

You now know the reason why God stands so long waiting on sinners, months, years, preaching to them; it is that He may be gracious in pardoning them, and in that act delight Himself. Princes very often pardon traitors to please others more than themselves, or else it would never be done; but God doth it chiefly to delight and glad His own merciful heart. Hence the business Christ came about (which is no other but to reconcile sinners to God) is called "the pleasure of the Lord" (Isaiah 53:10). --copied

BENJAMIN KEACH'S CATECHISM

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)

Q. 55. Which is the second commandment?

A. The second commandment is, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me: and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments." (Exodus 20:4-6)

Q. 56. What is required in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment requires the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances, as God has appointed in His Word. (Deut. 32:46; Matt. 28:20; Deut. 12:32)

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Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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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

It is most thrilling to true believers to hear of the salvation of another and of such being brought into the Kingdom of God acknowledging that Jesus Christ is Lord. It is even more exciting to be in the presence of such a person and to witness the change wrought by a miraculous quickening work of the Spirit. Such an experience witnessed brings reminders to all who know the Lord of that time of awakening in them and we receive personal confirmation when our spirit bears witness with their spirit in the desire to exalt Christ.

The biblical descriptions of people being passed from death unto life are most instructive. We witness the overwhelming power of God in the conversion of Paul. We see the sweet response of the Lord to the quickened prayers of Cornelius. And, we witness here, in a few words, the conversion of a woman of Thyatira. It is here we witness the sensed effect of a mighty work of grace and power, conceived in eternity, purchased by the blood of Christ and then applied as the sovereign work of He, the Holy Spirit. It is here that we learn the simple truth that conversion is seen as an opened heart.

The brevity of the description of this event and our lack of attention to detail could cause us to pass by here with little notice. Even though many preachers, this one included, often refer to what the Lord did in this instance. The purpose of God in directing Paul to Macedonia

unfolds in rapid fire succession. But, before all the succeeding events there was a foreordained matter to be addressed. We think of our Lord and His determination to travel through Samaria and see it in the same light. So, Paul was sent first to a riverside Jewish prayer meeting where he would meet Lydia. There the Lord would bring His purpose to bear. While we think of all the events of this missionary journey, including the Philippian jailer, the riots at Thessalonica, and Paul being driven to Athens, we must believe that the Lord would have sent him for Lydia even if there had been no others.

Equally miraculous is the fact that this lady had been prepared all her life for this meeting with eternal consequence. If we could say nothing else about her, she is important enough to be forever memorialized in the Word of God. She may have been there on business or she may have been a transplant. We simply acknowledge the hand of divine providence that brought her, Paul and the Lord to converge at that point. She was dealing in a “high-dollar” enterprise and was, probably, a person of means.

She was evidently a person of faith either being a faithful Jew or a proselyte. She was part of the reason Paul was directed to go to the Jew first. She would fall in the category of the Ethiopian eunuch, Cornelius, and the “certain Greeks” who came to Christ as recorded in John 12. Such were those who practice a form of

religion, apart from Christ but with a reference to the Old Testament scriptures. She was in the place where “prayer was wont to be made.”

Buried in the midst of this verse is the simple statement, “whose heart the Lord opened.” It had been a few days since Paul had arrived. We are not told what drew him to the spot, but the fact that he was supposed to be there quickly became evident. He spoke to them and it appears they listened respectfully. However, one of his audience was special. Many had listened before to the men of God and even to Christ Himself. But, the difference was made when it was heard by that “hidden man of the heart.” This is what happened to Lydia. She was not overpowered with oratory. She was not intimidated by threats. She was not deceived by sleight of men. It was that the Word of God found access to her heart and here we learn an important truth – it required her heart to be opened by none other than the Lord. It was neither Paul nor her that made the Word effectual.

At this point we are made to wonder where the thought of one being told to “invite the Lord into their heart” originated? We are aware of the Lord knocking on the door of the Laodicean church, but this is the manner of divine conquest in the matter of the individual hearts of His elect. We are aware of the plea of the wise man “my son give me thine heart” wherein we understand the devotion expected of one of

the Lord’s redeemed ones. The picture here is of the Lord laying claim to that which He has identified as His from all eternity. In the fullness of time for each of His own, He opens the door and walks in thus claiming that life for which Christ died. As our Lord walked along the road to Emmaus with the two disciples (Luke 24) He opened their eyes and they knew Him. But, their testimony to each other was “did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?”

