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The Lord Opened Her Heart!

By the late Boyd E. Morgan

Acts 16:13-14: *"And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spoke unto the women which resorted thither. 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 was spoken of Paul."*

After the great call 'Come over into Macedonia' had been answered by the apostle Paul, his first opportunity to 'help us' was presented by Lydia and the women which 'resorted thither'. Outside Phillipi, the apostle preached for his first time on European soil, and Lydia became the first European convert to the cause of the Lord. As far as Salvation is concerned this case is of no more importance than the conversion of Saul, of the Eunuch, of the household of Cornelius, or those on the day of Pentecost. The outstanding point of discussion is 'whose heart the Lord opened'. The fact that the Lord opened her heart is sufficient for some to launch out and preach salvation poured out upon the alien separate and apart from all God's commands and the sinners obedience.

The heart was important enough in the plan of salvation that the Lord opened it. The Church of Christ has no reason to deny this, it behooves us to teach and to show how the Lord operates upon the heart of man.

The human heart is likened unto the earth in Luke the eighth chapter. Jesus said, *"A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed some fell by the wayside; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.*

And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it.

And other fell on good ground, and

sprang up, and bore fruit an hundred fold." (Luke 8:5-8)

The good ground in this parable, Jesus said *"are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word keep it and bring forth fruit with patience."* (Luke 8:15).

We cannot doubt for a moment that Lydia's heart was any other ground than "honest and good". She attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul, thereby bringing forth fruit unto God of her own soul and the souls of her household. Also she became hostess to the temporal needs of the apostle and his company. The scripture reads in Acts 16:15 - *She besought us, saying, if ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us."*

Noticable in the parable of the sower is the fact, that while the devil followed the sower, overthrowing the ability to bring forth fruit in all but the honest and good soil, the devil exercised no power whatsoever upon the sower and hindered him in no way. Satan is unable to stop the sowing of the Seed. Jesus said, *"Now the parable is this 'the seed is the word of God.'" (Luke 8:11).* The power of the seed is shown in Hebrews 4:12 - *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* Lydia was redeemed. This is unquestioned. Lydia was born again. Peter declared the means of birth when he said, *"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptable, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."*

Regardless of the condition of the heart: wayside; thorny; or rocky; God has the right of way to have the seed sown. Whether or not fruit is yielded depends

upon the quality of the heart. Solomon said in Proverbs 16:1 - *"The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord."* Now the question arises, "How does God prepare the heart?" God prepares the heart by revealing unto man the way, and preparing the means unto the end proposed in the outset. *"Go through, go through thy gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for thy people."* (Isaiah 2:10).

In Lydia's case, Salvation was proposed. *"Come over into Macedonia and help us"* was the cry.

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." (Isaiah 40:3) *"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God: As it is written in the prophets, Behold I send my messenger before thy face which shall prepare thy way before thee, The voice crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."* (Mark 1:1-3). When John the Baptist appeared in Judea preaching, he was preparing the hearts of the people for the reception of Jesus Christ. The highway and the way of the Lord were not temporal or earthly roads. They were spiritual ways for Jesus to gain a hearing, he preaching the fulfillment of the law to the Jews and peace between God and man through his blood: the Son of God's.

John prepared the hearts of the people by preaching, *"Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins."* (Matthew 3:5-6). *"John did baptize in the wilderness, and preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan confessing their sins."* (Mark 1:4-5)

But Lydia is the subject. Paul had gone into foreign soil to plant the seed of the kingdom. The Lord prepared Lydia's heart

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FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

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“Thou Art The Man”

(II SAM. 12:7)

By Glynn V. Purdy

In II Samuel, chapter 12, we read of a very unusual and human interest account, and yet it is as true to human nature as if it were written today. There was one of the greatest of all Israel's leaders who decided to take matters into his own hands and make “Might to be right”. This man could murder his fellow man, and yet he seemed to have a heart filled with truth and compassion. Now, how can this be said of the same man?

