

# Study on Acts no.11

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let us turn now to consider words you will find in the portion we read of God's Word in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 16, verse 13.

Acts, chapter 16, verse 13. Last week we considered the sermon that Paul preached at Pisidia Antioch during his first missionary journey when he penetrated into the region of Galatia in Asia Minor.

After leaving that area, they continued on their journey to certain places such as Lystra, where, for example, we read that in chapters 13 and 14 that the pagan community there deified Paul and Barnabas.

They thought that they were, as they put themselves, gods come down from the heavens. And after Paul and Barnabas had sought to correct their attitude, they were then persecuted and stoned, and Paul indeed was left for dead.

They escaped, in any case, and after a period of time they retraced their steps, and after about three years made their way back home to the church's headquarters at Antioch, and there reported on the success of their mission.

[ 2 : 30 ] And it was recognized there that a notable beginning had been made by the New Testament church, and they believed that greater things were to follow.

They recognized that Christianity was no longer a mere Jewish, that the Christians were not a mere Jewish sect, but that Christianity in the hands of the apostles and by the blessing of the Spirit was becoming a worldwide movement.

However, the reception of the Gentiles into the Christian church posed a very real problem for the Jewish leaders. And so they had to assemble in Jerusalem for the first general assembly of the Christian church.

The leaders came together in Jerusalem, and you have an account of that meeting in Acts chapter 15. And after they had sorted out the problems and decided to send letters from the assembly to the various Christian congregations, we read here in chapter 15 at verse 36 that after the assembly, Paul and Barnabas decided to determine to go back again on their missionary journey and revisit the places that they had been to.

But it was at that stage that the Lord stepped in, and he stepped in a most unusual way. Barnabas and Paul couldn't agree on whether to take John Mark with them or not.

[ 4 : 12 ] Barnabas was all for it, and Paul was all against it. And so, human age be what it is, they couldn't resolve their difficulties, and they had to split up.

Barnabas took John Mark with them and went back to the area or took the route of the first missionary journey, sailed off again to Cyprus. Paul decided to go another way, and this time he took with him Silas.

And we take up now the story of this second missionary journey, where after a time, Paul and Silas are joined by Timothy, and eventually these three are joined by Luke.

Luke. You will notice in verse 10, a new pronoun comes into play in the Acts of the Apostles here. After Paul had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia.

That man is now Luke, the historian, who has written this account, and to whom we are indebted for the history of the Christian church in the New Testament, as it is recorded in the Book of Acts.

[ 5 : 37 ] The historian, Luke, who was also a doctor, joins them now. And so, these four men are pictured one night, or one day, on the coast of the Aegean Sea.

And it was there that Paul had this vision. The Lord had stepped in a second way. Paul wanted, Paul's restless spirit, wanted to press on and push into the interior of southern, of Asia Minor, where they had been before, to Galatia.

He wanted, he had decided to go and see these new churches, see how they were doing. But the Lord, time and again, stepped in, worried here, the spirit wouldn't allow him.

The spirit wouldn't allow him. And this way in which he recognised guidance. Guidance, as you know, can be a terribly difficult thing to know. But in this case, Paul recognised that the spirit was holding him back.

He wasn't allowing him to go his own way. And it was then that he had this vision. This man, whoever he was, crying, come over into Macedonia and help us.

[ 6 : 51 ] And in response to that cry, the four of them sailed across that narrow strip of water and landed on the seashore of Europe.

And here we have the account, an account, or the account, of the gospel coming to Europe. Four men coming with a message that was to have momentous consequences for this continent.

It is doubtful, it has been said, it is doubtful that there was ever a more important mission undertaken in the history of this continent where these four men, when these four men landed at Macedonia.

And, after he had landed at Samothracia and they came next day to Neapolis, they then arrived at Philippi. And here, three people were contacted with the gospel.

This is quite interesting. As far as we know, there was no Christian church or congregation in Europe at this time.

[ 8 : 09 ] and it's strange how the Lord works, how the Lord builds a cause or a church or a congregation.

It's strange how unpromising its beginnings can look. Do you realise that the beginning of the Christian church in Europe started with a woman?

Lydia, the first convert that we know of in Europe. Then, her conversion followed by the conversion of the young slave girl who was a fortune teller.

She too came under the influence of the truth. And then, this rough character, the Philippian jailer, the prison officer who was looking after Paul and Silas when they were thrown into prison because of the uproar that the conversion of the slave girl fortune teller caused in Philippi.

