

The Faithful Church
Revelation 3.7-13
Sunday July 28,2024

His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' Matt.25.23

- Isn't this the commendation we long for?
- Have we considered last week's questions?
 - How is our church health? Are we willing to examine ourselves to find out? Are we willing to repent and work toward making changes the Holy Spirit has called us to make?

The City of Philadelphia: (modern day Alasehir)

- Known as the City of Brotherly Love
- Approximately 40 mi. (60 km.) SE of Sardis
- Situated on a major fault line thus subject to earthquakes
 - Name changed after earth quake devastation in 17 AD to Neocaesarea, then Flavia
 - Small population due to fear of earthquakes
- Prosperous with industry in textiles, leather and vine growing (wine)
- Chief deity = Dionysus, the god of wine

The Church at Philadelphia:

- Received no rebuke, no call to repentance
- Small but significant church up until 12th century (muslim takeover of Turkey)
- Able to withstand the pressures toward conformity with the general culture

⁷ *"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 'The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.*

the holy one, the true one:

- Divine title applied to our Lord Jesus:
 - *Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy mountain; for the Lord our God is holy!* Ps.99.9
 - *I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God;* Is.45.5

the key of David:

- Symbol of Jesus' authority to determine who will participate in His Kingdom,
 - *And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.* Is.22.22

who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.

- Jesus has opened the door to the Kingdom that the enemy cannot shut:
 - *And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* Matt.16.18

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

I know your works:

- Same words spoken to Ephesus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.

Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut:

- The door to the heavenly sanctuary opened to the church at Philadelphia (*After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven!* Rev.4.1)
- Because He admits them, they cannot be excluded!
 - *All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.* Jn.6.37

May also imply an open door for the ministry of the Gospel:

- *At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison—* Col.4.3
- The Church's witness will remain effective.

I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

- Possibly small in number, socially outcast, materially poor, yet remained faithful
- Commended for faithfulness
 - *This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.* 1 Cor.4.1-2

⁹ *Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—*

- Though they identify as Jews their actions of accusing God's people, denying the Son of God identify them with satan.
 - *You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.* Jn.8.44

behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.

- Submission (bow down) and acknowledgement (will learn)
- Vindication before Jewish persecutors
- Will acknowledge that God loves and welcomes Christians (Jewish and Gentile)
 - *At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the Lord, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the Lord in Jerusalem, and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart. Jer.3.13*

¹⁰ Because you have kept my word about patient endurance,

- *Patiently, faithfully resisting the enticements of a sinful world to the honor and glory of God:*
 - *And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things that we command. May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ. 2 Thes.3.4-5*
 - *As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." 1 Pet.1.14-16*

I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.

The hour of trial:

- To some (preterists) the fall of Jerusalem (earlier writing of Rev. mid 60's, the whole world being the Roman Empire)...
- To others (dispensationalist futurists) the final tribulation before Christ returns to set up His Kingdom...
- Yet others (idealists) any time of crisis and conflict throughout history...
 - *"At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. ²And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Dan.12.1-2, see also Matt.24.14-21*

those who dwell on the earth - Rebellious humanity.

I will keep you from the hour of trial:

No consensus:

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. 2 Thes.2.7

- Those who interpret 2 Thes.2.7 as the removal of the Holy Spirit believe in a pre-tribulation or mid-tribulation rapture, thus escaping the time of hardship.

- Those who do not interpret 2 Thes.2.7 as the removal of the Holy Spirit see the Holy Spirit's care and protection during the tribulation.
- *I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. Jn.17.15*

Others interpret "I will keep you from the hour of trial as protection of their testimony for Christ:

- *Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Rev.7.13-14*

¹¹ I am coming soon.

- Possible reference to the 2nd coming of the Lord.
- Possible reference to His spiritual presence to bring comfort during their hardship.
 - *So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied. Acts 9.31*
 - *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 2 Cor.1.3-5*

Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.

- Salvation cannot be lost, but a reward can.
 - *If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. 1 Cor.3.15*

¹² The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it,

- Often after an earthquake only the pillars were left standing
- Believers will be so securely set in his Kingdom that no disturbance can remove them

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,

- As Philadelphia's name changed to honour the name of its benefactors so will the conqueror bear the Name of his benefactor, God Almighty.
- He will be given a secure place in the City of God, a city in which he is welcomed!
 - *I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. Is.56.5*

and my own new name.

- As the rebellious bear the mark of the beast so the conqueror will bear the mark of the Lord!
- Seal of Christ's ownership and protection:
 - *In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. Eph.1.13-14*

¹³ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

How do we begin to live as a church pleasing to the Lord in our day?

1. *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Col.3.1-3*

Develop a godly, eternal mindset. Understand that we belong to Him and are to live for His honour and glory.

2. *If you love me, you will keep my commandments. Jn.14.15*

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. 1 Jn.2.3

Our love of Christ is shown in our obedience to Him, not in our rationale of what might be considered loving.

3. *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Prov.3.6*

We need to trust God will carry out His plans in His time. The ends do not justify the means.

4. *As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." 1 Pet.1.14-16*

As children of God we will only be reflective of our heavenly Father if we strive to be like Him in every aspect of our life.