

HOW THE LORD OPENS HEARTS (Acts 16)

S.R. Acts 16:30 – 34

10 – 1 – 2023

Intro.

- I. **Purpose of the Book:** To demonstrate to Theophilus and us that the message the Holy Spirit recorded, via Luke, was a chronological and historical defense of the teaching of Christ and His apostles. Throughout the book you will find the resurrection of Christ the foundational motivation to serve Him.
- II. **Overview of Acts:** Gospel preached to the Jew first and also to Gentiles (Acts 1:8).
- A. Chapters 1 – 12 Peter – Jews
 - B. Chapters 13 – 28 Paul – Gentiles

III. Setting of Chapter 16:

- A. Paul and Barnabas were sent out on an earlier preaching tour beginning at Antioch (ch. 13 – 14)
- B. In (ch. 15) they met with apostles and elders in Jerusalem to determine God's will regarding the conditions of Gentile acceptance by the Lord.
 - 1. Paul and Barnabas separate due to a difference regarding the usefulness of Mark.
 - 2. Paul chose Silas and returned to areas visited on the first trip.
- C. As they travel through cities previously visited, Timothy joins them.
- D. The Holy Spirit revealed message from ch. 15 is announced. **Read (Acts 16:5).**

I. THE GOSPEL COMES TO PHILIPPI (Acts 16:6 – 34)

A. Receiving the Macedonian Call (6 – 10) Read (6 – 15)

- 1. The Holy Spirit directs their travels.
- 2. They respond immediately to the request for help.

B. Finding Truth Seekers (11 – 15)

- 1. Entering the large Roman colony, Philippi, they look first for those who believe in God (12 – 13).
 - a. Evidently there was a small Jewish population - no synagogue is mentioned.
- 2. Paul, Silas, Luke and Timothy assemble with and teach women gathered to pray.
- 3. Lydia – a God – fearing truth seeker (v. 14)
 - a. Most likely a Gentile proselyte (cf. Eunuch [8] and Cornelius [10])
 - b. The Lord opened her heart to respond (v. 14)

- c. A business woman from Asia (cf. v. 6)
- d. The response – she and her household are baptized into Christ.
- e. Lydia extends hospitality to Paul and companions – faithful to Lord (v.15)

C. Christ's Power Over Satan's (16 – 26) Read

- 1. First century demon possession permitted God to demonstrate Christ's power over Satan (16 – 18).
- 2. False accusations by unscrupulous men (19 – 21)
- 3. Unjust persecution of Paul and Silas (22 – 24)
- 4. Their response (v. 25) Pre – evangelism, God's response (v. 26)
- 5. Anywhere the gospel goes, Satan will not be far behind. (Parables: Tares and Sower).

D. A Jailer Learns About God (v. 27 – 34) Read

- 1. Doubtless the jailer understood concepts of power and authority.
- 2. But, he had heard the singing, been awakened by an earthquake, presumed that all had escaped and prepared to kill himself (v. 27).
- 3. Faced with the realization that here was real power, far different than he had ever observed, he came to Paul and Silas trembling with fear and seeking answers.
- 4. **What must I do?** - no more important question can be asked. (v. 30)

II. ANSWERING QUESTIONS

A. What kind of heart does the Lord open?

- 1. Characteristics of a heart the Lord will not open:
 - a. Dull, insensitive, hardened (Mt. 13:13 – 15; cf. Ezek. 3:4 – 11)
 - b. Proud – **“God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.” Jas.4:6**
 - c. Politically correct vs. lovers of truth (John 12:39 – 43).
 - d. Person who does not seek and love truth (2 Thess. 2: 10 – 12).
- 2. Characteristics of a Lord opened heart:
 - a. Seeks God and His truth (Matt. 7: 7 –8; Acts 17:27) “so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;”
 - b. Humble - (James 4:6-8) “Draw near to God”
 - c. Honest and good (Luke 8:11 – 15) Note: the gospel determines the type of heart (Heb. 4:12; Acts 13:46).
 - d. Which kind of heart do we have?

B. How does the Lord open hearts?

1. Through the hearing of the gospel (Acts 11:14; 16:13 – 14, 32; 2 Thess.2:13-14)
2. All who come to Christ must first hear or read the message (John 6:44-45; Titus 2:11).

C. "What must I do to be saved?" (16:30)

Intro: Type of question asked by an honest hearted person – not enough to ask right questions.

1. Hear the message of salvation – read the directions (Rom. 10:13 –17)
2. Believe (Acts 16:31; John 3:16; 8:24)
3. Repent – change of mind followed by a change in action (Acts 17:30; 16:33)
4. Confess, not only that you believe that Christ raised from the dead, but that you will make Him your Lord (Romans 10:9-10).
5. Baptized (Acts 16:15, 33 – 34) Why? Urgent! Don't delay.
 - a. Lydia, the Jailer and **all** their household had "believed in God" – denies infant baptism
 - b. They believed God (Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21)
6. Follow the directions of Christ (Matthew 28:18 – 20; Acts 2:42)

Conclusion: Same question needs to be asked today.

What (something) **Must** (imperative) **I** (personal) **Do** (action) **to be saved?** (in order to obtain)