

September 4, 2022
“God’s Command To Persevere Comes With Promises!”
Sermon Notes

Revelation 3:7-13

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’: 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, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. 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. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. 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. ¹³ ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’”

Introduction

The Lord, through His Grace, Mercy and Love calls us to persevere through our time in this world. Persevere so that His great and eternal promises can come to fruition. Our Lord is faithful and ALWAYS keeps His promise. There a number of those promises in the Revelation letter to Philadelphia. Promises that go along with His promises to not leave, nor forsake, His promise to be with us always, His promise to strengthen us, His promise, should we allow, to transform us into the likeness of His one and only son: Our Lord Jesus.



We are in a weekend where we celebrate “labor day”. This holiday is rooted in the late nineteenth century, when labor activists pushed for a federal holiday to recognize the many contributions workers have made to America’s strength, prosperity, and well-being. Our Scripture brings truth and clarity about where our strength comes from; defines prosperity from a Kingdom perspective; and, highlights the importance of ensuring our eternal well-being. Rest from our earthly labors will come!

Jesus Accusations in the letters to the churches in Revelation.

We had a deep dive two part look at the church in Laodicea back in June. There we read Jesus’ description of Lukewarm Christianity. A people too comfortable with their own riches and success to get serious about their relationship with God. We also took a bird’s eye look at all 7 church letters in Revelation 2 and 3. There is a separate hand out with that recap. There were consistent themes of direct accusation from Jesus that ran through 5 of them, along with his consistent counsel to repent.

- 1. Loss of First Love For Christ**
- 2. Sexual Immorality**
- 3. Idolatry**

The churches had lost their first love for the Christ, they were slipping back into their old ways being corrupted by their sinful perversions. Sexual immorality was once again becoming their way of life, reverting to the idolization of many gods, setting aside what they had come to know as the one true God. Sound at all familiar to where the church is today? Ecclesiastes 1:9, brings the wisdom of:



Can we agree that church in general terms has “lost its first love of Christ”, suffers from confusion when defining sexual purity and sexual immorality has permeated society. The desire is to believe what we know to be evil, somehow make it good.

Whether we like to think it or not, we were created by God, for His Holy purposes. God, after all, IS love. God doesn't just love us; He loves us **wholly** and completely and wants our love to be like His. We have been given, should we choose to receive, the gift of the Holy Spirit, enabling each of us to love like He loves – Holy, Perfect and True. And yes, God desires for us to ardently love Him back! Not lose interest, but to hang on to our first love of the Lord throughout our “eternal” lifetimes. What stops that from happening? Simply put, focus on the shiny things of the world get in the way of growing our relationship with the Lord...for if your focus is fully on God...the more you get to know who our beautiful, powerful, all knowing, gracious, loving God is the more you want to be transformed to be just like Jesus!! Satan does not want that!! Satan desires for us to pervert the things of God, falling love with ANYTHING and EVERYTHING except God! Don't fall for it!! Satan is a loser...remember that! There is no place in the life of a believer for the things of satan.

Idolatry



Idolatry Defined: At its root, an idol is anything or anyone that becomes more important than our relationship with God. An idol is anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, or anything that you seek to give you what only God can give! Consider what may be standing in the way of living a life that is full and intimate in your relationship with God. One that was designed by Him for each person and for the community of followers of Jesus!

A study of Protestant Pastors was recently done by Lifeway Research. The objective was to define the top modern idols. Some of the things on that list are not all that surprising. Control, Money, the approval of others, our success in this life, our social influence, political power, sex. I have added others that have come up in other studies and should ring true. Our entertainment, phones & technology, our houses, or sports or physical appearance, how much and what type of leisure time, maybe even our families. Comfort was #1. How can comfort become an idol? We hear the adage change is difficult. The study defined Comfort this way:

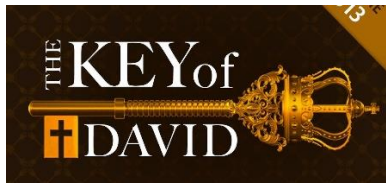
“We have made our lives much easier and much more comfortable than at any other time in history. Tasks that used to take all day can be done in minutes. Many menial tasks are now automated. While that’s a good thing, our pursuit in life should not be comfort alone.”

The call that Jesus gives His followers is a life of obedience to His Will, not one of comfort. Jesus promises that His followers will face trials, persecution, and difficulty. While comfort isn't bad, it can become damaging when it becomes the main pursuit in life. When comfort is an idol, we will struggle when God calls us to something difficult. For we are called to be faithful, not comfortable.

