

on a voyage

2018 NATIONAL WOMEN'S MINISTRIES DAY: SUGGESTED MONOLOGUE

By Candy Tolbert

Use this monologue when teaching on extending hospitality in the “harbors” of life. (See the 2018 suggested sermon outline, point 2).

LYDIA: Extending Hospitality (Acts 16:13-15; 1 Timothy 6:17,18)

There are not enough hours in this day, Lydia thought. Examining the exquisite blue to red fabric before her, keen eyes and delicate fingers assured her the purple silk would bring a handsome price. Royal dignitaries throughout Philippi—the perfect place for cultured and affluent women—were the reason things were going well. Only the very rich could afford her merchandise.

No doubt about it. Lydia was a woman of means and status; a successful businesswoman and the head of a household. She knew how to make a living.

Sighing wearily now, Lydia yawned and looked out at the setting sun. Her thoughts wandered from fine cloth to her new Christian friends.

The words of Paul from weeks earlier still captivated her. Already a worshiper of God, she was a Gentile. And though not a full convert to Judaism, she studied the Jewish faith with fervency and passion.

Suddenly, her thoughts found her sitting by the river with friends—other believing women who had come to worship God under the open sky and near the running water. Lydia became pensive as she saw the events of that day again through her mind’s eye.

“Look,” one of the women said. “Over there. That man is talking to Anna, Dorcas, and Rebecca. See how they sit and listen to him.”

Moments later, Lydia slowly walked to the circle that had formed. Her friends sat silent, and looked as if they were searching for understanding of the truth and profoundness of what had just been said. *This conversation runs deeper than an idle stream of thought*, she reasoned.

She listened as Paul spoke of Jesus. And as she listened to the good news, the Holy Spirit opened her heart and mind to Paul’s message.

“Do you understand?” Paul asked them all. Quiet reigned in that moment. Lydia made a decision of her own. Swallowing hard, she stood to her feet. “I understand,” she said, “and I believe.”

Lydia listened for more than an hour as Paul and the other men continued to teach about Jesus’ life, death, and Resurrection and how water baptism for the true follower is a symbol of the believer’s burial and resurrection with Christ. And again she responded, this time through her own baptism.

Glowing with the love of God as she was raised from the water, she knew in an instant that in spite of her self-sufficiency she had found something she needed—something outside herself.

She said, “If you’re confident that I’m in this with you and believe in the Master truly, come home with me and be my guests.” The men hesitated, but Lydia wouldn’t take no for an answer.

As they sat waiting for the evening meal to be served, one of the men spoke. “Your generosity and hospitality are unique gifts God can use for provision to the church.” Lydia knew days like this would be the first of many cherished memories.

Now, as a long day was drawing to an end, she sat down to fold the last stack of polished cloth and to offer a simple prayer. *Jesus, my life changed forever that day by the river because I found You. Use my home for Your glory, to bring rest and comfort to the weary.*

Through the years Lydia would grow in her faith and learn more about what her friend Paul meant when he said, “those who are rich in the present world [are] . . . to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.”

—THE END—

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LYDIA: EXTENDING HOSPITALITY

Production Notes

RUNNING TIME: about 7 minutes

CAST: *Narrator, Lydia, (and three women: Anna, Dorcas, and Rebecca). Paul, (and two other men), dressed in biblical-era costumes*

SETTING: *Lydia's home, and a river scene*

PROPS: *A bench, a chair and/or table, folded stacks of colorful cloth (including purple), and a few ceramic pots will create Lydia's home. A few large potted plants, a "boulder," (possibly made of styrofoam), a small piece of green fabric to simulate grass, and a blue one to simulate water, could create a river scene. Consider turning lights on each scene as needed.*

SUGGESTIONS: Consider taping this script ahead of the performance with a narrator and actors speaking the conversations. Then actors would only need to act out suggested actions on stage while the recording plays.

READERS THEATER PERFORMANCE: If you don't have room onstage to stage each setting, the actors can pull this off as a Readers Theater. Set them up with mics and scripts (*handheld or on music stands*), putting the narrator and Lydia on one side, and Paul and a group of women, and a few men, on the other side.

Because there are no props, it's essential that the actors get their expressions—and especially their timing—down. Even though it's called "Readers" Theater, they need to know their lines and cues well. It would still be helpful to have theme music to mark the beginning and end of the Readers Theater-type skit.

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