

Lydia

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Preacher: Rev Iver Martin

[0 : 0 0] it with me. So setting sail for Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia, and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days, and on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira.

A seller of purple goods, who was a worshipper of God, the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. After she was baptized and her household as well, she urged us, saying, if you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay. And she prevailed upon us.

That psalm that we've just sung, Psalm 87, it's about the gospel. It's what we call a prophetic psalm, one that tells the story of what God is doing throughout the whole world in every age. But it uses the picture of the city of Jerusalem, which of course was the prominent place in the Old Testament, and indeed in the New Testament. Not because geographically the city has any more importance than anyone else, but because that was the place that God chose to place his temple and to descend amongst his own people. And that was the place where, which was the headquarters, if you like, of the king of the King David, as we've been seeing over the past few months. That's where his palace was, and that's where the temple was going to be. But that was where God's name was going to be worshipped and praised, and where his people were going to gather together, and where God was going to make himself known, first of all to Israel, to his people Israel, but then from Jerusalem was going to spread the gospel, the message of Jesus having coming into the world and having given himself on the cross. So Jerusalem is a hugely significant place in the Bible. And it's about Jerusalem that this psalm was written, Psalm 87. And when you read it very carefully, and you have to read it carefully, you have to ask a lot of questions in order to try and extrapolate from it what the message of the psalm is. It's about people who actually come from different parts of the world.

Now that wasn't true in Jerusalem in the Old Testament. And if the Jews had had their way, it wasn't true. It certainly wasn't ever their intention that it should be the case.

In any age, they wanted Jerusalem for themselves. But here, right in the heart of the Old Testament, and in the heart of God, there is his plan that Jerusalem would be filled with people from all over the world, not just people who were culturally and ethnically Jews. They were people from all, of all colors and tribes and nations and different languages. Every one of them an individual in their own right. And every one of them, and this is, here's where the paradox lies. Every one of them, even although they came from different parts of the world, they were born in Jerusalem. Now that's what's meant to make you ask questions. How can you be born in Jerusalem if you come from Ethiopia?

[3 : 36] Or how can you be born in Jerusalem if you come from Egypt or Tyre or Sidon or anywhere else in the world? How can you be born in Jerusalem? That's a contradiction, isn't it? Well, that's the paradox that God wants us to notice. And that's where the gospel comes in. Because the truth is that wherever we come from in the world, whatever nationality we are in the world, whatever color or tribe or nation, if we have come to faith in Jesus, we have been born again. And we have been born in Jerusalem, in God's city, in his kingdom. That's what the psalm is all about. Hundreds, thousands of people, and they're all celebrating. They're celebrating not to please themselves. There's far more to it than that. There's far more joy to it than that. The joy that God's people know is a lasting joy. It's a permanent joy. There's a depth to the joy that you can never get anywhere else in even the happiest places in the world. No one can give you the joy that God can give you through the Lord Jesus Christ.

And all of these people are celebrating this one thing. They're celebrating what God has done for them in Jesus Christ in rescuing them from sin and in opening their eyes to see the glory of God and in changing their direction and their lives from then forevermore. One of them is called Lydia.

And this is the person that we meet in this chapter. Every one of them has a name. Every one of them has a story. They all have their testimony as to how exactly God led them to know himself. Just the same way as every one of you, if you're a Christian, you have your own story. It'll be slightly different from everyone else. And yet it's a story that tells of how God led you to himself. And Lydia has her story.

We don't know much about it, but we know enough to know that whatever her background was, that she ended up on this day listening to the greatest message she had ever heard in all her life. And that was the moment her heart was opened and her life was turned around.

And so it's important to stop for a moment and not just to rush through a chapter like this. I know it's a narrative, it's in story form, but it's important to stop and to ask what is God doing?