There you were the seats of the New Testament church in Philippi, the seats of the Christian church in Europe. These three people, so unlikely, Lydia, commercial traveler, a fortune teller, and a jailer.

[ 9 : 25 ] And from them sprang up the church to which Paul in later years was to write a letter called the letter to the Philippians, a letter which tells of the love of a Christian company, love which probably no Christian congregation in the world has attained to since, a church which is known for the fervor and for the practicality of its Christian love.

Well, that's how it began. That's the story that we have here in Acts chapter 16. But tonight I want to hold in with you on the conversion of this young woman, this woman who is named Lydia.

And I see the two or three things that come to light in her conversion. And three things that come to light, I believe, in the conversion of every single individual if you apply it in this way.

And I want to consider with you, first of all, the providence of God that played a part in her conversion. Then notice with you secondly, the part that prayer played in her conversion.

And then thirdly, the part that the power of God played in her conversion. The Lord opened her heart. And then fourthly, the proof that she gave of her conversion.

[ 10 : 57 ] she applied to herself the things that were spoken by Paul or she attended to the things that were spoken by Paul. That was one evidence of the proof. And the second evidence was her request that if they had judged her faithful, to lodge or to stay in her house.

These four things then, in connection with the conversion of Lydia, four things that you might remember, I'm not, as you know, probably if I gave more time to it, I would use this more often. I'm not given to using alliterative headings for my sermons. But here's four of them for a change. Providence, Prayer, Power, and Proof.

First of all then, the path that Providence played in her conversion. Now this woman was in the course of her business in Philippi.

Philippi was really a Roman colony. I'll put it more specific here. It was colonized mainly by Italians.

[ 12 : 11 ] And this woman was from Thyatira. Now this is interesting. She didn't belong to Philippi. Do you know where she came from? Asia Minor.

The very place that Paul had wanted to go to. But the Lord wouldn't let him go there. The doors were closed. And this woman who was from Asia Minor found herself in the course of her

occupation selling either dye or some kind of cloth.

We're not very sure what this means, a seller of purple, whether it was a seller of the dye that made up this color, or the seller of the cloth, selling the cloth that was known as dye.

We're not sure. Anyway, she was in Philippi, away from her homeland, in the course of her occupation, trying to sell her goods.

And here, into that very place, comes this man who had wanted to go to the place that she came from, but he couldn't. the Lord wouldn't let her. And so he arrives, directed by the Spirit of God to the place where she was, Philippi.

[ 13 : 24 ] So, in God's providence, these two meet. And they met at a prayer meeting.

They met at a prayer meeting. How significant are these, what you and I may come to look or consider as the small events in our lives.

Have you ever noticed how fun the Bible is of using the word must? He must needs pass through Samaria.

He must do this. And here, Lydia had to be in Philippi, and Paul had himself to be in Philippi.

And Lydia was in this prayer meeting because her interest was in the worship of God. And Paul arrived at this meeting because he was supremely interested in people and in communicating the gospel to them.

[ 14 : 32 ] But it would have been a poor meeting for both of them. if the Holy Spirit of God had not been there as well. Now then, I believe that providence plays a part in the conversion of every person.

Whether it be these conversions that we hear of which are sudden or instantaneous, or the conversion which is most common in the lives of people, the conversion that is gradual, or at least their recognition of being converted is something which dawns on them over a period of time.

I think there may be people, and this is one of the danger of testimony meetings I've heard, I think there may be people who seem to think that a person must be suddenly, instantaneously, and wonderfully converted somewhere, somehow, by some means.

Well, that's not the case. The majority of people come to a knowledge of the truth over, I believe, a period of time. But the thing to notice is this, the part that God's providence plays in everybody's conversion, I'm sure that there are people here tonight, maybe, there are no doubt people here tonight who were converted in a, perhaps, as they would say, in a very strange way, in a very sudden way.

Perhaps they went into a place, into a meeting, or they met someone, or they heard something, or they read something which was blessed to them there and then. And they happened to be there at the time.

[ 16 : 04 ] Others whose conversion has been gradual will look back on some instances in their lives, I'm sure of this, where they can see some events and some people who were of tremendous help to them, and people who in the hand of God enabled them to, or encouraged them and helped them to believe.

This is the way it is. I read recently of an evangelist who was holding a series of evangelistic services in Dublin, a man from London. And in that city was another man on business, also from London, as a matter of fact, a man who lived on the same street as the evangelist.

