Sermon: **we decided that God had called us** (Acts 16.10), **The Lord opened her mind** (Acts 16.14)

When meeting someone new you exchange names, but both are so focussed on doing that and so surprised that you remembered your own that you forget to hear the other person’s name (and vice versa!). Or in discussion, too easily we only focus on what we are going to say next, and forget to listen to others.

Last week I said it was OK to have strong views but also they should not be used to build walls.

If you agree then the first thing to do is to actively listen those who are different from you.

This means not just hearing the words, but trying to see the force of the argument.

This, of course, is especially true when it comes to God.

Paul’s travels in Acts 16.6-8; frustrating, confusing. What was God playing at? Dream at Troas was not in keeping with Paul’s plans (views?), but Paul listened to his dream. Today we probably take little notice of dreams, unless we are with our psychiatrist! Dreams then were significant. Think of both Josephs’ dreams.

TEXTa. There is a theory that Paul had met Luke in Troas (NB the switch to ‘we’ in Acts 16.10); maybe he was Macedonian.   
Importantly Paul listened; even more importantly he discerned God in it all.

Paul went to riverside where Jews often met where there was no synagogue. His message had its objectors, among Jews, Gentile converts and ordinary Macedonians (more next week!). Often a slanging match with no one listening, merely shouting their views. Lydia. Like Paul she listened, not just because she was polite or curious, but TEXTb. She discerned God was in it all.

How far do we hear God through others? Even those with whom we disagree? So easy to be so right in your views that you do not listen to others; sometimes what they say is wrong/foolish/hurtful, but if listen carefully you might discern God in it all. Remember your strong views, express them, but remember you have two ears and one mouth! God can even be heard even through the wrong, or foolish, or hurtful!