

*In
search
of*

Truth and Right

Tim Henderson, Editor

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"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." Phil. 4:8 (NASB-U)

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"And She Prevailed Upon Us" The Story of a Certain Woman

By: Jason Moore

From the editor's desk: The following is the first of a series of seven articles written by Jason Moore, preacher for the Vestavia church of Christ in Vestavia Hills, AL. This is the record of the conversion of a young lady and the effect it had on those around her. Sometimes we seem to forget the power of the Word of God, and do not believe it remains today. These articles prove otherwise and serve as a reminder, the conversion of one person can lead to so many more. Be sure to read the following article and the ones that will follow in the weeks to come and keep an eye out for your "Lydia". **TRA**



"And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled. ¹⁴ A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. ¹⁵ And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay.' And she prevailed upon us." (Acts 16:13-15) NASB-U

Part 1—Humble Hearts: Prevailing Power

Luke finishes his story of lovely Lydia, the Purple Dealer, with a flourish—"And she prevailed upon us." The sentence is not just an agreeable ending but implies the beginning of a warm, caring friendship.

Lydia's offer of hospitality is humble, "If you have judged me to be faithful, come into my house and stay." Such a modest appeal is not out of place on her lips. If worship

TIMES OF SERVICES	
SUNDAY	
Bible Classes*	10:00 AM
AM Worship	10:45 AM
PM Worship	6:30 PM
WEDNESDAY	
Bible Classes*	7:00 PM
(* Bible Classes for All Ages)	

was a priority for her and if listening brought such immediate compliance to the word of God, it's no surprise to find that for humble-hearted Lydia, service was a privilege—such an honor that she begs the favor of treating Paul and

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company with her hospitality.

Lydia's humble attitude makes her invitation irresistible. How do you turn down such a meek request to serve? Her story is an illustration of how the meek *"inherit the earth"* (Matthew 5:5), a demonstration of the persuasive power of a humble heart. So captivating is Lydia's humility that her entire household—long under the spell of her humble habit—is moved by her example. They consider Paul's teaching too and are baptized along with her. Humble people have a way with people. A persuasive way. A prevailing way.

In July of 2006, a certain woman that we'll call "Lydia" came into my world—or else God dropped me into hers. Our meeting and friendship is bathed in the same serendipity that sweetened the story of Paul and Lydia of Thyatira. No vision in the night led to our introduction the way God directed Paul's path to Macedonia (Acts 16:9-10). But Luke's behind-the-scenes glimpse of God reaching into Paul's world suggests to me that God still reaches into ours.

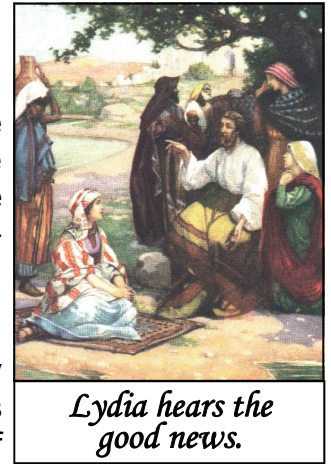
There is no confection as sweet and satisfying as the discovery of God's hand in your day. Such was the sweet serendipity of God's intrusion when He reached into my world and introduced me to this modern Lydia. The event was so unexpected that I stumped my toe on His hand and have still not quite recovered. And every day since has brought new surprises and new demonstrations of His power and providence.

No, there was no man of Macedonia who called me saying, *"Come over and help me."* Instead the call came from the church secretary who told me about a persistent soul who called the church building and asked to speak to the preacher. The secretary had told her that both of the evangelists were out of town and gave her the number of another nearby minister. A few minutes later the woman called back; there was no answer at the other number and she had already called five other churches before reaching our secretary. At first, the woman avoided stating the purpose for her call but finally offered, "I need a minister to baptize me."

We were driving back to Birmingham from my sister's wedding in Knoxville, Tennessee when the incredulous secretary rang my cell phone to tell me of the stranger's call. I was skeptical too. "She doesn't live in Birmingham," the secretary said. "She lives in Troy, but she's moving to Montgomery ... I think." "So what is she doing in Birmingham?" I asked. "She said she's visiting a friend—it's all confusing and vague." It's embarrassing to admit now, but we both surmised that the stranger might be looking for benevolence instead of baptism. So with admittedly low expectations I made the appointment to meet the mysterious caller.

I expect that Paul's trek to the bank of the Gangites River outside Philippi was far more optimistic than my drive home to Birmingham. When Lydia of Troy walked into my office with bright blue eyes, the hint of a smile, and hands folded in front of her in characteristic shyness, I was outwardly amiable but inwardly guarded and suspicious. In a short time, she disarmed me. Humble people have a way of doing that. They have a way with people. A persuasive way. A prevailing charm. Though the account of Luke's Lydia teaches us that, and the Savior teaches it best, I learned that lesson from Lydia of Troy, Alabama.

You see, this Lydia, like her namesake, possesses the kind of heart which the Lord tries with His Word and finds easy to open. And having opened her heart, He finds a doorway to many other hearts and an eager servant who regards such employment in God's purpose a privilege. It's not all at once that I connected the two Lydia's and discerned that the same humility that brought them both to God is how God draws others through them and how they stay content under His yoke. It's been five months since I met Lydia of Troy and I'm just making that connection.



Like Lydia of Thyatira, she is the kind of lady who has made such a habit of humility for so long a time that she has a magic about her—but not the kind of manipulative magic that makes merchandise of people. No, she only knows the kind of spells that humble hearts conjure. The kind of spell that brings people to the river to listen to the Lord and be baptized. Like the Thyatiran Lydia, the Trojan Lydia has mastered the kind of charm that prevails upon others not because of her irresistible strength but because of her overwhelming weakness.

It's not difficult to figure out why God brought Paul to Lydia. A woman of such prevailing charms was the ideal entry point for the gospel into Europe, the perfect doorway for the western expansion of the Word. This modern Lydia story is evidence to me that God is still looking for such avenues into our world and that when He finds them He does amazing things.

Luke's final flourish— "*And she prevailed upon us*"—is an open ending that teases his readers with a bright expectation of Lydia's future deeds of service. It's too early for me to know how my subject's story ends but like Luke, the eyewitness to Lydia's charms, I'm optimistic of her future feats of weakness. This is the story of a certain woman, a humble soul with a prevailing charm. She has captivated those of us that know her. I think you will find her story compelling too.

(To be continued next week)

News N Notes

Surgeries/In Hospital:

- Zeda Goddard is in room 552 at Weirton Medical Center
- Terry and Lora Smith's son, Terry Jr., will be undergoing surgery Monday, 6-25-07 at 9 AM.

Sick:

- Dorothy Sams, Linda Marshall's mother
- Susan and Scott Swanson, Dorothy Lancaster's daughter, and their baby.
- Hazel Carroll is still suffering from pneumonia

- Continue to remember

- Blake Headen, Alberta's husband
- Amanda Dowdy
- Vicki Renshaw
- Terry Smith's brother George
- Faith Kress, Linda Marshall's niece
- Ed Roberts father
- Ila Marshall, Harold Marshall's mother
- Marie Roberts
- Cindy North
- Grace Lancaster

Nursing Home:

- Hazel Carroll
- Pauline Sellers

Shut-ins:

- Rhea Henthorn
- Ethel Mahan
- Josephine Clow
- Mabel Fleming
- Pauline Midcap