

To the Church in Philadelphia

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[0:00] Good morning, everyone. I'm going to stand today. I think James, as he adjusted his mic previously, he'd say he did some research and it's the same height regardless of whether he's sitting or standing, but I think I got a few inches on him. So I'm gonna stand today.

Um, but yeah, good morning. And as a church, we've been going through the book of revelation together, um, the last few weeks, and it's called the book of revelation because as we see in the first verse, it's the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to servants the things that much soon take place.

And we're going through revelation because as we're starting the season of church together, this new season of church, we wanted to start with the end in mind. We need a clear picture of what is at the end over there in order to give us the right focus on what we should be doing here. And now what we have around us, the beanbag chairs, freshly brewed coffee, a pool table in the back. That's not the end goal.

And this life that we live now, the things that we enjoy is also not the end goal. And thank God that it's not because what we see in this book in revelation is that we have something that's so much better. We have a greater reward. We have an inheritance that is one of a kind and set apart. The reward that we have is that we will have God himself. He will be our God. We will be his people and we will be able to worship him for all time, unstained by sin and beyond the reach of death. That's the hope that we have. And that's what we see in revelation.

[1:38] Now the last several weeks, we've been looking at the letters in revelation to the seven churches. These letters are from Jesus. He has a message for the churches and he had a lot of praise for some churches, but for others, simply a stern warning.

But in all cases, regardless of the message, there is one call and that's to keep the end in mind. There's a reward to the one who conquers and who makes it to the end. And although the letters are addressed to these seven churches in Asia, the letters are also for us. The message to the churches is also a message to the one church, the universal church, God's gathered people for all time, including God's church, his people here in this room today.

And this week now we're looking at the letter to the church in Philadelphia. And if you have your Bibles open, you might notice that we skipped one of the letters.

We skipped the letter to the church in Sardis. James was going to preach on the letter to Sardis last week, but unfortunately we missed our weekly gathering because of the typhoon and he's out of town this week.

So, and the best you have is me. Um, so, okay. Yeah. Okay. And yeah, I prepare for Philadelphia. So, um, that's what we're going to be opening up today, but we're going to jump back to Sardis next week.

[3:00] Um, to the one who conquers past this week, you'll hear about the letter to Sardis next Sunday. Um, uh, but yeah, we'll, we'll have Jackie now to read, um, the letter, Jackie and Paul, wonderful Jackie and Paul, um, to read the letter to Philadelphia.

For us. I knew I forgot something. So yes, please stand as we read the word together.

Revelations free. And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, right? 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.

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.

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.

[4:21] Because you have kept my word about patience and 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. I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have so that no one may seize your crown.

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.

He who has ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Amen. Thank you. It's the word of the Lord.

Yeah, the letter starts off. And to the letter of the church in Philadelphia, write.

[5:32] 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. See, these are the words of Jesus.

They're the words of Jesus himself. We know it's Jesus because the letters in chapter two and three are a continuation of what we read earlier in chapter one. We read the several weeks ago together. And in chapter one, around verse 13, John, who's the author of Revelation, who this revelation was given to, John saw Jesus. Jesus. And what he writes is amazing, nearly incredible even.

See, Jesus had eyes like a flame of fire. From his mouth came a two-edged sword. His face was shining, was like the sun, shining in full strength. His voice was like the roar of many waters.

And the question we were asked is, is this the Jesus we know? Have you ever seen someone like this? Have you ever been brought face to face with a man like that?

[6:33] Is this the Jesus you know? Well, this is Jesus himself. This is who is speaking. And Jesus spoke to John in one verse 17, and he tells him, he tells John to write to the churches.

And these letters are the words of Jesus himself. And now, why should we even care about this letter in the first place? If I stand up here and talk for an hour, half an hour, why should you even listen?

There's one reason. Only because that these are the words of Jesus himself. These are the words of God. He wrote the church in Philadelphia a letter, and he wrote us a letter. So jumping back to chapter three now, this is how Jesus introduces himself in verse seven.

He says, these are 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.

Now let's start with the first part. Jesus is the Holy One, the true one. Now we say the word holy a lot in church, right? You hear it, that God is holy. We sing about this.

[7:38] Holy, holy, holy. Holy, holy. You might also yell the word holy when you're walking home at night and you look down and see a cockroach. Holy. But what does holy mean? It means that Jesus is set apart.

