

Acts 16:11-40 - Godoy

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Preacher: Dan Godoy

[0:00] Well, good morning. It's a joy to greet you in the name of our risen Lord Jesus this morning. If you are visiting, my name is Dan Godoy, one of the five pastors here at Holy Covenant Church.

And if you are visiting, maybe starting a semester at Wheaton College, special welcome to you. I and my wife Megan, who's sitting there with our children, lead the college gathering that meets in our home every other week during the school year, along with Michelle, who's sitting next to her, Christine sitting back there helping lead that as well.

So something to look forward to this coming semester for college students. But it is a joy to be gathered and to open God's word together. And today we are in Acts chapter 16 in our series in the book of Acts.

Let me invite you to pray with me once more as we come to God's word. Father, we need your help. We need you to open our ears, to open our hearts, that we may pay attention to your word.

Help me to speak clearly and to say what is true and right and good. And it gives glory to your name, we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen. Well, our text this morning is an earth-shaking story that is centered around a world-changing claim.

[1:25] And it's the claim of the gospel, which I will summarize from our text this way. The long-expected salvation of God has arrived.

And all people join in through faith in the one true Lord. I saw a couple of you trying to scribble that down, so I'll just say it one more time. The long-expected salvation of God has arrived.

And all people may join in through faith in the one true Lord. This is the claim, of course, of the gospel. This is the message of salvation that the apostles are bringing to the whole Roman world, as we see in the book of Acts.

And it's my goal this morning to show you how the author of this earth-shaking narrative has carefully crafted a story to amplify that good news.

But before we get into Acts chapter 16, I want to start with a story, a very familiar story. In fact, a story we heard read in our Old Testament reading from the book of Exodus this morning. You know the story, Jacob and his family had gone down to Egypt, and they prospered into a great nation, the nation of Israel.

[2:38] And then a new king arose over the land of Egypt, a king who did not know Joseph and his brothers. And this king oppressed the people of Israel. He enslaved them, put them to hard labor, and murdered their baby boys.

And the people cried out to God for salvation, for deliverance. And you heard, God remembered, God heard, God saw, God knew.

And you remember how the rest of the story goes. God raised up his servant Moses to lead his people Israel out of the house of slavery, under the sign of the Lamb's blood painted on the doorposts, through waters of baptism, as it were, in the Red Sea, and out into the wilderness to make covenant with God in a community united by faith.

This is the story of Israel's salvation, and it becomes the national origin story for the people of Israel in the Old Testament. And it becomes the melody that echoes from one cover of our Bible to the other, the melody of salvation.

And I want to suggest this morning, it is the story that taps into the longing of every human heart, my heart, your heart, every human who cannot be freed from the things that enslave us through any work of our own.

[4:05] The longing for salvation. That story, that longing, is like the theological bedrock for the author of the book of Acts, Luke, who is the writer of the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts.

In fact, Luke, in his Gospel, uses the word salvation, savior, save. More than any other Gospel writer, it's not even close. Luke loves the story of salvation. And for Luke, this is the Gospel. That God's long-expected salvation has finally unfolded. In the person of Jesus, in his resurrection, he gives forgiveness of sins and freedom from all that enslaves us.

This is the Gospel that Peter and Paul have been proclaiming for the first 15 chapters of this book of Acts. And this is the Gospel arriving in the city of Philippi here in chapter 16.

As we see God's salvation freeing a slave girl possessed by demons, a Gentile businesswoman, a Roman civil servant.

[5 : 10] And friends, it is my privilege, my duty, my joy to proclaim in your hearing this morning, this Gospel of salvation. Now, if you've been around Holy Covenant Church a little while, you might know that I like to have very orderly and structured sermons.

I like to tell you the points of my sermon as we get going, with points and sub-points, and sometimes sub-points of the sub-points. And I like to invite you into my wonderful world of order as we get started in a sermon.

But I'm not going to do that this week. Oh. They like the order. Yeah. This text is a very intentionally crafted narrative.

And the author uses all the elements of narrative, scene and character and plot, rising action, climax, to direct us to the central claim of the passage.

