

Philadelphia: The Church of Uncompromising Perseverance | Revelation 3:7-13

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Date: 16 July 2023

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[0 : 0 0] Charles Simeon was an Anglican minister who lived in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Today he's remembered and honored in the evangelical community for his lifelong commitment to expository preaching, faithful leadership among evangelical Anglicans of his time, other things he was responsible for helping found the missionary society in the early 1800s which was very effective and noteworthy. He was a leader among those who were faithful to their gospel convictions during his time but life and ministry if you know anything about Charles Simeon was anything but easy. After graduating from King's College in Cambridge Simeon was appointed by the local Anglican bishop to be the vicar or pastor of Trinity Church Cambridge. Now nothing about that seems unusual until you learn that the church did not want Charles Simeon to be their pastor.

There was an assistant pastor there that they wanted more. Mr. Hammond, that's the one that they really wanted as a church and they fought against this bishop because they did not want Charles Simeon but Charles Simeon out of humility which was probably from what we understand historically was probably not very natural to him especially at that point in his life in a humble statement went to the bishop and says if the church doesn't want me it's probably not a good idea for me to be there.

The bishop responds even if you don't go I'm not putting Mr. Hammond in this place and Charles Simeon feels at that point that there is a unique calling of God on his life to go to this church and so he remains. Now here's what's interesting about it. The church didn't care that he wanted to be there.

In that this is a different world this is a different kind of framework for church life and church policy. At that time the vicar of the church the pastor of the church was responsible and had authority for the morning worship service. The congregation however and the church wardens had responsibility for their afternoon service and so the church refuses to let Charles Simeon their pastor be the lecturer in the afternoon service. He could do his thing on Sunday morning but they refused to let him speak on Sunday afternoon. For his first five years the assistant pastor is the one that they gathered to hear speak on Sunday afternoons. Well then Mr. Hammond decided to leave and he leaves the church and he goes on to other things and the church still refuses to let Simeon be the afternoon lecturer. Instead they hire and pay an independent preacher that does not belong to them in order to come and do the afternoon lecture and he does that for the next seven years. So for the first 12 years of Charles Simeon's ministry at

Trinity Church Cambridge he was not even allowed by the congregation to preach in the evening service or the afternoon service. He tried to discharge his duties as a pastor and to do pastoral calls and visits for the people in the church and they refused to open the door and let him in. They scarcely attended the morning worship service and the pew holders which is interesting if you've ever seen a picture of an old church a congregational meeting house or something like that there were pews and the pews had doors on the end so you had to be able to get in the door to get into the pew. Well you could rent or purchase your pew. It's a completely different concept of somebody sitting in your seat at church. That was a reality.

[3 : 48] There were certain things they were allowed to do whether it was to decorate or to put things in their pew that they wanted to keep for themselves and they had locks on the doors of the pews. What the pew holders would do is they would come in and they would lock the doors to the pews so that whoever came to the morning worship service couldn't have a place to sit. So for 12 years Simeon preaches on Sunday mornings to people who would have to sit or stand in the aisles or in the corners or the nooks of the church building. At one point he personally purchases chairs for people to sit in. The church wardens in protest to that come in take the chairs that he purchases and throws them into the church yard.

Simeon later would decide that he would give his own go at having his own evening service that would take place after the afternoon service and in objection to that the church wardens came in and locked the door so Simeon and no one else could even get in the building. 12 years of this. Now most of us would have left this church very early if we would even win. Simeon out of a deep sense of calling from God endured the opposition stayed faithful to discharge his duties as a pastor.

After 12 years the situation at Trinity Church gets better but life is still difficult for Simeon. At this point he's a teaching fellow at King's College in Cambridge. He lived on the campus. He never was married. He lived on the campus his entire ministry and he would preach in the church that was nearby. He was a teacher there but he faced severe opposition for his gospel convictions.

Not only from the faculty but also from the students. Students would routinely interrupt his lectures. They would gather on Sunday mornings in the streets and outside the church where he preached just to disturb his preaching. His relationship with the other faculty was such that he writes in a journal how overjoyed he was one day that one of his colleagues took the time to walk with him for 15 minutes around the college courtyard.

He was an outcast. Nobody wanted him. They didn't want to listen to him because of his stand for gospel truth. Throughout his life Simeon endured occasional uprisings of disunity in the church.

[6 : 10] Bouts with failing health for 13 years. He thought he was going to die every time he preached. An intense opposition from those who did not appreciate his gospel preaching.

He had every human reason to quit but he continued faithfully for 54 years at Trinity Church and at King's College until just before his death in 1836.

Later in his life one of his friends asked him how he had persevered through the opposition of his ministry and Simeon responded this way. I think I have this quote for you if you want to read it on the screen.

Here's how he responded. Brother, we must not mind a little suffering for Christ's sake. Let us rejoice in the remembrance that Christ has surmounted all his suffering and triumphed over death.

Let us follow him patiently. We shall soon be partakers of his victory. In the sermon to the church of Philadelphia we find a story that is similar to Charles Simeon's.

[7 : 22] It was a congregation of little power that persevered in uncompromising faith amid severe opposition. They trusted that Christ's suffering and triumph over death guaranteed their sharing in his victory and Jesus comes to them in this sermon with amazing comfort.

And if you've been with us through these now seven messages through these two chapters or two and a half chapters perhaps you will find with me that this text is a bit of fresh air.

While most of the other churches we've studied are failing through either complacency or compromise it's refreshing to read of a church that was steadfast in the gospel.

But the overwhelming encouragement of this particular message from Jesus comes from the fact that Jesus took notice of their faithfulness.

In fact it becomes abundantly clear that Jesus' purpose in this message this sermon to Philadelphia is to reassure the beleaguered congregation.

[8 : 33] He goes above and beyond to emphasize his divine power for their good because of their faithfulness. So let's dive in and see what Jesus has to say to the church at Lake Norman through his sermon to the church of uncompromising perseverance.

Let's consider first the church identity in Christ's title as always. Verse 7 To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write the words of the Holy One the true One who has the key of David who opens and no one will shut who shuts and no one opens.

Philadelphia as you know is the city of brotherly love and it was so named because of the to honor a man of intense loyalty and love for his brother who was an ancient king of Pergamum.

But love and loyalty was not the experience for the Christians in Philadelphia. It's quite the opposite actually. Like all the Christian churches that we've studied at that time the constant threat of persecution from the Greco-Roman society in which they lived was a reality for these believers.

But like the church in Smyrna which is its parallel in the general structure of these chapters like the church in Smyrna the opposition that Jesus addresses in this sermon is focused primarily on the Jewish community what Jesus calls the synagogue of Satan.

[10 : 10] The message to Smyrna emphasized the slander that came from the Jews. They were serving as informants somewhat to the Romans. Remember how we talked about the slander and the shape that it would take?

They were taking common Christian doctrines they were twisting them and perverting them and presenting them as things that were a threat to Roman society. Remember the Jews were taking the doctrine of communion the Lord's Supper and they were accusing the Christians of being cannibals which was against Roman law.

They were thought of as atheists not because they didn't believe there was a God but because they denied all other gods except for Jesus. There were many other things doctrines that were taken and were twisted and purported by the Jews to be in violation of Roman law.

They were seeking to make a distinction between themselves and the Christians so that they wouldn't suffer the same persecution that the Christians were suffering. So some of them became informants. That's primarily what Smyrna was dealing with.

We would assume though it's not listed explicitly that that is very much the case for the church in Philadelphia as well. Now it will help us to understand too which seems to be the focus or the primary problem in Philadelphia that some early Christians continued their memberships in the local synagogues to take advantage of the fact that many couldn't distinguish clearly between Judaism and Christianity.

[11 : 40] In the Greco-Roman world Christianity was just primarily considered a sect within Judaism. And so there wasn't a lot of distinguishment that people could make unless they were just very familiar with the preaching of the Christians.

And so these early Christians some of them would maintain their memberships in the synagogue as a form of protection. The Jews had an agreement with the Romans that they could persist without problems as long as the Jews didn't create problems for Rome.

Christians were taking advantage of that almost masking the fact that they were Christians to some extent but it was something that was happening. Eventually Jewish leaders realized that Christians were enjoying protection due to their political arrangement so they closed the door as it were by kicking Christians out of their synagogues.

Something Jesus said to the disciples clearly would happen. Remember in John chapter 16 Jesus tells his disciples I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away.

He's warning them of what is to come. They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.

[12 : 59] And they will do these things because they have not known the Father nor me. But I have said these things to you that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you.

Now do you see the parallels between what Jesus was saying in John 16 and what he's now saying to the church in Philadelphia? There will be these Jews. They're going to kick you out of the synagogue. They're going to cut you off.

And then they're going to try to kill you. They're going to become informants as we find out historically they become. They're going to become informants to the Roman authorities in Philadelphia that are going to try to kill you.

And they're going to think they're doing that in the name of God. But they don't know me, Jesus says. They don't know the Father. And when their hour comes you'll remember what I'm telling you.

Stay faithful. And now he says it to the Philadelphians who are experiencing that very thing. They've been cut off by the Jews. They're exposed. They have no protection. The Jews are actively trying to have them killed by turning them into Roman authorities.

[14 : 00] And now they must be reminded of Jesus's words. This is what Jesus said would happen. Our responsibility now is to be faithful. And that's exactly what this church was.

Now let's think about these Christ titles for just a minute. It's against this backdrop that we are to understand Jesus's self-revelation here. He uses three titles. All that have significant Old Testament parallels.

And we'll try to spell that out. That he is the Holy One. A term that's used dozens of times in the Old Testament to refer to God. Is a not so subtle way of Jesus declaring his own deity.

Jesus is God. He is the Holy One. One of the Jews' most significant issues with Christianity still today has always been Jesus's claims of divinity.

His claims of divinity. That he claimed to be one with God was unthinkable to them. And it's a critical element in their vehemence against Jesus. Not only in ancient history but also in modern history.

[15 : 09] So this title would have come as uniquely reassuring to this church. Here's the Jews who have had the scriptures who have been the privileged people as far as the scriptures are concerned.

And they're coming and they're working against Christ and against these Christians saying that Jesus is an imposter. Well now Jesus comes and he reassures them. It doesn't matter what the Jews are saying.

They belong to the synagogue of Satan. They're liars. I am the Holy One. I am God. He's the Holy One. That's a reassuring statement for this church. That he declares himself to be the true one is a polemic against these Jews who he calls liars in verse 9.

It speaks to his utter reliability. He can be trusted. But notice again the declaration of deity here.

Jesus is the true one. Meaning his trustworthiness is perfect and it's exclusive in a way that can only belong to God.

[16 : 18] It can only belong to God. They are liars, Jesus says. I'll never lie to you. They're deceivers. But I am the true one.

And someone might argue they may push back against it and they say well don't all cult leaders make similar statements? Don't they all say that they're the Holy One?

That they're the true one? That they're the ones that will not lie? That everyone else is deceiving? What's the difference between them and Jesus? Why would we listen to Jesus?

Do you know the answer? Resurrection. Resurrection. Resurrection changes everything. One other cult leader has died and come back to life.

Sure there may have been signs of power and other things that probably are initiated from the evil one. Jesus comes with divine power. Ultimate power that's proven finally in his resurrection.

[17 : 21] He is the true one. He is the Holy One. The third title. He is the one who has the key of David. The key of David. Now this is an interesting title.

To fully appreciate it we need to go back to its Old Testament counterpart. In fact if you can get there quickly turn to Isaiah 22. Isaiah chapter 22. You can read the whole passage later if you'd like.

I want to point out one verse especially to you. Isaiah chapter 22. Let me give you the background of what's happening before we read the verse.

Shebna was the palace steward in Jerusalem which was a very powerful position akin to the president's chief of staff we would say.

If anyone wanted access to the palace or access to the king they had to go through his chief executive which was the palace steward.

[18 : 23] And at this point in Isaiah's writing it's King Hezekiah and King Hezekiah's palace steward is a man named Shebna but because of his arrogance you can read in the chapter because of his arrogance God removes Shebna from power and he replaces him with a man named Eliakim.

And here's what God says through Isaiah would be true of Eliakim. Look at verse 22. And I will place on his shoulder recognize the parallel the key of the house of David he shall open and none shall shut he shall shut and none shall open.

Okay. Almost certainly Jesus is using this Old Testament allusion as he speaks of himself to the Philadelphian church in Revelation chapter 3.

And when he says that he is the one with the key of David who opens and no one shuts who shuts and no one opens what he means is that he is the only one with absolute authority over who can enter the kingdom of God.

That's his point. The Jews may have had authority over their synagogue over who could belong there and who couldn't belong there but Jesus is the one who grants entrance to the eternal kingdom.

[19 : 47] Only Jesus. Not your parents not your church not anyone else Jesus only.

And their Jewish and Roman oppressors had no power over their heavenly citizenship. That authority belongs to Jesus and he reminds this church right off the bat just with the self-revelation of who he is that no one can shut a door that he opens.

He is the one with the key. And though this world with devil's field we'll sing later should threaten to undo us we will not fear for God has willed his truth to triumph through us.

So let goods and kindred go this mortal life also the body they may kill God's truth abideth still his kingdom is forever.

Now what comfort would this have come to the church in Philadelphia? What comfort it should bring to you? Our world is just as broken as theirs.

[21 : 06] The severity of our opposition may not be to the same level not yet but our world is just as broken. The threats against us will grow more and more severe.

What is it that will give us comfort and hope but to acknowledge that our Savior our Lord is the one with the key of David? He's the one with authority over the kingdom.

They may have authority in this life only he has authority in the next one and those who are faithful to him will have an open door that no one can shut. Let's look at the commendation.

The churches in Smyrna and Philadelphia as you probably have already noticed are the only ones that are not confronted by Jesus. There's no correction there's no threat or call to repentance.

It's all commendation and exhortation for them and the commendation for Philadelphia extends from verses 8 to 10 but its structure is unique which is why I'm pointing it out.

[22 : 09] Jesus commends them three different times and each time he has a promise that he immediately attaches to the commendation. So I want to break it up into those three sections.

The first one is in the first part of verse 8. Look at verse 8. I know your works that's the commendation. Here's the immediate promise that follows. It's almost a parenthetical statement.

Behold I have set before you an open door which no one is able to shut. Now to every single one of these churches Jesus says I know.

Remember in chapter 1 he walks among the golden lampstands those are the churches he holds the seven stars in his right hand those are the pastors. In other words Jesus knows everything about the churches and he has sovereignty and authority over them.

And for many churches if they are to hear Jesus say I know your works it would induce a measure of anxiety to be reminded of the fact that God sees all and he knows the reality of my heart and the reality of what no one else may know is terrifying.

[23 : 22] dying. But for the church in Philadelphia this brought great comfort. Why? Not because they were perfect but because they were neither complacent nor were they entertaining compromise and to be reminded that Jesus is fully aware of their perseverance had to have brought amazing joy.

I know your works. When Jesus says that to Sardis it's a problem. When he says it to Philadelphia it's a relief. Relief.

He knows. He sees our faithfulness. He knows we're struggling and toiling for him and for his name. He knows. And what is the promise?

The one with the key of David opened for them a door of heaven that no one would be able to shut. I know your works. I have the key. I've opened the door.

Walk through. No one can shut it. It's yours. Right? Second one. Second part of verse eight. Here's the commendation. I know that you have but little power and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

[24 : 42] Here's the promise. Behold I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not but lie. He doesn't mean that they're faking their nationality.

That's not what he means. When he's using Jew here he means he's referring to the true people of God. They say that they are the true people of God but they're not. They're liars.

Behold I will make them come and bow down before your feet and they will learn that I have loved you. So both the commendation and the promise gets more specific.

Despite having little power the Philadelphian Christians obeyed Christ's words and refused to deny his name. Now think about their context.

As much as they would have wanted the sense of security that came with being linked to the synagogue they would not compromise their faith in and obedience to Christ for comfort in this world.

[25 : 45] For a season there was a loophole. They could kind of sneak along. They had this kind of link to Judaism until the Jews made sure that link no longer existed.

Now they had a choice at that moment. We could either just kind of diminish all of this Christian stuff, this Christ stuff, and just seek comfort and security or we can embrace Christ knowing that it will cost us everything.

And what did the Philadelphian church do? They embraced Christ. They did not deny his words. They did not deny his name. They remained faithful, uncompromisingly persevering.

And they have little power. There's no political or cultural power for this little church to lean on, yet they publicly remain faithful.

Now is that not a word for us? We have no power. Nobody cares about us.

[26 : 52] We may think of Christianity like that in general. Let's just think about it in terms of Lakeside Bible Church for a moment. There's what, 30 of us here this morning? I know there's more that belongs to our church, but this morning there's about 30 of us here.

We have no power. We have no influence in this community. If they all turned on us right now, we'd have nothing to lean on. We would have to face this same dilemma.

Do we diminish our stand, our gospel convictions, in order to maintain some type of comfort and peace with the people around us? Or do we embrace Christ and proclaim Christ, knowing it's going to cost us everything?

Christians in Philadelphia said Christ is worth it. And what's the promise that they received? The promise is not, I'm going to make things better for you right now.

And I think it's important that we recognize that. Because there are some people out there that will try to tell you that if you just come to Christ and you just join our church, and if you do the things and you do your best and you try your hardest, what God's going to do for you is going to make you happy, and he's going to make things easy, and if your life isn't easy, it's because you're not believing hard enough.

[28 : 11] It's a problem with your faith. But Jesus comes to this church that he commends more than any other church with the exception of Smyrna. And he says, I realize your faithfulness, I know you're faithful, I know you're more faithful than these other churches are.

But the promise that he gives them is not, I'm going to take care of the Jews real quick here for you so that you can be more comfortable. He doesn't do that. What's the promise? The promise that they received is that they would ultimately be vindicated, not now, but at the judgment.

You see, that's the point here. It's not about the Jews bowing down before Christians. That's not the emphasis here. That's metaphorical language that Jesus is using to say, in the end, in the judgment, Christians will be vindicated.

The ones who deny Christ and his followers will, in the end, know that they are wrong. The Jews who wrongly believe themselves to be the true people of God will learn that God's love is set on those who believe and follow Christ.

They will know, Jesus says, that I have loved you, that you were mine, that you were the real, true people of God.

[29 : 31] The vindication comes in the end. Can I ask you, is that enough for you? Are you good with Jesus so long as he brings you some kind of vindication now? Or is it enough for you that he promises to vindicate you then in the judgment?

The third set comes in verse 10. Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, that's the commendation, here's the promise, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth.

So here in the final commendation, Jesus restates that these Christians have kept his word regarding patient endurance. Now, let's talk about the word of patient endurance.

Jesus specifically and explicitly taught this. Several places, I'll read it to you from Matthew 10. brother will deliver brother over to death, Jesus says.

The father his child. Children will rise against parents and have them put to death. All of this is in the context of the gospel. That all of this will be happening.

[30 : 40] Our own families will be turning against us because of our commitment to Christ. And then Jesus says, you will be hated by all for my name's sake.

But the one who endures to the end will be saved. The one who endures to the end will be saved. That's the word about patient endurance that Jesus preached.

And it would have been taught to these Philadelphian Christians through the apostolic teaching. And Jesus promises the Philadelphian church that their faithful endurance will be met with his divine protection when he returns to judge the earth.

Notice the language. There is this hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth.

What is this all about? The hour of trial, I believe, to be this period of tribulation leading to Christ's second coming. That's going to be described in the subsequent chapters of Revelation beyond this chapter.

[31 : 44] And there are all kinds of suggestions about what it means to be kept from that hour of trial. Some, and maybe some of you even would believe this to be a kind of a secret rapture that Jesus will remove his people, literally physically remove them from the earth.

Others believe that they will be protected, untouched by the judgment though they remain on the earth. It's not my intention to get into those debates, at least in the sermon.

We can talk about it after the service perhaps. The bottom line is this. Those who persevere in the gospel will not be in danger of Christ's judgment on the earth.

That's the bottom line. Because of their patient endurance, because they endure in the faith all the way to the end, they will be kept from the hour of trial.

Meaning, you will not have to stand before Christ and give account for your sin, because you belong to him, and you have stayed the course. The holy, true one will keep his people safe and secure as he ushers them into eternity.

[33 : 01] Isn't that a wonderful promise? It's amazing. Remember, growing up, people would talk about the book of Revelation and all this imagery, and to be quite honest with you, especially as a kid, even as an adult, it is absolutely terrifying.

I mean, you got creatures coming out of the earth that look like scorpions and they have stingers and they're going to sting people. That's weird. Let's be honest, that's weird.

That's terrifying. And I remember even as a Christian young person, I would read about those things, or I would think about those things, or people would teach them, and I would just be filled with fear. I don't want to have to endure that.

And then Jesus comes and he says, you won't have to endure that. If you're mine, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is to come on the whole.

Now, considering this commendation, now we're considering all three parts of it, what is it that we can discern that Jesus desires from his people?

[34 : 03] What does he desire from us? Clearly, Jesus is not concerned with or impressed by elaborate ministries with political influence, dynamic metrics, and buildings, and staff, and money, and all the things that come along with it.

Now, I'm not disparaging those things. It is sometimes, out of the faithful blessing of Jesus, that some churches and some Christian groups enjoy that for a season. I'm not taking away from that.

What I'm saying is that those are not the things that Jesus intends for us to pursue as our focus. What is it that Jesus desires from his churches?

Not that they try to get as big as they can get and have all the influence that they can possibly have in all those things. That can't be our focus. In fact, Jesus doesn't commend in these sermons any of the things that we tend to value in contemporary Christianity.

Jesus values faithfulness. He desires that we keep his word and glorify his name. He commends uncompromising perseverance.

[35 : 17] And if we're going to be a Philadelphian church, we must focus on what Jesus commends. Unwavering faithfulness to him. That's what he desires from us.

That's what we need to focus on giving. To him. Let's consider the charge now in verse 11. Jesus says, I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have so that no one may seize your crown.

There's no correction or call to repentance here, but there is this urgent exhortation. immediately following immediately following Jesus' reference to his return to judge the earth.

He affirms that he is coming soon, bringing urgency to the charge that he's about to deliver. And what is this charge? Though the church was not guilty of the complacency and compromise of others, Jesus understands that as they await his return, both sins will only grow in temptation.

That the longer Jesus tarries his return, the more tempting it will be for us to grow spiritually cold and to spiritually compromise. Think about Charles Simeon for a moment.

[36 : 35] How many of us would have made it six months, much less 54 years? Over time, you weary. the persecution, the opposition, the problems, and finally you just are tempted to concede.

And the longer you have to endure, the more the temptation grows for you to concede and to compromise and to grow cold. The same is true for churches. The longer Jesus tarries his return, the larger the temptation grows for us to be complacent, to stop being persistent in the things Jesus has called us to be, and it tempts us more and more to compromise.

Out of the opposition that we face, we just grow weary. Jesus understands that. So he brings urgency to this exhortation. He says, I'm coming soon.

And here's what he tells them to do. Hold fast. Hold fast what you have. And what is it that they have?

The gospel. That's what they have. Jesus simplifies what it means to prepare for his return. By urging us to hold fast to the gospel, to keep his word, to glorify his name.

[37 : 51] You say, how are we supposed to wait? How are we supposed to wait with expectancy? How are we supposed to look for the return of Jesus? He tells us plainly, hold fast to the gospel.

Stay committed to the gospel of Jesus. Don't waver on it. Don't waver from the word. Don't grow cold in your devotion to the truth of God. Glorify his name even when it comes at great cost.

Proclaim his name. Declare his name. Glorify his name. Not only in the things that you say, but in the life that you live. In other words, persevere without compromise. That's how we wait for the return of Christ.

That's how we acknowledge he's coming soon and I want to be ready. And for those tempted to give in and give up, Jesus reminds them of the consequence here in verse 11.

That no one may seize your crown. This crown is not the royal diadem. It's the victory wreath awarded to winners of athletic events.

[38 : 54] In other words, to turn away from Jesus as a result of false teaching or fear of persecution. is the equivalent of losing the victory. Of allowing someone to take your crown.

Remember Jesus' word. The one who endures to the end will be saved. That's not a threat for Jesus to take away salvation from someone to whom it truly belongs.

That's not what he means. But we do know in the scripture that those who persevere are the true people of God. Those who fall away never were. And yet Jesus gives us these warnings over and over in the New Testament as a means of causing us to persevere.

Don't give up. Don't turn back. The one who endures will be saved. The next time Jesus comes, it will be for judgment. And his coming is nearer than it's ever been.

So hold fast, church. Hold fast. Don't give up. Don't give in. Don't lose your crown. Let's consider the final call and conquer formula here.

[40 : 09] Verses 12 and 13. Just mention it briefly. The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it. I will write on him the name of my God, the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven.

And my own new name. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. So in contrast to what will happen to those who do not hold fast to the gospel, the call and conquer formulas of this message reiterate what will be true for those who do persevere.

And wasn't it that Jesus says, this is amazing. I wish that I would have taken more time to develop this more for this morning. Jesus, the one with the key of David, will give all who conquer an honored and permanent place in his kingdom, like a pillar in the temple.

The one who has authority over who is shut in and who is shut out will never kick us out of our heavenly home. He will put the mark of God, the new Jerusalem, and of himself on us.

A public display that we belong to him. Now think about that for a moment. He says, I'm going to write the name of my God on you.

[41 : 41] I'm going to write the name of his city on you. And I'm going to write my name on you. God says, you're mine and I want everybody to know it.

For those who continue, that's what I'm going to do. You're mine. In other words, everything that the world denies us in this life will be ours beyond measure in eternity.

He who calls you is faithful, Paul said. He will surely do it. Take heart, church. The promise is good. It's true. There is a lesson of perseverance in this message.

There's no doubt about that. But there's also a necessary encouragement from Jesus that we need to take heart. Like the Philadelphian congregation, Lakeside Bible Church is of little power.

To most people, we are weak and insignificant. And this will inevitably lead to discouragement. It will lead to temptations to quit or compromise when facing opposition for our gospel convictions.

[43 : 01] Let's just be honest. That's a reality. That's coming. Better not to deny that that will be the case in our future, but to acknowledge it and be prepared when it does. This will be a temptation we face as a church.

It won't be easy. But we need to remember that Jesus knows our works. He has set before us a door that no one can shut.

And we must hold fast to the gospel. And with Simeon and the Philadelphian Christians, follow Christ patiently, for we will soon be partakers in His victory.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Let us. Let us.