

First Baptist Church Merritt Island
The Door is Open. Now What?

Revelation 3:7-13

August 26th, 2018

Main Point

God is able to open doors of opportunity that no one can shut. As a church family, we have several doors of opportunity that have been opened by God's power. What we do with those opportunities is eternally significant. By God's grace, will you step into this community for the sake of the gospel?

Getting Started

In his message to the church at Philadelphia, Jesus presented an open door of opportunity to the believers in that church. He acknowledged their weakness and inability to accomplish what he wanted them to do in the midst of that opportunity. Praise the Lord that His grace is perfected in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9)! Human weakness and limitations do not inhibit Jesus from working in and through people. He promises to give us His strength and power to walk through the open doors of opportunity He gives us. We don't have to rely only on our own resources and strength. Think about the opportunities He has given you and us as a church. Place your faith and hope in Him for the power He will give us to do what He calls us to do.

Observation

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Have a volunteer read revelation 3:7-10.

How did Jesus identify and describe Himself in these verses? Which description encourages you the most? Why?

What did Jesus mean when He said He had the key of David? What does that give Him the ability to do?

Each of the letters to the seven churches, except for the letter to the church at Philadelphia, used one of the descriptions of Jesus from Revelation 1:12-16. Here Jesus identified Himself as the holy and true one who has the key of David. To say Jesus is holy is to say He is perfect and separate from us. That He is true means He is perfectly honest and completely reliable. Because Christ holds the key of David, He alone can admit or deny entrance to heaven. Because He is holy and true, we can trust Him. Jesus

has both the means and the qualifications to open the gates of heaven and also keep doors of opportunity from shutting.

Jesus gave the church at Philadelphia an open door of opportunity. While we don't know what that door was, what did He promise them about the door He had opened? Who could shut or open the door?

The church at Philadelphia was one of two churches about whom Jesus says nothing negative. What did Jesus commend them for?

What struggles were the church at Philadelphia dealing with? How can we hold to God's Word with patient endurance during hardship?

Who were the synagogue of Satan? How could they say they are Jews when they were not? How did Jesus promise to deal with them?

Jesus told 5 of the seven church in Asia that He knew their works. Jesus sees all human activity with perfect clarity and knows the motivations of our hearts. The church at Philadelphia was found to be faithful because they kept God's Word and refused to deny His Name even amidst persecution. The church at Philadelphia were being persecuted by a group who claimed to be Jews based on biology alone, not on faith, which is why Jesus called them a synagogue of Satan. Being a true follower of Christ does not ever promise to spare us from the trials of this world, but He does promise He will welcome us at heaven's door with open arms.

Have a volunteer read Revelation 3:11-13.

How does the reality that Jesus is coming soon affect the way we live right now?

What are some ways we hold fast to what we have in Christ? What does that look like in your own life?

What specific promises did Jesus make to those who continue in obedience to His commands out of love and faith for Him in these verses?

Jesus ends His letters to the churches with the statement "He who has an ear, let Him listen to what the Spirit says to the churches". How would you summarize Jesus' message to the church at Philadelphia?

Just as Jesus gave the church at Philadelphia an open door of opportunity to make His name known, He has given our church unique doors of opportunity. Which door will you and your family walk through? What does Jesus want you to do with the gifts and talents He has given you?

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What help do you need to walk through an open door of opportunity? Share your answers with your group.

Is every open door an opportunity God has designed specifically for you? Why or why not?

What weaknesses or obstacles seem to stand in the way of you stepping into an opportunity to serve Him? Give those to Him in prayer! Commit to trust in Him alone for the power He provides to do what He wants to do in and through you.

When did Jesus open the door of heaven to you? Celebrate the precious truth that Jesus loves you and has opened heaven for you.

How is the promise of heaven comforting when we go through trials and hardship?

Do you live as though Christ is coming soon? What would change about your life if you lived every day as though Christ was coming soon?

Prayer

Praise God for opening the gates of heaven to us. Thank Him for loving you and preparing a place for you. Pray that you would live your life in the hope Christ is coming soon. Ask for the grace to hold fast to God and His Word.

Commentary

3:7 Philadelphia, 40 miles southeast of Sardis, suffered long-term effects from the earthquake of A.D. 17. Thus, the people planned with earthquakes in mind. Although there is little extrabiblical evidence for a Jewish community in the city, the letter indicates a situation like that of Smyrna. Nothing is known of the origin of the church, but there was a connection with Paul's ministry in Ephesus, like the other six local churches. The phrases the key of David and no one opens echo Isa 22:22 and speak of Christ's authority in the household of God.

3:8 Christ commended the faithful works of this small congregation, despite their limited strength. The open door that no one can close opens to opportunities God gave the church at Philadelphia and perhaps referred to an open door to heaven as well.

3:9 On synagogue of Satan and who claim to be Jews and are not, see note at 2:9-10. These phrases are in reverse order from 2:9, implying there is a key point of comparison in the two letters. It is likely that the brief and local "tribulation" faced by the church at Smyrna (2:10) contrasts with the promise to the church at Philadelphia that it would be kept from the worldwide "hour of testing" (3:10).

3:10 The hour of testing refers to "the great tribulation" (7:14). Though the wording may sound like a reference to all who will inhabit the world at that time, those who live on the earth ("earth dwellers" from this point on in the notes) is a phrase used repeatedly in Revelation (Revelation 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8), speaking of the non-elect,

“whose names have not been written in the book of life” (17:8). To “keep... from the hour of testing” has been taken to mean: (1) removed before the time of tribulation, or (2) supernaturally protected within the tribulation. Since the word “hour” suggests a period of time, and the purpose of the hour of testing is to test the non-elect “earth dwellers” rather than believers, it seems more likely that believers will be removed before the hour of great tribulation begins.

3:11 On coming quickly, see note at 1:1,3. To hold on to what you have appears to refer to the faithfulness of the church, described in verse 8.

3:12 The victor (see note at 2:7) is promised a permanent place in the sanctuary in God’s eternal city, the new Jerusalem. This “sanctuary” is actually the Lord Himself and the Lamb (21:2,22). Christ’s new name may refer to “a name... that no one knows except Himself” (19:12).