And we want to see that together. So I'm just going to invite you along as I am your guide in walking through this text. We're just going to walk through the parts of the story together and see the salvation of God coming to the city of Philippi.

[6 : 22] So let's get into it. Keep your Bibles open to Acts chapter 16. And let's pick up where we left off last week. If you were here last week, you'll remember that Paul and Silas and Timothy have been traveling through Asia Minor, modern-day Turkey.

And the Holy Spirit has forbidden them from doing ministry in the places where they've already been in Asia. The Spirit is sort of herding them toward the western edge of the continent.

And there in the region of Troas, they stop. And Paul receives a vision calling them across the Aegean Sea into Macedonia to bring the gospel there.

And so that's what they decide to do. And so verse 11, so setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace and the following day to Neapolis. And from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony.

And we remained in this city someday. This is setting the scene of the story. This language of direct voyage is sort of a sailing term. It could be translated, they ran at full sail with the wind at their backs.

[7 : 31] Okay, the Spirit had constrained them from doing ministry in Asia. And now the wind is propelling and compelling them across the sea to bring the gospel to Europe.

And so they island hop from the island of Samothrace to the port city of Neapolis there on the shore of Macedonia. And from there, the eight-mile walk up the Roman Via Egnatia to the city of Philippi, which the author describes as a leading city.

And if you know your Greek and Roman history, this is a bit of an understatement. Okay, Philippi was named for Philip of Macedonia, the father of Alexander the Great.

He captured the city, he occupied it, named it after himself, and used it to control the strategic highways cutting across the land of Macedonia. And to control the local gold mines, which would become the financial powerhouse for Alexander the Great's conquest of the whole world.

A leading city indeed. A couple centuries later, after the assassination of Julius Caesar and the Roman civil war that broke out, Mark Antony and Octavian faced down Brutus and Cassius in the decisive battle of Philippi, which took place just outside this city.

[8 : 49] And after Octavian's victory, he, who would be later named Caesar Augustus, populated that city with the veterans of his wars, with his soldiers.

He colonized the city of Philippi. So by the middle of Philippi.

As his beachhead for the mission of the gospel in Europe. So verse 13, If you were here over the summer, you remember from Acts chapter 13 that Paul has what we've been calling a ministry playbook.

These things that he does in every town where he goes. In every city of the Gentiles, he goes first to the local gathering of the Jews, to the Jewish synagogue, to preach the gospel to them first. And I suggest that's what he's doing here. He's finding the local gathering of Jews. Maybe not a synagogue in this town, but a place of prayer by the river. It seems there are no men at this gathering.

[10:19] Maybe there were no Jewish men in Philippi. We don't know. But Paul is coming to the Jewish community to proclaim the gospel as he always does. But notice how the author is zooming in from a district of Macedonia to the city of Philippi, to a place by the river, to the heart of one person who will be open to the gospel.

A woman named Lydia. Verse 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.

And the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. Throughout the ages, the interpretations of this woman, Lydia, have varied from a successful international businesswoman, a well-off wholesaler of luxury goods to a high-end retail market.

All the way to a former slave who takes her name from the region in Asia Minor where she comes from, the region of Lydia in the city of Thyatira. And the author seems to expect that we will know something about what this vocation means.

We're distant culturally from this text, so we don't know exactly. But what's clear is that her heart was prepared to hear the word of the Lord. One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God.

[11:46] She's probably a Gentile woman who has joined in with the community of Jewish faith, maybe out of a love for the stories of the God who saves people. And so she hears what Paul is saying.

And what is Paul saying? The author doesn't tell us, but we know. Because it's what he says in every city where he goes. Remember his speech in Antioch in Pisidia just a couple chapters back. Where he says, remember those promises to Abraham? Remember the promises to David that were never fulfilled in their lifetimes? Those promises are now unfolding in the resurrection of Jesus, who he says, sets you free from all you could not be freed by the law of Moses.

Jesus brings freedom, salvation. He says we expect to these women. And Lydia hears, but notice it is the Lord who opens her heart.

And then she is enabled to pay attention. Listen, faith is not some superhuman effort where we sort of brace ourselves to believe.

