

**Revelation 3: 7-9; "I have set before you an Open Door", Sermon # 24
in the series - "The Faithful and True Witness", Delivered by
Pastor Paul Rendall on July 23rd, 2006; and a second time
on May 9th, 2010, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

As we begin our study of Christ's message to this church, let us consider first the fact that there is no word of rebuke or reproof given to them about sins that they were committing or false doctrines that they might have been tolerating; they were a church which the Lord Jesus was pleased with. I am sure that this does not mean that that they were sinless. Rather it means that they were walking blamelessly before Him. They had kept His Word. We should understand that not all churches are alike in the sight of our great God and Savior. Some churches and believers are more pleasing to Him than others. I did not say that some are more acceptable than others for that would do violence to the doctrine of justification by faith alone on the basis of Christ's finished work. Each one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ is accepted in the beloved, none more accepted than another. But there are some believers who are more pleasing to God in their walk with Him than others are. We are not in competition with each other in this matter, rather we each ought to be conscious of God's holiness, and to study to learn what is pleasing to the Lord and when we do this we will find that the Lord will reward our faithfulness. Then being united in our desire for holiness, we can together find the blessing of our text. The message to the church in Philadelphia shows us that the Lord Jesus had determined to reward his faithful church with an open door of success for preaching the gospel. This afternoon I want to open up this truth so that we will appreciate it and so that we will live in such a way that the Lord will know that we are seeking the same blessing in our own church here in Tama. What does it mean when the Lord Jesus says that He will open a door for the church of Philadelphia, a door that no man can shut? I think that we can find 2 answers to that question.

1st- It means Christ's showing them the key to the door, which is His own ability to promote them to this blessing. (Verse 7)

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, "These things says He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts, and no one opens: I know your works." There are some blessings which the Lord Jesus takes his time bestowing because he knows that it is for our good that, at the right time, we be rewarded for faithfulness. These are blessings which are related to our faithfulness here in the ministry, and in serving in the church. He says, "I know your works." I know what you have done or have not done. I know what your desires are and what they are not. But He wants to remind the church of Philadelphia of the purpose for which they have been called, and that is, that they might be conformed to His own blessed image. He says to them, "He who is holy, He who is true," before he ever tells them what He thinks or what He intends to do for them. He, of course, is referring to Himself. He

wanted to show them, and He wants to show us, that from His standpoint that everything that He does for them, and in them, and with them by His grace, is based upon his holiness. Everything that He would do for them would be based upon His being holy and true as well. He had to be holy in order to become the sinless sacrifice for the sins of His people. It was a holy purchase that He made there on the cross for us His people. And now that He is raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of the Father, He continues the Risen, Living, Holy One of Israel. His judgment is pure and perfect and true. He is the "Genuine One." This is what the Greek word in the original which is translated "true" means in this place. Lenski says, "The Genuine One" is an independent designation (from His being holy) and includes all that our Lord is: in all that He is, He is genuine, in nothing is there mere empty claim or pretense." That is the way the Lord Jesus is; He remains faithful, ever faithful in every situation.

And He also has all the power necessary to mediate every single blessing necessary to establish His church in righteousness and to open doors for them to reward them for their faithfulness. "He has the Key of David it says in verse 7. Turn with me to Isaiah 22: 20-24 and we find the verses from which this phrase was taken. God through the prophet Isaiah is reproving a scribe named Shebna who had used his position of wealth and influence to hew out a sepulcher high in the rocks so that he would be remembered for a long time after he died. In verse 17 God says, "Indeed the Lord will throw you away violently and toss you like a ball in to a large country; there you shall die, and there your glorious chariots shall be the shame of your master's house." "So I will drive you out of your office." "And from your position he will pull you down." God is shutting the door on Shebna. And then he says this about his replacement. "Then it shall be in that day, that I will call My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah; I will clothe him with your robe and strengthen him with your belt; I will commit your responsibility into his hand." "He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah." "The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; so he shall open, and no one shall shut; and he shall shut, and no one shall open." "I will fasten him as a peg in a secure place, and he will become a glorious throne to his father's house." "They will hang on him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the posterity, all vessels of small quantity, from the cups to all the pitchers." Now this is speaking of what the Lord would do to an unfaithful scribe; Shebna, taking his responsibility and privileged position away from him and giving it to someone who had been faithful; Eliakim." But the Lord Jesus is applying this phrase, the Key of David to Himself. He is the One who has the key, the authority and the power to grant to the faithful believers in Philadelphia an open door which no one can shut. The Key of the house of David, being laid upon the shoulder of Eliakim, signified that he had complete access to the temple and was given the great privilege to be able to open all the doors to those who would enter the temple and participate in the worship and also to be able to shut out those who were not worthy. He is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ who does the same for the New

