



## ***“The Heart the Lord Opened”***

**(Acts 16:11-15)**

The first part of the sixteenth chapter of Acts contains the account of the “Macedonian Call.” The journeys of Paul and Silas had brought them to Philippi. On the Sabbath day they went by a river side, where they found a place of prayer. The group which had gathered there was made up of women. Taking their seats, Paul and company spoke unto them. Among the women was Lydia, and since it was her heart the Lord opened, it is well that we note some facts regarding this woman.

**Some Facts Concerning Lydia.** She was a merchant woman and had come from Thyatira, a city of Asia. Her business in Philippi was that of a dealer in purple. Purple dye was very costly and was used only in expensive fabrics. When one became quite prosperous, it was designated in those days by the saying, “he had reached the purple.” Being a dealer in this material, head of a household, and having a large home large enough to accommodate Paul and his companions indicates, while not above the necessity of working, she nevertheless was in comparatively easy circumstance. “One that worshipped God” are words descriptive of Lydia. She had carried her religion with her into a heathen city where doubtlessly the Sabbath of the Old Testament Scriptures was unknown to its inhabitants. Other merchants may have been busy on that day, but not Lydia. Temptations and competitions of trade could not seduce her from the

faithful observance of worship. Since there was no synagogue to worship in, Lydia took to the river bank. Since there were no men to conduct worship, she and her associates had a prayer service on the bank of the river. Such fidelity to God is not often seen in our own more favored time. There are some professed Christians who will let business, pleasure, company, and almost anything else keep them from worship. If it is convenient for them to worship, they will; but to overcome inconveniences is something that never enters their minds.

**Why Did Her Heart Need Opening?** The question naturally suggests itself. The fact that the Lord opened it implies in some way it was closed. It was certainly not due to inherited depravity (if such is true and it's not), nor yet to the hardness of a sinful life. Her character is against this idea in no uncertain terms. I would conclude that her heart was closed in the same sense in which the hearts of other pious Jews were closed—misconceptions regarding Christ. Perhaps she was thinking Christ was coming to establish a earthly kingdom and her heart was closed against Him as a crucified Redeemer. This condition had to be corrected or she would reject the gospel of Christ. The effect of the opening was precisely that which was intended. It led her "to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul."

**What Is the Heart That Was Opened?** Certainly the "heart" referred to is not the lobe of flesh or physical organ known as the heart! It is the heart that the Scriptures describe as being able to *think* (Prov. 23:7), *desire* (Rom. 10:1), *purpose* (2 Cor. 9:7), *believe* (Rom. 10:10, and *love* (Matt. 23:37). It is that which may be pricked by the gospel (Acts 2:37). This heart involves man's intellect, emotions, and will. We have used the expression, "his heart was opened" in reference to a stingy per-



son becoming charitable. His contracted and narrow heart had been filled with a grander, nobler sentiment than usual.

**How Did the Lord Open Lydia's Heart?** Notice the order of the text. She "heard us." She listened to that which was spoken to her. Following this hearing, it is stated: "Whose heart the Lord opened." After her heart (or understanding) was opened, "she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul." What is the order? Hearing, opening, and attending! Through the preaching of God's word, the heart of Lydia was opened that she might attend to the things which were spoken by Paul. Here is the reason why the Lord opened her heart, so that she might do the things which were appointed for her to do. "And when she was baptized." That which Lydia did in response to Paul's teaching was in complete harmony with the Great Commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16).

The context plainly shows that the Lord followed a deliberate plan in bringing Lydia and Paul together (Acts 16:1-10). Barring any miraculous element that may have been in the case of the "Macedonian Call," it is altogether probable that the Lord, in his providential oversight, is doing the same for people today, especially those whose lives and attitudes are like Lydia.

***How is your heart? Does it need opening?*** Give heed to God's word and permit your heart and understanding to be opened that you might attend to obeying the truth.

Bobby Thompson



## GLAD TIDINGS

*Sermon Notes:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Speaker:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Topic:* \_\_\_\_\_

### Order of Worship November 28, 2021

Song Leader—AM	Matthew Frazier
Song Leader—PM	Michael Young
Lord's Table	Gary Barber
Sermon—AM—Devin Barber	Sermon—PM—Derek Steen

Continue prayers for those on our list, and for the free course of the gospel.

*1 John 5:14*

Editor: Steve Frazier

### **Marietta church of Christ**

**8150 Driggers St.**

**Jacksonville, FL 32220**

Meeting times of the church

Sunday 09:00 am Bible Classes 10:00 am Worship 05:00 pm Evening Worship

Wednesday 7:00 pm Bible classes

Evangelist: Devin Barber

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**Hebrews 10:24-25**