[12:54] Faith is a work of God in our hearts. Listen how the London Baptist Confession has it. Listen, the grace of faith whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls is the work of the spirit of Christ in their hearts.

Exactly as we see in the case of Lydia here. And so verse 15. After she was baptized in her household as well, 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. So Lydia comes to faith. It's not only knowledge of God, but do you see what it says? Faithful to the Lord.

She is faithful. She is loyal. Her loyalty has transferred from Caesar to Christ. And she is faithful to the Lord. She receives the sign of baptism, marking her belonging to Christ and her belonging to the community of faith.

And her whole household is baptized as well. And we'll have more to say about households later on in this chapter in baptism. But note for now how God's grace extends from this woman to her whole household.

[14:04] Before we go on, I just want to hold up and consider this example of faithfulness of Lydia, the woman who paid attention. Are you paying attention to the word of the Lord?

A new school year is starting up. New teachers and books. And this Wednesday, Megan and I went to the parent curriculum night at Wheaton North High School where Caleb is starting his sophomore year.

And we sat in the classrooms and sat in the students' desks. And I was reminded how hard it is to pay attention in class. And I only had to listen to like 10 minutes of these teachers talking about the class that the kids would be in in the coming year.

It's hard to pay attention in school, right, kids? What about paying attention to the word of the Lord? Here at Holy Covenant Church, our entire service is a practice, an exercise in paying attention to the word of the Lord.

We hear readings from the lectern, from the lectionary every week. We hear the sermon text read out. And then you listen for 35 minutes as the minister of the word proclaims that sermon into your hearing.

[15 : 18] Listen, we're not putting on a show here. Like if we wanted to be entertaining, there's a lot more we could do to make this entertaining. But this is an exercise in paying attention to the word of the Lord.

So are you paying attention? Let's learn from this example of Lydia, the woman who paid attention. Well, as the story goes on, the conflict begins to build.

The author is pointing us toward the climax of the story. Verses 16 through 21. Rising action. Paul and his companions are going down to the river to pray.

And there they're met by a slave girl who it says has a spirit of divination. Literally the spirit of python. Luke is probably referring here to the cult of Apollo that was established at the city of Delphi.

Where the oracle of Delphi, the priestess, the pythoness, would proclaim words from the spiritual realm or about the future. And people came from all over at great expense to hear what this oracle had to say.

[16 : 24] And now here at Philippi, people are coming at extravagant cost to themselves and extravagant gain to her owners. To hear what this girl who seems to share in the spirit of python.

To hear what she has to say. Luke is painting a picture of spiritual and material bondage. She is in bondage to her Roman owners who have taken control of her and her body.

And she is in bondage, maybe even more, to these demonic forces that would reduce her to a mere channel for their words. I'm reminded of Luke's gospel where Jesus encounters the man possessed by the legion.

And you remember the man, he says, What have you to do with me, Jesus, son of the most high God? And of course he's right about who Jesus is.

In the same way this girl in her demonic trance cries out, These men are servants of the most high God. Same language. Who proclaim to you the way of salvation.

[17 : 33] Did you catch that? They proclaim the way of salvation. She's right, of course. Even the demons believe and shudder. But in a twist of irony, this girl names the longing of her heart to be set free from bondage.

The way of salvation. Paul, after a few days, it says, was annoyed. It's a tricky translation. It might mean he was troubled in spirit. And he turns, as Jesus did with the man possessed by the legion, To confront the demonic forces.

And he says, in verse 18, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out that very hour. Salvation springs up in this girl's life.

Salvation from demons. Salvation from her Roman masters. Does she come to saving faith in Jesus? The text doesn't say. But I think we're to understand that she probably does.

Of course, her owners are not impressed. And as the text goes on, the conflict continues to build.

When her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, They seized Paul and Silas, dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers.

[18 : 50] And when they had brought them to the magistrates, They said, these men are Jews and are disturbing our city. They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice. A gospel that makes claims on the pocketbook will meet hostility from those whose hearts are fixed on money.

These accusations are lies at best, But they are well-aimed lies for political outrage in a loyal Roman colony. And so the action speeds up.

