

**Series: Acts**

**Lesson #61**

**Title: Christ Teaches Lydia the Gospel**

**Scripture: Acts 16: 6-15**

**Date: March 26, 2009**

**Place: Sovereign Grace Baptist Church in Princeton, New Jersey**

Now we come to part 3 of the subject which we began a few weeks ago--the first message was titled: How Lydia Came to the Doctrine of Christ. What did we see? Lydia did not. Christ came to her and taught her.

First, we saw that Christ through the Holy Spirit forbids the gospel and sends the gospel where he will. God afar off is yet God at hand. We spent two services looking at how the Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit forbid Paul, Timothy, and Silas to preach the word in one place but revealed that they were to go to another place. Secondly, we saw that Christ prepares the heart of one who he will teach as he did Lydia (we will see this more tonight) and he prepares the heart of the one he will use to teach the gospel (as he did Paul.) Thirdly, we saw that it pleased God because Christ will receive all the glory in every aspect of our salvation--including the teaching of the gospel to every saint--Christ sends the gospel and teaches us in power.

The second message was titled: Christ Filleth All In All. First, we saw that Satan and his messengers are responsible for all falsehood in this world. God never used a lie to save one sinner. He has used liars, even used Balaam's ass, but the word spoken was the word he bid them to speak. But he promised to do much more than leave his redeemed under the preaching of liars. **Jeremiah 23: 4: And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD.** Secondly, we developed this point more as we saw that the same Jesus Christ who descended and executed judgment and justice on earth--seen most clearly at Calvary's cross--is the same who is ascended and is now executing judgment and justice from his throne of victory. Christ is sending forth his gospel through the Holy Spirit, through his messengers, in truth, and he is effectually calling out his elect throughout the world. Christ is doing the work and will receive all the glory.

This time, the title of our message is: **Christ Teaches Lydia the Gospel.**

**Proposition:** The point I have been trying to drive home through the past two messages and the one tonight, is that we ought never let that which is seen with the natural eye, hinder us from seeing Christ by faith who is working all things according to this good pleasure. Paul is the instrument used; Christ is the teacher. Paul's words struck the natural ear; Christ opened the heart. Paul is taught himself by Christ and is the instrument through which the Holy Spirit of Christ teaches the Lydia in the heart.

Outline: I. CHRIST BEGINS TEACHING US BEFORE WE REALIZE IT; II. CHRIST OPENS THE HEART AND TEACHES US; III. CHRIST ALWAYS WINS THE VICTORY IN ALL IN TIME *FOR* WHOM HE GAINED THE VICTORY AT CALVARY.

## **I. CHRIST BEGINS TEACHING US BEFORE WE REALIZE IT**

Do you remember what we observed about the Macedonian man which Paul saw in the vision?

1. He was a common man of Macedonia, nothing to commend Paul to him--a sinner like all other men.
2. He was "standing"--a sign of respect--scriptures teach us to "stand" before the white-haired man, and to give honor to those who labor in the word--he stood before Paul.
3. He was importunate--he begged Paul to come over and help.

These are the characteristics of someone whom the Lord Jesus has made teachable. Now listen to what these names mean in the next verse.

A. Every detail given about Lydia can help us to see how Christ was working to draw her to him.

**Acts 16: 13: And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted *thither*. 14: And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us*: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.**

1. Lydia walked in what light which the Lord gave her.

(v13) ON THE SABBATH--By mentioning it was the Sabbath--where prayer was wont to be made--together with verse 14--Lydia, worshipped God--we learn that Lydia was a proselyte to the Jewish religion. That is what is indicated by the fact that she was there on a Sabbath day. She did not know Christ but she was there seeking God, according to the law of Moses.

(v13) OUT OF THE CITY BY A RIVER SIDE WHERE PRAYER WAS WONT TO BE MADE--There was no synagogue in the city (10 Jewish men had to be present to constitute a synagogue.) This area was some sort of open air enclosure by the river. It was outside the city. Paul had to abide certain days to find this place. There was only women there.

