

Lydia's Lesson

Week of Mar. 15 - 22, 2020

Introduction

This week's lesson is the story of Paul's second missionary journey. It begins where his first one left off; in Asia. But God is not about retracing steps. God has a whole world he wants to reach with the Gospel message. Before he knows it, Paul has added new members to his team and he crosses over for the first time into the continent of Europe. One more surprise will be the first person to accept the grace of God, and become part of his squad.

Lesson

¹⁶ Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. ² The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. ³ Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. ⁴ As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. ⁵ So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

⁶ Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. ⁷ When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. ⁸ So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. ⁹ During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰ After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

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.

Questions

1. Why was Paul, not allowed by God, to preach in Asia? Why did God not allow Paul to even go to Asia?
2. What is the significance of the parentage of Timothy?
3. Notice the change of pronouns in verses 8, 9, and 10. What does this suggest?
4. Where did Paul find Lydia and her companions?
5. Lydia worshipped God, her family did not. Why did Paul baptize Lydia's family?
6. What was Paul's response to Lydia's request?
7. What does this lesson tell us about our efforts to share the good news?

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for the courage and energy of Paul. Although he had other plans, he followed your path and went where he was most needed. Help us to be more like Paul in our words and actions. Amen.