

The Directive Hand of God

The church in Philippi was impressive, but on the day this church began, it did not appear to be impressive. This church had a very small beginning, but it would become known by many as the apostle Paul's favorite church.

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO LOOK IMPRESSIVE TO BE THE LORD'S WORK.

There's no doubt about it, God was at work in Philippi. It was His doing, even though, from an outsider's perspective, it didn't look impressive.

Now the question I want to ask concerning God at work in Philippi is: How was the Lord at work in Acts 16? Well, He was working behind the scenes, directing the entire scene, and He called for 5 events to take place.

Event #1 - God directed Paul and his friends away from Asia Minor to Philippi. **16:11-12**

*11 So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis,
12 and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days.*

This is what God does. He directs the location of His people. He brings His people where He wants them to be so they can be effective for His purposes.

Have you ever considered that the fact that God has something to do with where you are? Why did you take the job you did? Why did you move here or move there? God's the one that planted those stars in the sky. He put them there, and He's done the same with you.

Event #2 - God directed a meeting between the missionaries and a few women. **16:13**

13 And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together.

This is normal Christianity. God is in the business of setting up meetings between Christians and non-Christians. God gives us random opportunities to tell the gospel to others. When Luke says they sat down and spoke with them, that doesn't mean they preached a sermon. It was a simple conversation. God opens up doors for conversational evangelism.

Event #3 - God directed one woman's heart to open up to the gospel. **16:14**

14 One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.

Lydia wanted to know God, and God opened her heart to know Him. The NET Bible said the *Lord opened her heart to respond to what Paul was saying.*

Jesus said, "*I will build My Church*", and that is exactly what He is doing. Jesus is doing the work of salvation

Acts 2:47 - the Lord added to their number daily.

Acts 13:48 - as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

Acts 15:14 - God is taking a people for His name.

Acts 16:14 - The Lord opened her heart.

The only way someone will respond in faith to the gospel is if God is working in their life to bring them to salvation.

Event #4 - God directed Lydia to become a bold witness for Jesus Christ. **16:15a**

15 And after she was baptized, and her household as well, ...

Philippians 2:13 - *for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

God was certainly at work inside Lydia. She became a great example for us. She wasted no time going public with her faith and sharing the Lord with others. That's the kind of Christian life God loves to see.

Event #5 - God directed Lydia to begin ministering for Him the best way she knew how. **16:15b**

...she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” And she prevailed upon us.

It's like the Lord rescued her from drowning in the waters of sin and she right away grabbed a fishing line and, working for the Lord, started fishing for men. She said, “how can I help? I know! I have the means for it. I can show hospitality to the men God has called to spread the gospel across the world. I can support missionaries. I can encourage them. That's how I can do my part in God's work of salvation in this world.

This is how God works. It's normal Christianity. It may not impress the world, but it doesn't have to look impressive to be the Lord's work. He directs His people where He wants them to be. He sets appointments for His people to share the gospel. He calls individuals to salvation. He makes those individuals bold for Him. He works in their heart to begin ministering for Him.

How is God directing you today?