**Here is the point:** Lydia did not have Christ the Light but she did walk in the light God had given her. She was not turned aside because there was no synagogue. Instead, she was willing to go out of town to this place by the river with a group of women to seek God.

2. It appears the Lord had given Lydia a concern for her soul. I say that as we judge by the Macedonian man who prayed for help. Lydia was here praying for help. Remember that is how the Macedonian man's importunity was manifest--**verse 9: There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.** Sometimes the Spirit of God combines things like that with the meaning of names given in a passage to reveal much about the person in that passage. That may be the case here.

(v14) AND A CERTAIN WOMAN NAMED LYDIA--The name "Lydia" means "travail." Paul used this word in his letter to the Galatians, writing, **Ga 4:19: My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.** Remember the vision of the Macedonian man was a man who was envisioned as, "travailing" for help.

(v14) A SELLER OF PURPLE--Purple was the color used by God throughout scriptures for a sanctified item, worn by a person for God's use. The ephod worn by the priest was made: **of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work** (Exodus 28: 6.) The breastplate of judgment was the same. The hem of the priests garment had: **pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof** (Ex 28: 33.) Purple became the color sought by the Roman royalty as well. She sold purple; she did not wear it. But this tells us that Lydia was likely a wealthy woman. Purple was costly. We know she had a house. She had household servants. There is no mention made of a husband. She had obtained all this by selling purple.

**Here is the point:** First, with regards to Lydia personally, though she was wealthy Christ had given her a desire--perhaps she was in travail till she find out the truth of God and have peace with God in her heart--though she was wealthy, she was poor in spirit. Therefore she had a mind to set aside her business to seek the riches only God gives.

OF THE CITY OF THYATIRA--Lydia means "travail." The name "Thyatira" means "odor of affliction." Thyatira was in Asia where Paul originally desired to go but the Spirit forbade him to preach, sending him here to Philippi instead. Lydia was from Thyatira in Asia Minor yet Christ had directed her to Philippi in Macedonia.

**Here is the second thing:** Lydia does not know it yet, but the Lord Jesus will use Lydia, and some of these women with her, to help Paul in establishing a church there in Philippi. Therefore Christ prepared her to be a support to that work, to have money through the selling of purple. He drew her to Philippi long before she was ever taught why. Christ only uses those whom he has afflicted to see that all their salvation is in Christ alone.

Do you see the great purpose of God in his providence in all this? The Lord Jesus Christ said, John 6:44: **No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.** The word "draw" is the same word used when Peter drew his sword. That is what Christ is doing with Lydia in bringing her to Philippi and in giving her this desire to know the truth of God. She is being drawn.

HEARD US--This is easy to pass up but it is very important. It means Lydia listened to Paul, very attentively as he preached the gospel of Christ.

Application: The vision of the Macedonian man was the vision of a common man, speaking the common language--Lydia is a sinner, that's all. She is a "certain" woman, chosen of God, elect and precious--that is the only thing that makes her to differ.

The Macedonian man appeared "standing"--a token of respect toward God's messenger and his gospel. Lydia has set aside her business. She left the idolatry of Philippi and went outside the city. She went there to seek God's face. She listened when God's messenger came preaching Christ.

The Macedonian man was in great need, he was humbly, importunately, seeking help from God.

Do you see all this in Lydia? Here is Lydia--"travail," from Thyatira "odor of affliction", seller of purple--she's wealthy but this world's gain has brought her no peace, she worshipped God--she was a woman who recognized that her business and the world was not her life, she listened intently-- she was in that place to hear from God.

One of the old writers said, "The Macedonian man" turned out to be a group of women by the riverside.

It is my ardent prayer that the Lord Jesus would make you like Lydia. Is travail and affliction needed? By all means, if we are going to see our need of a Savior we have to have our sin made known to us. It will bring much travail and affliction. We must be made to see that all riches are insignificant and unable to satisfy; we must be given a hunger for Christ, the Pearl of great price; we must be drawn to the place where are determined to let nothing interfere with being in the place he has promised to meet with us.