Testament church in an absolute way. All the glory of His Father's house has been hung upon Him. The government would be upon His shoulders, and the key would be hung there too. Christ reigning and ruling in righteousness has become a glorious throne to His Father's house. All power and authority in heaven and earth has been given to Him. All the offspring and posterity, all vessels of small quantity from the cups to all the pitchers, are found hanging on Him. That is everyone who will believe in Him for eternal life. You must be filled with the Spirit of Christ and His grace, to minister unto Him. Some Christians are cups in their ability to serve Christ in His house, the church; and some are pitchers who pour forth in their service to accomplish much in terms of His kingdom. The Lord Jesus has the Key to success in service and the ability to promote them to this blessing. Oh, the importance of faithfulness in regard to this service. 2 Timothy 2: 20 says, "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor, and some for dishonor." "Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work." The church of Philadelphia had done this and now the time of the reward was coming.

2ndly- When the Lord Jesus says to this church that He has set before them an open door, He means that He will set before them providentially ordered opportunities to preach the gospel and to see success in them. (Verse 8)

"See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My Word, and have not denied My name." This is certainly not a privilege and blessing given to every church or every individual minister, but a blessing only given to some for whom it has been determined by Christ, that they can handle rightly handle it. After He has studied their obedience and tested them as to their character and their works, He will open the door to give them opportunity to serve Him. I would like to turn you to a few passages of Scripture to show you this. Let's look at Colossians 4: 2 and 3 first. "Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak." This truly is a very revealing passage. It shows us that we ought to pray for the opening of a door for ministers of the gospel and for the church itself to "speak the mystery of Christ." It shows us that God Himself is the only one who can make His word effectual by the power of His Spirit working in and through a preacher and people to whom the Lord grants providential openings for, through bring them into contact with unbelievers whose hearts are being prepared by His Spirit. He leads both the preacher and those with him to the people, or he brings the people to the preacher, or both. But the opening of a door is a marvelous thing. Paul wasn't at all against asking for a prayer for a door to be opened for him, even while he was in prison and in chains. And in the book of Philippians 1: 12 he says, "But I want you to know brethren, that the things which happened to

me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ." Even in prison a door was opened for him.

Let's see how doors opened for Paul in his ministry. Turn to 1 Corinthians 16: 5- 9 with me. Paul wants to come to see the Corinthians and tells them he will "if the Lord permits." He says this. "Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia (for I am passing through Macedonia)." "And it may be that I will remain or even spend the winter with you, that you may send me on my journey, wherever I go." "For I do not wish to see you now on the way; but I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits." "But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost." "For a great and effectual door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries." And if we turn over to Acts 16 we will be able to see how the door in Macedonia opened to Paul. Acts 16: 6 says, "Now when they gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. "After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them." This was the Lord shutting a door, at least for a time it was not his will that the door for the gospel be opened in those places. We know that it was later in Asia for all these churches in the book of the Revelation were in Asia. "So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas." And a vision appeared to Paul in the night" "A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.'" This was Christ showing Paul that the opening of the door and the turning of the key in the lock was not far off. "Setting sail from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next day came to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony." "And we were staying in that city for some days." Now see how the door is opened for them by the Lord. "And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there." "Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us." "She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshipped God." "The Lord opened her heart to heed (to respond to) the things spoken by Paul." "And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.'" So she persuaded us." This is how the Lord opened the door. This was the beachhead established for the gospel in that place. He led Paul and those with him to the place he would have them to preach and then He in His providential ordering of events brings them to a prayer meeting where only women were attending that day. And then He opened Lydia's heart to respond. Whenever and wherever the Lord opens a door, He is also intending to open hearts. The conversion of this woman was the opening of a great door for Paul. Let us learn to see things rightly. The conversion of women and children and households of people is a great door and effectual opening up. This is the kind of thing that we need to take notice of and to pray for and to expect if the Lord judges us faithful. May we expect great things from Him and attempt great things for Him in the days to come.

