



OPEN
DOORS



GRACEPOINT CHURCH

JUNE
2022

HOME GROUP &
DEVOTIONAL MATERIAL

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Pentecost Sunday: "Open Doors" – by Similo Sangela – 5.6.2022



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"Open Doors" by Similo Sangela 05-06-2022

1 day ago



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Scripture: Revelation 3:7-13

Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God's word to you.

Observation

The city of Philadelphia came into being to extend the Greek way of life as well as its culture and language. It was seen as a mission station for all things Greek and was situated on an important highway to the East. It was a beautiful city, but was subject to many earthquakes which caused its citizens to flee in fear.

Jesus addresses the church. He introduces Himself by saying that He is, in essence, holy and true. This is not a description of what He is like, but of who He is. There is nothing false about Him – He is God; and He is man. He possesses absolute authority.



Spend some time in worship.

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The Philadelphian church had experienced difficult times, and Jesus acknowledged this. There was an open door before them which they needed to go through. Just as the city existed to spread Greek culture, so the Philadelphian church existed to spread the Gospel. He told the Christians in the city to look for opportunities to do this, and to go through the doors He had opened in front of them. Any door He opened could not be closed; and any door He closed could not be opened.

The people were not physically weak, but rather dependent on the strength of Jesus to accomplish what He was asking of them. They knew that they could only accomplish what He was requiring in His strength. They were faithful to Him and witnessed this through the way they lived. Jesus was pleased with this humble, willing church. He had nothing to say against them.

As a result, those who came against the church would, one day, recognise their mistake. Jesus spoke of the Jews in the synagogue who worshipped there in name only. These people had no spiritual relationship with God, and they persecuted the Christians in the city. Jesus told the believers they would be justified before such people.

Jesus promised the Philadelphian church that they would be protected from the world-wide trial that was to come. This trial is understood to be a time known as the Great Tribulation which will occur prior to Jesus' return to earth and which will affect everyone who has not accepted Jesus as their Lord. During this time, those who believe in Jesus will be protected in Him (Colossians 3:3). Some scholars believe Christians will no longer be on earth at this time, but will have joined Jesus in heaven during an event known as the Rapture; others believe they will still be on earth but will be protected during this time. The encouragement to persevere fits both scenarios, whether Christians persevere to the very hour of Jesus' return to remove them from the earth, or whether they persevere through the Great Tribulation. Jesus will reward them for their perseverance.

Jesus tells the church He is coming quickly – not in the sense of immediately, but rather in the sense of unexpectedly. They must be ready for Him. They must also continue to live as they have been doing, grasping every opportunity to spread the Word of God; relying on Jesus; being faithful to the Lord. If they should fail to do these things, Jesus warns them that the crown of victory which they would otherwise receive may be given to others.

With reference to Philadelphia's many earthquakes the citizens were continually fleeing and going back into the city as each quake occurred. The people would know that buildings collapsed in the upheaval, leaving only the pillars standing as they were held firm in their foundations. Pillars would often be inscribed with the names of distinguished citizens. In the same way, believers would remain standing when all crumbled around them, for their foundations were solid in Jesus Himself. Those who remained faithful would have an assured place with God and each one would be inscribed with many new names: that of God; of the New Jerusalem; and of Jesus. There would be no doubt to whom they belonged and there would be no need for them to continue to leave and re-enter the city.

As He does for every church to which He speaks in the first three chapters of Revelation, Jesus urges those who will listen to hear His message to the church at Philadelphia.

Icebreaker:

In your life, what are you persevering with at the moment that is proving to be a challenge? Why do you keep on doing it? What do you hope to achieve by it?

Application

- How do you think the church at Philadelphia is similar to Gracepoint or to your own home church? How does it differ? What do you think Jesus would say to your church today?
- Spend some time considering what doors lie open before you, giving you the opportunity to spread the Gospel message to those who may not otherwise hear it. What doors have been closed for you recently? How do you feel about such doors? Are you willing to go through the open ones and turn away from the closed ones? Why/why not?
- ‘Our blessing is being where Jesus wants us to be when He wants us to be there’ How is this expressed in your life at this time? What changes, if any, do you think you may need to make to receive the blessing Jesus has for you?
- The Philadelphian church trusted God to use them to make a difference in their world, even though they were weak. They depended on Him. To what extent does your church depend on Jesus to make an impact in your world? What influence do money, personalities, circumstances have on the way your church influences those beyond your doors? How much do you depend on Jesus to change your world through you? What roles do prayer, Scripture, and the Holy Spirit take in your ministries to the outside world? (If you feel these roles are not given the importance Jesus would desire in your church, who can you speak to about such things?)
- What hope does this message to the church give to you at this time – for your church and for yourself as an individual? How can you share this hope with other believers who may not have heard this message that the Spirit gives to the churches? What can you do as a group or as an individual to give hope to others?
- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

Prayer

Pray for one another in regard to the issues that have been raised during your discussion time, and in regard to other needs of the group.

Service

Actively look for opportunities to go through open doors this week. Share with the group next week where God has led you.

Bibliography

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/revelation-3/>