

FOLLOW-THROUGH

“Testify with Open Arms” (Acts 16:11-15)

Sermon 5 in a Series Titled, “Testify”

May 13, 2007

Introduction

What are some of the most important aspects in your life that the church fulfills? How is the church fulfilling your needs and wants? How is the church equipping you to serve Him?



Putting the Passage to Work

In order to understand what is behind Lydia's conversion from Paul, you first need to look at how Paul was led to Macedonia.

1. Read Acts 16:6-15 aloud. Try to answer the following:
 - How do you see God using Paul and his companions for a specific purpose? What are some positive and apparent negative ways (vss. 6-7) that God used to lead Paul to Lydia?
 - What did Paul do when He was not allowed to preach in a particular region? What was the end result of Paul's preaching to Lydia? What was Lydia's response?
2. The Bible is filled with people wanting to go in one direction or do one thing, but God having another plan for them? What are some of your favorite Bible stories like this?
3. Continue reading in Acts 16 to the end of the chapter. In the passages that follow we see Paul healing a woman of a spirit and Paul and Silas being thrown in prison and converting the jailer.
 - What is similar about the two conversion accounts?
 - What is the significance of both requesting them to eat with their family?

Digging Deeper

1. Have you ever been lost or thought you had lost someone (child) in a large crowd?
 - How did this make you feel?
 - How did the person who was looking for you feel?
 - Have you ever been lost and did not know it? How is this different?
2. In both of the stories of conversion above, the people did not know they were lost. The people did not know that they need to be redeemed. Yet, God used Paul to show them the way. How did God work this for you in your life? What was your response then (and now)?
3. Is your church working to equip you to go joyful and share the Good News of Jesus Christ with open arms? Does your church fill you up and help you to hear God's calling in your life? Is this necessary? Is it important? How/why?
4. The average “unchurched” person in America feels that the church is judgmental, filled with hypocrites, and boring (according to Leonard Sweet – *Gospel According to Starbucks*). Do you feel this is a fair assessment of the culture? If so, how do we testify to them today? How do we reach out to them? How can we be different?
5. Close with a prayer that God will fill us up through His Gospel to what to go forth and welcome other people with open arms. (Don't forget to thank God for your mother☺!)