A Divinely Positioned Church.

Revelation 3:7-8  And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth: I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

Philadelphia

- Philadelphia was a city situated in a strategic place on the main route of the Imperial Road from Rome to the East.
  - Because of that it was once known as “the gateway to the East.”
  - The only major problem with the location was that the area was prone to earthquakes.
    - Philadelphia sat on a geological fault, and in 17 b.c. it was destroyed by a severe earthquake that also destroyed Sardis and ten other cities.
  - Afterward, many of the citizens refused to move back into the city and remained in the surrounding countryside, which featured lush green farmland.
    - It was a city with great potential, struggling against circumstances that conspired against it.

- And, within that shaken city, there existed a church.
  - Like the town that was its home, the church at Philadelphia was not great, but it was good.
    - It wasn’t a mega church but it was a sufficient little place.
      - It was not powerful but what it lacked in power it made up for in faithfulness.

- That little band of believers was struggling to have church in a shaken land with a faltering economy and an abundance of uncertainty.
  - But that little church caught the eye of heaven...

- From the Isle of Patmos, when John took pen in hand to write “He that hath an ear let him hear what the spirit saith to the churches…”
  - God sent a message to the little church of Philadelphia.
    - Rev 3:7-8 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works:
  - God said, “I know you! I know what your doing”
    - You’re labor is not in vain.
      - You’re efforts have not gone unnoticed.
        - I’ve got my eyes on you, I know your works!

- God has his eye on his church!
  - He knows us!
    - The great God of heaven has his eye upon his church.
o He knows your works.
  ▪ Not one moment of prayer has gone unnoticed
  ▪ Not one chapter read out of your bible has escaped him.

o I know your works!
  ▪ I’ve heard your prayers, I’m aware of your earnest plea, I’ve watched your faithfulness.

o Sometimes we get the mistaken notion that we live in a vacume, that our lives amount to nothing.
  ▪ I want you to know tonight that you are precious to God.
  ▪ He has his eye on your life!
  ▪ He knows your works.
  ▪ He knows all there is to know about your life!
  ▪ He is watching over his church!

• What works does he know?

• First he said, I know that you have a little strength.
  o Have you ever felt like you just had a little strength?
    ▪ This is not a rebuke, God is praising this little church, but he says, You have a little strength.
    • You may not have many people but you’ve got a little strength.
    • You may not have the greatest talent but you’ve got a little strength.
    • You may not have the nicest things but you’ve got a little strength.
    • The parking lot may be gravel, the foyer may be unfinished but you’ve got a little strength.
    • You may have half the people here on Sunday night that you had on Sunday morning but you’ve got a little strength.
  o You’ve fought your battles, you’ve faced your giants,
    ▪ you’ve walked through your valleys,
    ▪ you’ve weathered your storms
    ▪ and yet you’ve still got a little strength!
  o Don’t despise the small things.
    ▪ God can do more with a little strength among a people that are faithful than could ever be done among those that have much strength but no faithfulness!
    ▪ God’s message to the church in Philidelphia was simply this: a little strength is enough strength!
      • I can use you if you’ve got just a little strength!
      • How many here tonight have got a little strength?
      • That’s all God needs to ignite a revival!

• God said, let me tell you what else I know about you: You’ve kept my word and you haven’t denied my name!
God is getting ready to open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing upon his church.

- Let me tell you what he’s looking for:
  - He’s looking for a church that has a little strength, that has kept his word and that hasn’t denied his name!
  - He’s looking for a bible believing assembly of people that aren’t ashamed to be known as a people of the name of Jesus.
- And he’s not even asking that you have an abundance of strength.
  - He’s only asking that you have a little strength.
  - Love the word. Love the name. Have a little strength.

Can I tell you something tonight, I may be weary but I think I’ve got a little strength.

- I may be worn and battle scarred but I think I’ve got a little strength.
  - I know that I love his word,
  - and I know that I cherish his name
  - and I’m pretty sure that I’ve got a little fight left in me.

I can’t help but believe that God is walking through Lake City this evening looking for a church that meets that simple definition.

- I believe that we are that church.
  - Does anybody have a little strength left?
  - Has anybody kept his word?
  - Has anybody refused to deny his name?

Listen to what the Lord says to the church in Philidelphia...

- These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

I want to admonish you tonight to hear what the spirit of the Lord has to say to the church:

- “Behold, I have set before thee an open door…”

What an incredible promise.

- God has a opened a door before his church.
- A door that flesh and blood cannot manipulate, a door that no man can close has opened up before the church.
  - There’s a door open!
  - There’s an opportunity just waiting for the church to take advantage of it!

- In the New Testament, an “open door” speaks of opportunity for ministry.
- Let me give you a brief glimpse of the term in New Testament usage:
 Acts 14:27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

 The Message: On arrival, they got the church together and reported on their trip, telling in detail how God had used them to throw the door of faith wide open so people of all nations could come streaming in.

