

LESSONS FOR THE SISTERS

Lesson 1

Patterns and Examples of the Sisters in the New Testament (1)— Mary the Magdalene

Scripture Reading: Luke 8:2; John 20:1-23; 1 Cor. 2:9

- I. **Mary the Magdalene had been possessed by seven demons, and those demons were cast out by the Lord Jesus (Luke 8:2); she was released, and from that time she became a real seeker of the Lord, one who loved Him very much.**
- II. **After the Lord Jesus resurrected from the dead, He manifested Himself first to Mary the Magdalene:**
 - A. Why did the Lord manifest Himself first to Mary the Magdalene before Peter, John, Thomas, the other disciples, and the people?
 - B. Only Mary the Magdalene came early in the morning to the tomb to seek the Lord; she received the best portion, a portion which we may not have; her better portion was her love for the Lord; every Christian should desire and pursue after this.
 - C. First, we become the Lord's believers; then we become His lovers; first, we believe in the Lord's work; then we are drawn to the Lord's person:
 1. Many of us only know the preciousness of the Lord's work, but not the preciousness of the Lord Himself; we only know the grace we have received, but not the loveliness of the Lord.
 2. The difference between Mary the Magdalene and the others was that she not only appreciated salvation, she also treasured the Savior; Mary's heart was a heart completely occupied by the Lord; Mary's heart was a heart captured by the Lord.
 - D. Mary was the first to receive the revelation that Jesus was born as the firstborn Son of God and we all were born with Him (John 20:17), for she was not satisfied with the fact, but was seeking the experience of Christ; hence, Mary Magdalene is a sign of those who love the Lord and seek to experience Him.
- III. **There are three key points in the account of Mary seeing the Lord Jesus; first, Mary the Magdalene was attracted by the Lord's love:**
 - A. Even after the Lord Jesus was buried, Mary the Magdalene was so attracted by His love that she had to go to His tomb; everyone else went home, but she went to the tomb to find the Lord.
 - B. On the first day of the week, the third day after the Lord Jesus had been buried, Mary the Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was yet dark—20:1:

1. She did not go there to work; she went because she was attracted by the Lord's love; she loved and missed the Lord so much that she could not help but go to His tomb.
2. Mary's going early, while it was yet dark, shows that she loved the Lord and missed Him so much that she did not wait until daylight; she eagerly went to the Lord's tomb early in the morning with the hope of finding her Lord.

IV. Second, because Mary loved the Lord, she gained a new discovery, new knowledge, and new revelation concerning the Lord, and she also experienced the Lord's new appearing:

- A. There is an issue to having a loving heart and a loving response to the Lord; something happens to those who love the Lord; every lover of the Lord gains new knowledge, a new revelation—cf. 1 Cor. 2:9.
- B. Mary the Magdalene was a sister who loved the Lord, and the Lord gave her a discovery because she loved Him.
- C. Mary saw that the stone was taken away from the tomb (v. 1) and thought that someone had taken the Lord out of the tomb; hence, she ran to tell Peter and John (v. 2); because she had a new discovery, new knowledge, she had a new truth to proclaim and a new revelation to convey to others.
- D. Loving the Lord is a strength of the sisters; Mary loved the Lord, saw the empty tomb, but was not satisfied; she wanted to see the Lord.

V. Third, Mary, a lover of the Lord, took action based on the revelation that she had received; Mary's action was based on her discovery and revelation:

- A. Mary was the first one to discover the empty tomb; after she made this discovery, she took action by running to tell the brothers—v. 2.
- B. She was also the first one to see the resurrected Lord; after seeing Him she went to tell the brothers what the Lord had said to her; according to His charge—vv. 17-18.
- C. Mary's action was based on her knowledge of the Lord and was according to the revelation she had received from the Lord.

VI. John 20 shows the kind of person who will realize the Lord's resurrection, the kind of person to whom the vision of His resurrection can be disclosed:

- A. Before Mary the Magdalene came to the tomb, the resurrection in life had in fact been accomplished; but Mary had to discover it by loving and seeking the Lord.
- B. This lays down a principle; today the resurrection of Christ is an accomplished fact, yet so many people have not seen it; they have never come to the point where they have discovered it; have you discovered the fact of Christ's resurrection?
- C. Sisters, you may love the Lord very much and might be the first to see the fact of His resurrection but, like Mary, you still need to

brothers to help you: Mary immediately ran to the two leading brothers, Peter and John, and told them of her discovery—v. 2.