So many resources are provided for your taking. How often are you listening to the gospel by CD or on your I-Pod's or over the internet? Do you need CD's made for you? Would you like me to send you the articles by email so you can read them in quiet place? Take home a bulletin and look up the scriptures. Get the sermon notes and listen to the messages again.

Lydia had a need. Do you have a need? When you have a need you will search out the cure.

Your brethren can encourage you, but none can give you this heart. The Father must chasten us, turn us, give us the heart to travail in affliction until we have Christ. When he does it is evident. Pray for one another that Christ might make us like this group of women.

So we that Christ often begins teaching us before we ever realize what is happening.

## **II. CHRIST OPENS THE HEART AND TEACHES US**

**Acts 16: 14: And a certain woman named Lydia,...heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.**

A. All the glory belongs to Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

(v14) WHOSE HEART THE LORD OPENED--This shouldn't surprise us that the opening of the heart is the Lord's work too. Who receives the glory for forbidding Paul through the Holy Ghost from going to Asia and Bithynia? Who receives the glory for directing him into Macedonia through the vision, to this colony called Philippi? Who receives the glory for sending Paul out to this place by the riverside? Who receives the glory for giving Paul the truth to speak? Who receives the glory for bringing Lydia to that place? We shouldn't be surprised at all to read these words--whose heart the Lord opened. Christ receives the glory for opening the sinner's heart to teach them the truth concerning him.

**Revelation 3:7: And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;...20: Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.**

**Song of Solomon 5:4: My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.**

**Isaiah 50:5: The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.**

(v14) THAT SHE ATTENDED UNTO THE THINGS WHICH WERE SPOKEN OF PAUL.--We just read that she "heard." What is different about this word "attended?" We can tell by the construction of the sentence that this word "attended" is the direct result of the supernatural work performed in her heart: **14: And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.**

The word "heard" means she listened with natural ears as Paul spoke. Oh, but this word "attended" means she "cleaved with all her heart" "she grasped hold" unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

**Illustration:** The capsized boat and the man hanging on to the motor--he attended unto that motor, he cleaved unto that motor with all his strength.

Why did she not cleave to Christ before the Lord opened her heart? Why did she just hear with the carnal ear?

**Matthew 11:27** All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

**Job 42:5:** I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.

**Acts 16: 14:**...Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

CHRIST OPENS THE HEART, TEACHES US AND MAKES US WILLING TO BELIEVE HIM: The furniture in the room may not always look the same as it does here--but the truth of Christ's gospel will be declared and Christ will teach the sinner in the heart effectually and irresistible so that all who believe know the true Christ. **John 6: 45:** It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

**Illustration:** Remember the two men on the Emmaus road--They did not know who Christ was though he spoke with them face to face. But...**Luke 24:45:** Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,...**32:** And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

How much truth does a man know when God teaches him in the heart in the beginning--all of it! Because the Holy Spirit teaches every sinner, Christ, who is All Truth. The faith which God gives has nothing to do with knowing all aspects of doctrine but it has everything to do with knowing Christ in truth so that we irresistibly, willingly commit everything into Christ's hands alone. The new convert knows as fully as the old believer that Christ is All--ALL Salvation. The new convert may not know all that doctrine teaches but he knows that all doctrine teaches only Christ, because Christ is the Truth. From that hour forward, growing in grace is not learning that there is something yet that I must do but it is learning more and more just how totally, completely, fully, eternally Christ IS MY ETERNAL LIFE AND ALL MY SALVATION. Only the continual message of Christ makes the old man perish and the new man be renewed day by day.

**2 Timothy 1:12:** For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

**John 10: 4:** And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. **5:** And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

**Acts 16: 15: And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us.**

### **III. CHRIST JESUS ALWAYS GAINS THE VICTORY IN EACH PERSON IN TIME FOR WHOM HE GAINED THE VICTORY AT CALVARY.**

A. The Lord Jesus Christ always, effectually produces two things in every believer which manifests that he has gained the victory in them:

1. A love for God manifest in a willingness to confess Christ--the highest form of love to God and to brethren
2. A love for brethren.