He's one of a kind. He's completely other in a league of his own and wholly different from anything else. That's what we mean when we say holy. In Isaiah 40 verse 25, this is what it says.

The Lord says, to whom then will you compare me that I should be like him? Says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see. Who can we compare God to?

There's no one like him. Do you know anyone else who has a face shining like the sun with a sword coming out of his mouth? Have you met someone else who literally created the entire universe?

Everything that we see around us, he made by the word of his mouth. Out of nothing, he said, let there be light. And there was light. There's nobody like him. That's what we mean when we say that Jesus is holy.

[8:41] And also Jesus being holy means that he is completely perfect. He is morally perfect. He's blameless and not just blameless, but actively good. Jesus, when he lived on earth, he healed.

He cared for people. He loved those who weren't lovable or those who others did not love. He's good. And that perfection is also what we mean when we say that he's holy. Jesus is also the true one.

That means that he's genuine. He's true. He's real. He's not false, but true. He really is who he says he is. We can trust him and we can take him at his word. He's the true one.

And we'll talk more about this later. Next to says that Jesus is the one who, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.

Now to understand this, a little bit of history recap. Who is David? This key of David. What does this refer to? Well, David was the second king of Israel and probably the greatest king in Israel's history. [9 : 45] David feared God and loved him. God himself said that he found in David a man after God's own heart. That's how much David loved God. And so God made a covenant with King David.

He made a promise, a vow with King David. He promised David that he would establish his house, the house of David forever. Meaning that God would raise up a son of David who would hold the throne forever.

His kingdom would endure forever. There'd be a son of David who is king forever. And this is what the Jews had in mind. This is, it's this covenant that the Jews had in mind when they have the hope of a Messiah savior.

And even today there's Jews who are waiting for a Messiah to come and reign as King. The son of David was promised one. Who's heard of the word Messiah. How about Christ?

Who's heard of Christ? Maybe a few more as in Jesus Christ. Well, Christ Christos is the Greek translation of that, of the word Messiah.

[10 : 49] The Jewish word Messiah. And so when we call Jesus the Christ, we're actually call him also Jesus, the Messiah. The anointed one descended from David who God promised would bring victory and peace.

Who God promised would bring this reign, the reign of God's kingdom forever. So Jesus as Christ means that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's covenant with David. And more than that, the fulfillment of all God's promises in his word altogether.

So Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the one promised to save all of us. And that's the context behind Jesus's reference to David here. Also in saying the key of David, Jesus was referring to another bit of Old Testament, a lesser known man called Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah.

In Isaiah chapter 22, God makes a promise to him. He says that he'll lift up his servant Eliakim and put authority in his hands. And I'll read from Isaiah now.

And I want you, if you have your Bibles open to compare that to verse seven in Revelation in chapter three. So Isaiah 22 verse 22 says, I will place on his shoulder.

[11 : 58] So Eliakim's shoulder, the key of the house of David. He shall open and none shall shut. He shall shut and none shall open. You see that? The verses are nearly identical here.

And now in Isaiah, the point was that Eliakim was to be a servant. He was to be a steward over the royal house of David.

He held the key to the house of David. If you wanted to get to the king, remember King David, if you wanted to get to him, then you had to go through Eliakim. If he opened, then the door was open and no one could close it.

You had access. The way is clear. But if he closed, then the door was closed. You could bang on the door all you want, but no one's going to open to it. The way to the king, this house of David is closed.

So Eliakim had the sole authority to determine who had this access to the king. And the same and more is true of Jesus. If we look forward to Revelation chapter one, sorry, Revelation chapter four, verse one, there's another door that we see.

[13 : 02] And I think this in part is what Jesus is referring to when he's saying he's hold this key. He holds this key of David. It says there, behold, a door standing open in heaven.

And if we read on this door brings access to God in heaven, passing through the door, we see one seated on the throne in heaven with flashes of lightning, rumbling, peals of thunder.

He's surrounded by four living creatures that day and night never cease to say, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty who was and is and is to come. So David, Jesus holds this key, the key of David, but he does it in a way that is superior, even better than Eliakim.

See, Eliakim had the key to an earthly king, but Jesus holds the key to the king of heaven and earth. Eliakim was just a servant to the king, a steward, but Jesus is both servant and king.

