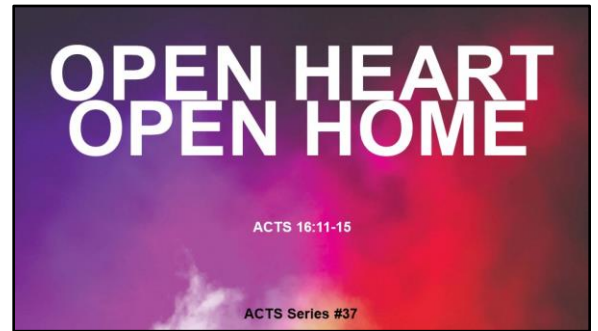


ACTSFACTS

C@G Supplementary Study Notes for ACTS

Message #37

“OPEN HEART – OPEN HOME” (Acts 16:11-15)



Having received the vision of the Macedonian man calling for Paul (and his team) to cross the Aegean Sea to “help us”...they quickly prepared to take the gospel from Asia Minor (Turkey) to a new continent (Europe).

Verse 11 – they sailed from Troas (Troy) to the island of Samothrace, about half way across the Aegean. The following day they completed the voyage to Neapolis (the port for the city of Philippi).

Neapolis was not the evangelistic target for Paul – his strategy was always to target the key cities. So they passed through Neapolis and on to Philippi.

PHILIPPI

- Named after Philip II of Macedon (the father of Alexander the Great)
- The Greco-Macedonian empire that Philip and Alexander established steadily broke up after Alexander’s death in 323BC, until it became a Roman province in 146BC.
- Philippi was a strategic city, a Roman colony and an important city of the region. The fact it was a Roman colony is an important context for later events of Acts 16.

Verse 12 - So Paul and the team arrived in Philippi from Asia Minor (via Neapolis) and stayed several days.

Verse 13 –

- Paul’s strategy was always to go to the local synagogue first; as a student of Gamaliel he was sure to be invited to speak.
- However, in this verse Luke implies that there was no synagogue in Philippi because...*“on the Sabbath we went outside...to find a place of prayer.”*
- It required 10 adult Jewish men for a “*minyam*” (the quorum needed to establish a synagogue).
- Obviously, the Jewish community in Philippi was too small and not enough men.
- The lack of Jewish men is further emphasized by Luke as he records that only women had gathered for the prayer meeting.

Verse 14 – Lydia

- Not from Philippi, but from Thyatira in Asia (Turkey)
- Thyatira is one of the Seven Churches of Revelation 2-3
- Thyatira was famed for the purple dyes and purple cloth it produced
- Lydia was a businesswoman, a “*trader in purple cloth*”
- Because purple cloth was expensive, it is likely that Lydia was quite wealthy
- Lydia was a “worshipper of God”....she acknowledged Yahweh (God of the Jews) as the one true God.
- Lydia “knows about God”....now Paul gives her the opportunity to “know God” personally.

What is the difference between “knowing about God” and actually “knowing God”?

AN OPEN HEART

Paul and his team go looking for people to share the gospel with. How keen are you to seek out witnessing opportunities? What are the best places / ways for you to share the gospel with others?

Do you find it hard to share your faith with others? Why / why not?

Have you ever been blessed to be a part of the process of someone's salvation? Share.

What happens in this passage is a good example of the balance between HUMAN INITIATIVE and DIVINE QUICKENING in the evangelistic process. Paul and his companions went to the people and shared the message, but God was the ultimate evangelist.

“The Lord opened her heart to respond.” (16:14)

It seems that many people listen...but not everyone hears. Luke tells us that Lydia did...and she responded.

Paul understood that it was God who was doing the saving of Lydia...he and the team were blessed to be a part of the process, but it was God who saved Lydia.

See **1 Corinthians 3:6-7**.



Our call is to be faithful to God's call and to use the best methods we can – but God causes the growth. It is the Holy Spirit who convicts – not us!

**God gives us OPPORTUNITY
We must accept it with RESPONSIBILITY
For we must give ACCOUNTABILITY**

How do the roles of God and of Paul in Lydia's conversion encourage you to speak regularly and boldly of Christ? What will that mean, specifically, in the coming week?

Lydia became the first Christian convert in Europe. It was a small beginning, but out of this grew a strong church and one that was much loved by Paul (see **Philippians 1:1; 4:15-16**).

Luke says that Lydia's whole household also came to faith and were baptised....we don't know if that means family or employees...but it is true there is often a "ripple effect" of blessing when someone comes to Christ.

AN OPEN HOME

God opened Lydia's heart....now she opens her home to Paul and the team.

People are ministered to powerfully through hospitality. It is always a mutual blessing....both for the receiver and for the giver. God has blessed us with homes and other resources for our benefit...and for the benefit and blessing of others.

- All Christians are called to show hospitality (**1 Peter 4:7-10**)
- Hospitality is an important ministry that we can all share in (**Hebrews 13:2**)
- Hospitality was vital to the early church....and is still vital in the church today.

How do you / how can you develop the gift of hospitality and of using your resources to bless others (1 Peter 4:9)?

When we truly make our heart Christ's home – He shows His heart in our home.