They had never met. This businessman in Dublin found himself at a loose end one night, and he was invited to go to a meeting addressed by the evangelist, and he went.

And in the wonderful providence of God, he was converted by the evangelist's sermon, or by the spirit blessing to him, the sermon. And they met after the service, and discovered that they stayed on the same street in London, and they had never seen one another.

And yet in the providence of God, they met far away from their homeland. how often it is that God's providence directs you and me to that place where God is going to bless us.

[ 17 : 34 ] And you know, I've said this before, I know, but I think it's worth repeating these things, so that you and I may attend to these things, and it's useful to have these things brought before us. For example, when you and I left our homes to come here tonight, did it ever cross your mind that in the providence of God, you and I would have to be here just for this purpose, so that God might bless this service to you and to me.

The part that providence plays in a person's conversion, in a person's life. You look back on your own life here tonight, and you see now, if that hasn't been the case with yourself.

And it's a wonderful study to see, the hand of God at various stages in your life, and the hand of God leading you and directing you to that very place where you would have to be, and if you hadn't been there, you wouldn't have got the blessing of God.

Lydia was in Philippi, in the providence of God, and in that same providence, Paul is directed by God to the same place.

And here and now, they meet in a prayer meeting. And this is the second thing I want to deal with, the place that prayer plays in the conversion of an individual.

[ 19 : 06 ] Now, what was Lydia doing at a prayer meeting in Philippi? Well, the Bible explains it to us. she was, as we read here, she was a worshipper of God.

She was of the city of Thyatira, and she worshipped God. Now, Lydia was a Gentile, and as such had come to, we're not told how this was, had come to the knowledge of the Jewish faith.

And in Philippi, there were a company of Jewish people, women, at least we know this, that there weren't sufficient Jewish adult men to necessitate the building of a synagogue in Philippi.

You know that you needed, under Jewish law, you needed ten adult men in a place before you could build a synagogue. Now, it's obvious that there was no synagogue in Philippi because there weren't enough adult Jewish men in Philippi.

And so, as the case was for Jews where there was no synagogue, they always tended to assemble together by the riverside. That is why you have Ezekiel, for example, in Babylon.

[ 20 : 28 ] Ezekiel speaking to the Jews at the riverside. That is why you have Psalm 137. by the rivers of water we sat down and we sang.

By Babel's streams we sat and wept when Zion we thought on. There is a picture for you of a group of Jews worshipping together beside a stream or a river in Babylon.

The streams of Babel. That is what it means. Jews gathering together for prayer because they did not have a building that they could go to. Now Paul as we saw last week Paul's tactics were these when he got to a place he scouted round he had a good look round he went sightseeing and he took in as much as he could of the people and the practices and the customs and he would have known that these people met by the riverside on the Sabbath day so when the Lord's day group is done for the cause of

Christ through groups of Christian women meeting for prayer without anyone knowing that they're meeting you see people don't need to parade what they're doing they don't need to advertise what they're doing we live in a day when everything must be advertised everyone must know what I'm doing what everyone else is doing well it's high time that you and I got down on knees and started doing I don't know who knows what this congregation itself may owe to people who are meeting in private without anyone knowing that they are meeting that's an aside these women were meeting together for prayer and Lydia joined with them in this prayer meeting now we're not told what she was praying for but I think that we can infer it I think we can infer from what happened what Lydia was praying for I don't think it would be wrong for us to suggest that she was praying for God's blessing upon her life praying that God would meet her to help her in her need because though she was praying her heart was still closed to the Lord we'll see this in a minute and therefore she may have been praying for something that she couldn't very well understand do you know what that is to pray not really knowing what you're praying for knowing that you need help knowing that you've got to cry to God for help but you don't know what to ask for that's perfectly biblical that's perfectly in accordance with the experience of many people who have gone before you even Paul himself could say this a man who knew what to pray for there were situations in his life where he you're here tonight you're feeling your sense of need there's a spirit of prayer born in your heart but maybe you don't know what to pray for you don't even know what to ask for but at least you know that you pray well my friend of the spirit of

[ 24 : 09 ] God has begotten a prayer in your heart you be assured of this though you may not know what to pray for God knows what you need and what you're looking for and I believe that the situation Lydia was in she was praying praying for help praying for light praying for relief praying for satisfaction praying for peace praying for God himself but notice this and I believe this is the case with every single convert that sooner or later they are brought to pray and I don't believe a soul has ever been saved without prayer some people may dispute that be that as it may I know of no example in the Bible where people have been saved without their praying for salvation even in the case of the instantaneous conversion

