

## LESSON 13

February 28, 2021

Unit III: The Call of Women  
Showing Generous Hospitality

**DEVOTIONAL READING:** Psalm 33:1-12

**BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES:** Acts 16:11-15, 40; 1 Corinthians 1:26-30

**PRINT PASSAGES:** Acts 16:11-15, 40; 1 Corinthians 1:26-30

**Key Verse**—When she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us. (Acts 16:15, KJV)

.....

When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. “If you consider me a believer in the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my house.” And she persuaded us. (Acts 16:15, NIV)

## LESSON AIMS

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do these things:

- Consider how Lydia used her gifts and her place in society to support Paul’s ministry.
- Repent of times you have looked down on others who have not had the same opportunities or advantages.
- Serve others joyfully through whatever means are at your disposal.

## KEY TERMS

**Gathered (Acts 16:13)**—Greek: *sunerchomai* (soon-er’-khom-ahee): came together; assembled; “resorted” (KJV).

**Heart (Acts 16:14)**—Greek: *kardia* (kar-dee’-ah): the heart, mind, character, inner self, will, intention, center.

**Persuaded (Acts 16:15)**—Greek: *parabiazomai* (par-ab-ee-ad’-zom-ahee): employed force; pressed; was constrained by entreaties; “constrained” (KJV).

**Speaking (Acts 16:13, NASB)**—Greek: *laleó* (lal-eh’-o): to talk; “spake” (KJV); “speak” (NIV).

## PREPARING THE LESSON

- Refer to the Townsend Press SS Commentary Teacher’s Edition for an additional lesson plan—with word studies, insights on teaching adults, learner matrices, etc.
- Review last week’s student assignments (“Your Life” and Your World!”).
- Thoroughly review your student book for your adult or young adult class.
- Please note that you have the option of using your subscription bundle supplements, i.e., Lesson Scenario, Student Activity Sheet, SSL-AAG

## WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS

Many people have been recipients of generous hospitality or have been in a position to extend hospitality to someone. In what ways can openness and a listening ear provide opportunities to serve? Lydia was an attentive woman who responded to the Gospel message with faithfulness and generous hospitality.

### **THE LESSON IN FOCUS**

Many people find it easier to go along with the popular opinion rather than stand up against it. The heartache from backlash and possible alienation can sometimes feel intimidating. Most people tend to associate and build lasting relationships with those who share their way of thinking. Each of us can testify to an experience whereby we have had chance meetings that grew into strong relationships. While we have maintained some close childhood friendships, many of our current friends were developed out of chance meetings in college, while working, or even working out or doing activities with our children. Even the most stubborn of us adults attempt to practice hospitality. Ensuring that others feel welcomed and having genuine concern for their well-being and comfort can create possible opportunities to introduce someone to a new or deeper relationship with our Lord, Jesus Christ.

### **THE LESSON IN CONTEXT**

Paul took a ship from Troas and sailed to the island of Samothrace before heading to Neapolis, the port of Philippi, a city lying ten miles inland. Macedonia was divided into four districts, of which Philippi was the chief city as well as a retirement colony for many Roman soldiers. Philippi was one of the strategic self-governing colonies set up throughout the Roman empire. Paul's customary mission strategy was to speak at an established synagogue on the Sabbath day and deliver the message of the Gospel (see Acts 13:5, 14; 14:1; 17:1-2, 10, 17). Paul had hoped to find a synagogue in Philippi but discovered that none had been established there. Ten Jewish men were required to establish a synagogue. Having no synagogue, several Jewish women gathered to meet as an ersatz, a substitute synagogue, led by a woman named Lydia. Lydia was a seller of purple (either the dye, fabric dyed with it, or both), and is said to have been a woman of significant financial wealth who shared generously with others. Tyrian purple was an expensive dye produced by predatory sea snails native to the eastern Mediterranean area. Another reason for the riverside worship could be that some empires were more tolerant of diverse religions than others. While the Roman empire tolerated established religions, its predecessor, the Hellenistic empire, had an often-hostile relationship with Judaism. It is not surprising that in a colony that was named after Alexander the Great, the Jewish population would be limited and met with hostility (see Acts 16:20-22).

