

# Church in Love with One Another

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[0:00] Let's go ahead and turn in our Bibles to Revelation chapter 3. Revelation chapter 3. And today we're looking in verse 7.

Revelation chapter 3 and verse 7. Today we're talking about the unmistakable promises of God that give unshakable assurance to the faithful.

Promises that are unmistakable, unending, and give us unshakable kind of faith. Draws us to it.

I think we need that today, don't we? There are wars on every front today.

And some seem like they're starting every week as we look in the news. You look at the border and the border is overrun and getting crazier and crazier by the day.

[1:16] And contrary to what false teachers in our own city might say, Jesus is not woke. But I think for us as believers, sometimes we're left with a little temptation that we don't have influence or strength or power to do anything about some of these things.

And it's just not true. And I think we need to hear that and be reminded of that. I was thinking of this in the context of Lord of the Rings, which always lends itself to so many good analogies.

If you haven't watched that movie, I don't think you're a Christian. No, I'm just kidding. I know some of you haven't. But there's one scene in the movie where I think her name is Galadriel.

I don't know how to say it, but she's the elf witch. Okay, long story. There's no good theology in that. But she's giving encouragement to Frodo, his hobbit.

And she shows Frodo this mirror of Galadriel or this basin of water that's a reflection of that. She shows him the past and the present and possible future.

[2:39] And she says something that I think resonates with everybody that reads the book or watches the movie. I think for all of us, something that resonates there where she said, even the smallest person can change the course of the future.

And for this little hobbit, it was just an encouragement for him to carry on and to go and do this impossible thing that he was called to do.

In essence, you're not significant. No matter how small. No matter how weak. No matter how you feel about the issue.

And this is really, I think, the message that Jesus is giving to the church at Philadelphia. They are more than just a fellowship of a few hobbits gathered together.

They are followers of the resurrected Christ. They are followers of the King of Kings who is coming again. And who still reigns, has authority.

[3:49] And so here John is getting a peek into the future. And in this vision, this revelation to John, he's got a message for each of these churches, as we've been looking at it, but also for every believer who has ears to hear.

Right? And that's who? Well, that's you and me. You got ears to hear? Listen to what the Spirit says to the churches because there's some application for you.

There's something for you to get out of this. There's something that you're going to glean from this, even as you watch their example in what Christ says to them. This word is not just to them.

It's to you and to me. So John is getting this message as he's giving these messages to the seven churches. He's been gone to Ephesus and Smyrna.

He's cruising down the Roman road. And all of these cities are in fairly close proximity. They're the nearest, largest cities to each other.

[4:54] And so going down that Roman highway, you just see John as he's receiving this vision, getting it for the closest church, Ephesus, and then the Smyrna, and then all these others, all down the highway.

And so it's very logical progression through these. In churches that John apparently has a relationship with. And he comes to this point in verse seven, and he's come to the church of, in the original language, Philadelphaea.

Philaleo is love. And Delphi speaks of brothers. So Philadelphia is the city of brotherly love. That's not just an American thing.

That American city is named for this city. And this city of brotherly love ought to be the city that actually characterizes what Jesus gave to his disciples on the last night around the table, right? When he speaks to his disciples, and he's about to be betrayed, and he says to them, John 13, 35, by this all people will know that you are my disciples, by what?

[6:10] By the love you have for one another. And then, that's going to be the last time they eat. Next time you eat with me, Jesus says. It's going to be on the other side.

It's going to be at that banquet table. And between then and now, you and I are going to experience the Lord's Supper, the Lord's table together to remember what we have in Christ and what we're headed toward, right?

The city of brotherly love. Man, there's probably a lot that could be said about them and to them, but Jesus pulls out a specific fact about them that you and I can resonate with.

He said, you are, or you have, little power. Their perception of themselves is that they have little strength.

A little church, maybe not much influence in their city, maybe not many prominent people in their church. Maybe they can't speak to the association of churches that they're a part of with any authority because they're so insignificant in the seven churches.

[7:25] And yet, Jesus is drawing this out so that he can encourage them. That although they may think they have little strength, that is not the reality.

They have great strength because of Christ. And this is the theme of the Bible, isn't it? That people with no strength can find strength in Jesus. After all, we're all dead people that have been given life, right?

If you're a follower of Jesus, you were dead in your trespasses and sins, insignificant on the eternal picture, and yet Jesus Christ died for your sins, resurrected you from the grave, and this is going to be the theme for eternity, that he rescues the perishing.

Well, that's good stuff. I don't care who you are. I don't care how small you are, how young you are, even for children or youth. Just like Paul told Timothy, don't let anybody despise your youth.

Be an example to the believers. Why? Because this is the theme of the Bible, that insignificant people and small things and things that are not according to the world actually become something in Jesus.

[8:35] And your identity in Christ now gives you strength and its encouragement, so that you'll trust him more and more and more as we're in this in-between time until he returns.

That's the message he gives to them. It's the same message to Moses. Moses, I'm slow of speech. I stutter. I can't even speak. And God calls him to set captives free and pull his people out of Egypt. And he uses somebody like that. Or Joseph, the youngest of the brothers. And God's going to exalt him and use him because he's got a redemptive purpose and a plan.

David, not chosen because of his stature. His brothers are warriors. They're strong. They're a head taller than the rest. And yet, as God's choosing a king, he chooses David.

Paul. Paul, whose name was Saul, which is really the strong, the mighty king of Israel. Well, he fell. But at one point, he was a mighty king.

[9:40] It's a strong name for a man. And yet, his name is changed to Paul, which means small and insignificant after he found Christ. Humility is now praised.

Being small is actually strength. The message to Philadelphia kind of unveils the promises that God makes to encourage that kind of faith in us.

To trust him. Not because we can be great, but because he's great. Revelation 3.7, this message to Philadelphia, really does reveal a God who opens doors that no one can shut.

The pathway to life is set before us. So that we can grow and minister unhindered by any earthly power.

He opens doors. He shuts doors. No one else can open. He can close them. No one else can open those doors that he closes. And no one opens doors that he can shut. Because he's sovereign.

[10:50] He's in control of the door. The passage goes on to give us a glimpse of protection in the midst of a global tribulation that's coming.

A very difficult time that's coming. And he's going to be the protector of his people. He's going to give a glimpse into the imminent return of Christ.

That it's the beacon of hope for us as believers. That we're to persevere in difficulty because he's coming again. It's the encouragement. Hang on.

He's coming. And so we get these unchanging kind of promises where our faithfulness is encouraged to a point of being unshakable in our perseverance.

It's something that he's doing in us. Not just something we're doing for ourselves. Not us being stronger and finding new strength within ourselves. It's finding our strength in him.

[11:48] And so how does God make big promises like this to us? And how do the big promises of God make an unshakable assurance in faithful little guys in the world?

What are the four big promises that we see in this passage? Number one. The promise of security in your relationship with Christ.

There is a promise of security in your relationship with Christ. Notice what he says in verse 8. I know your works.

Behold, I have set before you an open door which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power. Yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

So you notice he's talking about this open door. And this is coming right out of verse 7 where he just said something very similar. So look back at it. So he says, It's he who opens and no one will shut.

[12:59] Who shuts and no one opens. And this is the door. So you can't take this verse just out of context. And just think that he's merely talking about general opportunity in our life.

That God, he opens doors for opportunity and gives us opportunity. That may be true. But that's not necessarily what he's talking about here. We determine this based on context.

So we want to dig into the context of what he said. So then you go back and he's talking about this door. He who opens and no one will shut. Who shuts and no one opens.

And then right before that, you notice that he says, These are the words of the Holy One, the true One, who has the key of David. A key to a door.

What's he talking about? See, this work of David, you have to recall, Jesus is sitting on David's throne. The kingdom of David is talked about all through from the time of David all the way to the end of the Bible.

[14:11] Jesus is on that throne. A kingdom that will never end. And here what we see is a foundational promise for us. And all the other promises really grow out of this for us as believers.

For the church at Philadelphia, they need to be reminded of this, that they have security in their relationship with Christ because they don't have security in anything else.

These are people, as you read through the rest of the text, that you realize that they have most likely been kicked out of the synagogue already. They've been excluded.

They're no longer welcome. They're already not welcome by the Roman government because this kind of faith in Christ alone stands in contrast to the polytheism of the Roman world.

So they believe in all kinds of gods. They would add this too, so long as it's under Rome, but they're not going to have any god that's over Rome. So they've already been excluded from the culture from a Roman perspective, but they are also excluded from Judaism, from the Jewish perspective.

[15:22] Now, they are outside the synagogue looking in. And so the reference to the synagogue there is to those who claim to be Jews, but lie and are not. And they are the synagogue of Satan, Jesus says.

And that's not John's words. That's Jesus' words. That is a false group of believers. They may feel insignificant.

They may feel isolated. They may feel as the persona non grata of the world. They're alone. They're small. They have no influence. They're not accepted. They're not respected.

Little people. You have little strength. And he uses the word micros there, where we get our word micro. Christmas time, I remember when our kids were small on the mission field, we spent some time with our family.

Brandy's brother was on the mission field with us, and we spent time with our kids together. All our kids were small, and I remember Christmas time, I got them a bunch of micro machines. Little remote control cars.

[16:33] Okay? It was for the kids. Because that's what we do. As dads, we get toys that we want to play with, and we give it to the kids, let them play, give them some rules, and then, okay, kids, it's time to go to your room for a while, while me and Uncle Ray play with micro machines.

And have these little remote controls. They were this big. I mean, they were so small, and they were so small that you could easily step on them and break them, and so, and that would happen. So I'd have to run down to the market outside and try to find somebody else that's selling these little micro machines, and we get these.

You're so small. That's what Paul's saying. You have, or what Jesus is saying here, you're of small stature. You have no respect. You're insignificant. So much so that you'll get stepped on.

Stepped on by the world. Stepped on by the church. Stepped on by people. Thinking that you're insignificant. But you have a relationship, and it has something to do with David and this key to David.

And for me, this was really interesting because you have to be reminded that a key back in these times is not a key like we have. I lose my keys from time to time.

[17:46] Not often, but from time to time. And it's just a little key. You can lose it easily. But in this time, you can't lose a key because a key is a big thing. It's a big lever that can go in and move some mechanism so that it unlatches a door in a way so that even in the Old Testament, it talks about a key being on someone's back.

So they would be carrying this big, gigantic key around. If you had keys to everything that you're responsible for right now, what would that look like on your back? Right?

Big keys. You're not insignificant. Just like Jesus said about insignificant things before in Matthew 17, 20, He said, Truly I say to you, if you have the faith like a grain of mustard seed, you'll say to this mountain, move from here to there and it will move.

And nothing will be impossible for you. That's not insignificant, right? That's significant. It's the relationship that we have with Christ.

It's God's supremacy. It's God's sovereignty at work in salvation. I open a door for you that no man can open. This is the door of salvation to you.

[19:06] I close the door that no... And when it's closed, no one can open it. When you want it opened, God can open it. But nobody else can. And He talks about this door three times in Revelation.

In this verse, of course, then in Revelation 3, 20, He says, Behold, I'm standing at the door and I'm knocking. And if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I'll come in.

But I'm calling from the door. Don't come if I don't call. And then in Revelation 4, after He's done, after Jesus is done with the messages to the churches, then He draws John to a place where it says, chapter 4, verse 1, I was standing at the door of heaven and it was open.

And here, you're getting the picture that this is about, this doorway is something about the relationship with Jesus and the interaction with Him, a transition from temporal to eternal.

It's me going through this door. I have fellowship with Christ. Going through the door, there's revelation and truth being unveiled. In each use, you see the relationship with God at play.

[20:26] The sovereignty of God. And so, the key to David's house, Jesus is described as having this key, and it's really the picture that you get from Isaiah 22, verse 15.

In fact, it's a direct quote from Isaiah. And in that verse, what you see is this undisputed authority to admit somebody or refuse somebody from coming into the temple.

And this is what is described as the oracle against Shebna, Hezekiah's servant. Isaiah 22, verse 15. And it's talking about this new chief steward who's going to be responsible for the key. And it says, and I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David.

And what he opens, no one can shut. And what he shuts, no one can open. To the temple, to the presence of God. The reality of the relationship with God.

[21:29] Jesus is the Davidic Messiah. He's the one that's fulfilling everything that we saw in the Old Testament that was the picture of what was to come. And this key holder is just a shadow of what Jesus is going to be.

So when he talks about the door that's being opened here, he's talking about the relationship that you have with Jesus that is absolutely secure because God is sovereign over the door.

He's sovereign over your life. He's sovereign over the circumstances that you're going through. He opens the door or he shuts the door. And no one can open what he shuts.

And then, with this promise being foundational, then the other promises are going to unfold out of this. Because Philadelphia, you have a relationship with Jesus that is this secure.

you can trust him through every trial and every circumstance that you're going to go through. And this ought to strengthen you when you contemplate this promise.

[22:38] He's got the keys to heaven. And that reality is also seen throughout the Scripture even in Revelation 1.18 where Jesus said, I am the living one where he's describing this similar kind of thought as he opens this to Philadelphia.

Revelation 1.18, I am the living one. I was dead and now look, I am alive forever and ever and I hold the keys of death and Hades.

So not only do I have the keys to heaven, I have the keys to hell. I've got the keys. I open the door, I shut the door.

the absolute sovereignty and authority of Christ Jesus in salvation is what's in question here in the door. The door is just symbolic of the relationship that you have and it ought to be a promise that you stand on.

And not only does he have the keys to heaven and hell, but the Scripture also says in Matthew 16.19, Jesus said it this way, he said, and I will give you the keys to the kingdom.

[23:46] What? I will give you the keys to the kingdom. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven.

Whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. What has he given us? Gospel. Preach the gospel. Proclaim Christ.

You have the keys to heaven and hell. It's through the gospel. The security that they have in their relationship with Christ is what they're celebrating in the sovereignty of God. God has given the keys to us and he's working through us in some mysterious way so that through the foolishness of preaching, the lost can be saved.

And through the gospel, he opens the door and closes the door. Hallelujah! Man, that's something for us to come to the table about and say, praise the Lord. We've got something to celebrate at the table.

No matter how small you might feel. No matter how insignificant you might think you are. I'm not a preacher. I'm not a pastor. I'm not a Sunday school teacher. I'm not a deacon. I don't have a position.

[24:51] I don't do this or that. Don't listen to all of that. You are a follower of Christ Jesus. He's got the keys to heaven and hell and he is using you to bring people in.

Big promises to little faithful people that drive you to more faithfulness. promise number two.

Promise number two.

Not only do we have a promise of security in our relationship with him, also we have a promise of God's faithful vindication of us.

And this is important. Well, it's important if you're Philadelphia and you're being insulted and you're being harassed and you're being isolated and you're feeling like you're not useful and you're feeling

like you have no place, no power, no strength, and you think your strength is small, it'd be important to you to know that through the vindication of his people, God is revealing his righteousness. righteousness. He's promising that those who falsely accuse and oppose his faithful are ultimately going to know his love and his justice.

[26:15] And so you see it here in verse 9. He says, Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not, but lie.

Behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet and they will learn that I have loved you. I'm going to vindicate you.

That you may feel insignificant in the world. Don't let that discourage you. Don't let that let you think that you have no strength. Don't let that bring you to a place where you don't think that you have any ability to change things or affect things.

You have the strength of the Holy Spirit in you. The resurrected Christ who's got the keys to heaven and hell has given you authorization in this world to proclaim Him until He comes.

And you are absolutely invincible until He's finished with you. That's the message to every believer for all time no matter the level of persecution that you might endure.

[27:18] Whether that's you in school and you're in school and people are going to harass you because you don't want to do the things that everybody else is doing. You don't want to go along. You don't want to be in the locker room using the foul language that everybody else is using.

You don't want to do the coarse jesting that they do. You don't want to look at the stuff on the internet and gather around with the guys and tell dirty jokes and look at dirty things.

And because you don't do those things, there's going to be some exclusion and some ridicule and some hardship for you. Or some of you girls not being involved in some of the things that girls do, whatever that is.

I don't know. But you know, right? So just imagine. Somebody said something about a pastor just this last year and made accusations against him at the convention and it was all just, it turned out to be all fabricated and all a lie.

And I just remember on Facebook or on Twitter he had said something because they, that person said something about it so he said, hey, I'm not going to get into all that. It was false.

[28:33] It was wrong. The truth will come out. And so he took the high road, didn't argue it there. And so I felt like I needed to say something for the guy so I just went on there and said, yeah, it's all coming out at the judgment seat.

And it is. One day, vindication is coming. I mean, it may not happen in our lifetime.

We may go through our whole life feeling like we're small and insignificant and whatever because we've been pushed in a corner if people have said something about us or whatever. And so we feel like we've got no strength and so because of that we shy away from trusting God for something great.

We shy away when God calls us to do something. Not me, that's for somebody else. Somebody else will probably do that. And so some of you think, well, I can't be used by God because I quit high school and how's he going to use me?

Or I was abused as a child. How is he going to use me? I've gone through hardship and difficulty and you don't know my story and how bad it was but all those things, I'm just nobody.

[29:46] That was my story. High school dropout, abused as a child, etc., etc., etc. Don't believe the lie.

Christ will vindicate you one day. You're looking forward to that day when all the truth comes out, all the reasons come out. But until then, you're to trust him for great strength.

Trust him to do something great, not because you're great. You're not great. There's nothing good about you. We're all sinners. We're all condemned to die. The only good thing about me is Jesus in me.

He's my strength. He's my hope. One day, he's going to do the vindicating. Even as Martin Luther King Jr. said, he was right in this. He said, the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice.

One day, justice is coming. One day, the truth is coming out. One day, all the lies are going to be seen for what they are. All the fabrications of strength that you see in other churches or other people and you think they're strong, you think they're awesome, you think they're doing great things.

[30:58] And at the judgment seat, all of that's going to be burned away. You're going to see them for who they really are. You're going to see that church for what it really is because we are nothing except what we are before Almighty God.

It's going to come out one day. Jesus said, in Isaiah 54, God said, do not be afraid. You will not be put to shame. Do not fear disgrace. You will not be humiliated.

You will forget the shame of your youth. You will remember no more the reproach of your widowhood. As He speaks to Israel, He's given that same picture of redemption that's coming. I'm the God who vindicates. Isaiah 50, verse 7, for the Lord God helps me, therefore I am not disgraced. Therefore I have set my face like flint and I know that I will not be ashamed of prophecy of Christ who's coming who is humbled and yet He was exalted.

Isaiah 61, verse 7, instead of your shame you will receive a double portion. Instead of your disgrace you will rejoice in your inheritance and everlasting joy will be yours.

[32:04] It's yours. Don't think you're small. Don't think you're insignificant. There's big promises for little faithful people.

Jesus said it in Matthew 13, verse 40, just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire so it will be at the end of the age, the Son of Man will send His angels and they will gather out of His kingdom all causes of sin and all lawbreakers and throw them into the fiery furnace.

in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth and then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

And then what did He say? He who has ears let him hear. Matthew, this he who has ears let him hear isn't new.

These ideas are not something new. This isn't just John's words. These are Jesus' words. You've got a promise of vindication. Then number three, there's a promise of faithful protection. Faithful protection.

[33:15] Verse 10, Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth.

And verse 11, I am coming soon. A sense of imminence is what Jesus leaves them with. I'm coming soon.

You don't know when. But my promise to you, especially Philadelphia directly, this promise to you is that I'm going to protect you from the hour of trial that's to come.

Now this certainly speaks of some protection that's going to come through our lives and the way God protects us when difficulty comes. We know we can call on him in times of trouble.

But this is specifically talking about the end time scenario as a whole. They're going to be spared of that. Even though I'm coming quickly, Philadelphia, you're not going to go through the things that I'm talking about.

[34:21] And in fact, because you're faithful, this faithfulness that's characteristic of my presence in your life is going to spare you from the judgment that's to come. Judgment is coming on the whole world.

This end time scenario you see played out all through Revelation, like Revelation 12 where it just gives the picture. The great dragon was hurled down that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan who leads the whole world astray, it says.

The whole world. So you can connect these verses just with that phrase, the whole world. He was hurled down to the earth and his angels with him. Revelation 13.3 One of the heads of the beast seemed to have a fatal wound but the fatal wound had been healed.

The whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast. This end time scenario. Something that's going on at the end time that's going to overtake the entire world.

Not just the little trials that are coming, not even the persecution that they're going through.

Because these churches are going through persecution right now. He's not talking about that.

[35:30] I'm not going to spare you from every difficulty. I'm not going to make life easy all the time. It's not going to be easy every day because you're a follower of Jesus. There's going to be hard times.

There's going to be difficult times. But know this. You've got something to look forward to that I'm going to spare you of that the whole world may have to go through and go through and all the inhabitants of the earth are going to worship the beast.

All whose names and they will be cast into the lake of fire.

Fiery trial coming over the whole world. Oh, judgment. So yeah, they were spared. Philadelphia was certainly spared the end times because all of them died before the end times came.

Praise the Lord. I'm sure they said praise the Lord. It was already bad enough. But the Scripture said those days are going to be worse than anything we've ever seen or imagined. Besides that, the Scripture tells us that it's appointed unto man once to die and after this judgment.

[36:41] And that's going to be worse than anything we've ever experienced in the physical universe. So whatever that is, I'm spared of that.

Protection divine from the Lord because of Jesus and my relationship and Him that's secure and the door nobody else can open. Nobody can snatch me out of His hand.

I'm secure in Jesus Christ. And nobody can change that. It ought to give every little, significant, small person confidence in Jesus.

Jesus. Psalm 46, verse 1, God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble. He said it in Psalm 50, verse 15, call on me in the day of trouble. I will deliver you and you'll honor me.

[37:41] Protection. And then, He finishes it just in this promise of future elevation. You who are insignificant, just like the humble will be involved.

I hear that over and over in Scripture. This issue of humility is something that's being praised in Scripture because we're humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God. And when we do that, God's exalted.

We're not exalted. When we see ourselves there and see Him for where He is, then our faith in Him is what fills the gap. And He uses us as a reflection of greatness.

It's a picture of God's grace. You see the grace of God in this. We don't know we're exalted. I mean, think of your own life. Remember somebody, we knew somebody and she was dating this guy and she was trying to share the gospel with him and she said, well, you know, you're a sinner.

And he said, I'm not a sinner. She said, yes you are. The Bible says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. All of us are sinners. He said, well, I'm good.

[38:47] She said, you're not even that. You're not even that. If you were honest with yourself, you know, even in your best intentions, they're being painted just a little bit.

There's some selfishness even in my humility. It's amazing. I mean, we have an amazing ability to take those attributes that God calls for in us and just transform it into something sinful.

Oh man, how humble I am. You know? Man, aren't you amazed by my humility. But when we're actually humble, then the glory of God gets revealed.

It's in my weakness that he's made strong. And you see that all through the Bible. Gideon, I came from a small tribe.

God makes him a warrior. Liberates his people. Isaiah and Peter overwhelmed by their own sinfulness. You see Isaiah there in the beginning of the book of Isaiah.

[39:55] Woe is me. I'm a man of unclean lips. And the Lord takes the coal from the altar and burns his lips. Right? Just the imagery of purification.

He's burning out all the impurities. Jeremiah, the prophet, I'm too young to speak. Moses, I'm not eloquent.

Throughout the Bible, God promises big things to little people. Promises. Great promises. Salvation. Vindication.

Protection. Elevation. One day, it's all going to be known. And it's all because of Jesus. And you hear words in the Scripture that give that picture and it just stirs you up to that kind of thinking.

Even when you look at somebody like Hannah in the Old Testament in 1 Samuel 2. You read through 1 Samuel 2 and it says, And Hannah prayed and said, My heart exalts in the Lord.  
[41:02] My horn is exalted in the Lord. My mouth derides my enemies because I rejoice in your salvation. There is none like the Lord holy for there is none beside you.

There is no rock like our God. The feeble bind on strength. Those who are hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has borne seven. The Lord kills and brings to life. He brings down to Sheol but He raises up. Aren't you glad? great promises for you and me? I need to hear that. They're so often that I feel absolutely without power, without strength. I'm trying to put a sermon together for people week after week and I'm like, you know, you preach on a Sunday and I'm like, somebody comes, oh, that was the best sermon you ever preached and I'm like, that was the biggest dud.

[42:06] That was the worst sermon ever. There's nobody with more self-hatred than a preacher. You preach the word just like, oh, I did such an injustice to that text.

Oh man, if I could have just been more clear about that. Oh, if I could have just shown them something more about Christ than that and just absolutely hate yourself, you know? And it's in those moments that the Lord just says, my strength is sufficient for you. It's not about you. It's like the story of the old preacher that goes, you know, it's a young preacher, the old story, young preacher.

Young preacher goes up to the platform to preach and he's all proud and he's ready to go. He preaches his heart out and there's no response, there's no nothing, nobody says anything except one little old lady and as he's coming down he's all discouraged and she says, son, if you would have gone up like you came down, you would have come down like you went up.

Christ is everything. There was a song that I was reminded of that I won't sing. Steve Green had a song called He Holds the Keys.

[43:27] Anybody remember that song? He Holds the Keys. I didn't remember it until I went and looked it up. Death rides black in clouds across the sky. The son of man lays down to die.

With every pounding blow upon the nail, thunder rumbles all through hell. And from death's barren womb, the captives cry, who is there to free us?

Should he die? His grave becomes a door. He enters in to face the author of all sin. Defying death and the grave, he takes their keys.

And with them, every captive frees. And from death's barren womb, the captives cry, arise for our redemption draweth nigh. For he holds the keys, he holds the keys.

And though we've been held captive, at long last, we are free, for he holds the keys. Against the gates of hell I now resist, for the shackles that had torn my wrists lay before me now upon the ground.

[44:38] To sin, I am no longer bound. For from death's barren womb, he heard, he heard my cry. And loosed the chains that bound me to a lie.

For he holds the keys. He holds the keys. Father, we come before you this morning in absolute adoration.

We come before you, Lord, absolutely humbled. Our faces in the dust.

We are small people. We are insignificant.

We have no strength. We have nothing good to speak of. And yet, Jesus, you died for me.

[46:11] Called me up from the grave. gave me life. Big promises, Lord.

Salvation, vindication, protection, even elevation. Lord, you have given great promises to us. And maybe there's somebody here that has never trusted Jesus as Savior and Lord.

I don't have to tell them they're a sinner, Lord. They already know. And I don't have to tell them who you are because you've already shown them. Except through the preaching of the gospel, that's where you call.

And so, Lord, today, the gospel is being proclaimed. Christ Jesus died for sinners. And we thank you, Lord. But for those that are lost, that you need to call, Lord, I pray that you would reveal to them the reality of Jesus Jesus on the cross dying for their sin as their substitute and that right now where they're at, they would transfer their trust from everything they are and everything they've

been to everything that Jesus is and that they would trust Him to forgive them of their sins and to come in and give them life.

And right now where they're at as they confess their sin to you and ask you to come in, I pray that you'd make them a new creation in Jesus right here. That they'd be changed.

[47:43] And Lord, I pray that you would just block the enemy from their mind and from their heart and from everything and that they would flee from sin and flee to the cross and that they would cling to you with everything that they have, all of their heart, mind, soul, and strength.

But these promises will be theirs. And for believers this morning, I pray God that you would strengthen us. God, that you would strengthen us. That you'd remind us of what we have in Jesus who opened the door for us, gave us salvation, who one day will vindicate us, who will protect us from the enemy and from judgment.

And one day will elevate us in a way to show that we are loved by you. So Lord, I pray today that you'd have your work in our hearts as we prepare for the Lord's table this morning.

And in this invitation time, may you do a work in us that only you can do. It's in Christ's name we pray. Amen.