Verse 22, The crowd joined in attacking them. The magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, They threw them into prison, Ordering the jailer to keep them safely.

And having received this order, He put them into the inner prison And fastened their feet in the stocks. Things are going bad real fast For these ministers of the gospel.

Remember Peter in chapter 12, When he gets thrown into prison in Jerusalem under King Herod. Now in the same way, Paul and Silas are thrown into a Roman prison. No justice, No trial, Bloodied. [20:02] Can you imagine the scene? Their backs are open with wounds from the rods. Blood drying on their bodies. Their faces swollen and bruised.

Their bare skin pressed against the cold floor of this pitch black dungeon. Can you imagine? I imagine this is not the first time this had happened in the city of Philippi.

I imagine the other prisoners remember the last guy who got beat up and thrown into this jail.

Maybe it was them. I bet they remember a long night of agonized screaming.

Of shouts into the darkness. Of curses hurled at the jailer. But this time, Salvation had come to Philippi and something different was about to happen.

Verse 25, About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, And the prisoners were listening to them. Imagine their astonishment when they heard, Not curses, Not shouts and groans, But sweet prayers and songs.

[21:11] If you were beat up and thrown into a Roman dungeon, Would you be singing? I'm not sure if I would. Let us learn from this example of Christian faithfulness in suffering.

Of course, we don't know what they were singing or what they were praying, But reading with the grain of this text and the whole book of Acts, I have a guess.

I guess that they were singing the songs of Israel's salvation. Maybe like the responsive reading from our lectionary this morning. If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, Let Israel now say, If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, They would have swallowed us up alive.

But blessed be the Lord who has not given us as prey. We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowler. The snare is broken and we have escaped.

Maybe the prisoners joined in that song. Or maybe they were singing the famous Passover anthem, Psalm 118. Out of my distress I called on the Lord. The Lord answered and set me free.

[22:16] The Lord is on my side. I will not fear. What can man do to me? We don't know what they were praying or what they were singing, But their captive audience was captivated by their prayers, Listening intently as they cried out to God.

And as they listened, verse 26, Suddenly there was a great earthquake, So that the foundations of the prison were shaken. Luke describes divine intervention.

There's a whole strain of biblical scholarship I find kind of amusing, Where scholars try to link the events in this narrative to known first century earthquakes In the region of Philippi and Macedonian seismological activity in that region, Which totally misses the point.

Okay, earthquakes don't unlock doors and release shackles and set people free. They bury people. This is divine intervention. Luke is saying, God set these men free.

It's freedom for the captives. It's liberation for the oppressed. It's the year of the Lord's favor. As Jesus said in Luke chapter 4, God is working salvation for Paul and Silas and these prisoners.

[23:33] And if salvation was mainly earthly liberation, This would be the climax of the story. But Luke has been saying all along in the book of Acts, That salvation is embodied and spiritual.

It is in this world and the world to come. Which means the jailbreak is but a pointer to the main thing, To the real climax, Which is the thing that happens next.

Notice how in the next several verses, Time slows down in this narrative. The author is saying, Pay attention. Be like Lydia. Pay attention to what's about to happen next.

Because this is the main thing. Verse 27. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, He drew his sword and was about to kill himself, Supposing that the prisoners had escaped.

If you remember back in Acts chapter 12, When Peter escaped from prison, Herod ordered the guards to be put to death. Because that's standard operating procedure in the ancient Roman world. And this loyal Roman jailer is going to give himself what he deserves.

[24:42] Fall on his own sword. But verse 28. Paul cried out with a loud voice, Do not harm yourself. We are all here. He quite literally saves his life.

And then verse 29. And the jailer called for lights and rushed in and trembling with fear. He fell down before Paul and Silas. Notice when the salvation of God is at hand, Worldly status flips upside down.

The captor kneels before the captives. The servant of Caesar trembles before the servants of Christ. And the jailer brings them out and asks them the question of questions.

Sir, what must I do to be saved? And here we are at the climax of the story as the jailer asks the question for the ages.

How do I get in on this salvation that is clearly breaking out in this city of Philippi right now? I think that's how we're to understand this question. I've often wondered, what was the jailer thinking?

