

Look Book Took
Year C, Easter 6
Are you Ready?

O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Look: When have you felt like you would never be ready for something, whether it be getting married, moving, having children, going to school, etc...? Have you ever been ready?

Book:

Acts 16:9-15

During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was

listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us.

How soon after Paul saw the vision did he go to Macedonia? Do you think Paul was ready to go on such a trip?

Why do you think Acts has Lydia as the main person in this story? How was Lydia ready to receive the message from Paul?

Explain to someone reading this passage for the first time and interested in baptism for themselves why she was baptized.

"She prevailed upon us." – Why do you think they used the word "prevailed?"

Alexander the Great in the decade before 323, began his conquest from Europe into Asia. Paul began his mission work in reverse and now proclaims the Gospel in Macedonia, the beginning of Alexander's route. This is the conquest in reverse. What do you think that says about the message Christ gave to Paul?

Lydia and her household are the first European converts to Christianity. Do you think it is possible that Paul and the people with him received any gifts from God in this story?

How do you think Lydia felt after this encounter?

Took:

Do you ever think God has spoken to you through dreams?

Is your heart open to receive Good News as we read Scripture? Do you think you would have courage to do what God asks in a vision?

In your life, when do you think it was the Holy Spirit that enabled you to do something?

Tell the story of your baptism. What does baptism mean for you?

Have you ever had the feeling that in giving you were actually the greater recipient? Tell us about it.

Mission work can be perceived as "we are helping them," and Christian Mission is about relationship. What do you think "appropriate" evangelism is today?

How do you make your heart fertile ground to receive God's messages? Does God speak to you? Do you speak to God? Is God present in this room now?

Bonus: If time is ample read this:

John 5:1-9

After Jesus healed the son of the official in Capernaum, there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Bethesda, which has five porticoes. In these lay many invalids-- blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and

knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me." Jesus said to him, "Stand up, take your mat and walk." At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk. Now that day was a sabbath.

What does this passage mean for you? Why do you think the man doesn't say "yes."

We all carry our mats when we have been made well, we don't forget those 38 years and we don't forget our own scars. We do remember who made us well.

How might you use this story to speak to someone who is getting over a hard time in their life?