

7 CHURCHES OF REVELATION

Seven Churches // Sermon 7

Philadelphia: The Faithful Church // Revelation 3:7-13

Good morning, church family!

- Please turn with me to the book of **Revelation**.

We will be in **Revelation 3 this morning.**

How do you know if you're successful?

- Our culture says, 'Bigger is better. Louder is stronger. More followers, more influence, more power.'
- That's the standard the world uses.

But Jesus uses a very different standard.

- He doesn't measure a church by its size, its budget, or its popularity.

He measures a church by its faithfulness.

The church in Philadelphia was not large or impressive.

- They were small, weak, and surrounded by hostility and pressure.
- They had no influence, no power.

And yet – Jesus praised them for.... Their faithfulness.

And here's the reminder we all need today: what matters most to

Jesus is not our size, our strength, or our worldly success...

- What matters most to Jesus is our faithfulness to Him.

Big Idea: *Jesus delights in His people not because of their power or popularity, but because of their faithfulness to Him.*

This morning, I want to draw your attention to three things:

1. Jesus holds ultimate authority.

Jesus begins by introducing Himself in verse 7:

[7] “And to the angel (pastors) of the church in Philadelphia write: ‘The words of the holy one (*Holy* is the OT name for God and the NT title for Jesus – so Jesus is writing), the true one (*Truth* is an attribute of God), **who has the key of David**, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.

Jesus introduces Himself with four powerful titles:

- **The Holy One:** This title was ascribed to God in the Old Testament.¹ Jesus is God.
- **The True One:** He is the embodiment of truth. He is reliable and we can count on Him.
- **The One who has the key of David:** This is a direct reference to Isaiah 22, where the steward determined who could enter into the king’s presence. *Jesus says, “I hold the key to the Kingdom of God. I’m in control!”*
- **The One who opens and shuts doors:** This speaks to His absolute sovereignty.
 - He opens doors no one can shut; he closes doors no one can open.
 - **His authority is total and eternal.**

This is the language of authority, sovereignty, and absolute control.²

“There is no attribute of God more comforting to His children than the doctrine of divine sovereignty.”

- Charles Spurgeon³

Why? Because life is hard.

- It’s full of hardships. It’s full of deep sadness and sorrow.

¹ Daniel L. Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Revelation*, ed. Daniel L. Akin, David Platt, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 91.

² John MacArthur Commentary.

³ C. H. Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1856), Sermon #77: “Divine Sovereignty.

But believers can find comfort in knowing that God has not only allowed their circumstances, but he is actively in control of them – for His glory.⁴

He opens doors to:

- **Salvation:** He is the way, the truth, and the life. (John 14:6)
- **Blessing:** Every good and perfect gift comes down from above... (James 1:17).
- **Mission:** He opens the door for gospel advancement... (Acts 14:27).

So, when a door opens, we must move forward in faith.

- And when a door closes, we can rest in His infinite wisdom.

Jesus is in complete and total control.

- He is all-powerful, sovereign, holy, and trustworthy.

Jesus holds ultimate authority.

2. Jesus honors our faithfulness.

This church was a small, seemingly insignificant church according to the world's standards – but Jesus was pleased with them.

- Why? Because they were faithful!

There are three (3) ways Jesus honors faithfulness:

A. Jesus sees our faithfulness.

[8] “I know your works (Nothing escapes me or is hidden from me).

Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

Jesus fully knows their works.

- **Nothing is hidden in Christ.**
- He knows our struggles, our weaknesses...
- He knows our endurance and obedience...

When others overlook you, Jesus never does. He sees you!

I love how Peter said it:

“The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers.” – 1 Peter 3:12

⁴ <https://www.gospelrelevance.com/2015/06/22/charles-spurgeon-on-the-sovereignty-of-god/>

Listen, church, when you feel overlooked or unseen...

- When you feel small, weak, unrecognized, or unnoticed...

Remember this: ***Faithfulness may look small on earth, but it looks large in heaven.***

Jesus sees our faithfulness.

B. Jesus rewards our faithfulness.

[8] “I know your works. **Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut....**

[9] **Behold, I will make those** of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them **come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.**

Jesus promises “an open door” that no one can shut - the *open door* is an open opportunity for the gospel.

- It’s access to God’s Kingdom – it’s to share in God’s eternal reward.

He says, even their fiercest enemies (“**the synagogue of Satan**”) would one day acknowledge the reality of Christ’s love for His people.

So hear this – the world may oppose you, but Jesus will vindicate you.

- He honors faithfulness with open doors.

Jesus rewards our faithfulness.

C. Jesus protects the faithful.

[10] **Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial** that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.

There is some debate surrounding this verse: Does Jesus mean He will *deliver us from* tribulation, or *preserve us through* it?

Either way, the promise stands - **Jesus protects His faithful ones.**

- Like a shepherd who watches over his flock, Jesus will never abandon His children.

We will face various trials in this life.

- We may not escape every storm.

- But we are never left alone in it.

His presence will be greater than your pain.

- His protection is pure.

Jesus honors our faithfulness.

3. Jesus promises eternal reward.

At the end of this letter, Jesus lifts their eyes from present struggles to future glory.

- He says, “Our faithfulness will be honored forever.”

Jesus makes three promises:

A. Jesus makes us secure:

[12] The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God...

In a city like Philadelphia, often shaken by earthquakes, pillars symbolized stability and permanence.

- To be a “pillar” means you will never be shaken, never be removed.

You will always dwell in the presence of God.

The world around you will shake you, but in Christ you will be secure, forever.

Jesus makes us secure.

B. Jesus keeps us close:

[12] ... Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God...

The people of Philadelphia would flee for safety when there was a threat of an earthquake.

- The threat created fear and insecurity.

God is telling His people: You’ll never have to flee my presence.

- I will be a safe space for you, forever.

Jesus keeps us close:

C. Jesus claims us as His own:

[12] ... Never shall he go out of it, and 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 from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.

To have God's name is to bear His mark of ownership.

- You'll belong to His city, His Kingdom, and share in His eternal victory.

The world may label us by our failures, our past, and our weaknesses.

- But not Jesus.

He promises us a new name, a new identity, and a new eternal home.

The letter to Philadelphia reminds us that Jesus isn't impressed by numbers, budgets, or influence.

- He delights in our faithfulness.
- He measures us by our obedience to Him.

This morning, I believe Jesus wants to reclaim some of our hearts and call us back to Himself.

Jesus says, "If you love me, you will obey my commands."

- Our obedience to Christ is rooted in our affection for Christ.
- We don't obey because we don't love.

So, fall in love with Jesus again today.

Let me speak to two groups:

A. For those far from God (drifted): *Maybe you've grown weary, distracted, or cold in your love for Jesus.*

Maybe your faithfulness has slipped, and your obedience feels distant.

- Jesus has not given up on you. He sees you, and He still loves you.
- He is inviting you to return to Him today.

B. For those who don't know Jesus: *The same Jesus who wrote this letter is speaking to you today.*

He is the Holy One, the True One, the One who holds the keys to eternal life.

- He opens the door of salvation to you – all you must do is turn from your sin and trust Him.

How do we Walk in Faithfulness?

- 1. Be anchored in the Word of God.**

“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing through the word of God” Romans 10:17. Faithfulness begins by listening to God’s voice.

2. Pray unceasingly.

“Pray without ceasing.” 1 Thess. 5:17. Prayer is where we draw our strength.

3. Remain faithful in small things.

“One who is faithful in little, is faithful in much.” Luke 16:10

4. Stand firm under pressure.

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.” Hebrews 10:23

5. Fix your eyes on eternity.

“For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.” 2 Corinthians 4:17