### **OPENING INQUIRY (Choose from the items below.)**

1. Can you recall a time when you were received without good hospitality from Christians or someone else? How did it make you feel? What was your response?
2. What difference does good hospitality make? What benefit does it serve?
3. In what ways can the church be more hospitable to outsiders and newcomers?

### **INSIGHTS**

Every Spirit-led disciple of Jesus Christ should be willing to change their plans according to God's directions. The sacrifice of self is among the daily duties of those who seek to serve the Lord. We must be willing to do what the Spirit leads us to do, especially when it involves taking the Gospel to others. Paul was possessed with a determination to do God's will. He was willing to endure suffering, inconvenience, insult, or whatever was required to accommodate the preaching of the Gospel. Likewise, we must be willing to do what God requires of us, taking a stand for our faith, even when our beliefs violate the status quo, popular opinion, long-held traditions, or cultural norms.

## **EXPLORATION**

As a body of baptized believers, we must make efforts to revive the original model of commitment and love demonstrated among believers in the early church. They shared freely among themselves and bridged economic disparities between individuals with hospitality. Across the years, our capitalistic culture has seen an ever-widening gap between the privileged and the impoverished, a departure from the close-knit extended family structure, and a decline in mutual compassion and concern for others in the community. The rise of individualism has compromised the fabric of Christian love, even in the church. Believers must commit themselves to a conscientious effort to demonstrate love to the world and show unity with those who share their common faith in Jesus Christ.

## **ADDITIONAL EXPOSITORY INSIGHTS FOR THE TEACHER**

### **COMMENTARY**

Acts 16:11-15, 40

KJV

11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;

12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

14 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.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us

.....

40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

NIV

11 From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis.

12 From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

13 On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there.

14 One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.

15 When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us

.....

40 After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Then they left.

Paul's missionary team made a straight course to their destination without interruption, completing the journey through two ports in two days. Upon arrival in Philippi, Paul and his team searched for a Jewish colony or synagogue but were not able to find one. Instead, they found a small group of God-fearing women worshipping by the river, outside of the city in the place where they possibly expected to find a synagogue. The word for "place of prayer" is used in Jewish writings as a synonym for *synagogue*. Additionally, the word *prayer* used here is the Greek word *proseuche*, which has a triple-layered meaning. First, it means prayer addressed to God. Second, it is a place in the open air outside the cities and synagogue where the Jews were known to pray. Third, it was a specific place near a flowing river stream or seashore where there was a supply of water for washing hands before prayer. By the river, the team found devoted women in prayer, gathering together and serving God. Lydia is not likely a proper name; the people of Lydia were known as Lydians, designating the region in which Thyatira was situated. The area was well known for the manufacture and use of purple dye, and the woman referred to in the text as Lydia appears to have brought the business to Philippi. As a woman of means, Lydia had a family and servants who followed her example in professing faith and being baptized. The term household may or may not include small children, but could very well mean all those in the house (including servants). Recall the episode in Acts 16:9-10 in which Paul received and accepted the vision from the Lord, with an understanding that the Spirit was leading him to "preach the gospel" in Macedonia. The phrase "to preach the gospel" was one word in Greek (*euaggelizo*) and means "to bring the Good News or joyful tidings of God's kindness, specifically, the message of Messianic blessing and salvation through Christ."

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

1. Adult Question: When designated leaders are not available, how should laypeople carry on?
2. Young Adult Questions:
  - (1) How might this scene have looked if Paul walked off when he saw no men with whom to interact? What opportunities have you missed to share the Gospel?
  - (2) How have you used your gifts, influence, and resources to God's glory? How will this lesson encourage you to use these gifts to God's glory?