[6 : 23] And what is God saying? And how can Lydia's experience and what God did in the life of Lydia, how can it connect with me and us this evening? I hope it can, because God's word is the living word. It's the word in which he speaks directly to us because we too are souls, we too are human beings and our greatest need in the whole world is to know God and to discover him through Jesus Christ and to know his forgiveness in our hearts. So that's why I want to stop here this evening and to look at this story. I want to look at three workings. I want to look at it perhaps in terms of going into intensive care unit in a hospital. Some of you work in a hospital and so you know exactly what goes on far better than I do in an intensive care unit. Sometimes as a minister we go into hospitals on a fairly regular basis and sometimes we have to go into an ICU, an intensive care unit.

And that's really what gives you, what really gives you the sense of life and death. I suppose we should always have that sense of life and death, but in an ICU you see how life hangs in the balance.

The first thing you see when you walk in very often to an ICU is all the machines that are everywhere and the people that are everywhere and they're talking to one another and they're rushing around and some of them have got clipboards or notebooks in their hands and they're operating these machines and making sure that all the levels and the dials and the displays are correct and they're making adjustments. Every adjustment is of crucial importance. And right in the middle of this this array of machines, right in the middle of this circle of machines is one single person and it appears as if the whole hospital is focused on this one particular person. That's because the life of that person is in danger probably and the life of that person is in the balance and every effort is being made to make sure that that person is saved if at all possible. That's how valuable human life is.

We know that. Nature itself, if I can use that term, tells us the value of human life. And I would suggest to you that that is an indication of the existence of God. God has placed it within our hearts to recognize the value of human life quite rightly. Well this is like an ICU. The Bible and the gospel is like an ICU where everything revolves around this one person. This chapter is an ICU in which God is making several things all come together and people come together and all the stops are pulled out for the sake of this one person. It shouldn't surprise us when we know the book of the Acts of the Apostles and indeed the rest of the Bible. You remember how very often it was for one single person that a whole chapter is dedicated to like John chapter 4 where Jesus meets the woman at the well.

In fact the disciples came and it's like they're like what's he doing talking to one woman? This is the savior of the world. This is the Messiah. This is the son of God and he's talking to a Samaritan woman. And they of course they looked down upon women in those days and they looked down on them. That's one way in which the gospel completely radicalized people's prejudices.

[10 : 05] It was the gospel that gave women the dignity that they deserved and that they were always meant to have. It's the gospel that does that and that's why in the New Testament a great deal of dignity.

Don't ever listen to anybody that tells you that the Bible is misogynist. It isn't. That women have a central place in the life of the church. And women had a central place in the life of Jesus. His friends were women, Mary and Martha, Mary Magdalene and so on and the woman at the well for whom he stopped and he spent a considerable length of time just for the sake of that one woman and her salvation which of course he accomplished at the end of the conversation. By the time that woman went back to call to tell the people who she had met she was a changed person. And it's the same with this woman Lydia who Paul met. All the stops are pulled out in order for God to come into the life of this one woman. I want you to notice first of all how the working of providence comes together for the sake of this one woman. Providence is the what of how God orders events on a day-by-day basis from the outside and from the inside in order to accomplish his secret unknown plan.

Providence works everywhere. It works in you. It works in me. God orders his own purposes to pass. First of all if you read the whole of the chapter and the chapter before you find that that this was all part of a process that started off on the day of Pentecost when the church the New Testament church was born and from there the gospel spread into the known world into the Roman Empire sometimes through difficult circumstances like persecution and and through the apostles being arrested and some of them being put to death for the sake of their faith in Jesus. But one thing led to another and here was Paul to cut a long story short having decided to revisit some of the churches that he visited a year ago that he that he established a year ago by preaching the gospel to them. He decided to go back first of all he wanted Barnabas to go with him then he fell out with Barnabas at the end of chapter 15.

They went their separate ways that wasn't to last a lifetime. They came back together again. They reconciled and we saw that this morning in the seminary. But this was Paul he this time took Silas with him and he took he took a Timothy who was a young convert a young man showing great promise and ability and he was Timothy came from Lystra and he later became of course a pastor in his own right.