- D. The first one who saw the tomb was Mary, and the first person who entered into the tomb was Peter; here the brothers are really the brothers because they are clearer in the mind and find it easier to believe the fact than the sisters do—vv. 3-10.
- E. Although they saw the fact, realized it, and believed in it objectively, they did not have the experience subjectively; after being satisfied with the objective fact, they left the tomb.
- F. However, Mary, the sister, lingered, for she was still waiting, looking, and expecting; it was her additional seeking that gained the experience of the Lord's resurrection; since the Lord revealed Himself to her, she not only received the fact but also the experience; she was the first to experience the resurrected Lord.
- G. If we want to see something more of the Lord, we must have more fellowship with Him; Mary's seeing the Lord was the best morning revival; in this morning revival, she met the Lord and the Lord met her; she prayed to the Lord and the Lord spoke to her.

VII. Mary the Magdalene met the Lord personally in the morning and obtained the blessing (20:16-18), but she still needed to be in the meeting with the saints in the evening to meet the Lord in a corporate way to obtain more and greater blessings (20:19-23):

- A. The morning revival and the church meetings are two aspects; we need the personal blessing of the first aspect as well as the corporate blessing of the second.
- B. Mary received something new, fresh, and firsthand in the morning, and nothing could replace it; nevertheless, she still needed something more — the peace, the sending, the breathing, and the commission; these things can only be received in the church meetings.
- C. Therefore, we must neglect neither the morning revival nor the church meetings.

LESSONS FOR THE SISTERS

Lesson 2

Patterns and Examples of the Sisters in the New Testament (2)— Phoebe and Prisca

Scripture Reading: Rom. 16:1-5

- I. In Romans 16:1 Paul says, "I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a deaconess of the church which is in Cenchrea":**
- A. Phoebe was a deaconess, that is, a serving one; Paul held her in such high esteem that in the following verse he said that "she has been a patroness of many and of myself as well."
 - B. The term "patroness" in Greek is a word of dignity, denoting one who helps, sustains, and supplies; a patroness is one who stands beside you, serves you, nourishes and cherishes you, and cares for all your needs.
 - C. Paul's use of this word with reference to Phoebe discloses how much she was appreciated and regarded; Phoebe was a sister who served others at any price and at any cost:
 - 1. If we mean business with the Lord in the church life, we also need to serve the church and care for it regardless of the cost; if we lack the heart to care for the church, we are unworthy of the practice of the church life.
 - 2. The first requirement for the practice of the church life is that we serve the church; in the practical church life, the first thing is not doctrine, but serving.
 - D. In Paul's time, a patroness was one who was always with you, alongside of you, taking care of you, supplying all your need, bearing all your burdens, and solving all your problems, meeting all your need:
 - 1. Her service meant that she would provide whatever you needed; whether your need was great or small, right away she would simply give you whatever you needed.
 - 2. Perhaps the best nurse in an American hospital could give you a part of the picture of the service of a Roman patroness; the service of the best nurse may be a picture of one-third of the service of such a patroness.
 - E. In every local church there is the need of a group of serving sisters like this sister, a group of serving sisters taking care of the saints:
 - 1. The church in Shanghai, which was the largest church in China, was ninety percent built up with the serving sisters; Brother Nee's ministry was there, but his ministry rendered only one-tenth of the building up in that church.
 - 2. In some places the lack of the building of the church was mainly due to the shortage of the serving sisters; for this reason, we are burdened to have some training for the sisters

so that there could be a group of serving sisters raised up for the building up of a strong church.

