

Acts

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 06 October 1994

Preacher: Mercer, Seth (1930-2017)

[0 : 00] Amen. There is nothing like this in the sky.

There is nothing like this in the sky.

Feeling so much to need the Lord's merciful and gracious help, I can only venture in directing your thoughts to the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 16 and reading verse 9.

The Acts of the Apostles, chapter 16 and reading verse 9. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night.

There stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us.

[1 : 55] The Acts of the Apostles, chapter 16 and verse 9. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night.

There stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us.

When or after your pastor had telephoned this morning to desire for me the Lord's help and for the Lord's blessing here this evening, which was a mutual desire that we both had for one another.

And then there was the thought of your pastor being at the Deca this evening, which meant that he would be travelling there for that purpose, and the need for oneself to travel here for this purpose.

And it was with these thoughts that this word, come over into Macedonia and help us.

[3 : 35] Now, dear friends, this vision that the Apostle Paul had was God-given.

And it was for a divine purpose that he must go into Macedonia.

And, oh, I do hope that it will be proved that your pastor was to be at the Deca this evening and that one should stand here before you.

And I want to notice, first of all, that it is declared in this verse that there stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us.

And I wonder how many of you, or how many of us, have been praying about this evening's service.

[4 : 51] Lord knows if you have. And the Lord knows if any of you have come with a burdened heart.

And if you have come with a burdened heart, in whatever way that this might be, then it would be right to say that you've been praying about this service.

You've prayed your way here. And the Lord knows if there's anyone that has been waiting before God today with that that lays with weight in your heart.

It is very noticeable and very instructive how the apostle must go into Macedonia.

Because we read in verse 6, And I do also want just to go back for a moment to the preceding chapter.

[6 : 19] And there you'll find that it says in verse 36 of chapter 15, And some days after, Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord and see how they do.

Great and godly man though he was. And he had these thoughts and had this desire. Do you see, it was not the Lord's will.

He must go into Macedonia. And if you are moved just to cast your eyes back on that preceding chapter, you'll find there what happened.

The Lord did not intend to fulfill the desire of Paul in speaking to Barnabas as he did.

Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord and see how they do.

[7 : 40] I'm sure it would be right to say that it wasn't a wrong desire. That it wasn't the Lord's will. And you know, sometimes in our lives it is just like that.

We may have certain desires. We may have thoughts in a certain way. And we may even intend to take a step in that way.

But it was not the Lord's will. Now that might be a word to someone here this evening. The Lord knows just what is going on in our hearts.

But how careful we need to be. And it will certainly bring us away from everything and everyone as the Lord brought two of his servants here.

Strange though it may seem to us. And so we read and Barnabas determined to take with them John whose surname was Mark.

[9 : 02] But Paul thought not good to take him with them who departed from them from Panthilia and went not with them to the work. Would we ever have thought that godly men like Paul and Barnabas would have come to such a point as this?

And sometimes in our lives very sad things can happen. Things that we would never have wished to happen.

And in this particular case it meant and we are told in the contention was so sharp between them that they departed asunder one from the other and so Barnabas took Mark and sailed and sailed unto Cyprus.

And Paul chose Silas and departed being recommended by the grace by the brethren unto the grace of God and he went through Syria and Silesia confirming the churches.

the Lord was in this. Sometimes the Lord's divine purposes are brought about through painful things.

[10 : 27] and what is the lesson for us? Surely it's this that we must be preserved from ourselves preserved from our own will in matters that are in the Lord's hand.

hand. And how evident it was that Paul was to come into Macedonia with Silas.

And that was the Lord's will. And again I venture with this thought the Lord knows what his will may be for any of us here this evening.

Maybe someone here that will find if you haven't found it yet that your will is not the Lord's will.

And sometimes you know in our life we have to we have to do things or we have to take a step that is so completely opposite to our own will.

[11 : 59] But what a mercy it is when and some of you here tonight I'm sure in looking back over your life you'll say yes I know something about this and when the Lord directed you in a way that you never ever thought of that you have been favoured to prove that it has been according to the will of God.

