



Near and Now

On purpose – Lydia

By Rev. Mandy France

Warm-up Question

What is the difference between opening eyes and opening hearts?



Photo by Rhand McCoy on [Unsplash](#)

Discussion Questions

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

Come and Stay at My Home

Read [Acts 16:11-15](#)

Bible Story Reflection

The conversion story of Lydia is a strong testament to the power of God's Word. Lydia was a worshiper of God and knew the teachings of Moses. Paul's message, however, was about the saving power of Jesus Christ. Her heart was opened and she was moved to respond to the Good News she had heard. Lydia's story inspires us to put our faith into action.

Lydia showed hospitality to others as a response to God's Word. The Word of God is a living, breathing thing. It is not stagnant. It is always moving and creating. It is always calling us forward to show love and hospitality to our neighbors. Welcoming others is part of our Christian vocation.

When you think of your own life, in what areas do you see God opening your heart? How might you respond to the message of God's love for us in Jesus Christ? Being a Christian is not meant to be an individual experience, but rather it is meant to be shared with others. The love God has for us is so exciting! We should be eager to shout it from the rooftops for all to hear and experience. May your faith move you to places of radical hospitality and love for all God's people.

Discussion Questions

1. What impresses you the most from the story of the conversion of Lydia?
2. What could the church today learn from Lydia's story?
3. What do you think Lydia was thinking as she listened to Paul's message?
4. How are you using your resources to serve God?
5. What does it mean to be welcoming?
6. Think of a time someone showed hospitality to you. How did it make you feel?
7. God gave Paul an opportunity to share the Gospel. In your life, where do you see opportunities to share the Gospel?
8. Paul preached the Word of God, but it was God who opened Lydia's heart. What does that say about the role of preachers and ministers in the church?

Activity Suggestions

Draw a tree and label the trunk “Baptism”. In Baptism, we are named and claimed as Children of God. That identity produces, organically, good works towards our neighbors. Draw branches on the tree, and identify areas in your life you feel your baptismal identity leads you to show good works towards your neighbors.

Lydia used the resources available to her to show God’s love to other people. Make a list of resources available to you and brainstorm how you could use them to share God’s love with your neighbors. Be creative!

Paul shared God’s word with others. Invite some friends to engage in a Bible study with you. Close your time by praying for one another.

Prayer Concerns

Those preparing for Baptism and their sponsors, missionaries around the world, preachers and teachers of God’s word.

Closing Prayer

Help me to know, O God, what I have that I can use to serve you today. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

