

# Christ Opening Doors

Revelation 3:7-8

The ancient city of Philadelphia (meaning *brotherly love*) was located in Asia Minor about twenty eight miles southeast of Sardis. It was a relatively new city, founded in 140 B.C. by Attalus Philadelphus, the king of Pergamos.

Historians tell us that Philadelphia was a city of constant earthquakes. It was built in an area where there was much volcanic disruption. The people in Philadelphia were constantly having to flee the city in order to avoid being crushed by falling masonry from houses. The land was rich in agriculture, and grapes were the primary crop. The worship of the Greek god Dionysius (the god of wine) became the city's dominant religion.

The church in Philadelphia is one of the seven churches listed in Revelation chapters two and three. There is not one word of condemnation in the entire letter to the church at Philadelphia. Christ commends the church in Philadelphia for their faithfulness to Him in the midst of intense opposition and

persecution, and exhorts them to persevere in their faith. We read in verse 12, “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.”

The Lord set before the church in Philadelphia an *open door* in verse 8. It was a mark of God’s grace and goodness to them as a congregation. Philadelphia was known as the church of the Open Door. What a testimony! What a privilege! What a responsibility! What were some of the doors that Christ opened in the city of Brotherly Love? What can we learn from the church in Philadelphia? I believe the message for us today is simply, “Christ opening doors.” We must see Christ opening doors in our church, in our families, and in our lives. Therefore, I like to answer the question, “What doors must Christ open?”

## 1. Christ must open the heart of sinners.

Christ is the only one who opens the heart of sinners because He holds the key of salvation. Christ says that I am "... He that hath the key of David, He that openeth and no man shuteth; and shuteth, and no man openeth" (Rev. 3:7). Christ is quoting from Isaiah 22:22, and in this portion of Isaiah we read about a man Eliakim who was the son of Hilkiah. The following is recorded of him: "The key of the house of David will I [the Lord] lay upon his shoulder ..." (Isa. 22:22). Eliakim was going to be given the key of the house of David--the king's key. Verse 22 continues, "... so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open."

Eliakim had the key to the treasures of king Hezekiah. He was the king's treasurer: He was the only one who could open and close the treasury.

John MacArthur writes, "By referring to that ancient statement, Christ is calling Himself the antitype of Eliakim. (*Type* denotes an Old Testament picture that finds its fulfillment in its New Testament counterpart; *antitype* denotes the New Testament counterpart of that Old Testament picture.) As Eliakim had the key

to unlock the treasures of the earthly kingdom, so Jesus Christ has the key that unlocks the treasures of the heavenly Kingdom. When He opens the door, no one else shuts it; and when He shuts it, no one opens it. Christ, the great antitype of Eliakim, has the key to truth, holiness, opportunity, service, testimony, and salvation. Jesus said, "... no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (Jn. 14:6). Why? He has the key, and He is the key."

Only Jesus Christ can unlock a man or woman, boy or girl from sin, and free them from the bondage of their own depraved and corrupt nature. He holds the key of salvation.

The Psalmist prays, "Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD."

The Psalmist acknowledges he can't open the gates of righteousness himself. No man can because of sin. The Lord must open the gates.

Furthermore, the Psalmist continues, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

It is impossible for man in his natural and sinful condition to understand God's Revelation, The Bible.

We read in I Cor. 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Psalm 40:6 teaches, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; *mine ears hast thou opened*: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required."

The testimony of every true child of God is that, "Christ opens the heart of sinners. Without Christ, we would be lost and dead in our sins." It is Jesus Christ who opens the door of our hearts to salvation.

We read in Acts 16:14 about how the Lord opened the heart of a woman called Lydia, "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."

After the Lord opened her heart, Lydia followed the teaching of the Apostle Paul. The work in the heart of this woman was real and life changing. It changed her heart and her behavior.

The same could be said of the believers in the church at Philadelphia. The Lord opened their hearts and then they followed after the Lord. We read the words of Christ in verse 8, “ I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, *and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.*”

When Christ saves a sinner there is a transformation in the life, just as we read about in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

Therefore, when Christ opens the heart of sinners, a radical change takes place in the life, and this change is permanent. Listen to these wonderful words from Christ, “he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;” These words from our Savior teach us that our salvation is secure and permanent. We can't lose our salvation because it is rooted in Christ.

