

The Church in Philadelphia

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: Seven Churches

Text: Revelation 3:7-13

This marvelous church is known as the **faithful** church. Jesus does not have one negative observation to share. This is a sharp contrast to the church in Sardis.

Philadelphia is known for the Greek meaning of its name **brotherly love**. This word occurs several times in the New Testament to refer to the type of love and affection that happens between Christians.

Philadelphia was located on the border of Asia Minor and the rest of Asia. It was so beautiful and influential that it was called “little **Athens**” by one ancient historian. It was a city of refinement and Greek culture. It was the home of many magnificent temples and public buildings. This city was so strategically placed that it was known as the **open** door to the rest of the region. This city was the center of the wine industry and was known for its dried fruit. It was designed to be a center of commerce and trade. It was famous for its mineral hot springs that people use to soak in and drink medicinally.

The false god that was worshiped in this city was Dionysus - the god of wine-making, orchards and fruit, vegetation, fertility, festivity, insanity, ritual madness, religious ecstasy, and theatre. This city was known for **drunkenness**, “free love”, “creative culture” in art, music and acting. Much like modern day hippies. Because of the way the city was situated it exported these ways and ideas around the region.

Philadelphia was rocked by many earthquakes and had to be rebuilt. In order to do so the people were heavily **taxed** by the Romans. While the city was rather opulent, many of the people lived in poverty because of the taxes. Because the earthquakes happened for twenty years many of the people who lived outside of the city were afraid they would be crushed by falling buildings.

Jesus revealed himself to Philadelphia in three ways. **Revelation 3:7**

- He is **Holy** - To be holy is to be completely separated, sanctified and consecrated. When we are holy, we are set apart for sacred use. Jesus was saying that He is pure holiness. He is sacred. What He was saying is that He is in a category unlike anyone else. This is why we are called to “be holy as He is holy.” **1Peter 1:15-16**
- He is **true** - This means genuine, real, authentic, or absolute trueness. It carries with it the idea of integrity. Jesus tells us that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. There is nothing false found in Him. He is always who He is because He is – “I AM”. He is always honest and complete.
- He is the One that has the **Key** of David. The keeper of any key has the power to open and to close, because they have the ability to lock and unlock.

They are the gate keeper of what goes in and what goes out. Remember that Philadelphia was considered a door to the rest of the region. Those who had keys had the power to open and shut the keys to the royal treasuries. Jesus was saying He has the **power** to open and close. **John 10:9-10, Isaiah 22:20-22** This is the only other time in scripture that the key of David is mentioned in scripture. Eliakim is a **type** or a shadow of Christ. In both Isaiah and Revelation it speaks of Jesus having the key of David. The key spoken of is the key into the king's chambers, storeroom and treasuries. What Jesus was saying is He is the Door because He is the **King**. **Luke 1:32**

When you study the Bible, you realize that Jesus is the owner of multiple keys, in fact He has an entire key ring.

- ❖ He has the Keys to the **Kingdom** **Matthew 16:19 (NKJV & AMP)**
- ❖ The Key of **knowledge** **Luke 11:52**
- ❖ The Key of **death** and hell **Revelation 1:18**
- ❖ The Key of **David** **Revelation 3:7**
- ❖ The Key to the **bottomless** pit **Revelation 9:1, Revelation 20:1-3**

Jesus has all the keys – He is the **Key** man. The key man is the keeper of the keys and the only one who has the authority to have doors open to allow you in and out of where you need to be. Jesus has the authority to grant passage in or out and no one can close what He has opened or open what He has closed. As the Door, He opens or closes **opportunities** to us. **Acts 5:19, Acts 12:10, Acts 16:26 Revelation 4:1** Doors that are open represent us passing through where we are to where we need to be.

1 Corinthians 16:9, 2 Corinthians 2:12, Colossians 4:3

Jesus has some high praise for the church in Philadelphia. **Revelation 3:8** Again Jesus says that I know your works. I know all about you. You have little **strength** and you are a small church but I have set before you a great opportunity. You have been faithful, you have not denied my name, you have kept my word, you have lived up to My reputation.

Because of this I have set before you an **open** door. This has to do with the will of God in our lives. The open door is so visible that you cannot miss it. If we are ever wondering what the will of God for our lives is, He will make it **clear**. When God opens a door, it is open and when He closes a door no one can open it. Because of their faithfulness, Jesus was opening a door to all the region for them to share the Gospel. When God opens a door, you need to go through it.

Sometimes when a door opens **opposition** will come against you. **Revelation 3:9** Just because God opens a door does not mean that you will have problems or enemies.

1 Corinthians 16:9 Many times when a door of opportunity opens there will be **enemies**. This is called spiritual warfare.

Those that were opposing the Christians in Philadelphia were Jews. Jesus called them a synagogue of Satan. Satan is one who accuses, hates, slanders, and conspires against. The persecution that the church faced in the city of Brotherly Love was from their own people. Many times, it is the so-called religious people that oppose the open doors of God.

Jesus says that there is coming a time when He will make them come and worship before them and to know that He has loved them. This little church was feeling the hatred, disdain and being made to feel inferior by these hurtful people. Jesus said one day these people will fall at their feet as those that are truly superior. They will fall at their feet the way people bow before royalty. If you and I will be faithful and stay on track, Jesus will allow those who cause you trouble to see that He is for us. Remember, Jesus promises to prepare a table for us in the presence of our enemies.

This church showed a tenacity to keep the commandment to persevere. **Revelation 3:10** The command to persevere is given to soldiers who are facing extreme hostility. It is a picture of a soldier with a purpose who are positioned to protect something important. These soldiers are charged with staying faithful, watchful and committed regardless of the kind of assault that they were under even when they are outnumbered. Jesus is saying to them that they have kept the Word that was entrusted to them like a soldier standing their post. Perseverance is patience that holds on and endures while turning down every opportunity to quit.

Jesus says because you have held your ground you are now positioned for protection. What you have done for me I will do for you. Jesus promises to keep them from the hour of temptation that is to come on the whole world to test them. Jesus is saying that the church in Philadelphia had no need to be tested because they had already passed the test.

Temptation describes an outside source of pressure that is meant to crush or destroy you. We often just see temptation as enticement. It is pressure with a purpose from Satan that is meant to kill. **1 Corinthians 10:13-14, James 1:12-15, John 10:10**

Jesus says continue to hold on, He is coming quickly. Help is on the way. **Revelation 3:11** Hold fast so that no one may take your crown. A crown was something that was given for a victory that was achieved because of one's diligence, discipline, and commitment.

Five Crowns Given to Believers

- 1) Crown of Righteousness **2 Timothy 4:8**
- 2) Crown of Incorruptibility **1 Corinthians 9:24-27**
- 3) Crown of Life **James 1:12**
- 4) Crown of Glory **1 Peter 5:2-4**
- 5) Crown of Rejoicing **1 Thessalonians 2:19**

Jesus promises that those who overcome will be made a pillar in the temple of God. This is a picture of stability and permanence. You will be strong and unshakeable. **Revelation 3:12** When you put your name on something you are claiming it as your possession. He was saying everyone will know that you are mine. Are you listening?