Well how vital that is in our life not my will that thine be done. And then I would also notice this as in verse 6 in this 16th chapter now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galacia and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia and after they were come to Mysia they are saved to go into Bithynia but the spirit suffered them not.

But you know the Lord had a purpose to fulfil and I believe you know I venture to say this I hope it's the venture of faith that there are those here tonight that you're going to prove in your life that the Lord's will is to be done.

and then I come back to this and a vision appeared to Paul in the night see they must go into Macedonia they must come to this very place first of all by a riverside where prayer was wont to be made that they must come to this place just a thought the Lord might be in it that of course is with him that any of you here tonight who had to prove this in your life and what a mercy if you have proved it that you're aware the Lord would have you to be what a favour that is to have the witness of the spirit within our hearts that we are where the Lord would have us to be and if we are where the Lord would have us to be we shall find in the midst of all that it may mean that we shall have the Lord's approbation we shall have his approbation in our life but we shall have his approbation in our soul do you have that oh what a mercy to have that the Lord's approbation in your soul you may not be where you would like to be or thought you would be but you're where God has placed you well these thoughts have come as we have ventured to read this verse we're not told who this man was and a vision appeared to

Paul in the night there stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him saying come over into Macedonia and help us let me come back to this thought have you been praying today have you been praying today have you come to chapel with a burdened heart have you been asking that there might be thus saith the Lord for you oh you feel to need this you may well have come to a point about it you may even have felt today I cannot go on Lord without a word from thee you may have felt even today more burdened than you've ever felt more exercised in coming to chapel perhaps than you've ever felt before and if you have come like that

[17 : 07] I know how you feel you're waiting for a word from God well let us examine with the help of the Holy Spirit just a little of what happened did the apostle Paul tell his God that he wouldn't go or that he couldn't go you know dear friends if we are motivated by the Holy Spirit and another word the third verse in Psalm 110 is fulfilled in our heart and life and what is it thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power well as the Lord made you willing and the Lord knows what it may mean but has he made you willing the apostle

Paul what do we read about him and after he had seen the vision immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them oh what willingness attended him on this journey you see the Lord was in it and we have of course in this account here we know that there were two people that were to be met with and the first was Lydia a seller of purple of the city of

Thyatira and we're told this which worship God God do we know what it is to worship this great God do we know what it is to be burdened before him and where did they meet regarding Lydia's case they were favored to meet on the Lord's day by a riverside where prayer was wont to be made the Lord dealt very gently with Lydia and some of his dear people he still deals very gently with them and yet so effectual because power attended the preaching of

God's word by his servants and there are those here this evening and how favored you are to meet in a place where prayer is wont to be made and the Lord knows what has been prayed for by your pastor and by our friend at the desk in public prayer and the Lord knows what has been prayed for in secret now we read of this and on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a riverside where prayer was wont to be made and we sat down and speak unto the women which resorted thither do you know what it is to resort to a place like this where prayer is wont to be made have you felt it as you've come into this chapel sometimes because you will if you're burdened you will if you're exercised and you'll know what it is to pray for your pastor and you'll know what it is to pray that the

Lord would speak to you well has he spoken to you I mean God have you heard the voice of God in your soul as you've come into this chapel the Lord knows if you have or perhaps we might add the thought wherever it has been but have you known it here oh what a privilege you have for anyone has who comes into such an atmosphere where prayer is wont to be made an atmosphere of prayer you know it's this that will draw out the word of God from your pastor's heart have there been just a few times when it's been like that when the word of

[23 : 24] God has found you and when the word of God has had the same effect in your heart as it did Lydia's let us notice this and on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a riverside where prayer was wont to be made and we sat down and spake unto the women which resorted thither and a certain woman named Lydia the sourer of purple of the city of Thyatira which worshipped God heard us whose heart the Lord opened that she attended unto the things which was spoken of Paul now you know if we are among these people and if it has been with us as it was with

Lydia let me ask you one or two questions now this evening if your heart has been opened by God it has been made receptive earth so you have to remember when your heart was closed your heart was shut but has the

