

The Faithful Church – Revelation 3 v 7-13 – Philadelphia

CHARACTER OF THE CITY

Rev 3 v 7: “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write,

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: in modern day Turkey

- Furthest Greek colony into Asia. On the edge/frontier of Greek civilisation and culture
- Located on the highway leading from Europe to the East. Connected the continents.
- Called: The Gateway to the East

PURPOSE: Missions

- Founded as missionary outpost for Hellenism (the culture of ancient Greece)
- Planted to – spread Greek – Culture, Language, way of life, civilization - into Asia & the East

NAME: Meaning - Brotherly love

- Named after its founder – King Attalus – nicknamed Philadelphos, because of his love for his brother
- City constantly changed its name.
- changed to Neocaesarea, later to Flavia. Today: Alasehir

ENVIRONMENT: Dangerous

- Volcanic region, with many earthquakes
- People were used to running out of the city to escape the falling buildings

ARCHITECTURE AND BUILDINGS:

- As result of the earthquakes, they had to rebuild many times
- Fortunately, they were good at building
- Beautiful buildings, it was often name “little Athens”
- Pillars - In Philadelphia - honour people by putting their names on the pillars in the temple
- Also put the names of their gods on the pillars.

GODS THEY SERVED

- Greek and Olympian gods (as in Athens)

THE CHRISTIAN CURCH IN PHILADELPHIA:

- Was small, little group of people, not growing fast. But Faithful

- Sardis was just up the road, which was a big church
- People chose rather to go to Sardis

JESUS DESCRIBES HIMSELF WITH 3 THINGS

Rev 3 v 8: ‘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**”

1) HOLY

- title for God. God alone is Holy. Jesus says “I am God”

2) TRUE

- Two meanings for the word true: Not False OR **not Fake (REAL, GENUINE)**
- I am the REAL God

John 14 v 6: “I am the way, the truth (REAL), and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 6 v 32: My Father gives you the true bread (REAL) from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

John 15 v 1: “I am the true vine (REAL), and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

3) KEY OF DAVID

Isaiah 22 v 15 -23: story of a servant of king David, **Shebna**, who had authority and held the key to David’s palace. He became prideful and arrogant, made images and a made a tomb for himself in the palace. God said to him, I will remove you.

Isaiah 22 v 20: ‘Then it shall be in that day, That I will call My servant **Eliakim** the son of Hilkiah; ²¹ I will clothe him with your robe. And strengthen him with your belt; I will commit your responsibility into his hand. He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, And to the house of Judah. ²² The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; So he shall open, and no one shall shut; And he shall shut, and no one shall open.

- Just as Eliakim, Jesus is the Faithful, Reliable, Trustworthy Servant of God
- Jesus has the keys to the Kingdom. He open and shut according to the will of God.

Examples:

- Paul & Silas in prison, doors is closed, God open it
- Peter in prison, doors is closed, God opens it
- Acts 8 - Saul of Tarsus closes the door for the Gospel in Jerusalem- persecution, God spreads the Gospel everywhere.

- Jonah closes the door – God opens it with a storm, a fish

JESUS KNOWS THE CHURCH – AND PLACES AN OPEN DOOR IN FRONT OF THEM

Rev 3 v 8: “I know your works. See, I have set before you **an open door**, and no one can shut it; for you have a **little strength**

JESUS KNOWS THEM

- He knows everything about us. Thoughts, intentions, hearts desires. Nothing is hidden
- He also knows our weaknesses, faults, shortcomings, fears, little strength.

LITTLE, STRENGTH

- Small church in numbers
- Relying on the strength and power of God
- How the world sees us vs How God sees us.

1 Cor 1 v 26: For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*.²⁷ But God has chosen the **foolish things** of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the **weak things** of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;²⁸ and the **base things** of the world and the things which are **despised** God has chosen, and the **things which are not**, to bring to nothing the things that are,²⁹ **that no flesh should glory in His presence.**

- God reduced Gideon army from 32000 to 300. So that He would receive the Glory in victory.

2 Cor 12 v 9 – Paul:And He (God) said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for **My strength is made perfect in weakness.**” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, **that the power of Christ may rest upon me.**¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. **For when I am weak, then I am strong.**

Zechariah 4 v 6 – Zerubbabel was ordered to build the temple:

“This *is* the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: **‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’** Says the Lord of hosts.

- God uses our weakness, for His Glory
- Reliance on Holy Spirit

JESUS COMMENDS THE CHURCH FOR 3 THINGS

Rev 3 v 8: have (1) **kept My word**, and have (2) **not denied My name.**

Rev 3 v 10: Because you have (3) **kept My command to persevere**

1) KEPT MY WORD – obedience

- Faithful & Obedient

Mat 7 v 24 – after the sermon on the mount - Jesus: “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

John 14 v 15: “If you love Me, **keep My commandments**.