And they were in the process of visiting the churches that they had established a year ago. Now chapter 16 is one of the most fascinating chapters because it tells us of how the of a kind of a tension that there was between what Paul thought was best and what he intended to do or what he wanted to do and what God thought was best and what God wanted to do.

[13 : 39] And guess who won? Thankfully God won. Because it appears that on one occasion Paul wanted to go to Asia which was if you this is where you need a map this is where it would help so much to have a map.

If you can think of if you're into geography you can think of the country of Turkey because that's where it all was Turkey. And you start off at the southeast corner of Turkey just where the troubles with Syria are at the moment and work your way slightly northwest across Turkey that's the route that Paul took.

Now at one point Paul wanted to go south into what was known then as Asia Minor. But lo and behold the Holy Spirit forbade him.

That's what we read in verse 6. The Holy Spirit forbade him. That's all we know. We don't know anything about the details of how the Holy Spirit did not give them permission to go into Asia Minor.

So you have a kind of conflict. Paul wants it to go one way. God says no I don't want you to go that way. Then in verse 7 they are tempted to go to Bithynia which was in the opposite direction.

[14:57] This time it was in north. Presumably because Paul hadn't visited Asia Minor neither had he visited Bithynia. So he naturally wanted to go where the gospel where the gospel needed to be preached in.

Once again guess what happened. The spirit of Jesus did not allow them. Same thing happens again. By the way. The Holy Spirit that we read about in verse 6.

And the spirit of Jesus that we read about in verse 7. Exactly the same person of the Trinity. Different names. In one case it's the Holy Spirit.

In another case it's the Spirit of Jesus. It's the same Holy Spirit. Just different titles. That's just in the passing. But what it shows us is that God had a plan in mind.

That he wasn't revealing to the Apostle Paul. Now beforehand in the life of the church God was intervening at various points by ways of visions and dreams.

[16:02] These visions and dreams were becoming less and less and less frequent. Paul was having to rely on the truth alone that God's Spirit was leading and guiding him from day to day.

Just as he does with you and me. Are we aware of that? If you're a believer today. Are you aware? Do you live in the constant awareness or the regular awareness?

I know perhaps where your lives are so full of busyness that it's very hard sometimes to remember these great central truths. But when the going gets tough that's where we come back to isn't it?

We come back to this great truth that come what may God's Spirit dwells within me. And he's there for a purpose and he will bring about his own plan.

He will bring it about. And Paul along with the other disciples was having to rely upon that truth alone. That he was being guided by the Holy Spirit into the places that God wanted him to go.

[17:10] Even if it meant going to places that he knew little about and that he had never been before. As was the case in this chapter. He had never been in Europe before.

That's exactly where God was taking him to. He was taking him to Thessalonica. Rather to Macedonia I should say. And on into what we.

The region of the world that you and I live in today. Europe. If it hadn't been for this chapter. We wouldn't be here. This is our roots. This is our ancestry. Our spiritual ancestry.

This is our history. How the gospel came to the west. And that's where it connects with where we are this evening.

But it connects in more ways than that. Just a historical sense. It connects in a spiritual sense. Because we can relate I hope. To what is going on in this place.

[18 : 07] At the end. God literally takes Paul. As he makes his way in a northwest direction. Through what we now know as Turkey. He takes him to the coast. Where do you go? When you're on the edge of the sea.

That was the moment. At the very last moment. At the very eleventh hour. That God spoke to him in a dream. In fact. It wasn't the voice of God that spoke to him in a dream.

Paul saw in a dream. A man. From Macedonia. Which was the other side of the sea. And the man is saying to him. Come over and help us.

Now I think that is really significant. Because what that shows us. Is that the church needed help. The gospel needed to be expanded.

And it needed Paul's gifts. And his commitment. And his obedience. To have the faith. To go. Just like Abraham in the Old Testament. To go where he had never gone before.

[19 : 07] To rely upon God alone. And he didn't even know. When or if. Or how. Or whether he would ever. Come back.

That's the adventure of faith. That's the adventure that we've all. Started out on. It's a lifetime. Of new discovery. Of risk.

