

Philadelphia: The Church with a Divine Opportunity Revelation 3:7-13

This morning we are considering Jesus letter to the Church in Philadelphia.

A)Not Philadelphia PA - Rocky and Philly Cheesesteaks

B)But a real church in the first century - located in Asia Minor - Modern day Turkey.

C)We have spent the month of June on both Sunday mornings and Wed. nights looking at these letters to the churches

Five of the churches had problems - 2 of them Pergamos and Thyatira had compromise problems

A)Three of them had heart problems Ephesus, Sardis and Laodicea

B)Jesus wrote to those churches - exhorting them to repent of their sin and compromise

**C)But there were two of the churches - who didn't receive any correction from Jesus -
1)Only Compliments**

**D)Smyrna - the suffering church - we looked at this past Wednesday night
1)And the Church of Philadelphia - we are looking at today - The Church with a Divine opportunity**

Of all of the churches Jesus wrote to- this is one - that I desire personally to be like

A)This is the church - that I desire our church - CV to be like.

Today we are going to see what made them so Special

A)Before we look at this church today -

B)I do want to encourage you to come out on Wed night - one final study on these churches

1)Jesus wrote to these seven churches on purpose - and in the order recorded - on purpose.

C)True these churches were on a postal route - and laid out in this order -

1)but Jesus could have went backwards.

Why these churches? Why didn't he write to the church in Jerusalem?

A)Or Rome or Antioch? Colossae?

B))The interesting thing about these 7 churches

1)is they form an interesting picture of church history thru the ages

C)Starting with the early church - and taking us through the present day church in the world.

D)Now John Obviously would not have known about this when he was writing this -

1)But Jesus - who knows all things

E)who was dictating this to John - could see the whole scope of Church history

1)It is possible - Jesus picked these churches to paint a picture that - people in our day would be able to see.

In much the same way as when Ezekiel was writing in Ezekiel 37 about dry bones coming to life -

A)He had no idea - that what he was seeing was the rebirth of the nation of Israel -

B)Fulfilled over 2000 yrs later in 1948

C)Ezekiel didn't understand that in his day -

1)but we can see it clearly in our day that is what Ezekiel 37 was referring to

D)I think - there is a similar picture that Jesus could have been painting for us

1)when he wrote these letters via John

E)I am not saying definitely that this was part of the purpose of Jesus in writing these letters via John

1)But I do think it is a possibility worth considering - We will do that this Wednesday night - Join us.

Read V.7-13

"And to the angel (messenger – pastor) of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, 'He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens': 8 'I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. 9 Indeed I will make those of

the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. 10 Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. 11 Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. 12 He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.

13 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” - PRAY

On July 15, 2007, the Philadelphia Phillies set a new record for the losing-est team in sports history with 10,000 losses

A)10,000 losses is a big number - those no doubt were some tough seasons for Philly fans!

B)But here is what is interesting - One year after recording their 10,000th loss

1)The TEAM WITH THE greatest losing record in team sports won the World Series

C)The church in ancient Philadelphia was no losing team in God’s eyes.

D)Though the world saw them as weak and small,
1)Jesus looked at this church and saw a winning team, full of faith and good works.

E)As a result The Church of Philadelphia was the church with a Divine opportunity.

The City

Philadelphia was the youngest and smallest of the 7 cities addressed in these letters.

A)It was located between two mountains, in a narrow pass, and stood as a literal gateway between Asia and Asia Minor.

B)It was a place where the Hellenistic culture was BEING passed on to the rest of Asia Minor

1)Travelers coming and going were being influenced in the Hellenistic ways

C)You could say the city of Philadelphia were TREND SETTERS

Philadelphia was also on a major fault line and the city encountered frequent earthquakes -

A)Some that caused great damage

B)Philadelphia was named for King Attalus II, king of Pergamum.

C)He was known for his faithful love for his brother Eumenes,

1)He became known as Philadelphias, which means “one who loves his brother.”

D)Thus, Philadelphia was known as the city of brotherly love.

If you have ever been to a sporting event in Philly - Not a lot of Love

A)Known as the worst fans in sports - to turn on and boo their own teams

B)During a December Eagles football game in 1989 - Philadelphia Eagles fans booed Santa Claus

C)Pelted their own players, coaches and broadcasters with Snow Balls

D)Things got so bad at the Old Veteran’s Stadium where the Phillys Eagles played for 30 years

1)that a jail and courtroom were installed in the bowels of the stadium to handle unruly fans.

E)Be that as it May - the Original Philadelphia was named the city of brotherly love -

1)because of these two brothers.