David caused a man to be murdered and apparently with a clear conscience, he then took the man's wife for his own. This would indicate a man without a heart, but may we take a close look at David's heart. Nathan came to him and told of a man who owned many sheep. One day this man had guests in his home and instead of killing one of the sheep from his own flock, he went to a neighbor's home, who only had one lamb, which he loved very dearly, and took this lamb and had it slain to serve his guests for food. Upon hearing of such heartless creature, David became very angry and demanded the life of a man, who would so sin against his neighbor. David had killed a man; the man of which Nathan spoke had taken and slain his neighbor's lamb. David seem to think the sin of taking the lamb was greater than his sin, for he demanded the life of the man of whom Nathan spoke, but spoke NOTHING concerning himself.

Now, from the lips of Nathan, came words that shocked and changed the attitude and heart of a great king; “*Thou art the man*”. Then, for the first time, no doubt, David was seeing himself as God

saw him and the picture was one of horror. I am sure that you now can have a desire to condemn David for magnifying his neighbor's sins and minimizing his own; but wait just one minute. “Let him that is without sin cast the first stone”, so now may we examine self.

The Bible teaches that the man who is not baptized will be lost (Mark 16:16). We say, “What a sinner, how can anyone be so blind and stubborn as not to be baptized, does he not know he is without God and without hope”? Yes, this is true, but if you have been baptized and refuse to obey God, then read II Peter 2:20-22 and see which is more condemned in the sight of God. The man who uses mechanical instruments to worship God, of him we say, “He cannot please God, for God has not authorized such, it is not of faith, so it is sin” (Romans 14:23). Then we stay away from worship and worship God not at all. Read James chapter 4, verse 17 and see who has the greater sin. We say of the man who tithes, “God does not accept such offerings for this was a part of the law of Moses and this law was nailed to the cross” (Col. 2:14). Then upon the first day of the week we do not “lay by him in store as God prospered him” (I Cor. 16:2). Please read James 2:10 to see who has the greater sin the “tither” or the “short changer”.

Much more could be written, but I am sure you see the point. Yes, by all means, remove the “beam” from your own eye before you try to remove the “mote” from the eye of your neighbor. David saw the “mote” in the other eye, but neither saw nor felt, the “beam” in his own eye. The next time you talk about the sins of others; stop for a minute and think, sin can keep a man out of heaven, and should God answer you, would he say, “*Thou art the Man*”. REMEMBER, we do not go to heaven on the demerits of others, but on our own merits.

They Just Won't**Listen!**

by Dennis Crawford

A man obviously in need of help poked his head into the preacher's study. He looked as if he'd been sleeping on a park bench for at least a week.

“Come on in,” the preacher said.

As he sheepishly sat down in a chair, the preacher flared his nostrils from the stink that had followed the poor guy in.

“Reverend, I'm all messed up,” he said in a blurt.

The preacher shook his head as he said, “Not ‘reverend,’ ‘mister’ if you will - but don't call me “reverend.” You see the Bible says “. . . *holy and reverend is his name*” in Psalm 111:9. Many people in the denominational world call men reverend because they love the title. It was one with no less authority than Jesus who renounced titles when he said, “*And call no man father upon the earth: for one is your father who is in heaven.*”

The poor man squirmed and cleared his throat. “Well . . . I . . . uh . . . I need some help with myself See Pastor, I . . .”

“I'm not a pastor either No, I'm an evangelist, preacher, teacher, or Christian but not a pastor.” The preacher didn't realize it but he had raised his voice to just under pulpit volume. “You see, the New Testament in Phillipians 1:1 says, “*to the overseers and deacons.* . . .” The qualifications of a pastor or overseer - the Greek word is *poimen* - are found in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. The preponderance of New Testament evidence points to the fact that there was a plurality of pastors or overseers in the first century. Personally,” the preacher finished with a wide smile, “I prefer to be called an evangelist”.

“I'm sorry. I really am. I didn't know about all that.” The man's face twisted as he tried to get back to the reason he had come in. “Listen, I just need to know what to do to join your church. I really believe in Jesus Christ and I want to receive him as my savior. If I can just -”.