Of trust. Of reliance. Upon God. Even if you think tonight. That you're in a mundane life. You say. Well what. I don't know. I mean. I just do the same thing every day.

My life is the same. I get up in the morning. I have my breakfast. I have the same thing for breakfast. I have the same lunch. I do the same thing every day. Come to the same home. How come. How can my life be. An unknown. Well it is.

Because. God. Is going to. God. Is going to. Open your eyes. To things. And discoveries. And new truths. That you've never. Seen.

[20 : 06] Before. And many. As a child of God. Can look back over his life. Including me. Look back over our lives. And think. If I had known. 30 years ago. How God.

Was going to. I would never have believed it. I can honestly say that tonight. I never have believed it. Make sure you're obedient to him. That's all I'm saying. Make like the apostle Paul.

Just make sure you're obedient. Make sure. That you don't. That you don't. Disobey God. In your choices.

And in your decisions. Make sure you live the life. That is glorifying. To God. As he leads you. And as he guides you. Day by day. Step by step. Even in that mundane.

Ordinary life. There's nothing mundane. About the Christian life. There is everything. That is thrilling. About knowing Jesus Christ.

[21 : 01] And following him. And being involved. So is providence. And providence. And it's God's will. Now. The same. The same is true for her. Lydia. As well. She came from a place.

Called Thyatira. Thyatira. And one of the most. One of the most. Interesting facts. Of where Thyatira was. Was.

It's right. In the middle. Of. The place. Where Paul. Wanted to go. But was forbidden to go. By the Holy Spirit. In other words.

He tries to get to Asia Minor. And somehow or other. The Holy Spirit tells him. Some way. We're not told. Don't go there. And he's forced. To go to Troas.

He's forced to cross the sea. Into Philippi. The first person he meets. The first convert. The first person who. Listens to the gospel. Comes to faith in Jesus.

[21 : 56] Is a person from the very place. He tried to get to. And that's God's way of showing. I'm in control here. You think you know.

The decisions to make. And the way to go. And the direction to take. And so on. But that's not the way it is. And I'm going to show you. Time and time again. The wonder.

Of my work. And that's what you see. In the book of the Acts of the Apostles. You see it in the whole. In the history of the church. The way in which. God. Led. Has led his people. For two thousand years.

It's interesting isn't it. That it was a man from Macedonia. Who called him in the dream. And the first person. Who comes to faith in Jesus. Was a woman. Which goes to show.

That for. Even for Paul. Paul. What lay before him. Was the most. Were the most. Unexpected circumstances. Things that he never. Expected to happen.

[22 : 56] And it's as well. We don't. Know what's happening. Because as well. Was the pleasant experiences. Like. Lydia. Coming to faith in Jesus. Shortly afterwards. There were the unpleasant experiences.

Like. If you read on in the chapter. Paul being. Lashed. And sent to prison. And having to spend the night. In a horrible. Prison cell.

In Philippi. These are the things. He had to suffer. For the sake. Of the gospel. God didn't show him. How. He was going to have to. Suffer. Because God doesn't show us.

What the future brings. So Lydia. Herself. Had come. She had to be in that place. We don't know anything about her. We don't know. We know that she was.

All we know is that she was from Thyatira. And that she was from. She was a seller of purple goods. She was a business woman. She was. Away on business. Thyatira apparently was a region.

[23 : 52] Where purple. Which was a very popular color. It was a very popular dye. And. Fashion dictated. In those days. That you wore purple. If you were anyone.

If you were a celebrity. Or if you were rich. Or if you were famous. Or if you wanted to look. Like someone who was rich. And famous. Then you wore purple. You just did. Because purple was.

A little bit rare. And it was costly. And expensive. And people recognized. It just the same way. Nothing has changed. In terms of. People are.

What they look like. And so on. And so. Lydia. Was in the business. Of seller. Selling.

Purple goods. And she had come from. Thyatira. And she was. A worshiper. Of God. What does that mean? She was a worshiper. Of God. Does that. Mean that she was.