The Church of Philadelphia was in this city that was marked by a heavy Greek and Roman influence

A)It was also a place where Satan had a foothold - Jesus makes reference to the Synagogue of Satan being there.

B)Similar to Smyrna - Jewish people who rather than being governed by God were really instruments of the Devil

C)But despite the earthquakes, the strong Satanic and pagan influences

1) this church stood strong and was affective.

The Revelation of Jesus v.7

A) Jesus reveals himself to this church as – the one who is Holy

B) Idea: he is altogether righteous in all his ways

C) The one who is true: Genuine – count on – Faithful

D) Those are two things that are great to be reminded of about Jesus when you are struggling

1) and going through a tough season – He is faithful and can be counted on to do what is right

The one who has the Key of David

A) What is that about ?

B) The one who holds the Key OF DAVID. – speaks of HIS RESOURCES

C) The reference To the Key of David is from to Isaiah 22:20-25

D) In that passage A KEY is given to a man named Eliakim– who is a Servant of King Hezekiah

Eliakim was sort of a chief of staff in Hezekiah's kingdom –

A) he was given the key and the authority to open and shut the doors that led to the treasuries of the King

B) So by using this description -

1) Jesus was indicating that he is the one who has access to the Divine resources in God's Kingdom

He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens

A) Jesus is saying He is the not only the one who has access to Divine resources

B) But he is also the one who - opens and shuts doors of Divine opportunities

Application:

This is AWESOME – not only is Jesus faithful – we can trust in him

A) He always does what is right – He is Holy

B) But He is also ready to supply us with Divine resources for whatever trial or opportunity is put before us

C) That is so encouraging - and we need to be reminded of that constantly

1) Not in this alone - Jesus is with us - for us - wants to supply us---STAND/ LIVE / SERVE

The Recognition of Jesus

V.8 I know your works See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it;

A) What does an open door speak of? It represents Divine opportunities to be used by God.

B) Primarily to share the Gospel

C) In Colossians 4:3 Apostle Paul asked that the People in Colossae would pray, *that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ,*

Jesus is telling this church that – they have been given A Divine opportunity

A) An open door to spread the gospel all over the region

B) This city that was located on a trade route so People traveling from all over the region were going to pass through their city – Route 66

C) They would learn of the Greek customs and ways - and spread them into the Surrounding regions CITIES

1) The People in Philadelphia were trend setters

Jesus is telling this church –that this very thing that was a natural part of their culture – trade route

A) Was also an open door – for spreading the gospel - Spiritual TREND SETTERS

B) Travelers coming through Philly - could learn more than Greek culture –

1) But they could have a transforming encounter with the gospel of Jesus Christ!

C) THRU Their testimony, their manner of life – and willingness to be used by the Lord – There Was a Daily open door

1)Shops and coffee houses - through their businesses
- through the way they interacted with this travelers /
treated their kids

**“Ministry takes place when divine resources meet
human needs through loving channels to the glory
of God.”** Wiersbe

**D)God works in extraordinary ways – through
very ordinary people and means**
1)We just have to be willing and open

**Sometimes we can over complicate things when it
comes to being a witness for Jesus.**

**A)Jesus is looking to work through the natural
things of our daily lives to be dispensers of Hope**

**B)In a world filled with so much hopelessness
And Criticalness -**
1)and Yet we can stand out by just being different

**C)We live in a Tourist Destination -people come
here from all over the world -**
1)Outlet mall - Carlsbad - languages

D)Opportunities to be witnesses to travelers

**We live in a age of open doors – Digital age -
Internet – send an email, post on FB or Instagram
– You tube**

**A)God’s word does not return void –
Opportunities to share about Jesus on those
platforms**

**B)So many people are sharing about themselves -
we can populate social media with Tasteful
declarations of Jesus**

**C)Camp Pendleton in our back yard - Marines
from all over the US come and are stationed**

**D)Get introduced to Jesus and take him all over
the world**

Recruit boot camp outreaches

A)Saved by the 100’s and sent out - Amazing

B)Phil Mckay - Danny Williamson - Tony Clark -
1)Guys being used greatly by God today - Here
from CP

**C)Encourage you if you are not doing this already
to start looking at the natural everyday things in
your life**

1)and see the opportunities to be used by Jesus

**D)It could be in the ways you conduct business -
the ways you interact with strangers**

**E)That is not even counting the open doors we
have to take the gospel to other countries in
missions - 1)Those unreached people groups**

2)But we have a Mission field right outside these
doors

**Philly was a church with a Divine opportunity
What made this church such a blessed church? –**

**A)There are 3 things V.8 that we can learn from
Philly – Blessed church – effective lives**

**B)#1 They were a dependent Church - V.8 Little
strength:**

*C)LITTLE is Greek word ‘micros’, from which we
get our English word Microscope, or microbe.*

1)It means: small in quantity, small in number, and
small in dignity. - That’s small!

