

Conversion: Now That's How It's Supposed to Go

Acts 16:6-15

Sermon Outline

1. Intentionality: a massive need and a particular plan (6-12)
2. Opportunity: looking for a strategic opportunity (13)
3. Proclamation: speaking and hearing is always needed (14a)
4. Illumination: the Lord opened Lydia's heart to believe (14c)
5. Identification: she was baptized (15a)
6. Multiplication: through Lydia a whole family believed (15b)
7. Community: an instinct for fellowship, hospitality, and gospel-partnership (15c)

Implications:

- Keep studying, discussing, thinking, and praying about **tough doctrines**. Let us help!
- Be encouraged - **No one is beyond hope**. So proclaim and pray. And keep doing it.
- God has done more in saving us than we will ever realize - **praise him for his mercy**. Do not rejoice in this or that - let this rejoicing be as though all other rejoicing is not rejoicing at all - that "your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20).
- Baptism signifies a **resurrection**. Gives us a picture of our own **need**. Rejoice with them who are being baptized, but also see the picture of your own redemption again.
- **Not a Christian?** "How do I know if he's opening my heart?" Well, do you **hear**? Are you starting to **understand**? Do you **want to receive Christ**? Then he is likely opening your heart.

- *No one wants to come but can't. **Come!***

Isaiah 55:1-3 *Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. ² Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen ... eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. ³ Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live;*

Introduction

What a week for rejoicing. There is something very special about celebrating God's graciously saving people in our observance of baptism.

It is a great time for gospel clarification and a renewed zeal for seeing more people receiving God's gracious gift of reconciliation. Brothers and sisters let's see more of these baptisms.

^{ESV} **John 4:35** Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.

^{ESV} **Luke 10:2** And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.

Discussion 1: Gospel Clarification

- *Is it clear to each of you that salvation is a work of God?*
 - Be patient, you probably wrestled with this for a while in your own life. Focus on the essentials (saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone as revealed in Scripture alone to the glory of God alone...)
 - Folks not convinced? Gently ask:
 - *How do we know what we know about God? (revealed in Scripture)*
 - *Ought we to be careful in imposing on God our pre-conceived sense of fairness? (Do we want to be in the unenviable position of judging God?) Isa 55:9; Job 38; Rom 9:14-23 ...*
- *So what?* [what are the implications of the previous question?]
 - *If God is sovereign over this then ...*
 - *temptation: a "license to sin" type application*
 - *appropriate: always to be in awe, take comfort, and give thanks and glory to God*

Discussion 2: Prayer for the Lost

- *Take some time and pray for the lost who heard the message and experienced the drama (God given sacrament/ordinance) of the baptism service.*

[Pray that God will break up the hardened soil of their souls and do a great work to His glory... that we can be in awe of and give thanks!]

- Similarly, pray for those who will come to the holy week services.

[Pray for wisdom for whom to invite, the courage to step out and invite them, that God will bring them, that they will hear, repent, and believe!]

Discussion 3: Call to Mission

- If it is God (not us) who is "mighty to save," what then is our role?

[We are God's instruments--the way He has chosen to expand His Kingdom.
Faithful ambassadorship ... prayer and thanksgiving.]

- Who is on your prayer "target list" (for salvation)?

[If you don't have one... you should. Start sharing this list during CG meeting prayer time. If we believe prayer is powerful and effective, let's start acting like it. Pray for opportunities to proclaim (speak) the gospel and the courage to step out and do so.]

- Are you as a CG finding and focusing your energies on a specific mission area?

[Nothing brings community like being on mission together.]

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