

LYDIA'S HEART WAS OPENED

Acts 16:14-15

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Acts 16:14-15: *Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So, she persuaded us.*

Several questions may arise in our minds over the text above.

Who is Lydia? How did the Lord open Lydia's heart? Was it through a surgery? What was the effect of opening Lydia's heart? Why the emphasis on the heart?

We will get answers from God's words to these questions.

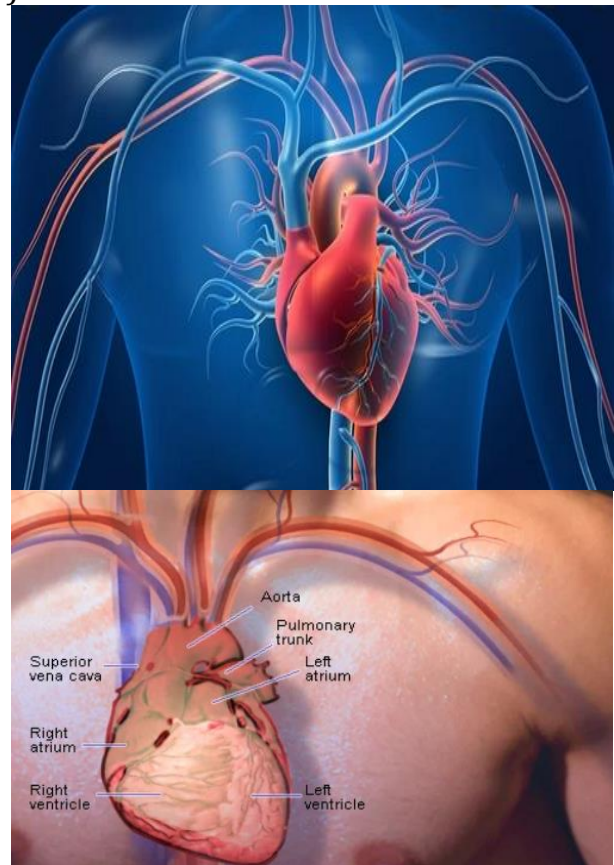
Do you remember one of Nigerian football superstars (*Nwankwo Kanu*)?

In 1996, after the Olympics, a routine medical examination at Inter Milan revealed that Kanu had a serious heart defect. He did a first open-heart surgery to correct a faulty aortic valve.

Years later, his wife observed his hammering heartbeat – his heartbeat sounded much louder than normal. She insisted he should go for a medical check-up. In 2014, he had to undergo a second heart surgery.

Kanu said that it was a complete shock to him. He says and I quote: *Now*

I know that being fit and strong doesn't make your heart 100%. Anything to do with heart operations is major. You don't pray to be in that situation. The heart is the most important machine in the body and when it goes off it's finished."



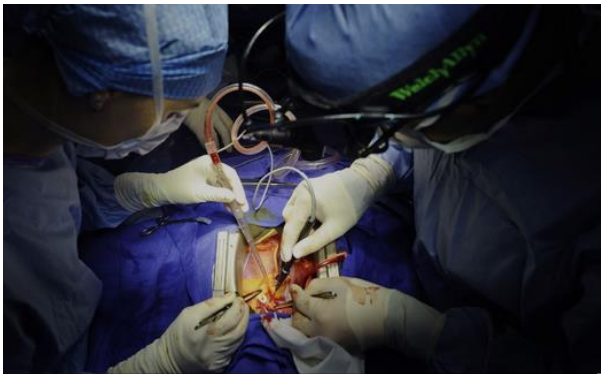
The heart can be found at the chest's center. The heart pumps oxygenated blood, hormones and other vital substances to the other body parts and maintain our blood pressure.

The moment our hearts fail to perform its functions, it becomes

faulty. We begin to experience various health problems and the faults in it, need to be corrected.

This is why heart surgery was recommended to correct problems with the heart, if other treatments haven't worked or can't be used.

Doctors use heart surgery to repair or replace heart valves, abnormal or damaged structures in the heart and so on.



WHO IS LYDIA?

Lydia is a woman. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira.

Thyatira is located in what is now western Turkey. Thyatira was famous for different purple dye.



Purple dye was a luxury product and Lydia ran a successful business selling this luxury product: purple cloth.

This was a unique achievement for a woman during the male-dominated Roman empire. At that time women had few rights, especially to Jews. Is her business, all there is to her? No!

