

DOOR OF EVANGELISM

“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. 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. Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. Revelation 3:7-9, NKJV

The church in Philadelphia was considered a good congregation like the church in Smyrna. They were the churches that were free from the criticism of the Lord Jesus. They were the churches that only received words of commendation from the Lord and not reprimands or reproaches. From the church in Philadelphia, we can learn some things about the church that the Lord desires. Philadelphia was located in the Asia Minor. This city was the cultural center of ancient Greece, it was established approximately in 189 BC by King Eumenes II. King Attalus II then succeeded King Eumenes II around 159-138 BC. King Attalus II loved his brother, Eumenes, so dearly. In Greek, the term for loving brothers is “Philadelphos.” The word “Philadelphos” comes from two Greek words: “Phileo” means brotherly love and “Adelphos” means brother. So “Philadelphos” means “one who loves his brother”. Because Attalus II was known as “Philadelphos”, the city he established was called as “Philadelphia”.

This city was established with a specific purpose, which is to spread the Greek culture, especially the Greek language to the surrounding areas, especially the region of Mysia, Lydia, and Phrygia that were situated in the border of Philadelphia, with the intention of hellenization. For this purpose, the gate of Philadelphia remained open in order to enable the surrounding inhabitants to interact with the Philadelphians. Therefore, the Greek culture, especially the language, could be widely known. This strategy was proven successful, because in the year 19 AD all the inhabitants of Lydia had forgotten their native language and had used Greek instead. Because Philadelphia was always open to the surrounding people/cities, Philadelphia was known as the city with open door. Through this city of brotherly love, the door of evangelism was opened for the non believers in the region.

The Lord spoke of ‘an opened door’ that

no one can shut. Door is also a symbol for gospel. For example, Paul said in 2 Corinthians 2:12, “When I came to the city of Troas to preach the Good News of Christ, the Lord opened a door (Greek: thura) of opportunity for me (NLT)” – it is the same word used in Revelation 3:8, which means ‘door’.

SOME OF THE THINGS THAT THE LORD GAVE TO THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA

1. A Little Strength (Greek: Mikran echeis dunamin)

Pay attention to verse 8b, Jesus said, “for you have a little strength...”

The church in Philadelphia was not a big church that had unlimited resources.

On the other hand, they had many weaknesses; nonetheless, in the aspect of an open door, they could make the most of it.

To become an effective tool in the hands of God, we must realize how limited our strength is, so that we will remain to lean on the unlimited strength and power of God. The Lord will open the door for that kind of Church and that kind of Christians. God uses the believers that realize and acknowledge that they are weak without the power of God that dwells in them. God uses churches and people that are considered insignificant by the world. God prefers the humble, not the proud. God prefers the weak, not the strong. In 2 Corinthians 12:9, when the Apostle Paul asked the Lord to get rid of his weakness that he called as thorn in his flesh, the Lord answered: “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness”. Paul responded to it very well, he said: “Therefore, most gladly I

will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

2. Obey the Word of God

In verse 8, Jesus said, “you...have kept My word” (Greek: Heteresas mou ton logon). The weak Philadelphian church relied on the written Word of God to gain strength and they made the Word as their guide. They studied the Word of God together. Therefore, the Lord opened a door of opportunity for believers that honor the authority of God’s Word; that is for those who live in accordance to the Book of all books. The door of opportunity will be closed for you if you let the Bible to remain closed.

3. Doesn’t Deny the Name of the Lord (Greek: Ouk hernesō to honoma mou)

The word hernesō is written in singular form, means that there was not even one person that denied the Lord, each individual obeyed the Word of God.

Pay attention to verse 8b, Jesus said: “You have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.”

Philadelphia was a church that refused to stop putting their faith in Jesus though they were mocked by the Greek or pressured by the people who worshipped idol and were persecuted by them. Nothing could shake their faith. They were steadfast, they didn’t deny the name of the Lord, they were faithful to the end. Nothing and no one could stop them from putting their faith in Jesus! Let’s all follow what the Philadelphian church had done, and we will certainly receive the same words of commendation from Christ, the Head of the Church. (JS)

Quote:

“The door of opportunity will be closed for you if you let the Bible to remain closed.”