

THE CHURCH OF PATIENT PERSEVERANCE – Revelation 3:7-13

Introduction

Welcome to My Thoughts and the sixth of seven segments of the Revelation Churches called The Church of Patient Perseverance, the Church at Philadelphia. So far, we have talked about:

- **Loveless Church at Ephesus**
- **Persecuted Church at Smyrna**
- **Compromising Church at Pergamum**
- **Corrupted Church at Thyatira**
- **Dead Church at Sardis**

A journalist assigned to the Jerusalem bureau takes an apartment overlooking the Wailing Wall. Every day when she looks out, she sees an old Jewish man praying vigorously. So, the journalist goes down and introduces herself to the old man.

She asks, "You come every day to the wall. How long have you done that, and what are you praying for?" The old man replies, "I have come here to pray every day for 25 years. In the morning I pray for world peace and then for the brotherhood of man. I go home, have a cup of tea, and I come back and pray for the eradication of illness and disease from the earth."

The journalist is amazed. "How does it make you feel to come here every day for 25 years and pray for these things?" she asks. The old man looks at her sadly. "Like I'm talking to a wall."

Sometimes the Christian life is like that. It feels like we're going through the motions, under adverse circumstances, and still not experiencing everything the way it should. Yet, we're called upon by Jesus to persevere, to hold on, and to continue moving forward with our faith.

The Faithful Church

As we've looked at several of the churches Jesus addressed in the book of Revelation, we've discovered that not all of them did that. In fact, all of the churches other than the one we're looking at today and the church at Smyrna had something negative going on that Jesus rebuked them for. Open your Bibles to the Book of 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.” ’**

What set them apart? For the Church in Philadelphia, it was their perseverance in spite of circumstances that would cause them to be tempted to just walk away. Let’s look at specific reasons why the church persevered and learn how we can do the same thing.

1. ACCEPTS THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITY

Sam Bronfman, the former CEO of the Seagram Company, entered a crowded conference room and plopped into the nearest chair. One of his young assistants immediately said, "No, Mr. Bronfman, you're supposed to sit at the head of the table." "Young man," replied Mr. Bronfman, "wherever I sit is the head of the table."

We could say something very similar about Jesus. He is the Head and CEO. He is Lord over the lives of every Christian. and we are bound by His authority. When we accept that as truth, rather than try to fight against it, we will begin to understand what it means to persevere in our Christian lives.

“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”’: – Revelation 3:7.

Holy, True, and the Key Holder

Three designations of Jesus’ authority are given here in this passage. Holy, true, and holds the key of David. Only twice in the New Testament are the adjectives “holy” and “true” combined. Once here in reference to Jesus and once in reference to God the Father.

- **To be “holy” means to be separate, to be distinct, to be set apart from the crowd.**
- **In the original language there were two words for “true” – one means true in contrast to falsehood, but the other one, used here for Jesus, means one who is real. The point being made is that Jesus is the ultimate reality, and therefore the ultimate authority.**
- **The “key of David” Jesus possesses is a symbol of His authority in that He opens doors no one can shut, and closes doors no one can open. This is a direct quote from Isaiah 22:22 where we read the story of King Hezekiah’s servant Eliakim who was given the key of David and who alone had the authority to admit the presence of the king.**

The point here is only Jesus has the authority to permit entrance into the New Jerusalem and the Kingdom of God. Those who accept the authority of Jesus are the ones for whom the door to the Kingdom swings open and never shuts.

Those who reject His authority are the ones who find themselves standing outside the door that never opens to them. Thankfully, the church at Philadelphia had accepted Jesus' authority and acted upon it, and the churches of today must do the same.

2. BUILDS ON A SOLID FOUNDATION

Scientists feel one day The Leaning Tower of Pisa is going to fall. They travel yearly to measure the building's slow descent. They report the 179-foot tower moves about one-twentieth of an inch a year and is now 17 feet out of plumb. They further estimate that by the year 2007, the 810-year-old tower will have leaned too far and will collapse onto the nearby restaurant, where scientists now gather to discuss their findings.

Quite significantly, the word "**Pisa**" means "**marshy land**," which gives some clue as to why the tower began to lean even before it was completed. In addition, its foundation is only 10 feet deep!

The church in Philadelphia understood that if their spiritual foundation were faulty, eventually the whole church would fall down. Thankfully, they built their faith and subsequent perseverance on Christ.

"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." – Revelation 3:8.

Don't Let Your Foundation Crumble

We'll deal with the first half of this verse under the next point, but for now, I want to focus on this foundational statement, **"I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name."**

The reason the church had **"little power"** was because it was a small congregation compared to the others Jesus addressed.

- **They were not politically powerful**
- **Did not have much influence in their city**
- **Didn't have the resources the other churches had.**
- **Yet they had been obedient to Jesus during times of trial and had not turned away**

When pressured to turn their backs on Jesus they refused. They understood obedience to Jesus and a continual acknowledgment of Him as Lord was foundational to the success of their faith.

The same needs to be true of us today. Jesus will not deem us successful based on our influence in the community, our level of attendance, or the talents of our members as important as those things might be.