He's a king who made himself a servant to us. Jesus is the door himself. He is himself the way, the truth and the life. And no one comes to the father except through Jesus.

[14 : 10] If he opens, nobody shuts. And if, but if he shuts, nobody can open. And one question is how is Jesus able to do this? Well, several weeks ago, again, in revelation one verse 19, we saw Jesus saying this.

He says, fear not. I am the first and the last and the living one. I died and behold, I am alive forevermore. And I have the keys of death and Hades.

See, Jesus doesn't just have the key of David. He has the keys of death and Hades itself. Jesus has total and control and dominance over death. And ironically, he did this himself by dying. Look what it says in verse 18. I'm the living one. I died and behold, I'm alive forever. And that's how he won victory over death and Hades. That's how he got these keys to death and Hades. You see, we couldn't get close to God because of our sin. We couldn't have a relationship with God because of our sin. And we all deserve death because of our sins. But Jesus, he died and is alive forever.

[15 : 18] He died on the cross, paying the penalty for our sins. And he conquered death by rising on the third day from death. Through his death and resurrection, through the cross, Jesus made a way for us to God.

Through the cross, he holds both the keys of death and the key of David that leads us to God. And he takes the keys of death and he closes that door to us. But he takes the key of David and opens the door for us to God.

That's Jesus. This is the one who speaks to the church in Philadelphia. And this is the Jesus that speaks to us. Jesus, the holy one, the true one, and the only way to God.

Now let's read on in verse eight. Jesus says, I know your works. Behold, I've 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. He says, I know your works. Now this is a way that Jesus begins all his letters to the seven churches.

[16 : 24] He knows our works. He knows. He sees what we're doing even if no one else does. And we skipped Sardis last week. But the letter to Sardis last week was a pretty spicy letter.

Jesus doesn't pull back any punches. He says to them, I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive. But you are dead. Wake up. Ouch.

Like I can imagine the church in Philadelphia holding the breath after hearing that. What's Jesus going to say next? Pretty anxious after that. But the tone with the church in Philadelphia is pretty different.

Jesus says to them, I know your works. I know that you have but a little power. And yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. What a relief.

Wouldn't we want Jesus to say that to us also? And not only that, but Jesus slides in a promise to them in the middle. He says, behold, I've set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut.

[17 : 26] We saw how Jesus has the final authority to open or close this door. And to the church in Philadelphia, he assures them. I've given you this open door.

It's open. No one can close it. He promises to them that their salvation, their way to God is secure. I open for you a way to God that nobody can close and nobody will close.

No matter what this church faces, no matter what opponents rise up, no matter what their enemies say, the door is open. The way to God is clear and no one can stand against them.

Their salvation is secure. Now let's move on to verse nine. He says, behold, I'll 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. Does this sound familiar to anyone? The synagogue of Satan.

[18 : 27] We heard about them a few weeks ago in the letter to Smyrna. The church in Smyrna, as James preached on, faced the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

Remember that? Pretty similar to what we read here. The church in Smyrna was under persecution. And Jesus said to them, I know your tribulation.

There's tribulation. There's people persecuting them and your poverty. The church was poor, but he says, yet you are rich. Smyrna was persecuted and poor, yet Jesus called them rich.

But on the other hand, there are some that are rich on the outside, but are completely empty and miserable on the inside. You can be rich now, but without Jesus, actually poor, pitiable, blind, naked.

Yet Jesus says to Smyrna, if you have Jesus, nothing else. We're rich. We can be poor yet with Jesus have everything. And in Smyrna, there were Jews who opposed the Christians there.

[19:31] They stirred up trouble with the government, with the Roman Empire. They accused the church of refusing to respect Caesar and for dishonoring him, not worshiping him. They slandered the church, saying that they were rebellious and seeking to cause trouble against Rome.

And in Philadelphia here, we see a similar conflict. There were Jews who were ethnically Jews by descent, but who opposed the church.

The Jews cast out Christians out of the synagogue because they, the Christians proclaim that Jesus was the Messiah. And the Christians proclaim that Jesus is the Savior, the son of David, who they all have been waiting for.

This Messiah promised. But the Jews rejected Jesus and accused the church of blasphemy because of their witness and cast them out of the synagogue, said, you're not one of us.

The Jews boasted in the race and their rituals. They boasted in, as God's people, because they were descended as Abraham. And I think they had some reason to.