The Church in Philadelphia



Philadelphia – an ancient city in the region of Lydia in western Asia Minor, on the site of modern Alashehir, Turkey. The city was in a strategic location, linking communication and trade between Sardis, Thyatira and Pergamum, Laodicea and Hierapolis. Philadelphia was a center of leather production, agriculture, and the textile industry. The name means “brother-loving” or brotherly love and commemorates the loyalty and devotion of Attalus II who lived from 220 BC to 130 BC, the city’s co-founder, to his brother Eumenes II. The city was known for its citizens love and kindness for each other.



“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”

Revelation 3:7a

The angel of the church in Philadelphia, the Holy One, is speaking to us!! Jesus is divine He is the True One, the Genuine One, the one who shares the holiness of God the Father. Holy in His nature and therefore He has no other option than to be true to His word and His promises. It is “He”, Jesus, who has the key of David; the key to the Kingdom, the open door that leads to heaven, a key to a door that only opens through Jesus.



“Truly, Truly I say to you I AM the Door”
I AM the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. (John 10:7a)
No one comes to the Father except through Me. (John 14:16)

“He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens.”(Rev. 3:7; Isaiah 22:22)

Jesus opens the Door of opportunity.
Jesus opens the Door of entrance into the Kingdom
Jesus opens, if we allow it, the Door to our hearts to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit
Jesus opens the Door of admission into a reconciled, forgiven relationship with God.
Jesus opens the Door to Eternity in Heaven.

When Jesus has opened the door, wicked people and the enemy try very hard to shut the door on those who believe, because they envy the freedom of His Door. It is only possible for the Sovereign Christ to shut the Door. The day will come when Christ’s Door shuts on all of Christ’s adversaries.

Every person on earth has 2 choices, either for Christ or against Him. Jesus came so that no one should perish. The decision is a personal one that has eternal consequences. The response of for Christ goes much further than a lukewarm, half-hearted yes. We are either all in, or not! Christ knows the heart so there is no hiding behind a mask of self-righteousness. Genuine faith is necessary for genuine Kingdom works, because Jesus says:

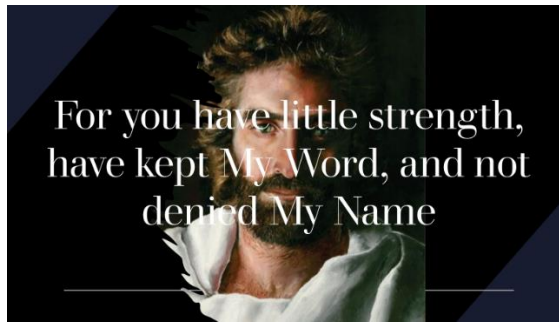
“I know your works”

Jesus is here with us today. He knows our works. The question for us, is are we working, faithfully doing the things Jesus asks? Is Jesus therefore saying to us too:

“See I have set
before you
an open door,
and no one
can shut it!”



Jesus opened the door of ministry in the church in Philadelphia as the believers had the heart and motivation that Jesus desires for all of us. The door that leads to the kingdom, starting here on earth and on into heaven.



Jesus said to them “For you have a little strength, have kept My Word, and not denied my name. The word “strength” used in this context means physical power, energy, ability. Philadelphia was, in all likelihood, a small church in number, yet they were a community that found the path of faith to keep the Lord’s Word and not deny his name. They were remaining faithful despite the satanic opposition from unconverted Jews. In our modern world the opposition to the Truth we profess is everywhere and only growing worse. That opposition is the workings of satan and in our lives it takes the form of sin and even the denial that sin is sin, something not of God!!

“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;
Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness;
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!
Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes,
And prudent in their own sight!”

Isaiah 50:20-21

There are at least 100 verses in the Bible about satan roaming the earth seeking to misguide, kill and destroy. Yet, we can, as the Scripture calls us to:

Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood and sisterhood throughout the world. (1 Peter 5:8-9)

The people in this little church in Philadelphia understood where their individual and corporate strength (albeit small in number) came from!

Question:

What were the people of that little church in Philadelphia doing to keep from denying the Name of the Lord?

Answer:

FAITH, TRUST and OBEDIENCE

1) FAITH

“So Jesus said to them (and to us), “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

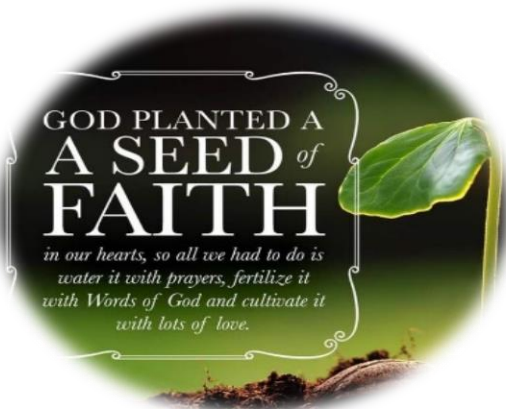
Matthew 17:20-21

‘Jesus says: *“If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.”*’

Mark 9:23

Pretty easy scriptures to understand. Jesus says it takes just “a little faith” to move a mountain; and, if you can believe, all things are possible! Even walking through difficult, difficult times, KEEPING the Word of the Lord, and not denying the Lord’s name!

