

sermon study summary

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Revelation Part 7 – Philadelphia, the Faithful Church

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To the church in Philadelphia Jesus introduced Himself as holy and true. His desire for us, the church, is that we be pure and spotless, set apart for Him and devoted to Him.

Jesus holds the key of David. That speaks of Jesus' authority. The One who has the keys has all power and authority! What He opens, no one can shut. The church needs keys to seize the opportunities to advance God's Kingdom and to open new doors! The doors Jesus opens no one can shut, and what He shuts no one can open. Jesus, the rightful owner, delegates His power and authority to us. We can walk through open doors trusting in Christ's authority.

The church in Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love, was relatively small and had limited strength. They were simple, ordinary women and men whose lives had been changed by Jesus. A church's vision and mission should never be limited by the size of the congregation, the budget, or the influence of its members.

The believers were faithful to Jesus; they kept His Word and never denied His name. Jesus had nothing negative to say about the church in Philadelphia. It was persecuted, but it remained faithful to Christ in the midst of great opposition, boldly sharing their faith and suffering for doing so.

The synagogue had become a tool of Satan, an enemy of the gospel. The followers of Judaism hindered God's purposes by opposing the Christian believers. They expelled and excommunicated Jewish-background Christian believers from synagogues. Christians were disowned by their families. But Jesus' mission is unstoppable if the church understands God's character.

The Father has given the Son all authority in heaven and on earth, He has the ability to create opportunities for the Kingdom of God to advance. But this little church in Philadelphia – with limited strength – believed in the name of Jesus. Little strength doesn't disqualify you from serving Jesus! God can use someone with little strength provided you depend on Him! Despite their limited strength, the church in Philadelphia leaned on Jesus, the One who has all strength, authority and power. And Jesus says to them, "The door of opportunity is open."

Every local church needs to have eyes that see doors that Jesus is opening for them to advance His Kingdom. That's why we exist. The doors of the synagogue were closed to Christian believers, but Jesus opens doors that no one can close—it's an amazing contrast! Don't be overwhelmed by opposition. Endure patiently. Jesus promises the church that the enemies of the gospel will fall at their feet and acknowledge that the Christians were the ones loved by God.

How will that happen? Through the conversion of the opposition. Jesus wants to win them over! Jesus can do to the enemies of the gospel what he did to Saul on the road to Damascus. No one is beyond redemption!

Jesus' promise to "keep you from the hour of trial" (v.10) could mean that the church will be raptured before the final great Tribulation, or it could refer to the promise of God to preserve the church in the midst of trials that occur throughout the entire church age. He ensures that our faith does not fail in the midst of our suffering. He will give us the strength to persevere till the very end.

The promise to "the one who is victorious" (v.12) is three-fold. Faithful people will bear God the Father's name, a mark of ownership. Jesus will write on them a new name, and they will be like pillars in God's temple – permanent and stable!

sermon study guide

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. When reading a letter from a friend, what do you take from it the most?
2. Share a time when God opened an opportunity or door for you.

UP – PURSUE GOD

Read Revelation 3:7-13.

3. How did Jesus describe the faithful church of Philadelphia?
4. What is God's character? What is His mission? Why is it important to know God's character and mission?
5. What are the promises Jesus made in these verses? What is the importance of each one?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

6. How can the church of today relate to the church of Philadelphia? What can we, as part of the church, learn from them?
7. Jesus in his first coming did not judge his persecutors, but he gave them a chance to change. What can we learn from Saul-to-Paul's life-changing story?

For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened” (Matthew 7:7).

Considering your life, circumstances and relationships, where are the open doors from God for you to share His Good News?

THE WORD (NIV)

Revelation 3:7-13

⁷ “To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. ⁸ I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. ⁹ I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. ¹⁰ Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.

¹¹ I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. ¹² The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name. ¹³ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

This week's writers: Elsa Henderson, Mark Eckstein and Jorel Quemuel