[20:35] God said to Abraham that his descendants would be his chosen people. And that through Abraham, all the nations of the earth will be blessed. The Jews had this promise.

They had laws and rituals. They had law that if they kept the law, it would lead to righteousness and life. And they believe that they were God's chosen people. Yet, Jesus says to them, he says to the church that these people who oppose you, who deny me, he says that they are in fact, not his people, but the synagogue of Satan.

They are false and they lie. These are pretty harsh words. To be called the synagogue of Satan.

And why does he say that? If they had all the promises, they, they were, they had, they had the law.

They were God's, they were meant to be God's people by descent, but he calls them the synagogue of Satan for one reason. Because they deny Jesus. They lie because they reject Jesus. First John 2:22 says, who is the liar, but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ. It goes on to say, no one who denies the son has the father.

[21:57] Whoever confesses the son has the father. Also, they lie about Jesus. They reject him. And in doing so, they also lie about who they themselves are.

They're not God's people. They say they're God's people. They say they're Jews, but they are not for one reason, because they deny Jesus. They're ethnically Jews, but not Jews. They're not God's chosen people because they reject him.

And we saw earlier in verse seven, that Jesus is the true one. He says, he's the true one. He's genuine. He's real. He really is the Messiah, the Christ, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

He really did die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. And he really did rise to life and reigns now as the son of David forevermore.

That's the truth. And we sang about this earlier. Thank you, Ellie, for leading us. How Jesus is the way maker. He is the door. He's the way. He made a way for us to God.

[22:56] And I love that we kept repeating that bridge. That is who you are. And that's what we confess when we sing those lyrics. That is who you are. You are the true one.

You are the Messiah. You're the one who made a way for us. You are true. Even if others say otherwise. The good news of Jesus Christ will be true and remains true regardless of whether we believe it or not.

Regardless of whether other people believe in him, whether we believe in him, Jesus is the true one. If others reject him and mock us for believing in him like they did Philadelphia, Jesus is still the true one.

If people call this all a fairy tale, same thing. He is the true one. Or maybe you yourself don't know Jesus yet. You're not convinced yet that Jesus is the Christ.

Even still, Jesus is the true one. And the question for us today is how will we respond to this truth? Do we cling to this truth? Do we build our lives on the foundation that Jesus is the son of God who died for our sins?

[24:04] Is that what we're staking our life on? Do we know the Jesus who writes to us? Or to those here for the first time who don't yet know Jesus, will you choose to follow him?

Why don't you take a step today to seek him and get to know him? No one who denies Jesus, the son of God knows God, the father. And I don't know if you think you believe in God, but are hearing about him for the first time.

If you're hearing about Jesus for the first time, then, then candidly speaking, I don't think you really know God. Because Jesus, no one has God except if you have the son also.

But that's okay. You can start today. You can start today. Look to those sitting beside you and ask them afterwards to tell you about Jesus. Ask them to tell you about who he is.

Or you can come up and talk to me. I'd love to tell you more. But I'm hoping that as you come up, you'll bump into the church, into God's people. People who have seen and heard the living Christ.

[25 : 10] And who are dying to tell you about who he is. In Mission Impossible, Mr. Phelps, he picks up the phone every now and then and he hears this.

Your mission, should you choose to accept it. But that's not the case with Jesus. It's your mission. He's our mission. Whether or not we choose to accept him.

If we reject him, he's still true. He is still the way, the truth, and the life. And if we walk away and neglect him, the truth remains that no one comes to the Father except through Jesus. And it doesn't matter what we boast in.

Whether, like the Jews, we have things to boast in. What good we've done. We've all sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified purely by his grace as a gift. Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Let's hold to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God. The Messiah who died for us. So there's a synagogue of Satan. And Jesus, yeah, there's a synagogue of Satan who opposes Jesus and the church in Philadelphia.

[26 : 17] But Jesus says of them, he says of the synagogue of Satan, Behold, I will make them come and bow down at your feet. And they will learn that I have loved you.

I have loved you. So there's hope here. The synagogue of Satan will bow down before our feet.

This means that we will be vindicated and victorious. See, following Jesus isn't easy.

There's a cost with it. We don't follow Jesus just by praying a prayer once and then simply moving on and carrying on with our lives completely unchanged. Following Jesus requires that we deny ourselves.

