

The Lord's Message: Lydia: A Heart Fully Opened to God

Date: September 27, 2026

Where: Tilghman Methodist Church

Scripture Reference: Acts 16:12-15

Today, we are finishing up our sermon series, Faithful Women of the Bible, with a woman named Lydia. Two weeks ago, we saw how God blessed a faithful Christian wife named Priscilla. This week, we are going to see how God blesses a faithful Christian single woman. It does not matter whether you are married or single, if you remain faithful to God, He will bless you.

Let us pray.

In verse 12, we learned that the Apostle Paul has traveled to Philippi. Philippi is located in northern Greece. This was during Paul's second missionary journey. During the time of Paul, Philippi was a major inland trading city. That is the reason why Lydia would have traveled from Thyatira in western Turkey to trade her goods of purple cloth. The distance from Philippi to Thyatira is about 250 to 300 miles.

Producing purple cloth was a very intensive process. First you would have to dig up the roots of the madder plant. The madder plant is a climbing vine that grows up to 5 feet tall. It has been used for thousands of years to make this purple dye. Next, you would allow the roots to dry out. Then you would crush the roots and boil them in vats of water. This would produce a rich, reddish-purple, or deep red colorant. It is known today as Turkey-Red. After the water in the vats had obtained this reddish-purple color, then you would dip the raw fibers of cotton, wool, silk, or leather in the water. This would turn the fibers to the purple color. From there the fibers would have been woven into cloths. These cloths would have been sold all over the Roman Empire and were quite expensive.

In verse 13, Paul goes to a river near the city gate to find a place of prayer. Often when Paul came to a city, Paul would go to the synagogue on the Sabbath. In Philippi the Jewish population was so small that they could not meet the traditional requirement of 10 adult Jewish men that would be needed to form a synagogue. So, no synagogue was built at this time. The next location to gather for worship was the river. "Let's go down to the river and pray."

It says that Lydia was “a worshiper of God.” Lydia, at this point in time, knew nothing of Jesus. Most likely the worship at the river was the singing of Psalms. Such as “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me lie down in green pastures.” If that was the case, then the Psalms as well as other scriptures in the Old Testament point to Jesus. Such as in Psalm 2 portrays Jesus as the anointed Son and King whom God establishes over the earth, **Psalm 2:7-8**. Psalm 16 tells of the security and the resurrection, **Psalm 16:9-11**. Psalm 22 tells of the deep suffering and Jesus quoted this Psalm from the cross, **Psalm 22:1,6-8,14-18**. Psalm 40 expresses be filled with joy at having been saved by Christ, **Psalm 40:16**. Psalm 110 tells of Jesus taking His rightful place as the supreme ruler of Heaven and Earth and eternal priesthood, **Psalm 110:1-4**.

Verse 14b, tells us that the Lord opened Lydia’s heart to respond to the Paul’s message. I hope that you can see how God had prepared these ladies hearts as they are worshipping Him for Paul, His servant, to come and tell them that the Messiah quoted in the Psalms is Jesus.

You might ask what Lydia’s response was to the Gospel Message? The answer is found in the next verse. She was baptized. This was the same response that Peter saw when he went to Cornelius’ house, **Acts 10:46b-48a**. Lydia and the other ladies responded the same way, so Paul baptized them in the name of Jesus. There is no other name by which you can be saved.

Lydia makes a plea of thanksgiving to Paul, “If you consider me a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my house.” The Bible says, “and she persuaded us.”

We are not sure how long Paul stayed in Philippi. It could be several days or several weeks, but he left shortly after being released from prison, **Acts 16:40**. From this reading, one could assume the Lydia’s house became a house church in Philippi.

Lydia’s heart was fully opened to God. She became the first European convert to Christianity. She established the first house church in Europe. She used her wealth to support Christian missionaries. The purple wool that she weaved was used to spread the Gospel Message of her Lord and Savior, Jesus. It is very likely that when Paul is in prison in Rome. He writes the letter to the Philippians; he is thinking of her, and this letter would be written to the church in her house.

Lydia, a single woman, accomplished all of this. There are reasons that a person would be single. I have friends who are single because Mr. Right or Miss Right has not come along. A few of my friends have taken a vow of celibacy to better serve the Lord. Some of my friends are single because of divorce and others because their spouse has died. It does not matter whether you are single or married, God can and will use you for His glory.

So, let us continue to listen for God to speak, so that we can do His will. Amen.