[24 : 46] A Christian. Before she met Paul. No it doesn't. It meant. It meant that. In the course. Of her living. Amongst pagan people. She had become. Dissatisfied.

With the kind of. Lifestyle. That she saw. Around her. It happened. Quite a lot. Anyone.

Who knows. Anything. About the Roman. Lifestyle. Knows that it was. Decadent. It was. Promiscuous. It was. Amoral. Everyone. Did. What was right.

In their own. Eyes. Which meant. That marriage. Meant nothing. For example. I wonder. If this woman. Had been cheated on. By her husband.

I wonder. If she was. The victim. Of abuse. Or some. Unhappy. Experiences. That were.

[25 : 38] Part. And parcel. Of the kind. Of lifestyle. That was. Typical. In Roman. Society. At that time. A society. In which.

People. Do. What's right. In their own. Eyes. Doesn't. Ever. Lead. To satisfaction. And contentment. It only. Leads. To misery. And there. Were. People. At that time.

And they. Became. Increasingly. Dissatisfied. With the way. In which. They saw. People. Living. On the one. Hand. They. So-called. They. Worship. The. So-called. Gods. And there. Were. Loads. Of.

Gods. In the. Roman. World. There. Was. A. God. Of. Peace. A. God. Of. War. A. God. Of. The. Harvest. A. God. Of. Love. You name it. There. Was. A. God. For. It. But. They. Weren't. Gods. At. All. Because. They. Lived. In. Exactly. The. Same.

Way. As. Everyone. Else. They. Lived. Lives. That. Were. Full. Of. Deceit. And. Cheating. And. Lying. And. Fighting. And. Violence. And. So. Anybody. With. Half. A. Brain. Would. Have. Said.

[26 : 30] That's. This. This. Doesn't. Make. Jewish.

Community. Lived. The. Israelite. Community. Because. Remember. That. The. Jews. Were. Living. Scattered. All. Throughout. The. Roman. Empire. When. They. Saw. The.

Way. They. Lived. And. They. Saw. That. There. Was. Such. A. Radical. Difference. In. The. Way. That. The. Jewish. People. Lived. They. Wanted. To. Know. What. The. Jewish. People. Had. That. They. Didn't.

Have. And. The. More. They. Discovered. The. More. They. Discovered. That. The. Jews. Didn't. Believe. In. Lots. Of. Gods. They. Believed. In. One. God. To. Whom. They. Were. Ultimately. Accountable.

And. Who. Had. Given. A. Law. Which. Had. To. Be. Obeyed. On. Pain. Of. Death. Now. Whatever. You. Think. Of. That. It. Makes. Sense. Because.

[27 : 29] If. God. Is. God. If. He. Really. Truly. Is. God. Then. A. Were. Accountable. To. Him. And. B. That. What. He. Says. He. Means. On. Pain.

Of. Death. And. What. These. People. Notice. Was. That. The. Way. The. Jewish. People. Lived. It. Reflected. What. They. Believed. In. It. Made.

Sense. It. Came. Together. And. So. Many. Of. These. People. Like. Cornelius. Was. Another. One. In. Chapter. Ten. Many.

Of. These. People. Like. Lydia. They. Started. Worshipping. In. The. Synagogue. They. Were. Kind. Of. Observers. If. You. Like. They. Weren't. Real. Jews. They. Were. Kind. Of. In. Limbo. If. You.

Like. They. Were. They. Were. Fascinated. And. Interested. In. In. What. The. Old. Testament. Said. They. Were. Hungry. For. The. Truth. And.

[28 : 24] So. Somehow. This. Woman. Lydia. Found. Herself. With. Other. Women. Who. Were. Of. The. Same. Mind. And. They. Were. Praying. Together. Asking. I'm. Sure. For. God. To.

Somehow. Make. Himself. Known. To. Them. And. To. To. To. To. They. Were. Seeking. God. And. So. When. Paul. Arrived. And.