**INSIGHT: The reason that Jesus has opened this
door of opportunity to them which no man could
ever possibly shut**

**A)is because they were small in number, small in
quantity, and small in dignity.**

B)Seems like a Paradox –

**C)Our tendency is to think that Jesus is always
looking for the Strongest & the most Gifted to use**

1)But more often than not it’s just such weakness that
Jesus wants to bless.

**He opens doors to those who realize – they need
His strength.**

**A)Those who know – they must depend on him!
Never do this by myself**

**B)The Lord GIVES Divine resources toward those
who know that they need him -**

**C)Contrast to Laodicea - last week - they had so
much -**

1)they didn't even need Jesus - he was pushed outside of their church - **Too self-reliant -**

D)Jesus loves to work through people who know - that without him they can do NOTHING!

Think of David – goes against Goliath – You come with..... I come in the name and in the strength of the Lord

A)Or Gideon's army of 300 defeated a Midianite army that numbered 135k

B)Elijah stood ALONE against 450 of the prophets of Baal.

1)In God's economy - One with God is always a majority!

C)After 3 years of public ministry Jesus had maybe 120 faithful disciples.

1)Yet those 120 turned the then known world upside down because they were a minority that had God on their side.

D)God loves to work in and through weak and small people - and when he does - He gets glorified

1)How did that happen? God !!!!

Our church through the years - Not small but not big - blue collar - tight budget -

A)God is using us in our city in significant ways

B)Using us in different parts of the world - COME ALONGSIDE

C)STAY DEPENDENT!!!!!!

So the first thing we see in V.8 is they were a dependent Church.

A)God opens doors for those who know they need his strength

B)#2 They were Dedicated to the Word of God! - they kept the word!

C)Allow me to read this t verse to you in the Amplified Bible.

D)I think it will color it enough to get the flavor: 'I know that you have but a little strength but you have kept My word and you have guarded My message.'

Jesus loves to work through people and churches who are faithful to his Word.

A)He knows that they are going to give the world what it really needs - the gospel

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. -Romans 1:16

B)Power in the word of God - God's word doesn't return void.

C)Power is in the message not the messenger - Linda Barret -Yugo

D)The Early Church was growing radically - committed to the Word of God! Acts 2:42 continued steadfastly in it

Paul admonished his young protégé Timothy to guard the message -

2 Timothy 4:2-4 Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage with great patience and teaching. ³ For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, will multiply teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear what they want to hear. ⁴ They will turn away from hearing the truth and will turn aside to myths. CSB

A)That time is now: We are living in those days: Lines are being drawn -

B)Stand for truth or tolerate error in order to be accepted

1))God is looking for believers who are going to be dedicated to the Word of God

C)God works through churches and people who are dedicated to the word -

1)They are going to be pointing people in the right direction

D)So God loves to work through people and churches who are Dependent upon him -

1)And who are dedicated to his Word.

#3 They were a courageous church V.8 Not deny his name

A)He opens doors and is ready to provide DIVINE resources to those who are willing to stand for Him!

B)I love the story Daniel the JR High student who stood against his 7th grade science teacher.

C)He was a courageous young man – and God blessed him

1)After that STAND - the Lord used Daniel led several of his classmates to faith in Christ

Courage is Contagious! –

A)To Joshua – be strong and courageous - You follow in that way – the people will to!

“When a brave man takes a stand, the spines of others are often stiffened.” Billy Graham.

B)You as a parent – your kids will be inspired!

C)Martyr’s in Rome – Singing – people got out of the stands

So this church was blessed with an OPEN DOOR because they were a Dependent Church, Dedicated church (Word), Courageous church

A)Here is something to remember folks - You know what comes with Open doors?

B)Opposition - - “For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.” 1 Corinthians 16:9

C)Opposition and adversaries come with open doors

D)Such Good thing for us to remember – because we can think – open door – Smooth sailing

First hint of opposition – We want to quit or question – IS God really in this!

A)There is often opposition with open doors - why?

