**An Open heart and an Open Home**

**The Word**

Read together Acts 16:11-15

**The Big Idea**

God supernaturally opened Lydia’s heart to the gospel, and as a result she opened her home and her life to the cause of Christ. Likewise, when God opens our hearts to his grace and truth, we have the opportunity to open our entire lives up to his kingdom cause.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. What questions or ideas were sparked in you as you considered the story of this prominent woman, Lydia, and her conversion to the gospel.

2. On Sunday it was stated that only God can open the human heart to the gospel. Do you agree or disagree? What are the implications of this statement?

3. Share the last time you recall when God opened your heart in a significant way. That is, when a door of your heart that was previously closed was suddenly opened to some aspect of God’s presence, grace, or truth.

4. On Sunday we sang a song to God that says, “I will make room for you to do whatever you want to.” Where in your life right now do you sense God asking you to make more room for him? (It could be room for a specific person in your life, more room in a particular area of your life, room in your time, thoughts, resources, practices, etc.)

**Sermon Outline**

I. Introduction

 A. This event took place during Paul’s second missionary journey

B. God was divinely guiding Paul and his companions, closing some doors and opening others (see v. 6-10)

C. It is likely that no synagogue yet existed in Philippi so there was simply a place of prayer outside the city for the Sabbath (v. 11-13)

II. Lydia

 A. She was a prominent woman

1. A high-end retailer working with high-ranking officials and wealthy customers

2. A wealthy woman who has a large home capable of entertaining many guests

B. She was a single woman

 1. Probably widowed or possibly divorced

2. She is clearly in charge of her household (children? And servants)

C. She was a worshipping woman

1. She was a gentile who experienced the emptiness of the pagan Roman gods and the immoral Roman society

2. She was attracted to the God of Israel and the morality of Judaism

3. But she didn’t yet know about Jesus

III. God opened Lydia’s heart

A. This is a supernatural act of God

 1. The heart

 a. The very core of a person, the center of emotion, thought, intention

b. Pv 4:23: Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

2. The heart has a door that must be opened

a. The heart can be deceitful (Jer 17:9)

b. The heart can be hard (Eph 4:18)

c. The heart can be resistant (Rm 1:18)

3. The Lord is the one who does the opening

a. God reached into her core and opened up a place to his truth and grace

b. We don’t know what this experience felt like for her

1) This all makes sense.

 2) This is true freedom

 3) This is speaking directly to me

B. Only God can open the heart

1. This is Jesus’ point in John 3: you must be born again, of the spirit, flesh gives birth to flesh, and only the Spirit gives birth to spiritual life

2. This doesn’t remove agency from her (clearly she is already a worshipper and seeker)

3. It’s so important for us to remember the supernatural work of God. We can forget that after many years in the church and default to a self-improvement project of trying to become better versions of ourselves

4. That’s why it’s so good to be around new believers or old believers whose hearts God is opening in fresh ways

IV. Lydia opened her home

A. This was obviously an act of hospitality

B. This was also an act of sacrifice and courage

 1. She was identifying with the cause of Christ

2. She was risking her reputation, business, and even safety (see Acts 17:5-6)

3. Her home became the homebase of the mission team and the early church in Philippi

C. So as God opened her heart to his grace and truth, she opened her life (home, resources, etc.) to be used for his kingdom

D. Luke records the conversion of many prominent women (Acts 17:4, 17:12)

1. The early church spread due in part to the courage, hospitality, and sacrifice of faithful women

 2. Jesus’ earthly ministry was funded and supported by women (Lk 8)

 E. Lydia is a great example for the women of our church