We pick up our cross and follow him. And before we do that, we should count the cost. Because if we do that, if we really follow Jesus, then as we saw with the church in Smyrna, persecution will come.

Jesus promises that. When we follow Jesus, we will have to live differently and make decisions that appear foolish. You might miss out on some big contract because you know it's not right to add some window dressing to that number.

[27 : 22] Or maybe you drift apart from your friends because you don't live like they do. You don't enjoy the same things that they do. You know that their invitation to a late night means trouble.

And as James says, you can't honestly say to yourself that you're going to evangelize to junk people and care for them. Maybe that's not true. There's a cost to following Jesus.

And Philadelphia, the church in Philadelphia paid that cost. But Jesus says to us, hold fast because you'll be victorious and vindicated. And what is our victory?

Jesus says, behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet. The synagogue of Satan. They will bow down, come and bow down before your feet. What does this mean? See, our enemies persecute us, but then Jesus comes and says, Aha, now we have the power and now they're bowing down before us instead of the other way around.

Is that what he's saying? Let's see. Jesus says, I will come. I'll make them come and they will bow down before your feet. But it continues. It says that, and then they will learn that I have loved you.

[28 : 29] They will learn that I have loved you. They will know this, that Jesus, that I have loved you. I think that's the crux of it. That's the victory that we will have.

That's our vindication. That the whole world, everyone will know that Jesus loved us. That's our vindication. His love for us is our crown and glory.

One day, it might be hidden now. The world might not see it now. But one day, his love for us won't be hidden. It'll be so undeniable. It will shine so brightly that our enemies will come and bow down at our feet.

But that's the glory we have, that Jesus loved us. And does this fact amaze us? Does this wow you? I don't want us to pass over this, that Jesus loves us.

We say this so much, but really he loves us. He loves us. Do you know in your hearts, in the deepest crevice of your hearts, that God, that Jesus loves us?

[29:30] I want us to know this. Let's all say this together. Let's say this out loud together. Let's say it out loud together that Jesus loves me. On three. One, two, three. Jesus loves me.

With a little bit more enthusiasm. Jesus loves me. That's the truth that we hold on to, and that will be a crown. 1 John 4, 9 says, In this the love of God was manifest among us, that God sent his son into the world, so that we might live through him.

In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation, to pay the penalty for our sins. Jesus died for our sins, and that is a love that will one day drive our enemies, drive the whole world to their knees before us.

And if that's true, it's also a love that should throw us on our faces before God. It's a love that ought to compel us with awe and wonder to love others in the way that God loved us.

Being amazed by this, at this love, frees us to love our enemies, to turn the other cheek, to forgive radically. God's love is a love that casts out fear, fear of death, fear of punishment, fear of this world.

[30:48] We don't have to be afraid. We don't have to strive when we know that deep down in our hearts, deep down in our souls, we are loved by God. We are called to be saints. That is our identity, not in anything that we do, but that we are loved by God.

That love frees us to love and good works. This is our victory, that Jesus loves us. And I want us to think, practically speaking, how does God's love free us to live in this way this coming week?

Is there a part of your life that you would change if this was your identity, that Jesus loves me? Are you anxious about school, about your performance at work? Well, you don't have to earn any approval because Jesus loves you.

Are you feeling tired and alone? Or maybe you're trying to find approval, jumping from relationship to relationship. Jesus loves you. Are you afraid of being laughed at or rejected?

If you identify as Christian, if you go and tell others about him, well, Jesus loves you and they will know the world will know that he has loved you and they will be amazed by this fact.

[32:01] And with our hearts want them not to bow before us at our feet, but for Jesus to also say to them, I also have loved you. Do we want this for our friends, those around us?

His love is our victory and our vindication. Another thing we can do yesterday, there was a young life event where we wrote down 10 things.

What are 10 ways in which God, you can see God has loved you. Jesus died on the cross for us. He knows us by name. He called us. Evelyn said that he, he even knows the number of hairs on her head.

And when a hair falls out, he changes his count. That's how intimately he knows us. So that's something we can do today. And this afternoon, write down what are some ways in which Jesus, you know that Jesus has loved you or after lunch today, when we're continuing to worship, chat with one another, ask each other, do you know that you're loved by God?

And how does this change? How does this affect the way we're going to, we're going to live this week? So let's continue on in verse 10. Jesus says, 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.

