

Paul found a group of women holding a prayer meeting by a river. One lady there was Lydia, a wealthy merchant who sold fine cloth. The "Lord opened her heart" to receive Christ.

While preaching in the city, Paul delivered a poor, demon-possessed girl, who was being used by greedy men. Those men had Paul and Silas, severely beaten and put in jail.

The jail-keeper was chosen from the finest and most trustworthy citizen. He heard Paul and Silas, bloody and bruised, singing hymns. And when God opened the jail door, he found they did not escape. If they had, he would have been executed. They saved his life. Impressed with people like this, he found salvation.

**Providence for Lydia and Me** Lydia lived *in Turkey*, where Paul *had just come from*. God, in His providence, brought them together in Philippi and I can relate to that.

In 1960, I was in an army tank in Kentucky reading my mail. One was from "Coosa River Newsprint Company" in Alabama. Thinking it was junk mail, I threw it out in the snow unopened, to put it in the trash later. Something (Someone) told me to go get it. It was a job offer and I wound up being a forester in Piedmont, Alabama.

At the same time, a college football coach in Birmingham, Alabama gave up coaching and entered the ministry. He wound up in Piedmont and led me to Christ through the message he preached and I understood. Like Lydia, the Lord opened my heart.

**Purpose in Troas** I also have an affinity *with Paul*. Piedmont became my Troas, my dead end. Troas is where a Christian has been prevented from going where he wants to go, feeling he has come to a dead end not knowing what to do. Troas can be a divorce; a bad doctor's report; boredom with life; a child on drugs; etc.

My Troas in Piedmont was boredom. I just didn't seem to be going anywhere. I didn't like my job anymore and felt guilty because I wasn't giving it my best. My Pastor, preached a sermon where he said, if we will pray, "Thy will

be done!" God will take control of our lives and give us the best life anyone can have.

I prayed it, and ended up called to Preach and enrolled at Southwestern Seminary in Texas. Here, God gave me my wife, my family and all the wonderful churches and people who have enriched me for sixty years. This is the story my pastor, Bro. Jack, used to lead me to pray that prayer:

Two young college seniors were in love and planning to be married. When a mission speaker came to the college, the girl surrendered to foreign missions. The boy just couldn't make that commitment.

Years later, he was in the third-world country where she served as a missionary nurse. He went to the hospital and walking down the hall, saw a lady cleaning up the floor where a patient had been sick. He stopped to ask her where to find his former fiancée and saw it was her. When she stood up to wipe her hands, before he knew it, he called her name and said, "There is not enough money in the world to get me to do what you are doing here." She smiled and said, "Bill, there is not enough money to get me to do it either, but I've learned I will do things for Jesus, I would never do for money."

**A Presence with Us** God's providences are not written on some blackboard in heaven. God, in the Holy Spirit, is with us every step of the way, helping us work it all out. Wherever you are right now, if you are a follower of Christ, He is there with you; like He was with Paul at Troas, with Paul in a jail cell and with me in Piedmont. Fanny Crosby was blind and wrote many of our best hymns. It was she who said:

All the way my Savior leads me  
What have I to ask beside.  
Can I doubt his tender mercy  
Who through life has been my guide.  
Heavenly peace, divinest comfort  
Here by faith in him to dwell.  
For I know what-e'er befalls me  
Jesus doeth all things well.

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