“God planted a seed of FAITH in our hearts, all we had to do is water it with prayers, fertilize it with Words of God and cultivate it with lots of love.” Author Unknown





*Acrostic: Anthony Sweat

2) TRUST in the Power of C.H.R.I.S.T.

(C)leansing Power – Jesus has the power to cleanse us and make us holy and pure. *“The blood of Jesus Christ **cleanses** us from all sin.”* 1 John 1:7

(H)ealing Power – Jesus has the power to heal us physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Jesus desires for us to be wholly in relationship with God. That is why *“He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been **healed**.”* 1Peter 2:24

(R)estoring Power – Jesus has the power to fully restore our relationship with God and with one another. *“Brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for **full restoration**, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.”* 2Corinthians 13:11

(I)dentifying Power... Jesus KNOWS what we are going through; not just because He is Divine, but because he lived in THIS world. *“For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.”* Hebrews 4:15

(S)trengthening Power – Simply put *“I can do all things through Christ who **strengthens** me.”* Philippians 4:13

(T)ransforming Power – Jesus has the power to change our natures to transform us. *And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being **transformed** into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”* (2 Cor. 3:18)

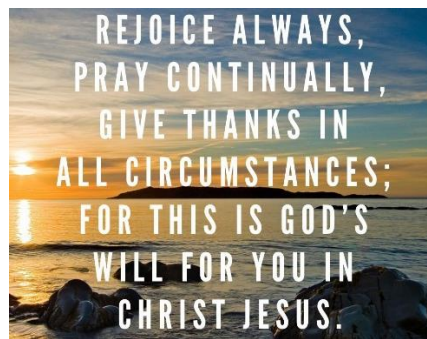
Trust in the Power of Christ.

Cleansing, Healing, Restoring, Identifying, Strengthening and Transforming Power.
Power that is tapped into through Faith, Trust and Obedience.

3) OBEDIENCE

- A. Prayer & Praise
- B. Word of God
- C. Community

A. Prayer & Praise



Hebrews 10:24-25

A1 Prayer

*“To Be a Christian without Prayer,
is no more possible
than to be alive without breathing.”*
Martin Luther

God has given us the breath of life, with a great hope and desire that communication through prayer will be as important to us as our very breath.

A2 Praise

*Every creature which is in heaven and on the earth
and under the earth and such as are in the sea,
and all that are in them, I heard saying:
“Blessing and honor and glory and power
Be to Him who sits on the throne,
And to the Lamb, forever and ever!”*

Revelation 5:13

John, the Revelator hears all of the creatures praising Jesus, the Lamb of God; not just humanity. Is Jesus hearing our hearts and our voices praise His name in this way? Blessing and honor and glory and power for ever and ever!

B. Word of God

“All Scripture is God-breathed
and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting
and training in righteousness,
so that the servant of God may be
thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Jesus knew the works of the people in Philadelphia. Those works were faith filled works, that must have come from reading, studying and living out the God-breathed Scriptures. It is in this way that we are equipped for every good work. God’s TRUTH! Let us allow the Lord’s Word to equip us, learning through our daily reading, through studying with fellow believers in our Community, and by doing the His works as He leads.

C. Christian Community

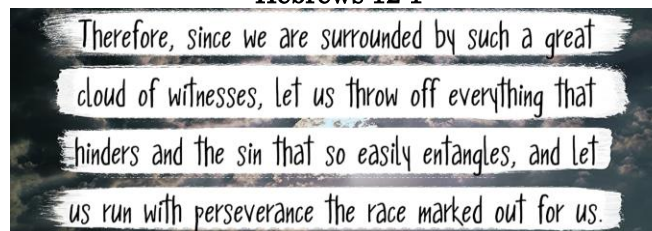
“And let us consider one another
in order to stir up love and good works,
not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,
as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another,
and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Hebrews 10:24-25

Simply put – we are not designed to go it alone. There is great power when believers come together. Maybe for some, the mustard seed of faith must be utilized to Trust that God designed us believers to be a community, one family with the goal of loving God, each other and bringing others into the family of God. Little strength in numbers? Still...great power!

God’s Command: Persevere

Hebrews 12:1



God’s Promise #1

*“I, (Jesus) am coming quickly.
Hold fast what you have,
So that no one takes your crown.”*

Revelation 3:11

Hold on fast to your faith and your first love for Christ. Live your life as He calls, holy and true. Be patient no matter what is going on or who is coming against you. The Lord is promising to come for you and to come quickly. Jesus promises is to fight to protect us! He has already won the battle and therefore we can TRUST Him to bring us through!