Acts 16:13 tells us that apostle Paul and his team, on the Sabbath day,

went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and sat down and spoke to the women who met there.



They preached God's word to the women but Acts 16:14a says *Lydia (one of the women) heard apostle Paul.*

What about the other women? Were they deaf to the gospel that was preached? Why were they not mentioned as people who heard apostle Paul? We don't know!

Our focus is on Lydia. She gave passionate attention to the word of God. Her mind was occupied with what was spoken. She understood the importance of the Word.

Romans 10:17 confirmed that *faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

You are here in this church service – are you deaf to what is being spoken? Are you distracted by issues of life? Is your attention captured by your phone, by what you are checking on the internet, by the pictures you may be scrolling or by the online chat you may be having now?

In **Acts 16:14b**, we read that Lydia was not only a successful business woman (she was rich), but

she had time for God. She worshipped God.

She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshipped God.

Most of us (men and women) due to our successful businesses, have used same businesses, as excuse not to have time for God or His work in the church.

Yesterday at *Onogho street*, {during the open-air preaching exercise}, one of our listeners asked if it was possible for a rich man to make heaven.

In **1 Timothy 6:17**, God warned us (whoever is blessed with riches, either in the form of job employment, promotion, salary increase, business setup, business growth and so on) not to allow our riches hinder us from giving our self and time to God, as proof that we depend and trust in Him.

Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.

HER HEART WAS OPENED

Lydia, a rich woman, worshipped God and gave attention to the spoken word.

Her heart (spiritually), like every other heart, had faults and needs surgery. But, are we willing to surrender our heart for surgery?

God saw that Lydia (among all other women) was willing to surrender her heart for a surgery which can be performed only by God Himself.

1 Corinthians 1:26 - *says that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.*

Because Lydia was willing to surrender her heart, she (a rich and busy woman) was called. God opened her heart and performed a surgery on her heart.

Acts 16:14c - *The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.*

Lydia gave God all the signs to indicate that she wanted a surgery on her heart. She was a student, a learner, and teachable. She was humble and grateful for the riches God gave her. She was a searcher for the right surgery, for transformation and for deliverance.

She knows where God looks at - **1 Samuel 16:7b**...*but the Lord looks at the heart.*

Jesus in **Revelation 3:20** says - *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.*

It is important to know that no one is saved without his or her will nor hypnotized to obey God.

As we listen to these words, as members of God's church and as those who are yet to give their lives to Christ - know that unless we give God the same signs which Lydia gave - our hearts will not be opened by God. We will not be selected for surgery.

No wonder, some of us as members of God's church, have not been able to manifest Christ in our words, actions, principles, dress-style and relationships within the church and outside.

Our hearts are still manifesting faults as Jesus stated in **Matthew 15:16-19** - *...Are you also still without understanding? Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is*

eliminated? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

HER LIFE WAS CHANGED

Acts 16:14c - *The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So, she persuaded us.*

The Lord opened her heart. After receiving surgery from God's word, she gave more attention to the spoken word.

she gave careful attention to the spoken word.

Hebrews 2:1 - *Therefore we must give the **more** earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.*

She understood the word and she acted upon the word and was converted to Christ. Also, our household were baptized into Christ and they had fellowship with apostle Paul and his team.

There was no room for Satan to snatch the word from her heart.

Matthew 13:19 - *when anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart....*

Because she allowed God to do a surgery on her heart - her heart became a good ground for conversion.

Matthew 13:23 - *but he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces:*

some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Her conversion began the gospel or church in Europe! Lydia is regarded as the first documented convert to Christianity in Europe.

CONCLUSION

Who are we before God? What is the condition of our hearts before God? Do we recognize that our hearts need a surgery? Are we willing to allow God open our hearts? Do we want our lives to be changed by God?

To our friends who have not surrendered their lives to Christ, now - is the acceptable time for you to be converted to Christ.

2 Corinthians 6:2 - *For He says: in an acceptable time, I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*

To all members of the church, now - is the acceptable time for our hearts to be renewed by God.

Romans 12:2 - *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Let us all be a Lydia today!

Charles B. Hodge, Jr 1983, 2004
The New Testament Church—Conversions in Acts 16—19
Truth for Today.

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Truth for Today.

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Emma Pietras 10 Jul 2017
Former Premier League star Nwankwo Kanu reveals how his wife saved his life hearing his heartbeat
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