What is foundational to Jesus and us, is we remain true to Him. When the tide of the culture turns against us and when even many in the church ask us to water down our belief in Jesus, He calls us to remain true to Him.

3. TAKES ADVANTAGE OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY

Two boys were twins, one an incurable optimist, and the other a pessimist. The parents were worried about their behavior and attitude. Finally, they took the boys in to see a psychologist. The psychologist observed them for a while and said that they could be easily helped.

He said they had a room filled with all the toys a boy could want. They would put the pessimist in the room and allow him to enjoy life. They also had another room they filled with horse manure and put the optimist in that room. He observed both boys through one-way mirrors. The pessimist continued to be a pessimist, stating that he had no one to play with. They went to look in on the optimist and were astounded to find him digging through the manure.

The psychologist ran into the room and asked what on earth the boy was doing. He replied that with all that manure, he was sure there had to be a pony in there somewhere.

Be Optimistic

I doubt he ever found the pony, but I like his attitude. Jesus gave the church at Philadelphia, and us, an opportunity for optimism. **“I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it;” – Revelation 3:8a.**

Just as He had the authority to open and close the door to the new Jerusalem, He has the power to open up a door of opportunity for the church. There has been much speculation concerning what door He was referring to, but given the context, I believe He is speaking of the door that invites the unchurched into the kingdom.

Just as Eliakim of the OT was given the key to grant an audience with the King, Jesus, at the establishment of the new Kingdom, the church, has the key to grant entrance into an eternal relationship with Him, and He does it through the church.

“So that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord” - Ephesians 3:10-11

God’s intention for the church has always been that it would be the voice through which He would speak and draw those far away from Him into His kingdom. The opportunity for the church in Philadelphia, and for us, is a door that is open wide to everyone in our culture who is willing to come in.

This opportunity is not based on our strength, finances, or our status in the community. Instead on our belief in the power of Jesus Christ to hold open the door for us so that the unchurched can come in.

Open the Door for Others

For most of those who don't know Christ, we must take the door to them, rather than simply hold open a door for them to walk through. What I mean is that rather than just inviting people to come to church, we must take the church to them. We can by being their friend, caring about them, and letting them know that we truly love them.

God is constantly opening up doors of opportunity for us to reach out to others, but we have to be open and alert for them. Every time we run into someone, or even meet someone for the first time, we should ask ourselves and God, **"Is this an open door that God is giving me to reach out on His behalf?"** and then act upon what He reveals.

One of these days **"open door"** is going to be shut, and all of our opportunities will be gone for good. We have to do what we can with God's help in the here and now if we plan to live in obedience to Him and populate heaven with as many people as possible.

4. ENJOYS THE ETERNAL FAVOR OF GOD

There are three promises here to those who overcome:

Promise # 1 – The Church is the New Israel

"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." – Revelation 3:9.

The early church believed that the Jewish nation had lost its favored status in the eyes of God, and all the promises to Israel had been passed to the church. I agree with their understanding and think that is what is referenced here.

The church is made up of all who claim Christ, regardless of nationality, language, status, or bloodline. Speaking of the church in contrast to Israel, the apostle Paul wrote, **"And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God" – Galatians 6:16.**

So the first promise to Philadelphia, and to us, is that we enjoy all the promises God made to His people down through the ages.

Promise # 2 – Protection from Testing

“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.” – Revelation 3:10.

This promise has to do with the various temptations and trials that come to us and to the world as a whole. The promise is not that we will never suffer from them, but that God will protect us during these times and keep us whole.

Promise # 3 – A Permanent Dwelling Place

“Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. 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. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” – Revelation 3:11-13.

When Jesus says He is coming **“soon”** it doesn’t mean in a short period of time, but rather, when He comes, He will do so quickly. In other words, He is not saying the time is short, but that the manner of His coming will come at any time, and it will happen in the blink of an eye.

He promises that those who overcome will be **“pillars in the Temple,”** that they will be **“citizens”** in God’s city, and that both God’s name and Jesus’ **“new name”** will be inscribed upon them. All of these promises speak to the permanence of our dwelling with God.

To be a pillar is to be a permanent part of a building; to be citizens in the city refers to a permanent homeland; and to have both God the Father and God's Son's names inscribed upon us means that we have been marked for eternity by our relationship.

It is a promise of security, surety, and a life with God that knows no end. It is a promise made to the church in Philadelphia and a promise that is made to each of us if we have Jesus as our Lord.

CONCLUSION:

As the church at Philadelphia patiently persevered, so must our church. As you and I pledge ourselves to follow Jesus, no matter what takes place, Amen! Are you willing to make that pledge?

I am Dale Van De Bogart and I fully agree on God’s Word!

If you are reading this and never accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, what are you waiting for? Click on [FREE GIFT](#) and make Jesus the Lord of your life **TODAY!** Remember, read your Bible daily, it’s good food! Like and follow us on [Facebook](#) and subscribe to our [YouTube](#) channel and watch this and other My Thoughts videos.

© 2023 – Van De Bogart Ministries – PO BOX 571 – Bunnlevel, NC 28323