“Just a second.” The preacher leveled his gaze into the visitor's eyes as he spoke. “You say you want to join my church? I assure you, you wouldn't want to be a member of my church if I had one, which if fact I don't. Let me ask you - did I die for the church? Did I promise to build the church? Is the church called by my name?”

“Well I'm not sure what you - ” The man started. He couldn't finish his statement because the preacher was getting into a kind of rhythm. He was unable to stop asking questions.

“Did I promise to come back and receive my church? Well, I'll tell you the answer to each of these questions is an emphatic No!” He relaxed then and leaned back in his chair.

With measured cadence the preacher continued. “No - the church belongs to Christ - not me. Jesus said in Matthew 16:18 “*Upon this rock I will build my church . . .*” Romans 16:16 says “*The churches of Christ salute you.*” Don't you

see? The church doesn't belong to people, it belongs to the Lord."

The man tried to interrupt. "I'm not sure -."

"Furthermore," the preacher said as he looked over the top of his glasses, "You can't join my church . . . uh, of course I mean **the** church, anyway. The Bible is very clear. It points out that penitent believers are **added** to the church when we are immersed into Christ for the remission of sins."

The preacher flipped his large study Bible around so the poor man could look at it. "Here, look up Acts 2:47 and see for yourself. Look and see. It says *"The Lord added."* Read it yourself. *"The Lord added . . ."*

The man hadn't any idea where Acts was in that big black book. He was embarrassed, frustrated and angry, all at the same time. What he really wanted to do was pick up the book and throw it at the preacher.

But he didn't. Instead he started over-speaking slowly.

"Look I'm sick. Not my body, but way down inside. I need lotsa help. My mother was a real good woman, see? I go to Sunday School with her - O.K.? She tells me about him - you know - Jesus - well, I - went way off the path - real bad - but I know where the answer to this mess is - it's Jesus, right? I hear answers is what he's got - you know - what he's all about. So if you could help me, I'd really thank you a lot. I want to know how to receive Christ?"

The preacher rolled his eyes toward heaven as if to ask for a special measure of patience.

"Receive Christ. Receive Christ! That sounds just like a Baptist. Was your mother a Baptist? Let's get this straight. You don't receive Christ. You're baptized into him."

By now the preacher had assumed his resonant pulpit voice and was looking over the visitor's head as if he was preaching to the balcony.

"Why, the Bible says we are baptized into Christ, don't you see? Yes, the inspired apostle Paul said in his letter to the Galatian Christians *"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."*

The preacher's voice trailed off when he looked down and noticed the man had left. His office door has just clicked shut.

"Just as I thought." Now he was talking to himself. "How well the Lord said, 'Having ears they do not hear.' No, if they won't hear, I can't help it. Yes, as I was telling them at the preacher's luncheon the other day - I said 'People just don't want to hear the Gospel anymore.'"

Where are the Headquarters for the Church of Christ?

by Wendell Winkler

Though some may have their headquarters in Rome, Italy; Anderson, Indiana; or Salt Lake City, Utah; the Lord's church has no earthly headquarters. The headquarters of a body or institution is the place where the head resides and the place from whence orders or laws come to govern the subjects. Jesus is said to be the head of the church. *"And he is the head of the body, the church"* (Col. 1:18). Also, *"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body."* (Eph. 1:22-23). Christ, as head of the church, resides in heaven. *"by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: who is gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God."* (I Peter 3:21-22). Since headquarters is where the head resides, and Christ as head of the church resides in heaven, the headquarters of the church of Christ is in heaven. This is the place from whence all laws governing the church come. The church of our blessed Lord has no earthly council of men who sit as a legislative body to formulate laws and by-laws to govern members of the church. Such a system is foreign to the New Testament and is an infringement on the supreme authority of heaven.

