Is how we make progress, In the life of faith, And how we come, To the end of life here, Is it by leaning, On Christ, As your beloved, Alone, That's what's really important, So here is this woman, Here is our text today, We came to Philippi, That was the open door, Place where, An opened heart, Was opened by the power, Of almighty God, That led to an opened house,

Place of fellowship, And communion, And worship, A place of hospitality, So can you say today, That you find yourself, Among those, Whose hearts have been opened, Does a consequence, Whose home has been opened, Christ, The king, Of your home, Let us pray, Eternal God, We thank thee, For the way, In which thou, Does bring, Men and women, And boys and girls, Into the kingdom, Of the son of thy love, We bless thee, That that work, Is ongoing, And will continue, Until the end of time, Until all, Whom thou hast purpose, To save, Are brought into the kingdom, And then, And then, The Lord shall come,

[63 : 42] O keep us in thy grace, And the glory shall be thine, In Jesus name we ask it, Amen. Let us conclude, By singing, To God's praise, From Psalm 104, Psalm 104, And at verse 33, I think Lydia could sing these words, I will sing to the Lord Most High, So long as I shall live, And while I be in half, I shall to my God praises give, Of whom my meditation, Shall sweet thoughts to me afford, And as for me,

I will rejoice in God, My only Lord, From earth let sinners be consumed, Let ill men no more be, O thou my soul, Bless thou the Lord, Praise to the Lord give ye, Let us sing these verses, I will sing to the Lord Most High, Amen.

I will sing to the Lord Most High, So long as I shall live, And while I be in half, I shall, To my God blesses still, Often my meditation, Sweet thoughts to me afford, And as for me, I will rejoice, In God my only Lord, From earth let sinners be consumed,

Let them may no more be, O thou my soul, Bless thou the Lord, Praise to the Lord give ye, Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, The love of God the Father, Fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit, Rest on and abide with you all, Now and forever, Amen.