B)Satan hates to see believers who realize that they have little strength

1)Who know they that they need to be dependent on the Holy Spirit

C)He Knows how Powerful people like that can be for the kingdom of God - Unstoppable

He hates to see Christians - being dedicated to the Word - He knows how powerful God’s word is

A)He hates seeing Christians who are courageous because courage is contagious

B)People like that are a threat to him - He knows they can do damage – so he tries to discourage them 1)any way that he can.

C)Facing opposition? Hang in there – God is on the verge of doing something great!

The Rewards V.9-12

A)The Gospel would prevail

V.9 Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie— indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.

B)Jesus is telling them - that a day was coming when the very ones who opposed them would acknowledge they were right

C)Worship at their feet - could mean - unbelievers would be converted and become worshippers too.

D)Or it might mean - Philippians 2 - One day every opposing person will bow the knee and declare Jesus is the king of kings and Lord of Lords

1)It might mean both

2nd Reward:V.10 Kept from the hour of trial - that will come upon the whole earth

10 Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

Personally I believe that whatever Jesus is talking about here

A)is bigger than what the local church of Philadelphia was up against.

B)I think Jesus is prophetically giving a word to the church of the last days

1)through His Word to this faithful church,

C)That God will keep that future church from the Great Tribulation period

1)Why do I believe that ?

Well one reason is because of the language in the text:

A) Jesus describes this trial as a future event - that will come upon the whole world.

B) He also mentions that it is to test those who dwell upon the earth

C) The phrase, "those who dwell on the earth" is a phrase used nine times in the rest of the book of Revelation,

1) Revelation 6:10, 8:13, 11:10, 13:8, 12 and 14, 14:6, 17:2, 8) – and each time that title refers to "unbelievers"

We will see in the book of Revelation starting in ch.6

A) that there is an hour of trial coming upon the earth - Known as the Great tribulation

B) It is a time when the Wrath of God is poured out upon a world that has rejected Jesus.

C) Paul the Apostle: Comforted the believers in Thessalonica - writing them about the rapture

1) The rapture is a time when Jesus will take his bride the church from planet earth.

D) I believe that will be before the Tribulation begins - Because Paul declared in 1 Thessalonians 5:9 - For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul admonished the believers to comfort one another with these words

A) His message was not gear up - going through the tribulation -

B) But comfort one another - that when this starts - you will escape it

1) Not appointed unto Wrath

C) We will be talking about the rapture in future studies -

1) but this could be what Jesus is talking about here

D) Note a promise to be Kept FROM- not through - the Hour of trial - Taken out by the rapture

1) People who are alive taken to Heaven

E) Enoch - Elijah - John Ch.4 - Two witnesses - ch.12

V.11 Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown

A) Jesus' exhortation to this church is not negative, but a true encouragement that He was coming soon, so hold fast to Him, that no one can take your crown

B) This declaration that Jesus is coming soon - is repeated several times in the book of Revelation

C) Sometimes people can read that and think - what a joke -

1) Coming soon it's been 2000 yrs - that is not soon.

But don't forget the perspective of the Lord's time frame - that Peter reminds us of in 2 Peter 3

A) Peter is writing about the coming of the Lord and the end of all things as we know it

⁸ But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:8-9

B) We say from our perspective: Lord how long - it has been 2,000 years -

1) but God is so patient - his view of time is so different

C) He says - No it has only been 2 days - I am waiting for more people to get saved.

D) DESIRE no one to perish and go to Hell- so I am still holding out -

1) maybe there is a final person... - Ok now it is time

E) You today: You might be holding this whole thing up. - ☺

Notice that Jesus also promises this church stability and Security

12 He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more.

A) In those days most of the Buildings were held up by pillars - kept the roof from collapsing – (These pillars)

B)Those pillars They were symbols of stability

C)Jesus is telling these believers and us - as we cling to Jesus - He helps us to overcome -

1)When everything around us is falling apart - we stand as Pillars for others to find refuge under.

Not just pictures of Stability but also security: -
and he shall go out no more.

A)Because of the frequent earthquakes the population was used to living outside the city walls in tents

B)Because they were so close to the fault line - there would always be these Huge aftershocks

C)So they would live outside the city in tents for a time period

1)until it was deemed safe to come back into the city

I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. (Again speaking future- after the Millennium - New Heaven and new earth)

Jesus is saying: I will put my name on you -and my city upon you

A)You will be safe - there is a time coming where you will know absolute stability and security under my banner

B)I will be your Pillar - I will be your security

¹³ “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Question for us today: Will we learn from the church of Philadelphia

A)Be dependent church/ people- know little strength

B)Remain - Dedicated to the Word?

C)Courageous to stand

D)Imagine the Divine opportunities the Lord will give us.