



The Lord Opened Her Heart

Acts 16:9-15

Ephesians 2:1-10

John 6:63-69

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In theology, there is a term that is helpful to know and remember when you think about the Gospel. The term is “**Divine Monergism**”. *Divine Monergism* is formed from three Latin words and it means “**God's One Work.**” It refers to salvation being *God's One Work* alone; that from beginning to end, our salvation is God's work on our behalf. We do not help, assist or contribute to our eternal salvation in any way; salvation is because of God's love and mercy in the Lord Jesus Christ: its *Divine Monergism*: **GOD'S ONE WORK.**

† In Ephesians, this is described as being *saved by grace through faith; and not of ourselves, but as a gift from God* EPHESIANS 2:8

† Jesus said in the Gospel lesson that the *Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing.* JOHN 6:63

We heard a perfect example of *Divine Monergism* today in the scripture lesson from Acts.

St. Paul was directed by the Holy Spirit to go to Europe, to the city of Philippi, the leading city of the area. Once there, Paul shares Christ with a group of women; and the miracle of salvation happened. Here is how it is described:

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. **The Lord opened her heart** to pay attention to what was said by Paul. ACTS 16:14

“*The Lord opened her heart*” is *Divine Monergism*. That is *the Lord at work* to save Lydia through the Gospel that Paul preached. The word “*opened*” is used in other places of Scripture to refer to God's work also: The Lord *opens* the disciple's **eyes** (Luke 24:33), **Scriptures** (Luke 24:32), and **minds** (Luke 24:45). Here in Acts, the Lord opened Lydia's **heart**.

Like Lydia, we all need the Lord to **open** our hearts --- because sin has closed our hearts so tight and hardened them so much that we would never know God or care about His Word. Sin blinds us; it darkens our understanding. Our sinful nature makes it impossible for us to love God or believe the Gospel on our own. Remember how we confess it in the Small Catechism:

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him.

Our heart, mind, will and actions are totally and thoroughly sinful. If the Lord does not work to open your heart, you would be lost forever.

But the Lord does open our hearts!

Divine Monergism is **God the Holy Trinity's** work to open your heart and save you! **God the Father** loves you so much that He sent His only Son into the world to save you. **Jesus, the Son of God**, lives a perfectly holy life and dies a sacrificial death for you. In His resurrection from the dead on the third day, you are given the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. **God the Holy Spirit** brings that Good News -- that *Gospel* -- to you in your lifetime. Through the Word and the Sacraments, the Holy Spirit creates faith within you so that you believe in Jesus the Savior and God the Father's love for you. Again, remember how we confess it in the Small Catechism:

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; just as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

That's **Divine Monergism!** That is the Lord at work to save you, forgive you, and give you eternal life! Not only are we saved by "**God's One Work**" --- but so is everyone else who believes.

When we share our faith with other people, we are bringing this Good News of God's love in Jesus Christ to them, and pray the Holy Spirit works to **OPEN THEIR HEART: that He calls, gathers and enlightens them! We want our family, friends and neighbors to know, understand, and believe the Gospel!**

There are people in your life who need to hear about Christ! Some of them may be like Lydia. It says that she was a “God-fearer”; she knew there was a God, but she did not understand what He did for her in Jesus’s death and resurrection. There are many people like that today. That have *bits and pieces* of Scripture, but they do not have all the story. They don’t know how it all fits together. They may be “spiritual” people, but they do not trust in Jesus nor understand the Gospel. There are many, many people in our lives who do not understand *Divine Monergism*: the work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to give them the gift of eternal salvation.

So we share our faith with others. Make it a natural conversation, as easy as talking about the weather. Use your own words. Tell others what God has done for you. Invite them to church or a bible study.

Remember: Only the devil wants you to be afraid of sharing your faith; only the evil one wants to keep you quiet so your family, friends and neighbors never hear about Christ and His salvation.

Share your faith with others. Explain *Divine Monergism* to them so they can know, understand, and believe God's One Work for them in Jesus Christ!

When the Lord opens your heart, not only does He create faith and forgive your sins, but **He empowers you to serve Him** and other people. For Lydia, she used her gifts of hospitality to support St. Paul and his mission work in Philippi.

Paul would go on to convert a demon possessed girl and to baptize a Roman jailer and his family in the city of Philippi. ***Lydia used her gift of hospitality to support St. Paul in his work.***

The Lord has opened your heart just like He did Lydia, and He has given you gifts to use to work in the Kingdom of God.

Do you know your gifts?

Are you using your gifts to serve God and other people?

In the scripture lesson from Ephesians today, we heard that ***we were God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do.*** The Lord has prepared opportunities ahead of time for you to share your faith and use your gifts to the glory of God and the benefit of others.

That means that there is something which God is planning to do through you for His glory. As you look to Christ and trust in Him, God does use you in wonderful ways to bring His love, His mercy, and His grace into this world and into people's lives. Find your gifts and use them. Be passionately engaged in the Kingdom of God. The Lord has not opened your heart so you sit on the sideline. The Lord has opened your heart so that you will continually do good works using your gifts in situations that He has prepared in advance for you to do! ***And as you use your gifts, be sure to use your words also --- to share Christ with those you serve!***

Lydia is a story of **Divine Monergism: God's One Work** in saving us. ***The Lord opened her heart, and she believed the Gospel.*** Her story motivates us to reach out to our family, friends, and neighbors, praying the Lord does the *same thing* through our words and our actions.

Since the Lord has opened your heart, may you share your faith and use your gifts to the glory of God and the benefit of others. AMEN!