## COMMENTARY

1 Corinthians 1:26-30

KJV

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

NIV

26 Brothers and sisters think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.

27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

28 God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are,

29 so that no one may boast before him. 30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

Paul's words offer a compelling challenge to Christians in Corinth and members of the church today. He addresses Christian "brothers and sisters," reminding them of the unity and bond they have as they stand together for the cause of Christ. Paul points out that no amount of human wisdom or natural ability can compare to what Jesus did on the Cross. Because of God's sovereign power, He can empower anyone to do His will. God's purposes, therefore, do not have to be hindered by human limitations. God does not need or depend on us—we depend on Him. Verse 30 emphasizes that the focus or strength of our potential for Christ does not lie in our own worth or ability, but fully in who we are and what we have because of Him—wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and redemption. Because God gives us all that we have we glory in Him, not in ourselves. We have no reason to boast of our ourselves, only in Him. *Wisdom* is the key word and the other words magnify the wisdom of God and not us, for we are made righteous by Christ Jesus who has redeemed and sanctified us for His glory. The wisdom Paul references is not the practical wisdom of mankind, but positional wisdom with God—His divine plan for our complete salvation. The aim of the work of Christ Jesus is to save humanity and glorify God. Jesus has completed His work; so let us not strive for personal greatness, but to rest in Him and who we are because of His grace.

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

- Adult Question: When opportunities rise, do you glory in personal recognition or do all you can to promote Jesus Christ instead?
- Young Adult Question: God often chooses people from humble beginnings, questionable backgrounds, or limited natural abilities and endows them with powerful spiritual gifts and callings. Why do you think the church is often hesitant to honor those whom God has chosen?

## **LIFE APPLICATION**

Refer to Adult Book (See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)

— This week, pause, pray, and reflect on any excuse you have made for not serving God—whether by attending an additional worship service or volunteering in a ministry. Strive to do better by starting this week and serving somewhere outside your comfort zone.

(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)

— This week, after taking up personal reflection time, seek a fellow Christian you can encourage to join you on your new journey. Be sure to make your invitation encouraging and not demeaning.

Refer to Young Adult Book (See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)

— Lydia's heart was opened not by Paul but by God. As God opened Lydia's heart to receive the things of God, He will also open the hearts of those are eager to hear the Good News. Ask God to lead you to new opportunities to share the Gospel message.

(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)

— All around you, people are shunned and mistreated because of their social class, appearance, or physical ability. Decide to embrace others' differences and see beyond what people disregard to celebrate the good that God sees in each of us.

## **NEXT WEEK'S LESSON**

The lesson topic for Sunday, March 7, 2021, is "Following True Leaders." The Devotional Reading is Psalm 77:11-20, the Background Scriptures are Exodus 12:28-50; Deuteronomy 18:15-22, and the Printed Text is Deuteronomy 18:15-22.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Lord, help us to remember that whatever we do in Your name should never be for self-promotion but for Your glory. Let everything we do be pleasing in Your sight. Give us humility to be faithful in what You have commanded us to do and to celebrate whatever You do in and through our brothers and sisters in Christ. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## **HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS**

**(March 1-7, 2021)**

**Moses: Prophet of Deliverance**

**MONDAY**, March 1: "Remember God's Acts of Deliverance" (Psalm 77:11-20)

**TUESDAY**, March 2: "Listen to Moses, Witness with Authority" (Luke 16:24-31)

**WEDNESDAY**, March 3: "Instructions for Observing the Passover" (Exodus 12:43-50)

**THURSDAY**, March 4: "Aliens and Unclean Share Passover Meal" (Numbers 9:9-14)

**FRIDAY**, March 5: "Consecrate All Firstborn to God" (Exodus 13:1-2; Deuteronomy 15:19-20)

**SATURDAY**, March 6: "Observe Festival of Unleavened Bread" (Exodus 13:3-10)

**SUNDAY**, March 7: "God Leads through Prophets" (Deuteronomy 18:15-22)