

Philadelphia: The Revival Church

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Preacher: Wayne Thiessen

[0 : 0 0] Good morning. I do welcome you to the service this morning in the name of our Lord and Savior.

Again, it's a blessing to be able to worship together. Thank you for reading the Advent. We've had the themes of hope, peace, and joy so far, and Lord willing, next Sunday is that of love.

But as we just get a glimpse in those readings of the hope, the peace, joy, and love that Christ brings to our lives, do we take that to heart?

Is that something we take for granted? You know, as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, and he overlooked the city, and he wept, and he said, if you only had known for the things which make for your peace.

That's our paraphrase. But, you know, if you only could grasp what would bring inner peace. And it made Jesus sad that they were missing it.

[1 : 3 7] And so we are privileged people to experience all of these attributes, hope, peace, joy, and love.

And all of them are rooted in our Lord and Savior. So, just give that thought. And even examine your life throughout the week.

Do those principles rule in your heart? Are they a part of who we are? Very, very valuable. Thank you, Igor, for reading the scriptures this morning.

As we continue in Revelations, we're going to do one more church, number six, this morning, before the Christmas season upon us.

And it's the church, the letter to the Church of Philadelphia, as we had read to us. And it's a different letter in that this is a church that receives no condemnation.

[2 : 5 7] Receives no condemnation. Jesus does not have anything bad to say about this church. But rather, words of encouragement.

So, it's a very important letter in that way. As we look at that, one of the promises that Christ gives in this letter is that I will make those of the synagogue of Satan come and bow before you.

And you know, sometimes we may wish that those who do evil to us, that God would show them. Or sometimes we even feel like, I want to show them.

But here God promises there will come a time they will bow. They will bow. They will bow before our feet. They will bow before the name of our Lord.

And so as we go through this letter, let's keep those thoughts in mind. So Mark, do you want to bring up our map again?

[4 : 1 5] Okay. Okay. So we're finishing the circle here. So we started in Ephesus, and then Smyrna, Pergamos, Tyra, and then Sardis, and now we're at Philadelphia.

And as we have the map up here, Philadelphia was known as an inland city, but as the gateway to the east.

And so the highway from the coast would go through Philadelphia and continue. This map doesn't show the other cities that Paul visited in his first and second missionary journeys, Lydia and so on, but they're right in there.

And so the road was through Philadelphia, and it was considered the gateway to the east and to Israel and beyond to Iran, Saudi Arabia, and so on.

So they were a traffic route, so to speak. So just keeping that in mind as we look at the church in Philadelphia.

[5 : 28] Philadelphia. It's a city that still exists today with a different name. And it's called Alasihir.

I'm not sure if I'm saying that quite right, but it's in modern-day Turkey today, and it's still there. This, you can put the map away again.

This city had a very heavy Jewish population. And so the church that is addressed here had many Jews as well and surrounding them.

And the name Philadelphia means brotherly love. Brotherly love.

And so the title of given this, and what this church is known for, is the revival church. So we look at Philadelphia, the revival church.

[6 : 34] And so a church that was on fire or had life in them. So let's again break down our scriptures as we go through this. Verse 7, And to the angel 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.

So of the seven letters, it's the longest introduction by the author of himself, the description of Jesus. And he says, he who is holy, he who is true, speaking of himself.

For Christ is true holiness and he is truth. And his truth is considered, contained in the word of God.

So that is truth that we have before us. And just like in 1 Peter 1, I think it's verse 15, we are commanded to be holy for he is holy.

And so, our Lord, as he writes this, has a right to say this as he is a reflection of total holiness.

[8 : 03] And so this is the way he introduces himself. And even your word is truth. Jesus is the truth.

Today, more than ever, our world struggles with what is truth. Would we agree?

And so many are putting out there the concept that truth is relative. And what that means is, truth is, well, it depends on your viewpoint.

Or it depends from where you come from. And so truth being relative can mean something to you and to me it means something different.