• That’s what God said he would do for a faithful church that had just a little strength!
• He will throw the door of faith wide open so that people can come streaming in!
  o Colossians 4:3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:
  o (NIV) And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.
• A door of utterance, a door for our message.
• There is a door open where folks who were once closed to our message are now open, where folks who once rejected truth will now entertain it.
  o 1 Corinthians 16:9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.
  o (NLT) for there is a wide-open door for a great work here, and many people are responding. But there are many who oppose me.
• A wide open door for a great work.
  o This what God said he would do.
   ▪ He will throw open a wide open door before his church!
• He said, I’ve noticed you.
  o Somebody ought to rejoice that you are on Heaven’s radar tonight!
   ▪ I’ve noticed you. I know your works.
   ▪ I know that you love my word.
   ▪ I know that you’ve been faithful to my name.
• And I want to tell you that I have set before you an open door.
  o I've given you an unprecedented opportunity for ministry.
• I know you are weary, I know that you’ve only got a little strength
  o But I have given to you a door already opened
   ▪ A door that no man can shut
   ▪ I’ve given you an atmosphere that is conducive to revival!

• The thing about a door, even an open door, is that in order to gain access to that which lies beyond it you must first walk through it.
  o I really believe that this is where we are as a church.
   ▪ I believe that we have been divinely positioned.
   ▪ I believe that God has had his hand upon us all along.
   ▪ I believe that he has brought us to this place at this time because he has placed before us an open door!
• I know that we are a little church with a little strength but I believe that just as surely as John wrote to the church in Philadelphia, the spirit is calling out to this church tonight.
  o Behold, I have set before you an open door and no man can shut it!
• I come to this pulpit tonight to encourage the church.
  o Revival is ours.
  o Everything we’ve been hungry for is getting ready to take place.
  o God is going to open the windows of heaven and pour out the kind of blessing that this house cannot contain.
    ▪ But we must walk through the door.
    ▪ That’s the thing about a door.
    ▪ Even though its already opened – we must walk through it!
• You may not have much strength left.
  o You may be weary and weak.
    ▪ But you’ve got a little strength and a little strength is all it takes to get through the door!
    • A little strength is all it takes to tap into the revival that God is preparing for us.
• I want to encourage you tonight, stay faithful to the word, stay faithful to the name and lets walk together into what God has for us.
  o It’s a door. It’s open.
    ▪ We’ve gotta do something with it.
      • This is the time to tell your neighbor.
      • This is the time to reach out to your friends.
      • This is the time to pray and fast for your lost family member.
        o This is our hour!
        o This is our moment!
        o This is our open door!

• A few years ago Malcom Glidewell wrote a book called the tipping point.
  o The premise behind the book was to focus on that one dramatic moment in time when everything can change all at once.
    ▪ It is the moment of critical mass, the threshold, the boiling point.
      • It is the place where the unexpected becomes reality, where radical change occurs.
    ▪ It is the place where, with absolutely no forewarning the entire world can change as the result of one small seemingly insignificant event..
• It is symbolized in the book by that single lone snowflake that comes drifting from the sky and lightly settles upon the mountain of snow that hangs precariously over a mighty precipice.
  o The snowflake, in and of itself isn’t much.
    ▪ It doesn’t weight much at all.
• It has only a little strength.
  • But when its minute weight settles onto that mighty mountain of snow it, alone, is the difference between calm and chaos.
    ▪ It’s fragile weight is just enough to cause the collapse that results in an avalanche that becomes a thunderous powerful force that obliterates an entire mountainside.
    • All because of one simple snowflake.
• A tipping point, by definition, generates effects that are greatly disproportionate to the cause.
  • That is where we are!
    ▪ A church with just a little strength.
    ▪ A church with just a few members.
      • Getting ready to reap results that are greatly disproportionate to who and what we are.
        o Because God has opened a door that we couldn’t open on our own!
• Remain faithful.
  • Keep standing in the gap.
    ▪ Keep marching through the door because God is about to take your little strength and cause it to become the catalyst that ignites a mighty fire of revival.
• I truly believe that, in Lake City there has been an open door set before the church.
  • God has created a divinely appointed time for a divinely positioned church and we are on precipice of reaping a harvest of souls.
    ▪ Oh, Lord, (we need to cry out) take my little strength and compel me through the door that you have opened!

Close
• Sam Jones was a popular evangelist in the South years ago.
  • During the course of a revival meeting, he would designate a "Quitter’s Night."
    ▪ People were asked to bring symbols, or pictures, of their sins: cards, dice, whiskey bottles, pictures of other men’s wives, and so forth.
  • When the time came and the fiery evangelist exhorted the brethren to come forward and leave evidence of their sins, a sweet little elderly sister responded to the call.
    ▪ As she made her way down the center aisle the fiery evangelist was taken aback for a moment and he asked, "Aunt Sarah, what in the world are you repenting of?"
• No one was prepared for her answer.
  • She replied, "I ain’t done nothing, and I’m gonna quit it!"
    ▪ I’m going to quit doing nothing!
• Tonight, I believe that God is calling his church to action.
If you've been guilty of doing little or nothing can I tell you that it's quitters night tonight and you need to quit doing nothing!
  - There is an incredible opportunity before us, a door has opened, God has created an opportunity.
- We must seize the moment, we must grab a hold of this day, we must compel ourselves through that open door and get a hold of what God has for us!