According to the pattern each congregation is a local independent body with its own self government - under the higher authority of heaven. The church of our Lord, universally speaking, has no earthly organization with an earthly head or

bishop and other offices. However, the scriptures do speak of the local congregation being organized with elders (Acts 15:4), deacons (I Tim. 3:8), evangelists (II Tim. 4:5), and members (Rom. 12:4-5).

We cannot afford to change this arrangement. Israel changed God's arrangement of government and desired a king to be like the nations around about them. Samuel, one of God's prophets, was displeased with Israel's request for a king. God spoke to Samuel and said, *"For they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them."* (I Sam. 8:7). In rejecting God's arrangement of government, they rejected him.

SECOND ANNUAL MISSOURI-KANSAS LECTURES

to be held September 23-27, 1984

The 39th Street Church of Christ in Independence, Missouri will again be host of the Annual Missouri-Kansas Lectureship. The lectures will begin this year, and each year following, on the fourth Sunday in September, thus this year's dates will be September 23 - 27.

The theme of the lectures will be a continuation of last year's theme "Issues Facing the Church." There will be a daily open forum and also a ladies class each day.

Free housing will again be provided on a "first come - first serve basis" in the homes of area Christians. Inquires may be addressed to:

JACK H. WILLIAMS
15331 E. 39th Street
Independence, Missouri 64055
Phone: (816) 478-0266
or
(816) 373-4946.

THE LORD OPENED HER HEART

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as he prepared the hearts of others. We are misguided to believe that the Lord opened Lydia's heart so that she heard the things Paul preached. Also that the opening rendered her saved and she heard as a Christian. Such is not so. Positively not. The scripture says no such thing. Let us read it again.

Acts 16:13-14 - *"And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a riverside, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down and spake UNTO the women which resorted thither.*

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."

Notice now "and spake unto the women which resorted thither." "Lydia - heard us: whose heart the Lord opened." The Lord opened Lydia's heart by the preaching. *"Faith cometh by hearing; and hearing by the word of God."* (Romans 10:17).

Her heart was not opened and salvation poured immediately in, for notice: "Whose heart the Lord opened", that she ATTENDED unto the thing which were spoken of Paul. Not just that she heard. She ATTENDED. This means she did the things Paul told her to do. She and all her household. How noticable is the 15th verse which says, *"And when she was baptized, and her household -"*

Who can deny that this is what Paul told her to do? AMEN

CONTRIBUTIONS INDIVIDUALS

Irene Laxton	\$ 5.00
Eleanor Davis	5.00
Paul and Mary Garland	10.00
Clyde and Delphia Smith	32.00
Mr. and Mrs. Roy E. Denner	2.00
Lela Blue	10.00

CONGREGATIONS

Maple Grove Church of Christ	\$100.00
Church of Christ, Marionville, Mo.	10.00
Big Pond Church of Christ	12.00
Viola Church of Christ	5.00
Agnos Church of Christ	10.00
Garfield Church of Christ	15.00
Elizabeth Church of Christ	10.00
Gamaliel Church of Christ	10.00

How To Become A Christian

The most important question ever asked is: *"What must I do to be saved?"* (Acts 16:30). Then, the **HOW** becomes equally as important. Notice the step by step process. First, we must have faith in the Author and Finisher of our faith, Jesus Christ. (Heb. 12:2). This faith comes by the hearing of the Word of God. (Rom. 10:17). *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* (Heb. 11:6). With the belief and trust that Jesus is the Redeemer, we must repent of sins. *"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent."* (Acts 17:30). In repentance, we turn from sin, **STOP** serving Satan and **START** serving the Lord. (Matt. 3:8,

Luke 13:3). With this new attitude we are ready to confess our faith, *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."* (Rom. 10:9-10). Read Matthew 10:32-33. Acknowledging our faith, repentance and confession, the last step into Christ is baptism. *"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."* (Gal. 3:27). Read Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38. Now that our past sins have been forgiven, the Lord has added us to His church and we are Christians. (Acts 2:47; Acts 11:26).

BECOME A CHRISTIAN

MAIL ALL ADDRESS CHANGES TO:
CHURCH OF CHRIST
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