



Right Place... Right Time!

SERMON NOTES MAY 25, 2025

6th Sunday of Easter
Scripture: Acts 16:9-15

ACTS 16: 9-15 (THE MESSAGE)

⁹⁻¹⁰ That night Paul had a dream: A Macedonian stood on the far shore and called across the sea, "Come over to Macedonia and help us!" The dream gave Paul his map. We went to work at once getting things ready to cross over to Macedonia. All the pieces had come together. We knew now for sure that God had called us to preach the good news to the Europeans.

¹¹⁻¹² Putting out from the harbor at Troas, we made a straight run for Samothrace. The next day we tied up at New City and walked from there to Philippi, the main city in that part of Macedonia and, even more importantly, a Roman colony. We lingered there several days.

¹³⁻¹⁴ On the Sabbath, we left the city and went down along the river where we had heard there was to be a prayer meeting. We took our place with the women who had gathered there and talked with them. One woman, Lydia, was from Thyatira and a dealer in expensive textiles, known to be a God-fearing woman. As she listened with intensity to what was being said, the Master gave her a trusting heart—and she believed!

¹⁵ After she was baptized, along with everyone in her household, she said in a surge of hospitality, "If you're confident that I'm in this with you and believe in the Master truly, come home with me and be my guests." We hesitated, but she wouldn't take no for an answer.

"We, like Paul, are called to respond to God's Good News by following the leading of the Holy Spirit and offering Christ to all who will listen!"

I. "LED BY THE SPIRIT!"

- A. Remember, the Holy Spirit is the main character in the Book of Acts and is moving in and through the believers (most specifically Peter, and then Paul) in the early church to guide and empower the church's witness!
- B. Having met with the Apostles in Jerusalem concerning the Good News being offered to "outsiders" Paul, Barnabas, Silas and others strike out for a second time to proclaim the Good News primarily to the gentiles.
- C. Paul and Barnabas part ways, and Paul chooses Silas to accompany him, then meeting and calling Timothy to join them they traveled from town to town in Asia Minor, "and day after day the congregations became stronger in faith and larger in size (Acts 16:5)
- D. The *Holy Spirit*, (*the Spirit of Jesus*) "blocks" further travels in Asia, possibly because the people weren't receptive! So, Paul, Silas and Timothy travel to the seaport of Troas on the Asian coast, just across from the European continent.
- E. It's here that Paul experiences a vision of a Macedonian man (a European) begging for *help* (Luke's use of the word *botheo* (*Gr*), is almost prayer-like...like a petition in the Psalms).
- F. The Holy Spirit is responsible for the plotline of the church's mission. Yet God does not "steam-roll" anyone into belief, but rather the proclamation of the Good News is in response to the urgent plea for help and receptivity.

II. "WE... ARE CONVINCED!"

- A. It's interesting that with v. 10, Luke begins to speak in the first-person plural, saying *"we...knew now for sure that God had called us to preach the Good News to the Europeans!"* Perhaps Luke is now part of the group?
- B. Being *"convinced"* by the vision, the party makes haste for the European continent, first stopping at the isle of Samothrace and then on to Neapolis, or "New City".
- C. Then by foot they arrive at Phillippi, a Roman colony, and it is there that they begin their witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ!
- D. It is on the Sabbath day that the group goes down by the river to a prayer meeting where many presumably Jewish women and "God-fearers" (gentiles who have come to believe in God) have gathered to pray and worship.
- E. Since the time of the Exile, the people of God have gathered on riverbanks throughout the world to pray (it took ten Jewish men to constitute a formal synagogue), and Paul and the others wade into the midst of the women...quite a controversial act for Jewish men!
- F. Luke is adamant to illustrate that the Church (unlike the Jewish Synagogue) led by the Holy Spirit, makes no distinction when it comes to gentiles or women. God's activity is available to all who will receive!
- G. The message that Paul and the others proclaim is the basic Kerygma that Jesus is the Messiah...lived, crucified, dead, buried, resurrected, and living still...and it is the Holy Spirit that opens hearts to the Gospel message, not Paul!

III. "THE MASTER GIVES A TRUSTING HEART!"

- A. Luke tells that as Paul, a rabbi, begins to teach and exhort as a "guest" of this informal gathering, possibly as worship breaks out, and that "the Master (Jesus through the Holy Spirit)" gives one woman who is listening with earnest, *"a trusting heart...and she believed!"*
- B. This woman's name is Lydia, a woman of considerable social and economic status as she owned her own business (a dealer in purple cloth destined for the rich and famous) and home originally from Thyatira in Asia Minor.
- C. Lydia's intense listening and conversion illustrate the call of Paul's vision to the Macedonian people who are hungering and thirsting for Good News! Even the socially prominent can be spiritually impoverished!
- D. Lydia's response to the Gospel of Jesus Christ leads to her baptism, the baptism of her whole family, and the offer of extravagant hospitality...asking Paul and the others to her home...another incredulous act!
- E. And with her conversion, Lydia becomes the first European believer and through Paul's acceptance, the leader of the church at Phillippi...which becomes Paul's most beloved congregation!

How are you listening for God's leading in your life?

Where is God calling you to witness to your faith?

How are you responding to your personal experience with Jesus?