

God will give us opportunities to serve, but how do these come about?

Christ makes a promise to the church, a gracious promise to a healthy church.

“I have put before you an open door which no one can shut” (v.8)

1. **The Character of Christ (v.7):** an open letter from Christ.

- a. The doorkeeper; the authority and power of Christ and His words; a letter of communication; each letter highlights a new dimension or aspect of His character and nature . . .
- b. He who is holy
- c. He who is true (Faithful)
- d. He who has the key of David (Sovereign: complete control over the royal household; power . . .)
 - i. Who opens and no one will shut
 - ii. Who shuts and no one will open
 - iii. I have the keys of death and Hades: Rev. 1:18
 - iv. God has the keys to the kingdom; the whole campus . . . He runs this place. In Him we live, move and have our being; life is a sacred gift, with divine opportunities all around us.
- e. God speaks of His servant Eliakim, “I will entrust him with your authority. And he will become a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Then I will set the key of the house of David on his shoulder. When he opens no one will shut, when he shuts no one will open.” (Isaiah 22:22)

2. **The Call of Christ (v.8):** “Says this”

- a. I know your deeds:
- b. **Behold, I have put before you an open door** . . . opportunity; a way, path; portal ... “a door standing open”
- c. His call upon our lives; an invitation and opportunity . . . the immediacy and possibility . . . every day a sacred opportunity: the people and situations . . .
 - i. Come unto me all ye who labor and are heavy laden (Matt. 11:28-30)
 - ii. If any man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink (John 7).
- d. **Open doors:** Primarily, access to God’s kingdom; Christ has the key to open and shut- this is God’s call; God’s gift to us, undeserved . . . grace
 - i. The key to forgiveness, formation and future glory . . . Peter in Matthew 16:19: the keys of the kingdom, what is bound on earth, bound in heaven . . . loose on earth, loose in heaven.

- ii. The Gospel makes entrance available and accessible
 - 1. John 20:23: opening and closing the door of forgiveness
- iii. Where is your official badge for the conference? Access; exile . . . she gives permission and direction . . . they can pick me out in a crowd . . . she confronts me . . . security and safety
 - 1. Acts 14:27: They reported all God had done; He opened a door of faith for the Gentiles
 - 2. 1 Cor. 16:9: a wide door for effective service has opened for me, many adversaries
 - 3. 2 Cor. 2:12: I came to Troas for the gospel . . . a door was opened for me in the Lord. Yet Paul was unsettled until he found Titus, and instead came to Macedonia
 - 4. Colossians 4:3: praying for us, that God would open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ.
- iv. There is this awareness, and openness and sensitivity: is this of God? Is this a God-ordained opportunity? Always be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in you.

3. The Cause of Christ (v.8-11): Why? Because

a. **BECAUSE (v.8) :** (NASB)

- i. Lose control of who, where, what, when. Surrender and openness
 - 1. Heb. 11:6; Matt. 6:33:

a. His world, not mine; His life, not mine . . .

- ii. Be willing to be surprised

1. Humble Dependency: *You have a little power (v.7).*

- a. Trust and reliance upon God, not self, which creates energy; divine power
- b. Deut. 33:25: as your days, so shall thy strength be.
- c. Do not despise the day of small beginnings (Zech. 4:10)- not many of you were wise, mighty, or noble. (1 Cor. 1:26)
- d. Micah 5:2: Bethlehem, too little to be among the clans, from you one will go forth from me
- e. Their strength and energy come from God. You do not have all power, but a little, and that's enough.
- f. More strength will be provided as you use the little strength you have.

