

Study 8: The Faithful Church Revelation 3:7-13

RECAP SESSION 6: Revelation 3:1-6

Introduction and Identification (Revelation 3:1a): The passage begins with an introduction, and Jesus identifies himself as the one who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars, emphasizing his authority and knowledge.

Rebuke for Spiritually Dead Condition (Revelation 3:1b-2): Jesus rebukes the church in Sardis for having a reputation of being alive, but in reality, they are spiritually dead. Their works are incomplete, and there is a call to wake up and strengthen what remains before it dies.

Exhortation to Remember and Repent (Revelation 3:3): The church is exhorted to remember what they have received and heard, to keep it, and to repent. If they do not wake up, Jesus will come like a thief, and they will not know the hour of his coming.

Commendation for a Few Faithful (Revelation 3:4): Despite the overall spiritual condition of the church, there are a few in Sardis who have not soiled their garments. They are commended, and it is implied that they will walk with Christ in white.

Promise to the Faithful (Revelation 3:5-6): The passage concludes with a promise to the faithful in Sardis who overcome. They will be clothed in white garments, and their names will not be blotted out of the book of life. Jesus will confess their names before the Father and His angels.

The city of Philadelphia (in Asia minor, not Pennsylvania) gained its reputation as a missionary city. In 140 BC (more than two hundred years before the letters in Revelation were written), a ruler named Attalus decided to import Greek culture to the barbarian people in this interior region of Asia Minor. He used the city of Philadelphia (first built in 189 BC by his brother Eumenes) as the launch point to spread Greek language and the Greek way of life to people locked in what he saw as crude and uncivilised ways. Philadelphia was to be the door for Greek culture into the whole region.

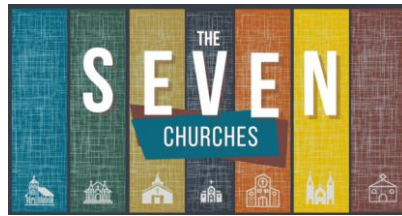
Now a new door of opportunity was wide open in Philadelphia-not for the gospel of the Greeks but for the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was open to a small band of seemingly weak and unimportant Christians, a band of Christians very much like us.

Read: Revelation 3:7-13

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) Jesus knows this church's deeds (v.8). As you scan back through this letter, what actions or qualities is Jesus referring to?

- 2.) An open door stands before this group of believers V .8. What fact should encourage them to go through the door?



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What realities about the church might cause them to hesitate?

3.) Recount a time you sensed God opening or closing a door in your life. How did you respond to that situation?

4.) The believers in Philadelphia also fears the opposition to their mission, probably from Jewish people who had rejected Jesus as Messiah. What promise does Jesus give the Christians (v.9), and how do you think they respond to that promise?

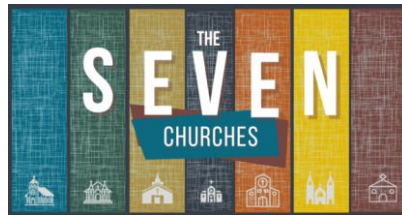
5.) Jesus makes another promise this faithful church in verse 10. What do you think Jesus is talking about in this verse?

How would you explain this verse to a Christian experiencing persecution today?

6.) Jesus' affirmation is that he is coming soon (v.11) is followed by his encouragement to hold on to what we have. What exactly are we to hold on to, and what happens if we fail to hold firmly?

7.) Jesus expands on the idea over award by making several promises to the one who overcomes by faith (v.12). What does each promise mean to you, and why would you seek that gift from the Lord?

8.) What aspects of the faithful church do you see in your church or small group?



9.) What are the qualities of the faithful believer do you see in yourself?

How has the Lord spoken to you in this letter?

What needs to be strengthened in your life?

RESPOND: Ask Jesus to help you remain faithful and steadfast in your commitment to him as Saviour and Lord. Seek his help to overcome any opposition and strengthen those places your spiritual defences may be weak.

NOW OR LATER:

Jesus describes himself as the one “who holds the key of David” (v.7). That phrase reaches back to the Old Testament to a man named Eliakim who is said to have the key of David (Isaiah 22:22). Eliakim was the steward for King Hezekiah. When someone wanted an audience with the king, they had to go through Eliakim. He alone could open or close the door. In the king’s household, Eliakim was sovereign and in control.

That’s the point here in Revelation 3. In God’s household, Jesus is in control. Absolute authority rests in his hands. Who are the doorkeepers in your life – those who open doors of opportunity or who seem to block your progress?

How do you pray for them?

What does Revelation 3:7 tell you about who is really in charge?