

Acts 16:11-14

Knowing How God Works...Works Wonders

Moving from Troas (in Asia) to Philippi (in Europe), the Missionary Team (Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke) Sees Lydia Come to Faith and Her Conversion Teaches Key Truth about How God Works in Salvation

Important Statement

“...the Lord opened her (Lydia’s) heart to respond to (believe in) the things (of the Gospel) spoken by Paul.” Acts 16:14

“Efficacious Grace” is the term theologians use to refer to this work of God.

Common Grace

Psalm 145:8-9; Matthew 5:45; 22:14; John 16:8-11; Acts 14:17

Given to everyone but not sufficient to save anyone

Efficacious Grace

John 6:44; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 2:9-10

Given only to some and always leads to saving faith

Amazing Grace

How Do/Can These Two Things Fit Together?

In every case in which Efficacious Grace is not given to a person...

...that person has freely rejected Common Grace John 3:18; Acts 13:46

Bottom Line

We should pray that God will open the hearts of friends/family so that they will believe in Christ. But we must keep in mind that God works persuasively not coercively to save sinners. He calls all to believe and holds each person responsible to do so Matthew 23:37; John 3:16-18; 36; Acts 13:46

No Extra Charge for This

When the unregenerate jailer asked Paul/Silas, “What must I do to be saved?” They did NOT say, “Beg God for mercy that He might open your heart...so you can believe!” They simply told the man to “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ” and promised him he would be saved at that very moment. They went even further and promised the jailer that all of his family would be saved if they believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, which among other things means that there are no sex, age or character pre-qualifications for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Take This To Heart

Speak to God Before You Speak of God to People

Before, during and after we “do evangelism” we should pray that the Holy Spirit would convict the unsaved in our lives of sin, +R and judgment and that He would open their hearts to believe in Christ.

But when we share the Gospel, rather than explaining the theological details of Efficacious Grace to unbelievers, we should simply share the Good News of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:3-4) and urge them to trust in Jesus Christ for salvation, knowing that when anyone believes in Christ...that person has not initiated his/her salvation, he/she has simply received the ultimate free gift by the grace of God (Romans 4:5; Ephesians 2:8-10).

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Even on our best day as witnesses for Christ, we will glorify Him instead of promoting ourselves, both in what we do and in how/why we do it. We will never be tempted to be impressed with our “evangelistic zeal” because we will know that while God can/does use folks like us to share the Gospel... ..in fact “Salvation is of the LORD” from start to finish. It is about who the Savior is, what the Savior has done/is doing and will do. It is not about who we are, what we have done/are doing or will do.