[33:28] Now, earlier we heard Jesus say to the church, I know your works. And this, this, this phrase, I know your works. It's associated with this promise.

Behold, I give you an open door that no one can close. He's giving a salvation that no one can take away. And likewise, in verse 10, we see Philadelphia's works. Jesus says to them, you have kept my word about patient endurance.

And explicitly now in verse 10, Jesus says that Philadelphia's works are reason for this promise that is given. He says, because you kept my word, my word, I also will keep you from this hour of trial. You keep. So I also will keep. So here there's, there's a clear connection between this church's works and the promise given their salvation.

He says, Jesus says, I know your works and promises them salvation. So one question that you might have is did. Yeah. Why, why does Jesus do this?

[34:28] If works are associated with salvation, did Philadelphia earn this open door as given to them? If Philadelphia could work to gain access to God, then implication is so can we, but let's see what Jesus says.

He says, I know your works. I know all the good you've done. I know you are big and powerful. You gave millions of dollars to the poor. You helped so many grandmas cross the street. You gave a balloon to that kid. And that was kind of sweet. Is that what Jesus said to the church in Philadelphia? No. He says, I know your works. I know that you have, but little power, just a teeny ounce of power.

You're weak, but yet you endured for my sake. You kept my word. You did not deny my name, even in your weakness. See, Jesus uses the weak to shame the strong.

He uses the foolish to shame the wise so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. Philadelphia didn't earn that open door because of their works. How can we earn the right to have God come as man and die on the cross for our sins?

[35 : 35] What have you done that deserves that? There's nothing that we can do to make up for our sins. There's nothing that Philadelphia did to earn their salvation. It's a free gift, but their works.

What they did demonstrated that they love God. They had faith in him. They believed in him. In their works, God saw their faith. And likewise, he looks at our faith and he gives us freely reconciliation with him through Jesus.

You see, Philadelphia kept Jesus's word. Let's also keep his word because we trust in him. We trust that Jesus is the true one, that what he says is true.

Let's obey God's word because we know that it is more precious than gold, sweeter than honey, that the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving our soul, that the law, his word, it's not a weight on our shoulders, but it's good.

And that following God's way is better than our way. Philadelphia didn't deny Jesus's name. They didn't deny his name because they love Jesus. Rather than being ashamed of Jesus, ashamed of his name and denying his name.

[36 : 43] Let us boast in him. Let us hold fast to Jesus. Let us confess that Jesus is our Lord and savior, our Christ and Messiah. And let us testify, even with the cost that we would be dead and hopeless.

If Jesus didn't die for us, let's have the strength to not deny Jesus's name because instead we boast in it. And Philadelphia also patiently endured.

They held fast to his word of patient endurance. Let's also do this. Let's also hold fast with patient endurance because we're looking to the reward. We're looking to the reward that's coming on Christ's return.

Let's have faith that our endurance. Now the cost now will be worth it because what we have then, we'll just have not even compare what we have now. Won't even compare to the glory that has to be revealed to us.

And let's look forward to the patients. My prayer for us as a church is that if Jesus wrote us a letter, he would write us one, like the church in Philadelphia, that he would say, I know your works from what you do.

[37 : 44] It's beyond doubt that you love me. You trust me. You have faith in me. And that because of this, I promise you an open door salvation. Let's be a church like that.

Let's continue on in verse 11. Jesus says, I am coming soon. Hold fast to what you have so that no one may seize your crown. So, so far, everything's been all good.

Jesus has been kind of talking up the Philadelphians, sort of tooting the horn a bit, but now we've been hearing praises and promises. So far, nothing actual to do yet.

If you read this letter, but now there's finally a command. There's, there's an imperative given now finally in verse 11. And there's one actual command. There's one main command that God, that Jesus gives to Philadelphia in this letter.

And it's this hold fast, hold fast, hold fast to what you have. He says, I'm coming soon. Hold on to what you have. So that no one takes your crown.

[38 : 45] That's the command he gives to Philadelphia. And that's the command he gives to us also. And he motivates this command to hold fast in a few ways. First, he says to them, I'm coming soon.

He's coming soon. Jesus coming is coming soon. This is a big emphasis in revelation. Jesus's second coming, his return. And we talk about how we want to have the end in mind.

We want to start with the end in mind. Well, