



After Lydia was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” (Acts 16:15)

Loving Lord, you once reminded Abraham to practice hospitality always because we never know when we might be entertaining angels. We thank you for that holy Word, and for people like Lydia who welcomed the apostles and were baptized in the faith. Make us hospitable too, reaching out to those you put in our path, that they might know your grace. In Jesus’ holy name we pray. Amen.

Introduction

As the Apostle Paul traveled from place to place, proclaiming the message of Jesus, he met many new people. On one occasion, he encountered a wealthy merchant woman named Lydia, who invited the apostles to come and stay at her house.

Read: Acts 16:1-15

On reading these verses, what are some of your initial impressions and questions? What stands out to you?

The Biblical Context

The book of Acts shows us many examples of the resistance that was faced by the first Apostles. But in spite of rejection and persecution, the message of Jesus spread throughout the Roman Empire. There were many who welcomed the message of Jesus and became believers. Many new converts, like Lydia, grew to become leaders in the early church.

As Scripture says in Acts 17:4: “Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.” Today’s story gives an example of how Paul’s message had a positive effect particularly on the lives of women, and how their influence and sponsorship was instrumental in the church’s growth.

Discussion Questions

1. According to Acts 16:1, what young man joined Paul as he passed through the city of Lystra? What was this young man’s dual heritage?
2. In Acts 16:6, we read that Paul and his friends were “forbidden by the Holy Spirit” to speak the Word in Asia. Do you think the Holy Spirit ever stops us from doing things? Why or how might that happen?
3. While in the city of Philippi, Paul and Timothy went “outside the gate to the riverside.” Why did they go there? Do you think it was a coincidence that Lydia was there at that specific time and place? Or was something more at work?
4. According to verse 14, why did Lydia pay attention to Paul? What exactly does that mean?
5. Do you think that God sets up particular events or circumstances in your life? Can you give an example?
6. Why do you think that the message of Jesus had particular appeal to Greek women? What do you think they were hearing in that message that they had not heard elsewhere?
7. At that time in history, all Christian congregations could be referred to as “house churches.” Why would it have been important to have believers like Lydia open their homes to the apostles?
8. Read Titus 2:1-8, where Paul gives some advice to Christian men and women. What would you say is the common thread in all this advice? In what ways does Paul’s advice here apply to all of us?