

## The Church that Jesus Built

### Revelation 3:7-13 New King James Version (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup>“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”

<sup>8</sup>“I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

<sup>9</sup>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.

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

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

<sup>12</sup>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.*

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

**Intro:** Before the Lord Jesus went to Calvary, He made a statement concerning His church. The church Jesus described often has little resemblance to many of the churches found in the world today.

Look at **Matthew 16:18**. Jesus said, "***And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.***"

Jesus tells us a little about the character of the church He is building.

**First, He says that the church is to be built upon Himself.**

- Jesus Himself is the foundation of the church.

- His death, shed blood and resurrection form the foundation upon which the church stands.

**Second, Jesus says His church is to be a militant church.**

- He says that "*the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*"
- **Gates are not offensive weapons, but they are defensive in nature.**

*The church Jesus described was not a body of weak, oppressed people who were sitting around in fear waiting on the next attack of the devil.*

**That does describe a lot of churches and a lot of Christians.**

*Instead, the church Jesus pictures is one that is on the move. They are active in the Lord's work and they are charging the very strongholds of Hell itself.*

They do not operate on fear, but on faith. **Literally, the church Jesus came to found is a church that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!**

**In our text today we have read our Lord's letter to the church in Philadelphia.**

**This church has been described in various ways over the years. Many have called it a weak little church.**

I just want to call your attention to the fact that of all the seven letters to the seven churches, **this is the only church that did not receive a rebuke of any kind.** When Jesus wrote to this church, everything He has to say to them was positive.

**With that in mind, notice that in this letter, Jesus, not the church is the primary focus.**

This tells us what we already know in our hearts. If Jesus is kept at the center of who we are and what we do, He will be glorified and we will grow as a result. **If we make much of Him as a church, He will make much of us!**

**This morning, I would like for us to spend a little time with the Lord's letter to Philadelphia.**

In His words to this church, we see a clear picture of the kind of church **the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.** If we are going to pick any church as our pattern, let this be the one we choose!

I want to draw our attention to a word that is used three times in this passage. It is the word "*behold*" and it is used in verses **8, 9, and 11.**

By using this word, Jesus is calling this church to make some observations. He is telling them to **"LOOK!"** There are some observations that the Lord wants the church at Philadelphia to consider.

**These are observations that I would like for Crosswinds to make as well.** I think we all want to be a church that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against*. These verses tell us how to be that kind of church. Let's make these observations together this morning.

## I. V. 7-8 CONSIDER OUR OPPORTUNITIES

(III. **The first "behold"** is given to draw their attention to certain opportunities the Lord has made available to this church. By the way, these same opportunities are available to every church that will walk in His will.)

A. V. 7-8a **The Character Of Our Master** - Jesus comes to this church and He reveals Himself as One in control of everything. He reminds them that He is to be the focus of their faith and the hub around which the wheel of their service turns.

**1. His Personality - He is Holy and He is True!** There is no sin and there is no deception in our Lord. **He is all He claims to be and His motives are always pure.**

Jesus Christ is the dependable One!

**2. His Power - Jesus is described as holding the "key of David".**

- This is a reference to **Isa. 22:20-22** where a faithful man named **Eliakim** was named the steward of King Hezekiah. He was given the **"key of David."**
- This referred to the fact that **Eliakim** had access to all the riches that belonged to the king.

**This Old Testament passage is an illustration of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

- He is the faithful administrator of the riches of the Kingdom of His Father.
- This reminds us that He has the power to meet the needs of His church as He leads them through the ministry He has given them.
- He will be faithful to provide all they need to do the jobs He calls them to!

**Since He has the keys, He is has the power to open and close doors as He sees fit.**

**The bottom line of all this is that Jesus is in control of the church.**

- He is in charge of seeing that her needs are met and
- He is in charge of the direction her ministry takes.

**Jesus is to be enthroned as, and recognized as, the head of the church!**

(Ill. Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23)

**Colossians 1:18 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>18</sup> **And He is the head of the body, the church**, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, **that in all things He may have the preeminence**.

**Ephesians 5:23 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>23</sup> **For the husband is head of the wife**, as also **Christ is head of the church**; and He is **the Savior of the body**.

3. **His Perception** - He tells them in **verse 8** that *He "knows their works."*

That is, He knows everything that they are doing, how they are doing it and what their motives are for doing it.

- He knows when they use the open doors He has set before them
- And He knows when they keep pushing on the doors He has closed before them.
- He knows all there is to know about us.

B. V. 8b **The Call Of Our Mission** –

- **Jesus now moves to tell them that He has given them an open door of opportunity to minister in their world.**
- **The Lord called them to represent His name in that day and He went out before them and paved the way for their success.**

**Friend, He has done the same for us!**

**This church was not founded by the Lord without reason!** He allowed this church to be born for a purpose and that purpose has not changed nor has it been fully realized.

God has given Crosswinds an open door of opportunity in this world and our duty is to find out what it is and go through it by faith.

(Ill. The Lord Jesus is in control of all the doors of our life.

**Notice how He moved in the life of Paul - Acts 16:6-10.**

**Acts 16:6-10 New King James Version (NKJV)**

**The Macedonian Call** <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but **the Spirit did not permit them**. <sup>8</sup> So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. <sup>9</sup> 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.”

<sup>10</sup> Now 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.

## All the doors of God are a blessing!

- **There are times** when He opens wide the doors and there is no doubt about His will and leadership.
- **There are other times** when we see doors slammed shut before us. When that happens, we often become confused and try to push that door open ourselves.
- We need to understand the truth that when the Lord closes a door in our lives, He is actively involved in what we are doing and He is merely going to lead us in another direction where He has opened a door for us!
- It would do us well if we learned to praise God for both the open doors and the closed doors.)

C. V. 8c The Consistency of Our Ministry - Another opportunity these people possessed was the consistency with which they carried out their ministry. **Two thoughts are mentioned here:**

### 1. Our Weakness - these people are described as possessing a little strength.

- Remember what Jesus said to the church in Sardis? They had the reputation of being strong, but He said they were dead, **3:1**.
- The church in Laodicea thought they were powerful and needed nothing! Yet, Jesus told them that they made Him sick, **3:16**.
- **Yet, this church**, which was probably small in size and poor in the financial realm is described as having "*a little strength*."

**While this church was weak in the eyes of men, and in their own eyes as well, their weakness was, in fact, their greatest strength!**

Jesus tells us that our weakness forces us into a place of greater dependence upon Him and the result is Heaven's power loving in and through us, **2 Cor. 12:7-10**.

### 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 New King James Version (NKJV) The Thorn in the Flesh

<sup>7</sup> And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. <sup>8</sup> Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. <sup>9</sup> And He 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. <sup>10</sup> 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.

2. **Our Willingness** - As Jesus continues to speak to this church, **He addresses two characteristics they possessed that made them strong in the midst of their weakness.**

**A. They Kept His Word** - The word "*kept*" means "*to take care of, to observe.*"

In other words, this church honored the Word of God. They gave it a high place in their church and in their lives.

**When the Bible spoke, the listened and obeyed without reservation.**

**(III. Friends, the Bible is the Word of God!**

This blessed old Book is under attack in our day and many have left the Word of God behind.

However, for a church to be strong in the Lord, the Bible must be that church's marching orders.

**A people who want to be blessed will be a people who will honor the word of God when it is read and preached to them.**

**(How are we doing when it comes to keeping His Word?")**

**B. They Kept His Name** - **They were not ashamed to be identified with the name of Jesus.** They were not ashamed to exalt Him and allow Him to be the focus of their worship and their lives.

**(III. As long as Jesus Christ is the center of the church, her work, her worship and all she does, that church will be blessed.**

**We are living in a day when many are turning away from the name of Jesus.** I just want to remind you that He is the reason we are here today!

He is why those who are saved will not go to Hell.

He is the purpose of our being here today.

May He always be the focus! JESUS! Let that name ever be raised high in this place!

- If we will make much of Him, He will make much of us!
- If we make much of Him, He will draw all men unto Himself, **John 12:32.**

John 12:32 New King James Version (NKJV)

32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.”

Remember what Jesus said about the church in **Matthew 18:20**, "***For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.***"

Notice where Jesus was when two or three were gathered together! He was "***in the midst!***"

**(Is that where Jesus is this morning?)**