

Every journey begins with a single step!

Acts 16⁹⁻¹⁵; Psalm 67; Revelations 21^{10,22}-22⁵; John 14²³⁻²⁹

*Come over to Macedonia and help us.
[Acts 16⁹]*

What would have happened if the early Christians did what the modern Church seems to do? If, instead of Paul responding to the call to come to Macedonia and help, he decided that he had better things to do or that he was too tired or was waiting for Amazon what then for the cause of Christ and the building of the Church?

Do you notice the words that are used: **immediately; straight course; the following day;** on the **Sabbath Day** Paul and Silas sought out the Jews of the Diaspora to **pray**. The result was the chance meeting with **Lydia and the Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly** and then **she and her household were baptised**.

You could be forgiven for thinking that John is more comfortable to live with than Paul. He places the affirmations on Jesus' lips: the **Advocate ... will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said; peace I leave with you; do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid**. Yet, this is the chapter that records Jesus saying earlier, **I am the way, the truth and the life. No one come to the Father except through me**. It is also in the Gospel that says, after the resurrection, **these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name**.

Place alongside John's Revelation and the starkness of the division at the end of time: heaven will be a place for God's people, a place of worship and a place of light where God reigns. But it is clear that **nothing unclean will enter it ... but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life** and that **nothing accursed will be found there any more**.

Aware that I have 11 Sundays left and, because of the diary, only another 7 sermons to preach, it is time to get the Church ready for the next chapter. Some

will do this by organising things and people so that the show stays on the road; others might prioritise pastoral groupings – both necessary things. But as I prayed in preparation for today it became clear that the foundation that needs to be laid is to make clear the urgency of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to underline that simple message that not doing so betrays our Lord, our families and our friends.

If you found an energy supplier that promised it would make significant savings in the desperate times in which we live, and we proved that the promise was dependable, you and I would not stop to think about sharing that news with those whom we care for.

If you found a faith that offered you forgiveness, freedom from guilt, the promise of never being alone because God is always there with you and the certainty of eternal life, what would you do?

All preachers tell the same stories over and over again. I think most people know that my favourite story to use in a sermon is Kierkegaard's' story of the ducks.

One day the ducks waddled to their duck Church. They sang their duck hymns, prayer their duck prayers and then the minister read from the duck Bible. 'Ducks, you can fly! Ducks, you can soar like eagles!' When the service ended, the ducks waddled home!

It is imperative that the Church wakes up to the urgency of sharing the faith that inspires us, that saves us, that we depend on. This sharing of the Gospel – with the same urgency as Paul had in responding to the cry from Macedonia – is what will take the people of God into a glorious future.

We can't!!? Remember that the 2.38 billion Christians in the world today started with 11 men and a few women who had that sense of urgency to tell people about Jesus!