I believe that's what happens that the power of God takes possession of a life or of a soul and constrains that soul to breathe a prayer heavenward that is answered not that he's saved because he prays but at the same time I don't think a person is saved without prayer it was James Buchanan who put it like this there is no promise in the Bible except to prayer and that promise is unlimited and sure there is no promise in the Bible except to prayer and that promise is unlimited and sure there are countless examples of this in the Bible ask seek and you shall find knock and it shall be opened unto you and all you who are here tonight converts all you who are believers in this church night you look back on your life and see if this is not the case did the

Lord not touch your heart and constrain you to pray before you came to recognize that the Lord had answered your prayer is that not the case and if it isn't I would like to be enlightened on that myself prayer and the place that it prays in the life of the convert I believe that is what happens God convinces you of your need and you cry to God in your need and as I said earlier that doesn't mean to say that you're able to recognize what your need is but at least you pray you may not articulate prayer very well but there's a desire born in the heart for something that you don't have something that you don't have and I know myself that you can be as ignorant of the things of God even though you may be brought up in a Christian environment brought up in a Christian home though you may have heard the

Bible read every day though you may have heard grace being said in your home every day of your life when God touches your life savingly you can be so ignorant of the things of God that you feel you have to pray but you don't know what to pray for you can't put words together though you have heard words of prayer for years and years and years she was praying and I know that there is something else that people say especially about our situation here in the western highlands particularly there are some people here tonight probably who would love to go to the prayer meeting but who are kept back from going because they think that you have to be converted before you go to a prayer meeting well you've got a

Bible in your hand just as well as I have a Bible in my hands and I would love you to point out to me where you find that in the Bible there's no such thing in the Bible you don't have to go to a prayer meeting anything about conversion at all or wanting to be converted I think it's the place that the convert wants to go to and it's the place where the seeking soul will go to and it's the place where the seeking soul is going to find the Lord in the means of grace don't you think that you have to be converted to go to a prayer meeting but I say this to you if you want to be converted that's the place for you to go to because you never know what you might find in a prayer meeting and that's what left

[ 29 : 44 ] Lydia in that meeting that day she wanted to worship God because she knew that whatever she wanted whatever she needed God had it for her whenever he would care to give it and so she found herself in the prayer meeting and then that led to the third thing in her conversion the place of the power of God played in it Paul and these three men arrived in the prayer meeting and what did they do they spoke to the woman the Lord opened her heart so that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul now this is clear what happened Paul was speaking to the woman and explaining as the New Testament puts it here the things that he spoke about to the woman and as he spoke something happened to this woman her heart was opened and notice it was the

Lord who opened her heart you you never do it you it was the Lord who opened your heart and no until he opens it you will never do it and when he does it you don't need to do it he does it all he opened her heart that's the first thing conversion is God's work not you and he opened her heart to the truth that Paul was speaking to her the heart here means all the faculties of her soul her understanding her will her knowledge her conscience that's what it means you see though she was seeking the

Lord and praying to the Lord she didn't have an understanding of salvation she couldn't she couldn't as it were fit in the various pieces of the jigsaw puzzle until this man came along and he explained it to her and she saw it do you know what that is in your own life that's what happens when the gospel is blessed to you when you know blessing under the preaching of the word it's the truth that is being made clear to you that is blessed to you and through the understanding it filters into the other faculties of your soul it gets a hold of your will and of your mind and of your conscience and of your affections through the understanding this is what always happens you begin to see things better than you ever saw them before you see it's like that man remember the man to whom the Lord

restored his sight and he was being quizzed by the Jews about what happened and he was trying to explain things to them I see man I see them as trees walking

I see I'm seeing things but you know he was being to see a few weeks ago and I don't want to labour the point there are two things that happen to a soul in conversion and bear with me while I explain this to you and I know that for some of you this may be difficult but you never know my friend the Lord may bless it to you as it is explained to it again two things happen Paul or two things happened Paul spoke to them about the truth about the gospel you see that was light coming to them the light of the gospel as you have the gospel coming to you tonight and every other time you hear it the light shines in the darkness it shines out with yourself no matter how dark your understanding may be tonight you may be sitting here tonight and you may not have a clue about what