You can lose your salvation if it is rooted in you. But true salvation is grounded in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The Cross is where Christ suffered and died for sinners. The Blood is what washes the vilest of sinners. True salvation rests in a person, Jesus Christ, and is secure, permanent, and eternal.

Christ says in John 10:9, “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.”

Has Christ opened the door of your heart to salvation? Are you closed to God? Is your heart cold to the gospel? Look to Christ. He holds the keys of salvation.

Christ must open the heart of sinners.

## **2. Christ must open opportunities for service**

The church in Philadelphia had a wide open door. Christ had opened it. He opens the door to salvation, and to service.

Matthew Henry writes, "Christ opens a door of opportunity to his churches; he opens a door of utterance to his ministers; he opens a door of entrance, opens the heart; he opens a door of admission into the visible church, laying down the terms of communion; and he opens the door of admission into the church triumphant, according to the terms of salvation fixed by him

Paul knew that Christ opened doors. For example:

1) 1 Corinthians 16:9 -- "For a great door, and effectual, is opened unto me ...."

2) 2 Corinthians 2:12 -- "... when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel ... a door was opened unto me of the Lord."

3) Colossians 4:2 -- "[Pray]... that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ ...." If there is an open door, God opened it. No power on earth or in hell can close the door that God opens.

4) Acts 14:27 -- Paul had been beaten and stoned when he was at Lystra. But God raised him up and returned him to his brothers in Antioch. And Paul



"reviewed all that God had done with them [his companions], and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles."

Despite a stoning and beating, the door was opened. When God is going to open a door, He opens it no matter what men may do. And no one is going to shut it.

I thought of four common areas where we must see Christ open opportunities for service.

### 1. At home

- In our marriages
- In our children

### 2. At work

- Boss or coworker

### 3. At church

- In their Trials and Afflictions
- Fellowship, Hospitality.

### 4. In the community

- Hand out tracts
- Listen to Sermon audio
- Invite people to church

Christ must open opportunities for service

### **3. Christ must open revival blessing in the church.**

Andrew Bonar writes, “Revivals begin with God's own people; the Holy Spirit touches their heart anew, and gives them new fervor and compassion, and zeal, new light and life, and when He has thus come to you, He next goes forth to the valley of dry bones... Oh, what responsibility this lays on the Church of God! If you grieve Him away from yourselves, or hinder His visit, then the poor perishing world suffers

sorely!”

Duncan Campbell, *The Lewis Awakening*, p. 14-15

In writing of the movement, I would like first to state what I mean by revival as witnessed in the Hebrides. I do not mean a time of religious entertainment, with crowds gathering to enjoy an evening of bright gospel singing; I do not mean sensational or spectacular advertising — in a God-sent revival you do not need to spend money on advertising. I do not mean high-pressure methods to get men to an inquiry room — in revival every service is an inquiry room; the road and hill side become sacred spots to many when the winds of God blow. Revival is a going of God among his people, and an awareness of God laying hold of the community. Here we see the difference between a successful campaign and revival; in the former we may see many brought to a saving knowledge of the truth, and the church or mission experience a time of quickening, but so far as the town or district is concerned no real change is visible; the world goes on its way and the dance and picture-shows are still crowded: but in revival the fear of God lays hold upon the community, moving men and women, who until then had no concern for spiritual things, to seek after God.

In revival there is a fresh focus on Christ's person (who He is to us, especially His character as God's Son) and on His passion (who He is for us, especially in His death, resurrection, and ascension). As a result, we experience together in new ways the fullness of Christ's life over us (as He rules over us as Lord and Head of the church) and in us (as He indwells us with His resurrection power). All of this presses us into new involvements in the fulfillment of Christ's mission, where we live and among the nations, as He carries out His purposes (through us), and as He establishes His preeminence among many peoples (going out ahead of us to lead His global cause to victory and to bring about the consummation of history) - David Bryant

We can't manufacture revival. The church has tried to do that and it doesn't work. We must ask the Lord for it!

Isaiah 64:1, "Oh that thou wouldest **rend** the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence,"

Deuteronomy 28:12, “The LORD shall **open** unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.”

2 Chronicles 7:14, “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Christ must open revival in the church.

The Church of Philadelphia could be called the Church of the Open Door. Does this describe the church today? We must see Christ opening doors in our church. We must see Christ opening doors in the hearts of sinners, see Christ opening doors in opportunities for service, and see Christ opening revival in the life of God’s people. Maybe you are here today and the door of your heart is still closed and shut to Christ. Look to Christ. “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Let us pray.