

## Lydia

*“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”, (Acts 16:14).*

God examines all hearts, looking for those that truly search the scriptures for Him, *“... to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word”* (Isaiah 66:2). He brings those who have His Spirit into contact with those who diligently seek salvation, *“... Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you”* (Luke 11:9). Lydia was such a seeker to whom Paul was sent to preach the Gospel, *“... repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations”* (Luke 24:47).

Paul was inspired by the indwelling Holy Spirit to lead people to repent of their sins and to receive the word of reconciliation. He had already undertaken one missionary trip when he and Barnabas decided to do it again, *“... Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do”* (Acts 15:36). Perhaps in a small way this illustrates the human nature that is in each of us: to go where they will accept us! After revisiting familiar cities in Phrygia and Galatia, Paul and Silas (Paul ultimately chose Silas as a travel partner) *“were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia”* (Acts 16:6). When they attempted to change plans and head northward toward the Black Sea, the Holy Spirit blocked them again. Scripture does not reveal how the Holy Spirit effected this stoppage but we learn that in the midst of this indecision Paul was given a dream which directed him to Europe, *“And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us”* (Acts 16:9). God was sending Paul to meet with Lydia but neither Lydia nor Paul was aware of their future encounter.

One might ask why God looked so favorably upon Lydia as to send one of His servants to her and not to someone else. The only clue scripture gives is that she prayed on Sabbaths by a river outside of Philippi with a group of other women. She appears to be no different from the others who also gathered to pray, but God sees the heart and when He recognizes one that is willing to give up all and to follow Jesus He will work with that heart, as He did with Lydia's. Most likely Lydia had been coming to this spot seeking salvation for quite some

time. Further we can probably say that she prayed on her own during the rest of the week as well for what else could she do if she truly sought the Lord. (Interestingly, Lydia had no church building in which to pray but yet God heard her prayers thus showing that it matters not where we pray but how.) God answered her incessant prayers by sending Paul to her and by opening her heart to hear his preaching. It is one thing to listen to preaching but it is quite another to hear it. Similarly, God recognized the heart of Cornelius, who *“prayed to God always”* (Acts 10:2), and sent a servant to preach the gospel to him. In both cases, prayers came from humble hearts which God always recognizes, *“He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them”* (Psalm 145:19).

What was it that Paul preached to all the women gathered at the river and that Lydia in particular *“attended”* to? This portion of scripture is silent on this question. However, when Jesus healed the demonic man of the Gadarenes He told him not to follow Him but to show to his own family *“how great things God hath done unto thee”* (Luke 8:39). Thus, it is safe to assume that Paul did likewise: tell of his conversion through the laying on of Ananias' hands. It was not until Ananias spoke to Paul (Saul) that he received his sight and was *“filled with the Holy Ghost”* (Acts 9:17). Without the Holy Ghost one is not saved, *“if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his”* (Romans 8:9). Just as Paul was awakened to his sin by Jesus (the blinding light) on the road to Damascus, Lydia was awakened to her sins by Paul's preaching near the river and she, like Paul, was granted the grace to believe the proclamation that her sins were forgiven, *“be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee”* (Matt 9:2). She was born again, being baptized with the fire of the Holy Ghost (Matt 3:11) through the spoken word and, afterward, she was baptized with water according to God's command.

Today, God still promises to answer the prayers of anyone who fervently seeks to be reconciled with Him, *“... he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him”* (Hebrews 11:6). As the word *“diligently”* suggests, seeking God is not an occasional thing but, rather, a fulltime commitment! *“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths”* (Proverbs 3:6).

God's Peace, Charles Korhonen

**Reminder:**  
**Membership dues should be in by September 30<sup>th</sup>.**

**Special Services with Raino Mauno**

**Friday, Sept 18<sup>th</sup> 7pm**

**Saturday, Sept 19<sup>th</sup> 2pm and 6pm**

**Sunday, Sept 20<sup>th</sup> 11am and 2pm**

**Meals following services**

Sep 6	Ken Storm	Holy Communion
Sep 13	Nathan Ruonavaara	Sunday School 9:45, Church Service 11am
Sep 20	Raino Mauno	11am, 2pm
Sep 27	Chad Kuivanen	Sunday School 9:45, 11am worship

**Online Broadcasts**

From our webpage: <http://www.tapiolachurch.org/> you will see the mixlr live audio – we will be 'on the air' during our church services.

**Winter Schedule**

Sunday Service 11:00am. Sunday School 9:45am

Wednesday night Bible Study 7pm

**Thank you**

To all who responded to our request this past spring for additional funds for our church operating expenses. May God bless you for your kindness.

TAPIOLA APOSTOLIC LUTHERAN CHURCH

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