It is to be further observed that the effect continued in that Lydia “attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.” In the following verse we learn that she followed the Lord in believer’s baptism and immediately displayed the characteristic hospitality of those who know the Lord. Paul did not leave Philippi without a return visit to Lydia’s house. *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. Acts 16:40.*

It would appear certain that Lydia figured prominently in the thoughts of Paul as he wrote the most affectionate and beautiful words of the Philippian epistle. May we rejoice in the knowledge that even as the Lord opened Lydia’s heart so has he done to all who come unto God through Christ and so we pray that He would open the hearts of many more. *bhs*

To follow Jesus Christ is the greatest adventure in all of life. It involves the pursuit of life’s greatest purpose – the glory that belongs to Christ alone. It meets life’s greatest need – the forgiveness of sin that only Jesus can give. It gives life’s greatest pleasure – the joy that comes exclusively from knowing Christ. It involves the greatest partnership in life – the fellowship of walking closely with Jesus. It imparts the greatest teaching in life – the wisdom that Christ alone possesses. It infuses the greatest power in life – the grace of Jesus Christ to live triumphantly. It leads to the greatest destination after life – the immediate presence of Jesus Himself in heaven. There is no journey that can compare with this one. It will take you from where you are to where you need to be. It will take you through all of life’s many experiences, including your greatest moments

and darkest nights. This journey with Christ will enable you to live as God intends you to live. As you follow in His footsteps, you will find the real purpose for which you were made. Moreover, it will ultimately lead you home to heaven, to the very throne of God. No pursuit in life even begins to compare to this journey of following Jesus.

--Steven Lawson The Cost

But has Paul got a self-sufficiency? you will say. How are we sufficient of ourselves! Our Apostle affirms in another case, 'That we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves' (2 Corinthians 3:5). Therefore his meaning must be, I find a sufficiency of satisfaction in my own heart, through the grace of Christ that is in me. Though I have not outward comforts and worldly conveniences to supply my necessities, yet I have a sufficient portion between Christ and my soul abundantly to satisfy me in every condition. This interpretation agrees with that place: 'A good man is satisfied from himself' (Proverbs 14:14) and also with what Paul avers of himself in another place, that 'though he had nothing yet he possessed all things'. Because he had a right to the covenant and promise, which virtually contains everything, and an interest in Christ, the fountain and good of all, it is no marvel that he said that in whatsoever state he was in, he was content.

--Jeremiah Burroughs (referring to Phil 4:11)

Salvation, in other words, is an ongoing process that is currently incomplete. Already Christians have been saved: • from the wrath of God (from judicial retribution: see Rom. 5:9; 1 Thess. 1:10); • from eternal death (Rom. 6:21,23); • from the dominion of sin (Rom. 6:14,18); • from the life of fear (Rom. 8:15); and • from controlling habits of ungodliness and immorality (Titus 2:11-3:6). And one day, beyond this world, Christians will be fully conformed to Jesus in both body and moral character (Phil. 3:20; 1 John 3:2). Then sin will not be in them anymore. At this moment, however, we who are Christians are very conscious of not yet having reached that happy state. We live joyfully in God's favor, serve and worship Him out of gratitude for His grace, and battle with the down-drag of indwelling sin through the energy granted us by the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:1; 8:5-14; 12:1; Gal. 5:16). We often have cause to thank God for fresh victories won, but like Paul we long for the day when the war within will be a thing of the past (Rom. 7:24ff; 8:23).

--J. I. Packer

Contemporary Western thought finds death so frightening that in polite conversation it is the last taboo. Nowadays one can chatter on about sex and finances, and never raise an eyebrow; mention death, and most people are uncomfortable at best. Even many Christians think of their faith almost exclusively in terms of what it does for them now, rather than in terms of preparing them for eternity such that it transforms how they live now. --D. A. Carson