When. He. Started. Opening. Up. The. Gospel. It. Was. The. Story. That. They. Had. Been. Waiting. For. Their. Whole. Lives. It. Was. The. Message. That. Finally. Once.

And. For. All. Made. Sense. Everything. Came. Together. This. Was. The. God. Who. Lydia. Now.

Was. Making. Himself. Known. To. Her. In. The. Person. Of. Jesus. Christ. I'm. Sure. She. Had. A. hundred. And. One. Questions. To. Ask. Paul. And. I'm. Sure. That's. The. Reason. Why. She.

[29 : 17] Wanted. The. Disciples. To. Stay. With. Her. So. That. She. Could. Expand. Her. Knowledge. And. Grow. In. Her. Faith. But. What. We. Know. Is. This. That.

Her. Heart. God. Opened. God. Opened. Her. Heart. There's. So. Little.

That's. Known. About. This. Woman's. Conversion. But. What. We. Do. Know. Is. What's. Important. There's. Two. Things. First. Of. All. What's. Going. On. On. The. Inside. Verse.

14. Who. Was. A. Worship. But. The. Lord. Opened. Her. Heart. But. It. Doesn't. Just. Stop. There. Because. When. God. Opened. Her. Heart.

It. Led. To. Her. Attending. This. Is. What. We. Read. She. Paid. Attention. To. What. Was. Said. By. Paul. There's. Two. Things. Going. On. One. Is. Going.

[30 : 09] On. On. On. On. On. On. The. Outside. But. These. Two. Both. Of. These. Two. Things. Have. To. Go. Together. God. Is. Doing. The. Work. On. The. Inside. She. On. The. Outside.

Is. Responding. To. The. Message. That. Paul. Is. Sharing. With. Her. The. Message. Of. The. Gospel. Now. Anybody. Who.

Knows. Anything. About. Paul. Either. In. Acts. Or. The. Rest. Of. Them. Knows. Exactly. What. The. Things. That. Paul. Said. Where. Paul.

Only. Spoke. About. One. Thing. The. Reason. He. Went. From. City. To. City. And. Town. To. Town. Was. To. Share. The. Gospel. He. Said. My. Life. He. Said. Is. Is.

Wrapped. Up. With. The. Gospel. Woe. Is. Me. If. I. Do. Not. Preach. The. Gospel. From. Day. One. From. The. Moment. That. He. Met. Jesus. On. The. Road. To. Damascus. That. The. Work. That. Jesus. Gave. Him. To. Do.

[31 : 00] And. From. That. Moment. Onwards. Every. Waking. Hour. Was. Spent. In. The. Service. Of. Jesus. Christ. And. So. It. Is. There. We. Don't. Need. To. We.

Don't. Need. To. Guess. What. He. Said. He. Would. Have. Spoken. About. The. One. True. And. Living. God. Which. He. Knew. About. Anyway. He.

Would. Have. Spoken. About. How. We. Have. Become. Separated. From. God. By. Sin. He. Would. Have. Told. The. Group. Of. How. God. So. Loved.

The. World. That. He. Gave. His. Only. Son. And. That. God. Became. A. Man. The. Person. Of. Jesus. Christ. He. Would. Have. Gone. On.

To. Talk. About. The. Life. Of. Jesus. And. The. Death. Of. Jesus. And. What. That. Death. Meant. By. Way. Of. Sacrifice. Jesus. Dying. Instead. Of. Us. Taking.

[31 : 54] On. Our. Sin. Instead. Of. Our. Having. To. Be. Punished. For. Our. Sin. He. Jesus.

Went. Up. To. Heaven. Once. Again. And. That. He. Would. Have. Spoken. Also. About. How. One. Day. Jesus. Will. Come. Again. In. Glory. And. Receive. Us.

To. Himself. And. The. Dead. Will. Be. Raised. Gloriously. And. We. Will. Go. Forever. To. Be. With. The. Lord. And.