[25:45] What did he understand about the salvation of God when he asks this question? The biblical authors don't really invite us to psychoanalyze the characters and figure out what they're thinking. We read with the grain of the whole book of Acts where Luke has been saying over and over that all people, Romans and Jews and male and female and slave and free, all people need saving from all the things they cannot save themselves from, from sin and death and the devil.

And the jailer asks the question of questions. There is only one God who can work that kind of salvation. And there is only one answer, and that's what the apostles proclaimed to him in verse 31. And they said, Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household. I don't usually like to write in my Bible.

I find it kind of distracting when I've got, you know, extraneous marks in my Bible, so I don't do it. But if you're into that, or if you have one of our Acts journaling Bibles that we've been handing out during the series, circle it, underline it, highlight it.

Verse 31 is the climax of this story, and it's the thing that the author is trying to direct our attention to. Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.

[27:04] Throw your trust, your loyalty onto Jesus alone. That's how you participate in the salvation of God that is breaking out in the city of Philippi and that is arriving in the city of Wheaton right now.

Believe and you will be saved. And so now let me stop and ask the question for the ages. What must you do to be saved?

Because newsflash, we've got problems. We've got a lot of problems. Gas prices are still around \$4.50 a gallon, I think. Inflation's running at about 3.5%.

Last Monday, the 30-year treasury bond hit 5.3%. Maybe you don't know that's a problem, but the finance bros of the world are trying to find shelter from a tanking bond market.

We've got problems. We've got bigger problems than that. Because sin is crouching at the door and it seeks to rule over you and you can hear the knocking.

[28:07] And the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to deceive, to cause to doubt, to lead astray.

And day by day under this sun, our bodies are slowly deteriorating into the dust from which we come. Even if you're 16 years old and feel invincible, the day of our death is coming and we know it. And where will we look for salvation? College students starting another semester of school or maybe your first semester of college. Where will you look for salvation this coming semester? In academic excellence? Throw yourself into it. In romantic relationships? Friends, where will we find salvation? In a political movement?

Ancient spiritual practices revived? The rule of Saint Benedict, perhaps? No. No. Too much.

[29:13] Friends, there is salvation in nothing and no one else but Christ and him alone. Faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation.

Now you might ask, what does that faith look like? What does it mean? I'm glad you asked because the writers of the Heidelberg Catechism have an answer for us.

I've heard that there was a vote among the teenagers of the church as to which pastor is most likely to quote from the Heidelberg Catechism during a sermon. And I won. And so I don't want to disappoint. What is saving faith?

Knowledge of all that God has granted forgiveness of sins, eternal righteousness and salvation. Not only knowledge but also wholehearted trust. That's what Paul is preaching. That's what saving faith looks like. Teenagers of the church, are you trusting in Jesus?

[30:20] Maybe you don't know or you're not sure what that means. I'm not sure I understood what that meant when I was a teenager. Let me invite you to talk to the pastors of this church about that.

I also heard there was a vote and I was voted one of the two most intimidating pastors of Holy Covenant Church. I don't know why or what that means. So if you're too intimidated to talk to me about trusting and faith, talk to Pastor Dave Papendorf.

He is not intimidating. No. The jailer asks the question for the ages and Paul gives the only answer there could be or will ever be.

Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. You and your household. And now we need to follow a brief rabbit trail on households and baptisms because in the next four verses, Luke is very interested to show us that salvation has come not just to this jailer but to his whole household. Listen as I read. Believe and you will be saved. You and your household. And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds and he was baptized at once.

[31:30] He and his family. And then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

Now, if you didn't know, for better or worse, these verses usually feature in the centuries-old Protestant Christian debate as to whether infants should be baptized in Christian baptism. And if you didn't know, here at HCC, we practice believers' baptism for those who profess faith in Jesus. And we practice infant baptism for the infant children of those who profess faith in Jesus. And this is a conviction that we do or a practice that we do out of the conviction that we have much more to gain from the unity that we experience across those differing opinions than what we would gain through division against those differing opinions.