John 15 v 14: You are My friends if you **do whatever I command you**.

2) NOT DENIED MY NAME – courage

Mat 10 v 33: “Therefore whoever **confesses Me before men**, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. ³³ But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

Rom 1 v 16: For I am **not ashamed of the gospel of Christ**, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

3) ENDURED PATIENTLY (KEPT MY COMMAND TO PRESERVE)

- Now we want everything now, consumerism. Have everything easy.
- We live for tomorrow, hope, when Jesus comes back
- It should shape how we live today.

Hebrews 10 v 36: For you have need of **endurance**, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

³⁷ “For yet a little while,
And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.

³⁸ **Now the just shall live by faith;**

But if *anyone* draws back,
My soul has no pleasure in him.”

³⁹ But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

James 5 v 7: be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer **waits** for the precious fruit of the earth, **waiting patiently** for it until it receives the early and latter rain. ⁸ You also **be patient**. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

How do we measure the church?

Jesus was **completely pleased** with this church. He had **no negative report** about them. Because they did these 3 things

- This is the **measuring tool** / yardstick for a successful church
-

OPEN DOOR - THAT NO ONE CAN SHUT

- Open door speaks of Evangelistic opportunity.
- God says to them: “Go through that door in faith”
- Because of their faithfulness, reliance on God, obedience, and courage – Jesus opens the door

1 Corinthians 16 v 9 – Paul: But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. ⁹For a **great and effective door** has opened to me,

2 Corinthians 2 v 12 – Paul: Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ’s gospel, **and a door was opened to me by the Lord,.....**

Colossians 4 v 3 - Paul: meanwhile praying also for us, **that God would open to us a door** for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, ⁴that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

- The City of Philadelphia was a mission station to spread the gospel of Greek culture
- Jesus says to the church – spread the Gospel of the Kingdom of God into the whole region.

NO ONE CAN SHUT THIS DOOR

- Kingdom of God will expand. Unstoppable. God opens the door.
 - Daniel – Kingdom is like a stone crushing all other kingdoms and growing until it fills the earth.
-

JESUS GAVE THEM 3 PROMISES – for the present

1) INCREASE - I set before you an open door

Rev 3 v 8, 9, 10: See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it.....

- In **numbers** as people come to salvation, and **territory** as the Kingdom of God expands.

2) INFLUENCE

Rev 3 v 9: Indeed I will make *those* of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.

- Even on their enemies. They will see that God is with Philadelphia, and loves them

- Persecutors will see God's favour on them. He will vindicate them and give them honour.

3) IMMUNITY

Rev 3 v 10:I also will **keep you** from the hour of **trial** which shall come upon the whole world, to **test those who dwell on the earth.**

- Wave of trouble coming, but He will keep Philadelphia from trial and testing.
- He will take special care of them, keep them.

I AM COMING SOON

Rev 3 v 11: **Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.**

HOLD ON TO WHAT YOU HAVE

- They must not depart from their foundation:
- Obedience, Faithfulness, perseverance, trust in Him, evangelistic opportunity

THAT NO ONE MAY TAKE YOUR CROWN

- See that no one robs you of the award to come –

Hebrews 12 v 1: Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and **let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,** ²**looking unto Jesus**, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Galatians 3 v 12: I press **on**, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and **reaching forward** to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴**I press toward the goal for the prize** of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

JESUS GAVE THEM 3 PROMISES – for the future

Rev 3 v 12: He who overcomes, I will make him a **pillar in the temple of My God**, and he **shall go out no more**. I will **write on him the name** of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And *I will write on him* My new name.

FOR THOSE WHO OVERCOME.....

1) PILLAR IN THE TEMPLE OF MY GOD

- Pillar holds up the building, standing on the foundation
- Picture of - strength, stability, beauty
- After earthquakes only the pillars would remain standing

Galatians 2 v 9: Peter, James, and John = pillars of the church in Jerusalem

- True pillars in the church support the church, and they look to Jesus as their support foundation.

Rev 21 v 22: God and the lamb will be the temple in the New Jerusalem – we will be a pillar in that temple – part of Him

2) GO OUT NO MORE

- No more fleeing (running away) for fear of life
- Come to a place of stability, certainty, peace

Romans 14 v 17: the kingdom of God is **righteousness** and peace and **joy** in the Holy Spirit.

3) NEW NAMES

The 3 new names:

- God
- City of God, the New Jerusalem
- The new Name of Jesus Marks of identification, show who we belong to.

Rev 22 v 4 – speak about the New Jerusalem: the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. ⁴They shall see His face, and **His name shall be on their foreheads.**

Philippians 2 v 6: Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the **name which is above every name**, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus **every knee should bow**, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹and *that every tongue should confess* that **Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.

RESPOND

Rev 3 v 13: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

- PRAY
-