- F. The most flourishing church is a church full of serving ones:
 - 1. Today, since we are taking care of the increase of the Body of Christ so much, we are promoting the gospel visitation and home meetings in order to gain the remaining fruit.
 - 2. But the most effective item in our church life is to serve people; by serving we will keep the people and preserve the people.
 - 3. Every human being loves to be served by others; to serve just means to love; we must love others.
 - G. We must touch people's heart by serving in many ways; sister Phoebe in Cenchrea was such a person:
 - 1. Everybody is in need; so the best way to visit people to preach the gospel is to serve them.
 - 2. When a number of housewives are returning home from grocery shopping with bags of groceries and one or two children (in Seoul), some church sisters would immediately render some help to take care of their children and carry their grocery bags; by that little service, they touch the hearts of the ladies and are able to obtain their names and telephone numbers.
 - 3. Another way to reach people for the gospel is to take care of our neighbors; among the neighbors some may be sick and even crippled; we can take care of at least some of their needs; this is the best time to gain people.
 - 4. Even among the saints in the church, a number do need help; if we serve them with love, we will surely edify them.
 - H. We need many Phobes in the church; we need many sisters who will minister in the churches, serving to such an extent they would be called deaconesses.
- II. In Romans 16:3-5b Paul says, "Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; and greet the church, which is in their house...":**
- A. The second sister in Romans 16 is Prisca, or Priscilla; we do believe that she was much stronger in the church life than her husband, and in a sense she did take the lead to take care of the church; wherever they went, she and her husband took care of the church in the way of having the church meeting in their home.
 - B. Prisca and Aquila did not count their own lives as dear to them; they were willing to care for the churches at the cost of their own lives (v. 4): we need to risk our lives for the church life:
 - 1. Paul wrote about Prisca and Aquila with a definite purpose, indicating that if we truly love the Lord's church, we need to risk our lives for it.
 - 2. We must be willing to pay this cost not only for one church, but also for the churches; some dear saints only care for the church in their locality; this is absolutely wrong.

3. Prisca and Aquila were for all the churches; although it is right to be located by the Lord in a specific place, our heart should be wide and broad enough to embrace all the churches.
- C. In Romans 16:5 Paul says "greet the church in their house," referring to the house of Prisca and Aquila; on the one hand this couple was for all the churches; on the other hand they were for their local church in particular:
1. When they were living in Ephesus (Acts 18:18-19), the church in Ephesus was in their house (1 Cor. 16:19); when they were in Rome, the church in Rome met in their house; the "church in their house" in verse 5 was the church in Rome.
 2. To have the church in your home is a very heavy burden; if you try it, you will discover how heavy a burden it is; however, Prisca and Aquila were absolute for the church life; they cared not for the heavy burden.
- D. In a family, if the wife does not take the lead to have the practical church life, the husband would always be frustrated; the best way and the highest way for a family to have the church life is for the wife to take the lead:
1. In any other matter the wife should not take the lead; but in the matter of taking the way of the practical church life for the family, the wives may take the lead.
 2. We do not mean in matters such as teaching, making decisions, and giving direction, but in serving the church, the sisters may take the lead.

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Lesson 3

Patterns and Examples of the Sisters in the New Testament (3)— Euodias and Syntyche

Scripture Reading: Phil. 4:2-4; 2:3-9

- I. **Euodias and Syntyche were two wonderful, lovely, even spiritual sisters, but there was a problem between them; they were not thinking the same thing—Phil. 4:2-3:**
 - A. Philippians 4:2-3 says, "I exhort Euodias, and I exhort Syntyche, to think the same thing in the Lord. Yes, I ask you also, genuine yoke-fellow, assist them, since they contended with me in the gospel..."
 - B. They were good sisters: they were spiritual, contending with Paul in the gospel, yet they were not thinking the same thing; this was of great concern to the apostle Paul.
- II. **Euodias and Syntyche were in rivalry for position or vainglory; otherwise, there would have been no need for Paul to beg them to "think the same thing in the Lord":**
 - A. If there had not been the problem of rivalry in the church there, there would have been no need for Paul to say in 2:3, "Doing nothing by way of rivalry nor by way of vainglory."
 - B. Because among the saints in Philippi there was rivalry for vainglory, it was necessary for Paul to present Christ as the pattern of a crucified life—2:3-9.
 - C. To some extent at least, such rivalry still exists among us: thus we need Paul's word concerning Christ as our pattern.
 - D. We need to be enlightened and take this crucified life as our pattern so that we may experience the power of resurrection; when we live the crucified life, we shall be ushered into resurrection power, and this power will exalt us.
- III. **Opinions are the main cause of dissension among serving ones who love the Lord; their opinions may be spiritual, good, and out of their love for the Lord, but opinions are nevertheless opinions:**
 - A. For example, a "Euodias" may say, "The messages given in the meetings should be simple," but a "Syntyche" may say, "The messages should have many details so that people can understand."
 - B. A "Euodias" may say, "Thursday night is not suitable for the Bible-reading meeting," but a "Syntyche" may say, "Thursday night is the best time for a Bible-reading meeting; it is not suitable for any other meeting."
 - C. If the elders decide to have a Bible-reading meeting on Thursday night, "Euodias" should not say anything.
 - D. When it is time to arrange the chairs for the Bible-reading meeting, a "Euodias" may suggest that the chairs should face the same direction, but a "Syntyche" may say that the chairs should face the center; this may cause an argument,