Everything. That. Paul. Said. I'm. I'm. Sure. That. There. Was. Much. Mystery. And. It. Just. The. Same. Way. As. There. Still. Is. Loads. Of. Questions. Loads. Of. Things. We. Don't. Understand.

How. Can. God. Become. Man. How. Can. The. God. Who. Created. The. Universe. Become. A. Baby. In. The. Arms. Of. His. Mother. Mary. How.

[32 : 52] Can. God. Need. His. Nappies. Of.

God. Into. This. World. How. Can. God. In. The. Person. Of. Jesus. Christ. Die. How. Can. He. Be. Betrayed.

Nailed. To. A. Cross. And. Yet. Whatever. The. Mystery.

There. Was. In. The. Message. Of. The. Gospel. Her. Heart. Was. Open. To. It. And. Once. And. For. All. She.

Discovered. What. She. Was. Looking. For. Which. Was. Jesus. Christ. The. Way. And. The. Truth. And. The. Life.

[33 : 48] And. The. More. She. Heard. The. More. She. Wanted. To. Hear. The. Hungrier. She. Was. The. Hungrier. She. Became. The. More. She. Fed. The. More. She. Wanted. Her.

And. That's. Always. The. Same. When. A. Person. Comes. To. Jesus. Everyone. Has. Their. Different. Testimony. Their. Different.

Story. Who. Knows. What. Led. To. This. Moment. Who. Knows. What. Took. Her. To. Philippi. In. The. First. Place. And. How. It. Was. That. She. Came.

To. Where. She. Was. That. Day. We. Know. How. Paul. Came. To. Philippi. And. We. Know. That. God. Brought. Them. Together. But. We. Know. This.

One. Thing. That. The. Word. Of. God. Meant. Everything. To. Her. From. That. Moment. Onwards. Because. It. Was. The. Word. Of. God. That. Spoke. To. Her.

[34 : 43] About. Her. Own. Sinfulness. And. That's. The. Way. It. Still. Speaks. To. Us. Today. It. Convicts. Us. With. That. Extraordinary. Exclusive. Power. In.

Which. We. Are. Put. Into. The. Spotlight. And. In. Which. We. Get. To. See. For. The. First. Time. Ever. Our. Own. Guilt. Before. God. And. Our. Own. Helplessness.

Before. God. And. In. Which. We. Get. To. See. For. The. First. Time. Ever. That. There. Is. A. Way. Of. Salvation. Of.

Newness. Of. Life. A. Way. In. Which. Our. Sin. Can. Be. Washed. Away. You.

Might. Say. Tonight. Well. God. Opened. Our. Heart. That's. What. I. Thought. All. Along. That's. What. The. Bible. Teaches. It's. All. It's. All. To. Do. With. God. Opening. A. Person's. Heart. What. Can. I. Do.

[35 : 42] Well. There's. Two. Strands. To. That. The. New. Testament. Is. Absolutely. Clear. On. This. That. Our. Salvation. What.

So. What. About. That. But. Our. Salvation. Is. Also. When. You. Listen. To. The. Gospel. And. Believe.

What. God. Is. Saying. To. You. About. Yourself. And. When. God. Tells. You. That. There. Is. A. Savior. Jesus. Christ. Who. Has. Died. For. Sin. And.

Who. As. You. And. Invites. You. To. Come. To. Know. Him. As. Your. Own. Lord. And. Savior. Then. The.

Question. Is. Will. You. Accept. Him. Lydia. Did. She. Listened. To. Paul. And.

[36 : 40] She. Accepted. The. Message. Of. The. Gospel. As. The. Message. That. Changed. Her. Life. Once. And. For. All. And.

As. A. Result. Of. That. Of. Course. She. Was. Baptized. That's. What. We. Read. In. Verse. Fifteen. She. Was. Baptized. As. Was. Everyone. Who. Came. To. Faith. The. Philippi.

The. The. The. The. The. The. Enoch. The. Ethiopian. Enoch. In. Chapter. Eight. Paul. Himself. And. So. Baptized. As. They. Came. To. Faith. In. Jesus.