And we're both right. Wrong. We're not right. Their truth is truth. even if they don't believe it.

[9 : 12] God exists whether you choose to believe it or not. The truth is still there. Jesus will return whether you choose to believe that or not.

It's still the truth. Pilate asked, what is truth? truth. And he was staring truth in the face and didn't recognize the truth.

He was looking at Jesus and he asked, what is truth? So we have we have Jesus as truth and we have the word of God as truth.

He goes on. He says, he describing Christ, he who has the key of David, he who opens and no one shuts and shuts and no one opens.

The reference to the key of David is very likely taken out of Isaiah 22 and it's a reference to the priest or maybe we could say even prime minister that had the key to the treasury.

[10 : 34] And in Isaiah 22 it's Elikim that God has chosen to be the one that has the key to the king's treasurer and under king Hezekiah and this person alone was able to open the vault to the king's treasury.

That's a physical reference to the key of David. Jesus introduces himself here as symbolically as he who has the key of David to open the treasure house and the treasure house is help me out the word of God to be effective for us for salvation as we accept it by faith.

God so this is Jesus introducing himself in that way. And by the way that treasure house that Jesus opens for us is much greater than the treasures in Hezekiah's vault.

And in the evangelism course we have these million dollar bills that we maybe use as an icebreaker to introduce the gospel to someone.

The introduction is to a treasure that is life saving. Eternal life. The word of God. The word of God.

[12 : 44] Okay, and then we go on to the words of commendation where Jesus praises the church.

He says, I know your works, in verse 8. 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.

a fairly simple verse, and yet very profound in that Jesus says, I know your works.

This he has said to all the churches. I know your works, but then what follows is different. I have set before you an open door.

What does that mean? I have set before you an open door. We have to take that in the context of what follows, is that 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.

[14 : 07] Based on, this church has refused to let go of the truth. They have clung to it. They have bore a name that they are alive in the city of Philadelphia.

And God says, because you have a little strength, not that they have strength on their own, I have opened a door for you with the gospel and an opportunity.

And so just like the city of Philadelphia was the gateway to the east, physically speaking, now he says, spiritually, I have opened a door for you to spread the word of God.

Because you've kept my name, you've kept the faith, and you have a little strength.

So that's the main praise that they are given here. So when we look at you've kept my word and have not denied my name, those two cannot be separated.

[15 : 32] If we keep the Lord's word, we will be faithful to his name, we will not be ashamed, and we will keep and declare his name unto others.

You have not denied my name, but rather put it forth. Now it speaks of you have a little strength. How many of us here this morning are strong?

Is that a trick question? You know, we don't have any strength, do we? This is a reference that in the Lord they have shown their trust, and God has revealed strength and power through them.

We do well to recognize we have no strength in us, in me, but in the Lord we have strength.

the church here was holding on to Christ and they had a living testimony in this city.

[16 : 52] When we think of open doors, Paul, he prayed often for open doors and he asked the church to pray for him that God would open the path and doors that he could spread the gospel and evangelize.

That was one of Paul's prayers and I thought we should maybe focus on that a little bit as we maybe bring this closer to home.

But let's look at Acts 16 and the life of Paul. Acts 16. He's on his second missionary journey and Paul and Silas and along the way they pick up Timothy a young man and the three of them are continuing to strengthen the churches in east of our seven churches in Asia Minor and as they're working their way they try to keep going and the Lord directs their lives.

