

TITLE

"A HEART FOR GOD"



Scripture Reading: Acts 16:13-15

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.

14 One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.

15 And 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.

Introduction

She has a heart for Elise.

Charles Spurgeon said of his mother, "I cannot tell you how much I owe to the solemn word of my good mother."

Elisabeth Elliot said: "The fact that I am a woman does not make me a different kind of Christian, but the fact that I am a Christian does make me a different kind of woman."

Key text: **Acts 16:14**, 'One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.'

The theme of the key text is, 'a worshipper of God.'

Here is a woman who has a heart for God.

I. LIFE OF LYDIA

A. A WORKING WOMAN.

Lydia was a working woman. She owned her own business. She was a seller of purple cloth.

Her presence at the riverside has twofold purposes:

- (1) It has something to do with her trade.
- (2) She was there for worship.

B. A WEALTHY WOMAN.

Lydia was a wealthy business woman from Thyatira.

C. A WORSHIPING WOMAN.

The phrase in **Acts 16:14**, 'worshipper of God,' refers to God-fearers who were attracted to Judaism but had not yet become full proselytes. That is the most important ingredient concerning Lydia. Many women in this world are rich but they are not worshipping women. Many women in this world are philanthropists, but they are not worshipping women. They have no heart for God.

Many women including Lydia were attracted to the morality and ethics of Judaism. So, these few Jews including the women with Lydia met for prayer by a riverside. Josephus, the historian wrote that the riverside seems to have been a common place of religious worship. The phrase, they 'sat down' was a typical rabbinical teaching position. The Roman province of Macedonia had more opportunities for women than any other place in the first century Mediterranean world.

The fact that Lydia entertained Paul and Silas, implicated the high position she held in this Sabbath gathering. She could even be the lead person in the prayer group.

Lydia was a remarkable woman. She was a dominant person and a leader. She became the first convert in Europe.

Just believing in God is not enough to be saved. It is also not enough to be saved by just being religious.

Roman 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God."

II. THE LORD OF LYDIA

A. EXPERIENCE OF SALVATION.

We are told in **verse 14** that **'the Lord opened her heart.'** The bible describes the relationship between God and humanity as a 'covenant.' God always takes the initiative in establishing the relationship and by setting the conditions of the covenant.

The Lord opened her heart to the preaching and teaching of Paul.

'Heart' in this instance means the center of emotion. She has an affection for God. Heart also means 'courage, spirit, enthusiasm.' Lydia has the courage to receive Christ. She has strong spirit and was enthusiastic concerning Christ.' She has a heart for God.

B. EVIDENCES OF SALVATION.

The word translated 'attend' in verse 14 means 'to turn to.' Lydia turned to the truth.' She made a decision for Christ.

What were some of those evidences of salvation?

Her baptism: She readily followed the Lord in baptism.

Her witness: Lydia left that prayer meeting a new person in Christ; she was a born-again believer. She must have gone and told her household of her salvation experience.

Her hospitality: The Lord opened Lydia's heart and she opened her home to the missionaries. She said to them: "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there."

In summary, we witness a woman who has a heart for Jesus.

Many mothers struggle to have a heart for Jesus.

But Lydia was different. Let us delve deeper into the heart of Lydia

Acts 16:14 says, '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.'

Lydia was a worshipper of God.

A worshipper is:

- Someone who puts Jesus as number one in her heart.
- Someone who doesn't worship anything or anyone as number one.
- Someone who has reordered her heart's desire for all the good things in her life like work and wealth; family and friends; time and talent to be secondary to Jesus and His cause.

How did Lydia do it?

Her heart had caught the costly sacrifice of Jesus for her.

Lydia was a seller of purple goods. As I said earlier – purple color was hard to obtain and the shell necessary to get the purple color was very rare. I can only safely say in modern terms that Lydia was a rich businesswoman of high-end goods, selling to the very rich in her time and culture. But when Paul shared the Gospel to her, Lydia's heart caught an even rarer goods – the blood of Jesus. As a seller of purple goods, she understood the derivative of purple – blue plus red. And I believe she saw how Jesus, the divine (symbolized by the color blue) had to bleed on the cross (symbolized by the color red) to give us the purple robe which is resurrection (purple color = resurrection.)

As a businesswoman, Lydia was familiar with investment and profits – return. She saw a better purple goods -the resurrection of Jesus but she also recognized this goods was too costly for her to buy. And when she heard the good news that this better purple goods was already paid for her by a wealthy Son of God with His own blood, she was so touched in her heart that she was willing to invest her work and wealth, family and friends, her time and talent into the Kingdom business. Instead of servicing her rich clientele, she was willing to serve Jesus – her ultimate Client.

Let's get back to us. To the degree your heart catches this costly divine sacrifice, you will not close your heart, you will not put Jesus second, you will not put your family first but you will lead your whole family to be spiritual: you will use your wealth for God's kingdom, you will invest your all for Him. And you will then truly be like Lydia – a true worshipper of God, giving God your work, wealth, worship, family and friends and even your time and talent.

So, all mothers and all who are here this morning. This message is not just for the mothers but for all. Jesus came, bled and died so that He can redeem you to worship God your Heavenly Father in spirit and in truth. The divine had to bleed in order to give you the **ULTIMATE RESURRECTED LIFE** (GOD'S KIND OF LIFE) - do you want it?

If so, acknowledge you do not have the means to buy one. You can only **RECEIVE** it by faith in the gospel. All Jesus asks right now is you **repent and have faith** in His finished work. And He will impart His Holy Spirit to open your heart as wide as Lydia's.

CONCLUSION

Charles Spurgeon says, 'Christ is the great heart changer.' To the degree your heart catches the **costly sacrifice of the divine** for you, you will put Jesus first in your life even as a busy mother or member.



Mothers and all who are here today – do you want to see the divine Christ continually bleed for you in vain by you always having no time and heart for him? If not, it is time now to let this vision of the bleeding Christ inspire you for a heart transformation -to rearrange your heart's desire to put Him as the most important person in life.

Once you do that, all your **"worship"** of work and wealth, family and friends will take a lower place. And Christ will be crowned as the Supreme king of your life and you will then be a Spiritual Lydia **whose heart is so opened to Jesus, attending to all the things of God with priority and worship. May the Holy Spirit demonstrate His power upon your heart too so that He can empower you to love Jesus like Lydia did.**