- E. A person who is not broken always has an opinion regardless of the time or occasion; without breaking, there is no building.
 - F. Hence, either "Euodias" or "Syntyche" should be the first to be broken and not insist on her opinion but fully accept the fellowship from the brothers.
 - G. This should not be a grudging acceptance but a willing and cheerful submission, which issues from being broken.
- IV. The biggest problem for the sisters in the church life is that they are not thinking the same thing; it is very easy for the sisters not to be of one mind:**
- A. Because of this, many of the divisions in Christianity were caused by the sisters; they have often been the source of division; this is a very serious matter.
 - B. On the one hand, the sisters are greatly needed; without the sisters the church is barren.
 - C. But although the sisters are greatly needed and very useful, it is also very difficult for them to be of one mind.
- V. The way for you to be of one mind is not to try to change your mind but to turn yourself from your troublesome mind to your spirit:**
- A. We must realize that if we are not thinking the same thing, it means that we are staying in our mind—v. 2.
 - B. We should never listen to or go along with our natural, fallen mind; we must repudiate our natural mind and always come back to our spirit—Matt. 16:23-24.
 - C. We must go along with our spirit and not listen to our mind, because the dissenting factor is in the mind.
 - D. The dissenting factor can never be in the spirit; rather, the spirit is the place where we have oneness—Eph. 4:3; Rom. 8:16.
 - E. As long as we come to the spirit and remain in the spirit, we are in the unique place of genuine oneness; if we turn to our spirit, we will be of one mind with others.
- VI. In Philippians 4:4 Paul says, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice."**
- A. According to Paul's word here, we should rejoice in the Lord always; this rejoicing affords us the strength for the oneness spoken of in verses 2 and 3.
 - B. In order for Euodias and Syntyche to think the same thing, it was necessary for them to learn to rejoice—v. 4.
- VII. All the sisters must forgive the offenses that come from others' speaking:**
- A. The sisters should not consider and think over what someone once said to them; they should let go of it, not remember it, and be as fresh as a newborn babe.
 - B. Forgiveness includes forgetting (Heb. 8:12); without forgetting there is no forgiveness.

- VIII. If the sisters take the attitude that they do not mind and would not make an issue of anything, the church will be at peace; there will be the real oneness to express Christ in the principle of incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and even descension—Phil. 2:3-9.**
- IX. The one accord is the master key to every blessing in the New Testament; this is why Paul told Euodias and Syntyche that they needed this one accord—Phil. 4:2:**
- A. If all the members of a local church have the one accord, the baptism in the Spirit will be there.
 - B. If you really want to practice the proper way to preach the gospel, you need the one accord.
 - C. Without this key, no door can be opened; the one accord is the "master key to all the rooms," the master key to every blessing in the New Testament.

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Lesson 4

Patterns and Examples of Sisters in the New Testament (4)— Elizabeth, Anna the Prophetess, and Other Women Who Ministered to the Lord

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:39-45; 2:36-39; 8:2-3; Mark 15:40-41; 16:1-8

I. Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, lived in the presence of God and in the fellowship with the Lord, in a constant, continual communication with the Lord and was a person ready to speak for the Lord—Luke 1:39-45:

- A. The pattern of Elizabeth's prophesying is seen in Luke 1:39-45; without living in the presence of God and in the fellowship with the Lord, no one could utter such a praise, such a blessing, with a prophecy of foretelling.
- B. Elizabeth was a person who was ready to speak for the Lord:
 - 1. Because Elizabeth lived in fellowship with the Lord, it is doubtful that she was able to speak in a loose or gossiping way.
 - 2. However, in the church life today there is much gossip, especially on the telephone.
- C. Many of us need to make a decision to present our tongue and lips to the Lord, with a vow to speak Him and to refrain from speaking any gossip—Rom. 6:19:
 - 1. Such a vow will deliver us from gossip; whenever a word of gossip comes to our mouth, we will remember that our mouth has been presented to the Lord for speaking Him.
 - 2. If our gossiping is stopped in such a way, not only we but also the whole church will be revived; if the gossip could be stopped in all the churches, all the churches would be revived.
- D. Elizabeth's prophesying also shows clearly that she possessed much spiritual knowledge; all her words and expressions were very spiritual; she also possessed a genuine concern for the Lord's move:
 - 1. When we come to the Lord's Day morning meeting, we may have nothing to say because our concern may not be for the Lord's interest but for our own security and well-being.
 - 2. When we come to the meeting, nothing of this earth should still linger within us; we must come with a care for the Lord's move, His interests, and His kingdom; if we do this, we will surely have something to say.
 - 3. When Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary and the baby leaped within her, she was stirred up in her spirit (vv. 41, 44); it is evident from her utterance and expressions that she was in her spirit, not in her mind.
 - 4. Being stirred up in her spirit, Elizabeth immediately received the instant inspiration of the Holy Spirit (v. 41b), and she had

the utterance by exercising her spirit (v. 42a); verse 42 says, "And she lifted up her voice with a loud cry":

- a. To speak loudly in such a way is to exercise the spirit.
- b. In the meetings, often the brothers and sisters do not speak with boldness; that is, they do not speak loudly with the exercise of their spirit.
- c. Speaking without exercising our spirit brings death to ourselves and to those who listen to us; in speaking for the Lord, we need to put ourselves aside and speak loudly with the exercise of our spirit.

II. The account concerning Anna shows us more about our experience of Christ—2:36-39:

A. The Gospel of Luke tells us that this elderly sister was "serving God with fastings and petitions night and day"—Luke 2:37b.

B. Eventually she saw Christ; once she saw Christ, she spoke concerning Him to all the people; verse 38 says, "She came up and returned thanks to God, and spoke concerning Him to all those waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem."

1. When Anna spoke about Christ, she could not stop; she spoke Christ to everyone.
2. We hope that we all, especially the sisters, would exercise not to speak about our children but to speak about Christ.
3. Anna not only spoke about Christ, but her prayer was filled with praises of Christ; the main point in considering Anna is that if all the elderly sisters were like Anna, when we all came together, we would not be without anything to say.
4. Simeon and Anna were among those who lovingly sought God; as they waited for Christ, the Holy Spirit was upon them (Luke 2:25); they also had the revelation of the Holy Spirit (Luke 2:26) and walked by the Spirit (Luke 2:27); dwelling in the temple, they served God with fastings and prayers (Luke 2:37); they thus enjoyed God and received His infusion.
5. The reason that we need to pray is because God will not do anything by Himself; He has to wait for man to pray before He works; the Lord Jesus was to be born; but there needed to be a Simeon and an Anna to pray for this (Luke 2:25, 36-38).

III. In Luke 8:2 and 3 Luke says, "And certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who were ministering to them out of their possessions."

A. The women named in 8:2 and 3 ministered to the Lord and to the twelve out of their possessions.

B. It may have been that, under the Lord's sovereignty, the husbands of these women were wealthy; we may say that this wealth was the result of the Lord's exercise of His divine attributes.

C. Then the women exercised their human virtues to use their possessions to minister to the Lord and His disciples.

- IV. Mark 15:40 and 41 tell us of the women who were present at the Lord's crucifixion: "And there were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were both Mary the Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the little and of Joses, and Salome, who when He was in Galilee, followed Him and ministered to Him, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem."**
- A. In Mark's account of the crucifixion there is no mention of any brothers being present.
 - B. He speaks only of the sisters; we may say that these sisters are our representatives.
 - C. When Christ was crucified, a group of sisters was standing by.
- V. In Mark 16:1-8 the resurrection of the Lord Jesus was discovered by three women—Mary the Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome (v. 1); in verse 6 an angel said to them, "Do not be amazed; you are seeking Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He was raised! He is not here! Behold, the place where they laid Him."**

LESSONS FOR THE SISTERS

Lesson 5

Patterns and Examples of Women in the New Testament (5) Sapphira, Dorcas, Mary the Mother of John Mark, Lydia, Women in Berea, Mary and Persis, Lois and Eunice