So let's read Acts 16 starting in verse 6. So it's Paul and Silas and Timothy. Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia that would be Asia Minor and they had come to Mysia and they tried to go into Bithynia but the Spirit did not permit them and so passing by Mysia they came down to Troas and a vision appeared to Paul in the night a man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him saying come over to Macedonia and help us and after he had seen the vision immediately we sought to go to Macedonia concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them and so as Paul and

Silas made plans to keep going in what's today Turkey the Spirit of God did not permit them now how exactly the Spirit did that we're not told but they knew inwardly they did not have permission to continue and as they look for direction the God in a dream reveals that they are to go to Macedonia and because Paul sees that as an open door his heart is to preach the gospel because of the result of this we have a church planted in Philippi in Thessalonica in Corinth and in Athens as Paul continues on a second missionary journey obedient to the direction of the

[20 : 14] Spirit God provided an open door for him why did God do this because Paul had set his heart out to preach the gospel to go on the second missionary journey and then in 1st Corinthians 16 I'll read two verses there 1st Corinthians 16 verse 9 and 10 1st Corinthians 16 9 for a great and effective door has opened to me and there are many adversaries and if Timothy comes see that he may be with you without fear for he does the work of the

Lord as I also do and so Paul is spending he has just spent two years at Ephesus and he says God has opened a great and effective door for me to spread the gospel and to teach them there so we have we have that in scripture in more places that God opens doors and in Philadelphia he told the church see I have opened a door for you walk through it follow the calling of God now as we as we look at this for Mount View do we have a little strength have we kept his word God are we confessing his name these these are questions that apply to us in our community do we have a reputation of having the strength of God here and that we are alive is there a door open for us is there a door that God wants us to go through and this door includes the word of God and bringing it to others this letter to the church in Philadelphia is all about evangelism being a light and testimony for our God yesterday yesterday at at our brotherhood we discussed and announced that that we are pursuing adding more deacons to our church leadership team there are needs that need to be met especially in the area of visitations that we have identified and so we are embarking on a journey to seek godly men along with their wives to serve as deacon couples and according to the qualifications given in 1st

Timothy 3 and so starting in February we are going to be selecting a nominating committee and we will be looking at the men in our church and their wives and engaging them against scripture who has god prepared to serve this is this is one way that we are walking and embracing an open door to serve our community it's not a gifting that all of us have but there are some here whom god has gifted and is preparing for that kind of work and ministry and but for others a direct evangelism gift is at the forefront and they're walking through this door with that aspect and have a zeal to directly go and share the gospel this too is a gifting from the lord that we need to support embrace and encourage as we work together in this i believe that god calls us to these kinds of works and that we should always be looking for an opportunity to plant more churches and more communities and in order to plant churches it means that god is preparing men and women to go the open door the open door door does this make us excited or a bit uncomfortable or maybe a bit of both the word of god is powerful and effective and his call upon us is powerful as we seek to serve him in whatever way he has gifted you and so i take courage from this letter to philadelphia for it's it's a beautiful letter in this way as god has placed before them an open door i i challenge all of us to give this thought where where do i fit in where do i fit in what's the zeal god has put on my heart am i obedient to that as paul and silas were we sometimes struggle with fear the fear of the unknown but can i trust the lord to step out but i

have to provide for my family the lord knows that and he wants you to but if the lord calls you to a work he will also provide that aspect of it i can remember the first time a brother in the church came up to me and he tapped me on the shoulder and he said have you ever considered selling your farm and i said no i haven't it was interesting because i had literally prayed in the years prior lord i want to serve you but don't make me give up the farm and here's a brother in church he has the courage to come and say those words you know what i didn't want to give up but the lord did a work two years later we sold the farm and we did it with joy as the lord showed himself and revealed his will to us and we learned to surrender god is powerful and when we fear remember he is strong i am weak you know i'm reminded of elisha and his servant and the syrians are battling against israel and elisha the prophet he keeps telling the king israel where the syrians are at and how they're going to come and attack and and israel can always defend itself and and the syrian king is getting very frustrated and and then one of his men tells us i know how this works there's a prophet in israel elisha he's guilty he tells the king what you whisper among your troops and and so and so the king of syria is determined we're going to kill elisha and so one night they surround the town or city that that elisha is in i think it's dothan and and so in the morning elisha wakes up and his servant and lo and behold the syrian army has surrounded them and elisha's servant is afraid what now we're done and elisha says lord open this man's eyes that he can see your power and what did he see chariots of fire outnumbering the army of the syrians the power of god you know spiritually speaking those forces of god are out there in fact they're in our midst here this morning they're here protecting us being with us but we tend to lose sight when you share the gospel with someone god is there his