2. Intentional Activity: *You have kept my word (v.7)*
 - a. Obedience to what God has already said creates and multiplies opportunities. His commands put us on the move; knocking on doors; trusting God is at work all the time, everywhere, in every person (Psalm 139). Matthew 28:18-20; John 13:34
 - b. "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them." (John 13:17)
 - c. What if God grants opportunity to those who love people well, in a humble Christlike way? They go and make disciples. They speak boldly, they serve, they give, they literally "organize their lives so that God will spend them"
3. Consistent Credibility: *You have not denied my name (v.7)*
 - a. Confess and live consistently with His character: in these opportunities, do not deny Him but rather make the most of them because the days are evil. (Eph. 5)
 - b. These doors of opportunity are not for myself, my flesh, my ego, etc. tested over and over . .
 - c. Rather, they are for His glory and honor and name; and for the sake of others.
 - d. Therefore, I will remain faithful and humble; and will not discredit His name nor make a name for myself. I must strive to avoid losing my credibility as a witness of Christ, which will quickly close doors of opportunity to serve.
4. Reliable Durability: *You have kept the word of My perseverance (v.10) hold fast what you have (v.11)*
 - a. Patiently trusting God to do the work through the Word- and trusting in His promises of future reward.
 - b. "Not mere resignation, but with blazing hope"

What are personal obstacles to entering open doors? (Eph. 5:15-17)

- c. Ignorance:
- d. Impatience:
- e. Indulgence:
- f. Immaturity:
- g. Inflexible:
- h. Insecurity:
- i. Indifference:
- j. Irresponsibility
- k. Inconsistency

Don't miss the next opportunity

- b. **I will Cause:** How? He is Lord, subduing His enemies to conform to His will; thy kingdom come, thy will be done . . . on earth and in heaven . .

Psalm 115:3; John 16:33 - this is ultimate victory

- i. I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan - enemies of God and Christ - he will subdue His/our enemies; world, flesh, devil, death
- ii. Say they are jews, but lie
- iii. I will make them - Bow down before you
- iv. Know how much I love you . . . Know how much He loved us . .
(reveal and display His love for them)
- v. I will keep you from the hour of testing, coming upon the world
 - 1. He is our refuge from the testing; the wrath of God
- vi. I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have

4. **The Community of Christ (v.12-13)**

- a. Where are we headed? The one who endures has a future glory and destiny
- b. I will make you a pillar in the temple of My God: living stones
 - i. A pillar in the community . .
 - ii. Not go out any more: permanence, stability, importance (Mounce: "To a city that had experienced devastating earthquakes which caused people to flee into the countryside and to establish temporary dwellings there, the promise of permanence within the New Jerusalem would have a special meaning.")
- c. I will write on him the name of My God
 - Ownership - He will give us His name . .
- d. I will write on him the name of the city of My God
 - i. New Jerusalem

- ii. Which comes down out of heaven
 - iii. From My God
- e. I will write on him my new name . .
 - Belonging to God and one another; forever; for worship; all access and all future glory
 - He is giving to us the benefits He already enjoys

“The pressure is off for us to make a name for ourselves; Jesus has made a name for us already”. (Tim Keller)

5. The Cry of Christ (v.12-13)

- a. John 20:17: I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to My God and your God . .
- b. Our ultimate assurance is what Jesus has already done to seal and secure us.
- c. I do not deserve any open doors; but rather, to be shut out eternally
- d. Inspired and empowered by Mark 10:45
- e. The door Jesus had . . . and now HE is the door for the sheep.
- f. These come by first entering the door of Christ by faith, on our knees in humble trust in Christ for salvation.
- g. My God, My God, why has thou forsaken me? (Matthew 27:46)
- h. The one who is holy, true, and has the keys . . . gave up everything sacrificially for us . .
- i. Jesus is the door . . .
 - i. The whole reason we have doors of opportunity is that the good shepherd has laid down his life for the sheep.
 - ii. John 10:7-11

“Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise; making the most of your time because the days are evil. So don’t be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” (Ephesians 5:15-17)

“The more often man feels without acting, the less He will ever be able to act; and in the long run, the less he will be able to feel.” (CS Lewis)

“To all who are weary and need rest; To all who mourn and long for comfort;

To all who fail and need strength; To all who sin and need a Savior;

This church opens wide her doors and her heart with a welcome from Jesus Christ.”

John Newton, Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken:

Savior, if of Zion's city, I through grace a member am

Let the world deride or pity, I will glory in thy name

Fading is the worldling's pleasure, all his boasted pomp and show

Solid Joys and lasting treasure, none by Zion's children know

Oswald Chambers: "The center of salvation is the Cross of Jesus, and the reason it is so easy to obtain salvation is because it cost God so much. The Cross is the point where God and sinful man merge with a crash and the way to life is opened—but the crash is on the heart of God."