God's Promise #2

"Indeed, I (Jesus) will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are believers and are not, but lie, indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you."

Revelation 3:9

The synagogue of satan; wolves in sheep's clothing; pretending to be believers; liars! They will be made by Jesus to come and worship before our feet. The day of judgement will arrive, and the TRUTH will be KNOWN. Every knee shall bow, every tongue will confess. The authority to judge alongside Jesus will be given to those who "hold fast" John sees a vision of it happening!

"Then I (John) saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed."

Revelation 20:4

Jesus' promise is interlocked with His command for us to hold to our faith, trust, and first-love for our Lord, loving Him by following His commands. For there will come a day when those that come against us will have no doubt about Jesus' love for us!

God's Promise #3

Persevere and Jesus will (provide):

"Keep you from the hour of trial which will come on the whole world to test those who dwell on the earth."

Revelation 3:10

Jesus is not suggesting that the people of Philadelphia let their guard down or become careless. They, like us here today, must avoid false teachers and keep fighting the only fight worth fighting, the fight of faith. Knowing, trusting and believing that Jesus has fought the fight for us and continues to provide for and protect us.

"Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."

Colossians 3:2-4

Such beautiful and wonderful promises for persevering. Our life is hidden with Christ in God:

"For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known."

1 Corinthians 13:12

God's Promise #4

Overcome and Jesus will (reward)

"Make you a pillar in the temple of My God, and you shall go out no more."

Revelation 3:12a

Overcome and Jesus will reward!! He will make you a pillar in the temple and you shall go out no more! This is a high place of honor: a pillar in the temple of My God; the inner sanctuary; the holy of holies; A position in the very presence of God will be an honor surpassing any other achieved by mortal humanity! Literal perfect unity with God! Persevere! Overcome! God's promises are so worth it! Eternally in the very presence of God, one with the trinity for ever and ever!!

God's Promise #5

Overcome and Jesus will write on them (blessing):

*"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 them My new **name**."*

Revelation 12b

The word **name** stands for authority, character, and person. Scripture describes it this way:

Beloved, now we are children of God;
and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be,
but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him,
for we shall see Him as He is.

1 John 3:2

We know His new name, as he also has promised a new name for us. We read the promises as written to the church in Philadelphia so long ago. There will come a day, should we persevere and overcome, that we shall be like Him and see Him as He is! How awesome is that? Unimaginable, yet possible! Persevere and overcome! Receive His character and likeness in full!

We will know His new name, the name that the New Jerusalem will carry and the name of God. We already know that God has more than 100 names and Jesus around 50 names just from reading scripture. Yet, there is more!

God's Promise #6 & #7

Overcome and Jesus will give you (blessing):

#6 *To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat.*

#7 *And I will give him a white stone,
and on the stone a new name written
which no one knows except the one who receives it."*

Revelation 2:7b

Conquer and I will give you the blessing of hidden Manna. The hidden manna is Jesus' very nature – for He is the Bread of Life. Conquer and I will give you the blessing of a white stone, says Jesus, and that stone that will be your new name, a name that will reflect the new manna, your new, fully Christ-like character.

7 Promises

There is a completeness in these 7 Promises. Promises that start with Jesus promising to come quickly, followed by the many blessings resulting from our perseverance in hanging on to our First Love for our Lord as we trusted the Power Of Christ.

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the church”

Revelation 3:13

The hearing ear is one of faith and obedience!! We as believers are to surrender to the Holy Spirit, successful in hearing His voice and making His Truth real in our hearts and our lives.

Consider your answers to the following questions. Answer them honestly and openly, for God knows your heart. If the answer to any one is no, surrender your heart in that area to God and ask for the Holy Spirit to change your heart and make it ever true to our Lord Jesus.

What about You and Me?

1. Do you believe? Really believe?
2. Are you intimate with God in prayer?
3. Is God's Word alive in you?
4. Are you an ardent follower?
5. Will Christ find fruit from your labors?

AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, WHEN THE TIME COMES:

6. Will the Lord find You faithful?



‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things,
I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord.’

Matthew 25:21

Rest from the labor of this life will come! We can find rest in Jesus right here and now for He will carry our burdens in this life. Yet we also know that the ultimate true and eternal rest will come when we enter the holy presence of God. Hang on to your first love, for any Godly comfort you desired, received or given to others in this life, will be returned to you one-thousand fold – your final comfort will come when you have received your reward of eternal rest, and the pure joy that will never ever end.

May all who come behind us find us faithful!