And if this is news to you or you have questions about this, please do find me after the service. Love to talk to you about our practice and what we do. But suffice to say, these verses are used in debates about this question because those with the infant baptism position will sometimes say, look at these verses when we understand the first century Roman household context.

[32:53] We understand that surely this is not only a jailer and his wife and maybe a teenage son, but a whole bunch of kids and adult children and their children and servants and their families.

And surely there would be infants in the bunch here. And so when it says all the family was baptized, that must mean all the family, including the infants. And proponents of the believer's Baptist view will say, yes, but when you look at the grammar and the sequence of this story, faith clearly precedes baptism and infants cannot profess faith in Jesus and so should not be baptized. And so the conversation goes. And let me settle it right now. This text is not about infant baptism. I don't think Luke's intention here is to answer questions about whether infants should be baptized. Luke is interested in at least two things, two things that we can observe in this text. Number one, baptism is like the front door to the community of God's people. If you go to some churches, you'll see the baptismal right at the doors near the back of the church to signify that baptism is the entrance into the community of faith.

And just as in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch and Cornelius and Lydia and the jailer, he's baptized to mark his entrance into this community of faith.

[34:16] And second, I think Luke, his special emphasis here is to show that God's salvation works through families.

The jailer believes and through his faith, his entire household hears and believes and comes to saving faith. This is how God's salvation often works.

Let me illustrate with a question. Is there a difference between a two-year-old growing up in a Christian home and a two-year-old growing up in a Muslim home? On the one hand, no.

They are both image bearers of God. They both need saving faith in Jesus. On the other hand, there is all the difference because the first child will hear God's gospel promises proclaimed to him, Lord willing, every day of his life, and the other child may never hear unless someone tells him. God's salvation works importantly through families. And I'll just say as an aside that infant baptism at its best is built on that biblical conviction. Here at HCC, we love baptism.

[35:28] Next Sunday, we will have believers' baptisms here in our morning service in a baptismal that I believe is now on site. It will be right here, filled with water, and we have four candidates for baptism next Sunday.

And if you've never been baptized and you would like to be baptized, please come talk to me after the service. We may not be able to baptize you next week. But we love baptism, and we want to obey Christ in his command that his people should be baptized.

Okay, so salvation has arrived at this jailer's house. A scene of Christian hospitality ensues, and there is much rejoicing. And in the final section of the story, we see falling action and resolution, and an odd little sequence where Paul wants to insist that the people in charge know their legal blunder.

Some of you know that my primary vocation is in the heavily regulated investment management industry. And something that I often need to tell newer employees is that when you're working with the regulators and people in charge, and you get them to say yes to the thing that your business needs to do, stop talking and get out of the room as quickly as possible.

Paul has a totally opposite approach. He wants the people in charge to know what they've done and apologize for it. Do you know Gary Chapman has a book, *The Five Languages of Apology*?

[36 : 53] You married couples might be interested in that, but Paul's language of apology seems to be that they own up to what they've done. Why does this little sequence happen? Why does Luke include it here?

I think there are two important reasons. One is that Paul's Roman citizenship becomes a major plot feature in chapters 22 and 23, and Luke wants to get it on the table right now. Paul's a Roman citizen.

But second, and maybe more than that, this teaches us Paul's view of government authority. If the gospel was merely political, he would burn it down.

But Paul upholds the Roman legal system. As he writes in Romans 13, let every person be subject to the governing authorities. This is why we pray for our government leaders. Let us learn from his example here.

And the story ends where it begins, verse 40. They went out of the prison and visited Lydia, the faithful woman who paid attention. And when they had seen the brothers, now it's not just Lydia, but a community is forming, a church.

[37 : 54] That within 10 years, we'll have elders and deacons. And Paul, the Roman citizen, will write them a letter saying, Our citizenship is in heaven. And from it, we await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

This morning, we've looked at this earth-shaking story centered around a world-changing claim that the long-expected salvation of God has arrived, and all people may join in through faith in the one true Lord.

We've seen the example of Lydia, the woman who paid attention. We've seen these pictures of salvation going to all people. And we've considered the longings of our own heart for salvation. May God work in our hearts through his word. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.