power is there with you and we need to recognize that take courage go through that open door let's go back to our passage verse nine indeed i will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not but lie indeed i'll make them come and worship before your feet and to know that i have loved you there are Jews in this city that have rejected the gospel and they're very likely clinging to Judaism their sacrificial system keeping the Sabbath and they're rejecting the Christ that has replaced that that has fulfilled that and by rejecting they are persecuting those who've embraced

[33 : 54] Jesus Christ and here John is given the words by Jesus he says these people are a synagogue of Satan they're a synagogue of Satan recognize that and he says i will make them come and worship before your feet what a promise there is a day coming when our enemies will bow they will bow before Jesus Christ and you know we will be with him as the saints we will see that day where our enemies or the enemies of the Lord ultimately will bow before him that is very very encouraging this past week in

Israel the same terrorists who kidnapped and murdered were surrendering by multitudes and I thought to myself what goes around comes around and we almost see a piece of fulfillment of what we just read as the very people that caused so much affliction on Israel are now so to say bowing and surrendering at the mercy of the Jews and by the hundreds and so for the Jews that must be very encouraging as they have had a very dark dark time dealing with all of this and so the

Lord is faithful even giving them a glimpse of hope here the second promise or encouragement that Jesus gives is that in verse 10 because you've kept my commandment to persevere I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole earth to test those who dwell on the earth so not only will your enemies bow but I will protect you out of the tribulation period and I will save you spare you from the wrath to come it's a promise to the church as they cling to their Lord and Savior and during that very dark tribulation period that is coming upon the earth to test earth dwellers God will punish and reveal his wrath upon the world and yet the church will be saved out of it so he's promising that to them as they cling to their

Lord and refuse to let go of him so because you've kept my command to persevere I also will keep you from the hour of trial which will come upon the whole earth and so brothers and sisters take courage in that that that as we're faithful here to our Lord and as there is persecution God will have his way and the enemies will have their day when they will face God when you read the last half of the tribulation period as we will in the months in January February as we keep going through the book we will see that the ungodly will see a God they have never seen before and they will tremble and fear and hide and curse as

God reveals himself behold I am coming quickly hold fast what you have that no one may take your crown again a promise persevere I am coming quickly whether that's a reference to the rapture it may very well be for us today but regardless the Lord's return will be speedy and he is coming 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 and the new Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven from my God and I will write on him my new name again as we close the letter here the

[39 : 55] Jesus words of prophecy here are that he who overcomes who endures to the end I will make him a pillar in the temple and the temple of my God now we know what a physical pillar does and it's very obviously not a reference to a physical pillar but spiritually we will be in in glory in the heavenly city new Jerusalem and and the whole city will be a temple of God and we will be pillars in that temple it's a promise that we will be with him even in the new testament there was men that were considered pillars of the faith but here it's a reference to eternity as we will be in

God's temple forever and ever and then the promise the triune promise of the name of God the name of the city of God and a new name written on us and so the very promise or allusion to we will be in his presence forever and ever more we will belong to him and that's the significance of that to to be have those personal names from the Lord we belong to him for all eternity he who has an ear let him hear what the spirit says to the churches so again for us as we hear these messages if you have an ear for it follow through follow through and as we recap here this morning

I want to reemphasize that open door take that open door that God is providing in your life pursue it for the Lord your God will be with you let's pray father we thank you for this letter of encouragement to the church in Philadelphia thank you for the example of that church that that they have their strength in you and that you provided an open door for them but father as we as we bring this home and as we look at our church the one that you planted here and and lord as we examine the opportunities that you've given us our father give us courage give us zeal excitement to open or to walk through and to take advantage of it may your word go forth richly and in abundance to your glory amen