I was talking about you may not have a clue about the things of God completely in the dark and all this may be double touched to you but you see that doesn't alter the fact that the light is still coming to you the gospel is still being explained to you you see but then that's where the other thing comes in the second thing is this something happens inside a person the Lord opens the heart the spirit of God helps you inwardly to understand what is coming to you outwardly so there are two lights then in your life the light from without and the light from within and when you hear people making fun of a convert and saying oh he's seen the light you're dead right that's just what's happened he has seen the light but he was only able to see it with the light of the

[ 35 : 00 ] Holy Spirit of God shining in him enlightening his understanding of the knowledge of the things of God so that he sees that it was necessary for Christ to die I hope that I heard someone speak in the other night about this and if he's present he'll forgive me for quoting him I won't tell you who it was but I heard a man recently speaking about his conversion converted as a young man in his early twenties brought up under the Christian faith to an extent at least but this is what he said and this really fits in to what I'm trying to explain to you you know he said I was looking I was seeking the Lord but Christ I couldn't understand he said why Christ had to be in all this couldn't understand it couldn't understand it until the light dawned on that Christ had to die for sinners and that this Christ must be his saviour otherwise there was no salvation for him he saw it he was looking for it but he couldn't see it until then now it is the same

I believe with every convert not suddenly but gradually the light dawns and they see this let me give you an example of how it may happen someone doesn't feel very life is turned upside down and things aren't what they used to be and then he begins to think about the things of God the Bible prayer Christian people church Sabbath prayer meetings never used to be like that but you see he's won over gradually to recognise that it's in these things that he's going to get what he needs and after a period of time and this is what happens in the light dawns more and more and more and it is really as you look back tonight that you see that I wouldn't be surprised if most people who are Christians here tonight looking back will see that the dawning of the light the opening of the understanding the opening of the will the winning of their will to say the

Lord Jesus Christ the winning of their affections for the things of God the winning of their conscience by the word of truth so that the things that they used to do they can't do them anymore you see it's not because the church says to them you can't do that that they don't do it oh yes you'll get people writing the gazette and they're in an awful dilemma and they find fault with the church and news and the church and sky and the church everywhere that's a lot of nonsense we are not under the authority of the church as Christians as believers we are under the authority of the truth it's the truth that sets you free it's the truth that guides your life ultimately it's the truth that directs you as to what you should do and restrain you from doing the things that you ought not to do not the church the truth so as

Paul explained the God sent a son into the world Christ had to die that you may receive forgiveness what you need to believe what you need for salvation is to trust in Christ give your life to him commit your way to him as he explained these things the Lord opened her heart and the truth sank in and she saw it and she believed how do you know she believed that's the final thing the proof that she gave she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul now the meaning of the word attended here is just this she applied these things to herself the things that were spoken by Paul the gospel was preached she applied to herself not to the other woman but to herself you see my friend when you become a

Christian a convert these things become relevant not to the person beside you but to you as I was explaining last Sunday night about forgiveness and to you is this word of forgiveness sent and here is Lydia now picture her and she hears all this and this is meaningful to her the opened heart is always carried to the truth and always carries the truth back to itself meaningful to the individual believer she applied herself to the truth she listened with great interest to what he was saying and she listened with great desire and with an understanding with a delight and with an obedience to the truth that she had never had before the things spoken to her about salvation forgiveness acceptance justification so on and so on the whole of the gospel message became meaningful to her it meant something to her and I would like to think that that is true of every single convert now bear with me while

[ 41 : 04 ] I say this I know that there are people who seem to think that Christians can attend too many meetings and I happen to agree with that sentiment whatever else you and I need in this island it's not extra meetings we've got enough of them we've got a surfeit of them week in week out at the same time let us be fair and let us be honest every single instance of conversion that you have in the new testament is an instance of a person applying himself and herself to the truth in other words the Christian needs the truth needs it needs it because it feeds his faith what happened to

Lydia her heart was opened to believe and to accept the Lord what was the proof of it in her life she took as much into her heart as the Lord would give her of his word that's the meaning of it she applied it to her heart she took it to herself you can almost hear pulling these things into herself and as Paul preached pulling these things from Paul wanting more and more and more of the truth as it is in Jesus that's I believe the convert drawing the word feeding on the word drinking in the truth drinking it in wanting to know more of the truth and that is why and I know that day some people some of the young people here may think that I'm far far too hard and not encouraging enough and not trying to influence them maybe that's true enough but at the same time there's no harm in putting yourself on record for saying these things

