



Heartbeats along the way: The Open Heart

"A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; ... The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us."
Acts 16:15

"After leaving the prison they went to Lydia's home; and when they had seen and encouraged the brothers and sisters there, they departed." Acts 16:40

Her name was Lydia, a business woman from what is now Turkey a dealer in fashionable purple cloth. She met Paul on a Sabbath by some river near Philippi. She was a God worshiper, although there's no evidence she was Jewish. Yet, somehow, in listening to Paul that morning, her heart was opened to the Gospel. (Wesley's was strangely warmed centuries later listening to a passage Paul wrote.

Clearly her heart was ripe for opening before Paul began to talk about the Gospel. I can imagine she was thirsty for a deeper relationship with God. Hearing what Paul was saying, she eagerly opened her heart and opened her home to him and his companions as well. As a result, she and her entire household were baptized.

Later, after Paul was beaten, jailed and released, Lydia welcomed him into her home to rest a bit before going on his way to proclaim the Gospel.

We may have been like Lydia when we began our Christian journey: a worshiper, but incomplete. And like Lydia, the Lord opened our hearts to receive grace beyond measure when that moment arrived.

Like Lydia, we can practice welcoming strangers to our church home, even after bad things have happened to them.

"Lord Christ, open my heart to receive Your Gospel. Quicken me to respond to its command to love and to employ all I possess for Your sake. Let this church family practice sincere welcoming. Amen."

~ cl reynolds