Lord opened your heart if he has opened your heart you will have been brought to attend to take notice of what has been preached and haven't there been the times when it has found you when perhaps solemn things have been preached and because your heart has been opened you have attended to them and perhaps today this word here seems to have stood out more than it had ever done in my own heart and life you know if we attend we listen if we attend to something we take notice our hearts are affected and if our hearts have been opened we'll have known what it is to attend and perhaps we might be able

I think we could say regarding this word attend that we've been brought to listen and oh how different it was with us when our heart was closed or shut we didn't want to listen you were glad when the preacher said amen and you could go back to your home to your ways to the things that pleased you but oh if your heart has been opened you've commenced to attend to listen to listen to take notice of what has been preached and you've received warnings regarding your never dying soul and you have commenced to understand what the word of God has said you've commenced to feel something of its power in your heart you've commenced to know that there is a never ending eternity you've commenced to know that you do have a never dying soul you've been brought to begin to tremble before an holy God you've been brought to feel yourself as a sinner in the sight of God oh you've known something of gracious conviction of sin you've been brought to know and to feel that you are a sinner it has become a burden to you and you know now what it is to join with the publican and cry from your very heart

God be merciful to me a sinner something that you now know to be true which when your heart was shut and closed you didn't want to hear anything about it but now because you have been crickened into life you've commenced to listen for yourself you've commenced to pray you've commenced to feel your need as a sinner and oh what a change has taken place in your life this may be as it were a reminder to one or another of what the Lord has done for you and I hope it will be the word of God to souls that have come here this evening that oh if our hearts have been open we've been made attentive we've had to listen we've been brought in guilty before a holy God and we've been brought to our knees we've had to cry for mercy eternity has become a tremendous sound to us to guilty souls a dreadful wound but can you come in with what follows in that verse that oh if Christ and heaven be mine how sweet the accent how divine so have you been brought here then have you known what it is to go home burdened under the word of God that has reached your heart you've known what it is now to pray over it and you now know what it is to come so differently that oh have you been brought to a point in your life in which you so need to know what the Lord's will is well what do we have here and I have felt in coming this evening

[31 : 24] Lord if I am to speak just a little about Lydia then that is all I can venture to do but you know this is so vital if our hearts have been opened to attend to the word of God then it will have become a very real matter to us it will mean something to us well have you known something of this just a little thought here in my early days exercise before God and I used to come into this chapel as a hearer and I have in my memory occasions when the word of God reached my heart and one occasion

I just think of in this moment when the late Mr. Leslie Rowell was preaching and his subject that evening was this regarding the morning cloud and the early dew that passeth away you know and he preached in a very searching solemn way that evening and my heart was opened to receive it in this sense that I went home wondering if there was anything in me at all I wondered if I knew anything at all I was searched through and through well have you known something about this have you had to go home sometimes from this chapel or any other wondering if there's anything in you would a mercy to have our hearts open like that because if we are graciously affected it will make us cry the harder that we may know that our name is written in the Lamb's book of life that we so long to know that it is well with our soul we're made aware that we need preparation for eternity and oh it will be a real exercise a continuing exercise well I must leave these thoughts with you but not without this thought and a certain woman named

Lydia a salaroth purple of the city of Thyatira which worshipped God heard us whose heart the Lord opened that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul now just a closing thought I do not know but the Lord knows even if there's anyone here tonight that is burdened with regard to making an open profession you will know if you are you'll not need me to tell you but you will know if you are if I might be allowed this thought in closing I came into this chapel one prayer meeting with this burden upon my heart hablo co■i that are known and felt whose heart the Lord opened that she attended.

Of course, much could be said about that but a final thought she attended unto the things that were spoken. The Lord knows.

Amen. We'll close by singing hymn number 83 and tune is Whitburn 435.

[36 : 55] Hymn number 83 How oft have sin and Satan strove to rend my soul from thee, my God but everlasting is thy love and Jesus seals it with his blood.

Amid temptations sharp and long my soul to this dear refuge flies. Hope is my anchor, firm and strong while tempests blow and billows rise.

Hymn number 83 All right. For the sage ray Oh.

God Pages Thank you.

Thank you.

[40 : 14] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, with the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.