(v15) AND WHEN SHE WAS BAPTIZED--The first act of willful obedience to Christ by the believer is baptism. God's messengers are not sent to coerce sinners to be baptized. We do not have to. The reason we do not have to do that is this: when Christ was raised to God's right hand God said this: **Psalm 110: 3: Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.**

(v15) AND HER HOUSEHOLD (WAS BAPTIZED)--These members of her household were workers employed by Lydia. Most likely it was these very women who were with her at the riverside. The Lord opened their heart like he did Lydia. Luke uses this phrasing in other places where the Lord gave the household of a certain believer spiritual life and faith in him (we will look more at this as we get to the conversion of the Philippian jailer and his household)

The Lord not only opened Lydia's heart but also the hearts of the servants in her household—and they believed Christ and were baptized. Let me show you that in: **Acts 16:40: And they went out of the prison, and entered into *the house of Lydia*: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.** In Philippians we are told some of their names. And we are told that Christ gave them faith because they were God's elect and his redeemed: **Philippians 4: 1: Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved. 2: I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. 3: And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.** This is why they believed on Christ, and how they were made a part of the covenant—by God writing their names in the Lambs book of life before the world began. **Luke 10:20: Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.**

(v15) AND SHE CONSTRAINED US--This is the second proof she believed on Christ, she loved the brethren. **Acts 16: 15:...***she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.*

Examples: Cornelius and his household we read: **Acts 10: 48: And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.**

The Philippian jailer and his household we read: **Acts 16: 33: And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. 34: And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house**

**THE MAIN POINT: All the glory in salvation belongs to Christ Jesus the Lord. Even the believers willingness and obedience is by Christ the Power and Wisdom of God**

1. We all know that the power is exercised in these last days through preaching. Throughout the generations the LORD God has proven that you and I can never know God by our own wisdom. Therefore the preaching of the gospel is God's ordained means of saving his people in these last days--

**1 Corinethian 1:21: For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.**

**Romans 1:16: For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;**

2. But the power in the gospel is the person of Christ who reveals himself in the sinner (Psa 110: 3; I Cor 1: 23, 24; 2 Pet 1: 16; Eph 1: 17; I Joh 5: 20.) The Power which makes the gospel the power of God unto salvation is not the power of a preacher, or of a discourse, or of persuasion--Christ worked all things to bring the sinner and the gospel together, Christ sent the truth, Christ opened the heart and revealed himself, and the revelation is Christ himself, the Power of God.

**Psalm 110: 3: Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.**

**Corinthians 1: 23: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 24: But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.**

**2 Peter 1:16: For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.**

**The revelation of the mystery is Christ. Ephesians 1: 17: That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:**



**I John 5: 20: And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.**

The hope of glory is Christ in you, the Power and Wisdom that Christ *IS* when he makes himself known in the heart which makes a sinner willing. Only when you see Christ--the beauties of holiness in him--will you be persuaded that he is All--all your complete acceptance with God with nothing needed by you.

**APPLICATION:**

1. As we endeavor to bear witness of Christ in this place let's remember when we are forbidden to go forward as we plan that the Lord always opens the door in his time and not ours. Let us actively wait on the Lord. We will know as assuredly as Paul knew when it is time.

2. Seeing the great detail with which our Lord governs the hearts of those he uses and those whom he calls out, let it not cause us to use his sovereignty as an excuse for laziness. But may it give us assurance that we can give ourselves to this work: Immediately, Making a straight course, Today and the next day and the next day, Assuredly gathering that the Lord has called us to promote the gospel of Christ in this place.

3. And finally, may we do so giving all glory to Christ Jesus the Lord in whom dwells all fullness.

When Paul wrote to the Philippian church later he comforted them by reminding them to always think on "things"--those things are the blessings of the person and work of Christ which you have learned and received (been given): **Philippians 4: 8: Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things. 9: Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.**