

“The Lord Opened Her Heart,” Acts 16:9-15
Tom Johnson, May 9, 2010

SITUATION—Hidden need for good news in Macedonia

- Paul is given a vision of someone asking for help in Macedonia
- Without the vision the hunger and thirst for good news hidden
- Paul & Luke sail from Troas into region of Macedonia (Turkey to Greece across Aegean Sea)
 - ↳ Two day journey—by car (Mexico), by plane (Nepal)
 - ↳ We do! Camps in Moscow, Christs in Sweden

COMPLICATION—Hidden need for good news all around

- We don't need to go half way around the world to find need for good news
- Need for good news hidden all around us
- Unspoken depression, loneliness, guilt, addiction, broken relationships—need for good news
- May not need to look further than ourselves—our own need to hear and experience good news
- Some needs are hidden because we have yet to experience them
 - ↳ Confirmands—teachers that will make fun of Christians, books on NY Times bestseller list that question our faith, temptation, the slow deceptive idea that we are happy without God

RESOLUTION—Hidden but prevailing good news

- Paul & Luke end up in Philippi—went to “leading city” to see if hidden need would be revealed
- They went to the riverside thinking it is a good place for prayer
- Group of women praying and one of them was Lydia—a worshiper of God (longer journey)
- She heard Paul talk about how his life was changed—how this Jesus lived, died, rose again
- **“The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.”**
- Holy Spirit and the Word worked in her heart—not just info & data—but living/active Word
- Hidden activity of Holy Spirit revealed here—that God gives faith, opens doors of our hearts
- She was baptized and “her household” with includes her children and family—she was a mother
- God opened the door of the heart of each member of her family
 - ↳ Confirmands—God has opened door of your hearts. His Word and Spirit have worked in your lives. You believe because God has given you faith and promises to strengthen your faith.

CELEBRATION

- After the good news of Jesus Christ prevail upon Lydia and her family—Lydia and her hospitality prevail upon Paul and Luke
 - They come to her house for food and for shelter during their journey.
 - It says that “**she prevailed upon**” them.
 - Just as the good news and Holy Spirit prevailed upon Lydia, now the Holy Spirit is prevailing upon people through her. She is not just a receiver of good news but now a source of it as well.
- ↳ And so is our hope and prayer and confidence for confirmands and all believers—that as we see the Holy Spirit and good news open your hearts, that other doors will open—opportunities that may be hidden now—but opportunities to live out your faith so that the Gospel of Jesus Christ will prevail in the lives around us.