I don't I'll be perfectly candid with you I don't like the emphasis that so often is among many Christian circles today when they seem to be more taken up with Christian music than they are with Christian doctrine I don't like it because I don't think it is a reflection of the way in which converts in the New Testament apply themselves to the means that God used for the conversion and the means that God used was the truth blessed to them by the power of the spirit and you see them on every single occasion as the opportunity presented itself meeting together around the truth drinking in the teaching of the word of God and if you don't learn more and more of the truth you don't fill your mind with the truths of the gospel the things that are spoken to you if you don't fill your mind with it you're going to grow up and you're going to form the

Christian church in 10 20 years time from now and if you are not well grounded in the truth you're going to have influences being brought to bear upon you and upon the society in which you live and they'll make encroachments into your society with things that are alien to the Christian faith and the best way of countering these forces is by getting to know the truth get to know it drink it in learn it and if I may put it like this to you far better for you than to know tens and dozens of Christian songs far better for you to know the gospels and the letters of Paul off by heart than these things and I don't think I know that some of you may not like that kind of emphasis coming from me I know that I'm aware of it and at times too painfully aware of it I can tell you but one of these days my friend you're going to look back and you're going to see who was faithful to your soul and who wasn't Lydia applied herself to the things that were spoken by Paul she drank them in and that's I would commend that practice to you I would commend it to you as a believer you and I need it I don't know enough of this Bible and I never will and you don't know enough of it either and I would like to I must say that I think it would be a joy to any minister's heart to minister to a people who are well grounded in the truth and I know that this has been the case here over the years and it saddens me I can tell you it saddens me and it's part of my heart's burden to think that there may be young

[ 46 : 43 ] Christians in our midst who are developing who are who are directing their attentions in other directions rather than this direction I'm not questioning the reality of your Christianity but I'm questioning the emphasis that are brought to bear upon it and I wish that you'd listen to my appeals to you to my counsel and to my direction and learn the truth and drink it in and continue I know I'll pay testament to you to every single one of you in this respect be found in the means of grace as

you are but see that you cultivate a desire for the things of God the things of the Bible and the teaching of the truth in company and in private on your own you've got a problem and I'll tell you what one of your problems is as a

Christian today as a young Christian that you live in an age which is not a reading age this is the age of the television and the age of the we've left behind almost now the age of the transistor this is the age of the cassette player and the telly and it's not easy to read it's not easy to read and this is a problem that you have you see that you live in this kind of age and the only best way of communicating truth to you of course is by reading it if you're not going to listen to it and I would ask you with all my heart to cultivate that practice Lydia applied herself to the things that were spoken by Paul she drank a dinner and she proved thereafter that she received and believed all that was said she was baptized in the faith being a prostrate to the Jewish faith she was baptized into the Christian faith she continued with them and she pleaded with them to enter into her house and when they were thrown out of prison afterwards after the conversion of the Philippian jailer it was Lydia said if you have judged me faithful come into my house she gave them a place in her heart and in her home that's something yes it happens in conversion the heart is open not only to the Lord and to his word but to his people the Christian wants Christian fellowship and as I've said before if you have a home and you're a convert I hope that one evidence of that conversion in your life is this that that has opened the door of your home to those who name the name of Jesus Christ see to it that they have a welcome in your heart and in your home and to give her the opportunity to bring them in that's the best company you'll ever have in all your life and after all if you're going to heaven my friend these are the people who are going to be with you in heaven that is going to be your company in the world beyond how strange that you should hope that to be your company in the world beyond if they're not your company in this present world can you see these things in your life the providence of God bringing you to the place of blessing the power of God the power of God constraining you to pray for his blessing the power of God opening your heart to receive his own word and that open heart tonight wanting more and more and more of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ and that open heart open to his people open to himself and if you have a home that home of yours opened to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ is that your life now can you find yourself at all following the footsteps of Lydia or can it be my friend that you're here tonight and your sole concern is to get out of this place once more tired and maybe fed up as they say to the back teeth time as dragged boring as ever nothing for you in all this how well will you take a word of advice even before you leave this place never mind about going home but even as you sit here and as we stand a minute to pray and then sit to sing pray to the

Lord that he would open your heart and that he would save your soul and give you himself let us pray bless to us Lord thy word oh do thou help us to receive it make it a powerful instrument in our lives to the saving of our soul and give us the knowledge of thy will and of thy salvation in Christ have mercy upon us and touch our hearts by thy power and the praise shall be thine forever in Christ Amen