

An Open Door

Sermon July 24, 2022

Scripture Reading: John 10:1-10 and Revelation 3:7-13

Golden Verse: *“I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut.”*
Revelation 3:8

The word Philadelphia means “brotherly love.” The city of Philadelphia in Asia Minor was showing this brotherly love towards each other. It was easy for a Christian congregation to be established and to grow in such a great environment. In numbers, they were the smallest but the strongest in love.

This letter in Revelation, addressed to the church in Philadelphia, is full of praise and there is nothing negative said against them. They loved each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. They were the model of loyalty, love, and kindness. They stood strong between the trials of life.

What was the secret of their strong love? Maybe they took their Lord's encouragement seriously: *“Hold on to what you have so that no one will take your crown.”* Revelation 3:11

This is the first message to us today: *“Hold on to what you have so that no one will take your crown.”* Revelation 3:11 He already gave something to you which is more important than any earthly values. That is the gospel of Christ and your faith rooted in Christ Jesus. Hold on to it and do not lose it.

God blessed you with this heritage, and you have to keep it. This rich heritage comes from the Lord Jesus himself. He gave it to you to make you rich. The apostles received from Him, and they passed on to Augustin's, to the Reformers, Luther and Calvin and Knox, and then to us. It obligates us to keep it and pass it on to those who come after us. Your sons and your daughters are the legitimate heirs, and the coming centuries will ask you for the ancient Christ's inheritance. Be careful; do not lose it. Do not lose it in the wild storm of troubles, sickness, or temptations. Do not throw it away. Do not exchange it for anything. Do not exchange it for the temporal benefit of this world. You have to keep your faith and Christ in your heart.

In this letter, Jesus explains to us how we can keep what we have. He said: *“I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut.”* Revelation 3:8a Imagine a

door that is open for you, and you are free to walk through it anytime into the presence of God. Whatever your physical or mental state is, you can walk into the room freely which is behind that door and leads you into the presence of your Saviour.

Have you ever wondered what an immeasurable privilege is for you to have free access to God? On that door could be written: Blessed Doctor. Specialist in all diseases. He takes his children day and night, without any prior notice. The consultation is for free. He already paid the price for you on the cross. Yes, this is true! If you are thinking of God, you should always think of Him this way.

I often imagine Jesus with His open arms, calling us to Him: *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest”* or with other words: *“Come unto me all who are tired and burdened, and I will comfort you. Moreover, you will find peace.”* Matthew 11:28

Dear beloved, you have an incredibly great and priceless privilege. You can come to Jesus.

We all can be caught up in difficulties. We all can experience spiritual earthquakes. Those could be financial difficulties, illness, or death. Just because we are Christians, we can't prevent them. Sometimes we have to struggle with our children, with their problems or even with their marriages, and with grandchildren. Often THEY struggle, and we, too, feel their pain and sorrow as well as others. We have to know, and we have to teach them also that, in these situations, there is always an open the door to God for believers, and there we can find security and salvation.

Often, we would like to talk to somebody about our issues, but we have a hard time to find the right person. We can be devastated, heartbroken and weak. Everything might seem to be dark and hopeless. In those moments, from where can we get any consolation, wisdom, and strength? I am so happy to share with you that we all can always go to that open door and talk to Jesus about our disappointment, complaints, and sorrow. In Jesus Christ, we always will have hope, and He will lead us out from the tunnel.

His door is always open. It is still open for those who have not entered in for a long time. It is also open to anyone who is already quite eager to meet God. It is also free for you to go in for the first time.

Jesus is saying to you and me now: “Behold, I gave you an open door, which no one can shut.” The door is open! This is your great privilege! Please take the opportunity to come into God’s presence regularly. Come to have a great conversation with Jesus, to receive comfort, to receive new orientation, strength, renewal in body and soul. Do it regularly in prayer. Just tell Him: “Here I am Lord” and start talking to Him. Talk to Him every morning before you start doing your daily tasks. Talk to Him about your daily tasks.

The believers from Philadelphia were able to stay strong during trials and temptations because they entered daily into the presence of God in prayer. Jesus said to them: *“I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.”* Revelation 3:8b They had little strength, but with God they were powerful.

Maybe you feel weak as well, or you feel that you have little faith, little strength. - If you go through this door, day by day, with God, you will be strong enough to conquer. Our problem is not that we do not work enough, but we do not spend enough time in the presence of God, and we do not pray enough.

There was a woman, who has only one relative here in Canada, but her mother died a few months ago. She said to her minister: “You know, reverend, the most terrible feeling is that I have nobody around me and I do not belong to anyone.” This sounds to me like the anxious modern man’s complaint. “I am lonely. I do not belong to anybody, and for this I am insecure.” It is awful to feel so lonely. If you feel lonely, please listen to what Jesus is saying to you today: My dear, you are never alone. You belong to someone. You belong to the most powerful, the most loving someone. There is Someone who is always waiting and is always happy to join you. Behold, there is an open door in front of you. I am your Saviour. Please step in through this open door now and come into the presence of God.

After you spend a great time with God, please come out and step closer to your neighbour and share with them the love, goodness, comfort, peace, and forgiveness from God. If you spend time with God, then the members of your family should

feel that, and also your colleagues, and your friends, and even your enemies will notice that you are approaching them now with special gifts you received from God. You are bringing them a message from God, maybe just a sentence, a word, which will give them comfort and peace.

We all have this opportunity of a mission. Moreover, it is also a responsibility for those we love. Tell them that the door is open and they can come through this with you in prayer, or they can do it alone. If they feel unworthy, tell them that NOBODY can open this door before them, not even the devil, not even our sin. Tell them that they have a great opportunity to testify God's love by stepping inside into His presence.

Jesus said: "I am the door", and that means that, because Jesus Christ died for you, you can step into God's presence without any fear. As long as someone lives, he or she has the opportunity to walk through this door without fear and will meet God, full of love and compassion and mercy. If somebody neglects this door, at the end of life, he or she will be called to step through that door, but will face God, the judge. Please share this knowledge with others.

One time, the great evangelistic pastor, Charles Spurgeon, was visited by a person, who asked him:

- *What can I do for Jesus?*
- What is your occupation? Spurgeon asked.
 - *Machinist.*
- Where?
 - *By rail.*
- The heater who works next to you already knows Jesus? Spurgeon asked.
 - *I do not know.*
- Go back and start on it!

Mission gates do not only open in Africa or Asia, but also where we are. There are so many restless, tired, fearful people around us who might find a lot of help and comfort in our message.

Jesus says: "*I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.*" Revelation 3:11 Jesus will come, and He will ask if you and I fulfilled His mission in this world. He will ask if we kept or lost our faith and our call.

May we all be able to summarize our life at the end as Paul did saying: *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”* 2 Timothy 4:7-8 Amen