Scripture Reading: Acts 5:1-9; 9:36-41; 12:12; 16:13-15, 40; 17:11-12; Rom. 16:6, 12; 2 Tim. 1:5

- I. In Acts 5:9 Peter said to Sapphira, "Why is it that it was agreed between you two to test the Spirit of the Lord":**
 - A. The negative scene in Acts 5:1-11 involves a couple, Ananias and Sapphira: "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a piece of property, and put aside for himself some of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it; and having brought a certain part, he laid it at the feet of the apostles" (vv. 1-2).
 - B. Ananias and Sapphira had an evil plan to deceive, to lie to, the indwelling Spirit; "But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart that you should lie to the Holy Spirit and put aside for yourself some of the proceeds of the land?" (v. 3).
 - C. Ananias and Sapphira had the ambition to be somebody in the church; they had the ambition to have a name; because of their ambition they were deceived, and that deception brought them into death.
 - D. Wives should be subject to their husbands (Eph. 5:24); but they should not agree with their husbands to commit sins.
 - E. Their case teaches us to be extremely careful about ambition and dishonesty in the church life.
- II. Acts 9:36 says, "Now in Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas); this woman was full of good works and alms which she did":**
 - A. "And in those days [Dorcas] became ill and died; and they bathed her body and laid it in an upper room. Now because Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples heard that Peter was there, and they sent two men to him, entreating him, Do not delay to come through to us"—VV. 37-38.
 - B. And Peter rose up and went with them. When he arrived, they led him up into the upper room. And all the widows stood by him, weeping and showing him tunics and garments, all of which Dorcas had made while she was with them —v. 39.
 - C. "And Peter put them all outside; and kneeling down, he prayed; and he turned to the body and said, Tabitha, rise up. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up" —v. 40.
- III. Acts 12:12 says, "And when [Peter] became aware of this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John, who was surnamed Mark, where there was a considerable number assembled together and praying":**

- A. In Acts 12:12 we see that in the house of Mary a considerable number were assembled together praying; this indicates that the prayer concerning Peter was offered mainly in the home of a sister.
 - B. From this we see that in the church life the sisters should take the lead in the matter of prayer.
 - C. According to the basic principle in the Word, the activities should be carried out by the brothers, and for the most part the sisters should do the supporting work behind the scene; the main supporting work is to pray.
- IV. Acts 16:14 says, "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple-dyed goods, from the city of Thyatira, who worshipped God, was listening, whose heart the Lord opened to give heed to the things spoken by Paul":**
- A. The first person gained by the Lord in Europe was not a man but a woman.
 - B. Acts 16:15 says, "And when she was baptized and her household, she entreated us, saying, If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and remain there; and she urged us."
 - C. Lydia, after believing and being baptized, entered into fellowship with the apostle and his co-workers, the fellowship of the Body of Christ, as evidence of her salvation; at her invitation, they came into her house and remained there.
 - D. This was the first house the Lord gained in Europe through His gospel and for His gospel (v. 40); in the house of Lydia a home meeting was set up, and the church in Philippi began this way.
 - E. The story of this female believer and her house believing in the Lord and being baptized is also an example of the family as the unit of the Lord's salvation.
- V. Acts 17:11 and 12 say, "Now these [Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed, and there were not a few Greek women of high standing and men":**
- A. The Bereans were noble, that is, open-minded; a noble person is always wise.
 - B. The Bereans were noble in receiving the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.
- VI. Romans 16:6 and 12b say, "Greet Mary, one who has labored much for you...Greet Persis, the beloved sister, one who has labored much in the Lord":**
- A. The incarnation of Christ started with the first Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the Mary in Romans 16, the last Mary, is the consummation of the practical church life.
 - B. In verses 6 and 12 Paul says that Mary has been laboring for the apostles, and that Persis has labored very much; this laboring is serving.

VII. Second Timothy 1:5 says, "Having been reminded of the unfeigned faith in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded dwells also in you":

- A. Here Paul reminds Timothy of the unfeigned faith which is in him; this faith first indwelt Timothy's grandmother and then his mother.
- B. We cannot expect our increase to always come from the world; we have to expect the second generation, men like Timothy, to come from our own families.
- C. Before the church will be rich, there must be grandmothers like Lois and mothers like Eunice who raise, edify, and nurture their children in the discipline of the Lord; if there are no such people, the church will never be rich.