Christ. The. New. Testament. Tells. Us. That. There. Are. Two. Sacraments. There's. Baptism. Lydia. Was. Baptized.

But. There's. Also. The. Lord's. Supper. Which. We. Are. Going. To. Have. Next. Lord's. Day. In. Which. God's. People. Are. Going. To. Sit.

[37 : 34] At. The. Lord's. Table. And. Remember. His. Death. The. Lord's. Supper. Is. Also. A. Way. In. Which. We. Can. Make. Our. Faith. Known. And. Public.

In. Which. We. Can. Confirm. Our. Faith. In. A. Tangible. Way. What. Is. On. The. In. Which. What. Is. On. The. Inside. Is. Becomes. Something.

On. The. Outside. Now. I'm. Not. Saying. It. Isn't. Already. But. God. Commands. Us. The. Lord. Commands. His. People. He. Invites. His. People. He. Urges. Them.

And. Anything. That. God. Commands. Us. To. Do. Is. Always. For. Our. Good. And. For. Our. Strengthening. And. So. What. That. Means. Is. That. If. The. Lord. Has.

Opened. Your. Heart. And. If. The. Word. Of. God. In. The. Gospel. Means. Everything. To. You. If. Your. Life. And. Your. Salvation. Depends.

[38 : 28] Upon. One. Thing. Alone. Which. Is. Jesus. Christ. His. Death. His. Resurrection. Then. His. Command. To. You. Is. To. Do. This. In. Memory. Of. Me. And. He. Says. It. For. Our. Own. Strengthening. For. Our. Own. Good. Which.

Is. The. Reason. Why. We. Should. Never. Say. Oh. Well. Because. I'm. Conscious. Of. A. Particular. Sin. In. My. Own. Life. Then. Sort. It. Out. Confess. That.

Sin. Come. To. The. Lord. Now. And. Turn. Away. From. It. But. Then. Come. To. The. Lord's. Table. Come.

As. You. Are. Come. Depending. On. What. He. Has. Done. For. You. And. The. Ong. Cleansing. Power. Of. The. Blood. Of. Jesus.

[39 : 25] Christ. Lydia. Was. Baptized. But. She. Also. Gave. Herself. To. The. Fellowship. Of. The. Other.

Believers. Who. She. Now. Had. Come. To. Know. As. Her. Brothers. And. As. Her. Sisters. In. The. Lord. God. Doesn't. Want. You. To. Be. On. Your. Own. As.

A. Christian. He. Wants. Us. To. Be. Together. As. His. People. He. Wants. Us. Us. To. Serve. One. Another. He. Wants. Us. To. Help. One. Another. To. Pray. For. One. Another. To.

Encourage. One. Another. In. The. Lord. And. That. Fellowship. Is. Hugely. Important. A. Hugely. Important. Feature. Of.

What. It. Is. To. Sit. At. The. Lord's. Table. As. I. Hope. Will. Do. Next. Week. If. You. Have. Come. To. Know. The. Lord. As.

[40 : 16] Your. Savior. Then. To. Remember. What. God. Has. Done. In.

Christ. Let's. Bow. Our. Heads. In. Prayer. Our. Father. In. Heaven. We. Bless. You. For. The. Gospel. And. We. Pray. That. That. You. Will. Encourage. Us. And.

Strengthen. Us. And. Guide. Us. Lord. And. Remind. Us. Afresh. Of. What. You. Have. Done. And. What. You. Are. Continuing. Voices.

Govern. Our. Choices. We. Pray. Give. Us. To. Trust. In. You. Lord. Even. Though. We. Don't. See. The. Future. Give. Us. To. Trust. In. What. For. Us. Is.

Unknown. But. For. You. It. Is. All. In. The. Plan. Oh. Lord. Make. Us. Obedient. To. You. And. Lord. May. May. We. Have. Open. Hearts. To. Your. Word.

[41 : 15] In. Jesus. Name. Amen. Psalm. 126. To. Close. With.