

## *The Church in Philadelphia*

*Revelation 3:7-13*

*“Every small church in a difficult area of ministry will find this letter encouraging. Every Christians uncertain about his or her gifts and place in the church as a whole will be comforted. The basic message is profound: God is more interested in faithfulness than success... When we get to heaven, the greatest rewards may well be for the kind of Christians who persevered in situations like that in Philadelphia, who remained true to the Lord in an extremely difficult situation. They are given an ‘open door’ and a ‘crown’ that no one can take away. Still, they can lose it by failing to ‘hold fast to what they have.’ Thus the message begins and ends with perseverance, with ‘overcoming’ any and all obstacles to the centrality of God and Christ in our lives. We will be vindicated; we will be given the very names of God and Christ for our own. We are citizens of heaven. But we must remain steadfast.” Osborne*

- I. The titles Jesus gives Himself tell us why the church must remain true to him alone. They show that He is the only one who has the authority to judge His churches according to how well they are living for Him. It's His judgement and not the world's judgement that should matter to us. That's why *“We must obey God rather than man”* (Acts 5:29) when it comes to how we are to live our righteousness. Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 2:14 that *“The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment.”* The reason we can make judgments about all things is because they are based on Jesus' holiness, character, and truth.

Rev. 3:7

1 Jn. 2:13

Isa. 6:3

2 Cor. 6:16-18

Isa. 43:10-12

***Prov. 25:26*** *Like a muddied spring or a polluted well are the righteous who give way to the wicked.*

- II. We understand that a works righteousness is unscriptural (Eph. 2:8-9). Our righteousness is given to us by Christ. It's His righteousness that has been imputed to us, which means that it cannot be taken away from or added to by works (Phil. 3:9). That profound blessing alone bears tremendous responsibility for us to live our faith well, which we will be judged for (2 Cor. 5:10). The Philadelphia church was commended for two things, their obedience to Jesus' Word and their loyalty to Him. Those two things alone kept the church from folding under the affliction (pressure) they endured for taking a stand for Christ.

Rev. 3:8

1 Jn. 5:3

Matthew 10:32-33

Isa. 49:22-23

Phil. 2:9-11

Matt. 16:18

***Psalm 118:6*** *The Lord is on my side; I will not fear what can man do to me.*

- III. Faithfulness is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen (Heb. 11:1). If our faith is based on wanting to see immediate results or blessings, then it's not faith at all (Jn. 20:29). The church at Philadelphia's faith was more concerned for the eternal than the temporal. That's why they persevered and remained true to the Lord. As a blessing to us, Jesus gives us a picture of the eternal rewards the faithful will receive: 1st, the door to God's kingdom has been opened, 2<sup>nd</sup>, vindication, 3<sup>rd</sup>, protection from Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7) **tēreō** - *to guard, to keep* **ek** - *out of, from*, 4<sup>th</sup>, stability and permanence in the kingdom, 5<sup>th</sup>, ownership, i.e., knowing that we belong to God, to be his essence and to be his child, 6<sup>th</sup>, citizenship in the new kingdom of God, and 7<sup>th</sup>, a new name that will show how valued we are by our Father.

Rev. 3:9-13

Isa. 49:22

Phil. 2:9-11

Matt. 16:18

1 Thess. 1:10

1 Thess. 5:9