



Nov 30, Conquer Series

Philadelphia: The Kept Church

Revelation 3:7–13 (ESV)

To the Church in Philadelphia

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.

8 “ ‘I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. 9 Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. 10 Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. 11 I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. 12 The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, 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, and my own new name. 13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

Endure.

- There's a dialogue between six Christian men in the city of Carthage who stood before a proconsul whose name was Saturninus. Saturninus said to these men, *"Denounce Jesus, and swear by the lord, our emperor."*
- They replied, *"We have committed no wrong. We have committed no theft. When we buy something, we pay the tax on it. We do all this because we know our Lord, who no one sees with these eyes, who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and the Emperor of all nations."*
- Saturninus says to these men, *"Give this some thought. I'll give you time. Take 30 days and rethink your position."* They say, *"We don't need 30 days. It won't change anything. We are Christians. We follow Jesus and no one else."*
- Saturninus says, *"Since you have obstinately persisted, it is determined you will be put to the sword."* And the men replied, *"Thanks be to God."*
- Look closely at what the men did. They quoted Revelation. *"We are not going to bow the knee to the emperor because our God, a god, and our Lord, a lord, someone who no one can see with these eyes is the King of all Kings and the Lord of all Lords."*
- In Revelation 17 & 19 Jesus wears this title.
- How did these men know the right title to use for Jesus? What if it's because they had heard Revelation?
- If so, then Revelation would have done its job. To help believers endure.

The commendations of the believers in Philadelphia is in verse 10. It says, *"You have kept my command to endure patiently."*

- They endured. Because they had a Savior who endured.
- Question: How are we doing? Are we enduring?
- ***If the words Jesus gives here enabled these early Christians to endure to their last breath, then those same words can enable you and me to endure anything we face.***
- Three objects here that will help us hyper-stand for Jesus.

Door.

- Look at verse 8: *Behold, I have set before you an open door...*
- Read it this way, *Behold, I have set for you an open door...skip to vs 10...because you have patiently endured.*
- In the NT anytime there is a reference to an open door, it's almost always telling us that there is an opportunity for the message of Jesus to be heard by more people.
- But then Jesus points out that they are people who don't have much power. They're not people of reputation.
- Add to that, there's someone here ***that is*** throwing around their weight. It's the enemies of Jesus. Jewish people who have never come to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah.
- Jesus says, *Don't worry about that. As much persecution as you're facing, it will all be worth it. There will come a time that even the ones who are totally hostile to you right now, will soften and turn to me, and they'll become your friends.*
- The reason I'll open that door for **them**...is because **you** patiently endure.
- **The way you handle closed doors will open other doors.**

- Whatever suffering we have, **it's never for nothing**. All the trouble you go through in this life can enrich you. Your suffering can have a purpose. It can make you a better person than you were before.
- The closed door in your life can lead to open doors.
- Now how do we make that happen? The answer is the second object:

Key.

- The way a Christian makes sure that a closed door leads to an open one is to recognize who holds the keys to all the doors.
- Look at verse 7. Jesus says, *I have the key of David. What I open no one can shut. And what I shut no one can open.*
- Pain can make you more compassionate and more loving. But pain can also make you more bitter and hard and mean. What's the difference? **It's suffering under authority.**
- It's enduring with an understanding of who holds the key.
- What if every door is opened or shut by God? What if I'm not in control of my life like I thought? And what if God has good reasons for opening and shutting the doors that he does?
- **Without shut doors...I'll never really know who I am.** The way you are when things are at their worst is who you really are. The real you gets exposed when trouble comes in and doors get shut. You'll never know yourself without suffering.
- **Without shut doors...I'll never know what lasts.** In trials and suffering God is showing you what flimsy things you've built your life on. Anything but him will be washed away with the waves. Your castle will crumble.
- **Without shut doors...I'll never be able to help.** The people who are the most compassionate when someone loses someone close are the people who have lost someone close.
- When you acknowledge that Jesus has the key, then you can realize that there is purpose behind every door. Your suffering is never for nothing.
- Is that not what Jesus himself did? Jesus, the God who holds the key of David, experienced what it means to be locked out. The closed door for Jesus was to have the wrath of God poured out on him because of sin.
- And what did he say to that closed door? *Your will be done.*
- Suffering under authority...seeing that Jesus is in control, but also seeing the way that he's in control...will turn your suffering into something useful and great instead of something that's only terrible.

Pillar.

At the end of this letter is a promise: *To the one who conquers I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, never shall he go out of it.*

- What's a pillar? Something rock solid. It's stable. It's lasting.
- Jesus says, I will make you a pillar in the house of my God. I will make you into people who are faithful, bearing the name of God for the glory of God for all time.

- *Only the people of Philadelphia* knew what a great promise was being made here by Jesus. That they could remain inside forever, never being forced by the world's circumstances (earthquakes) to seek safety outside and flee.
- You can endure. You can continue in patient endurance, because one day soon, all your suffering will come to an end.
- A pillar of God is someone who says, "I don't know why I'm suffering today. But I know that soon the suffering will be over. Because a Savior came down there will be an end to all suffering, including the thing I'm going through right now."
- They can endure. They know the war is over, and Jesus has won.
- Do you?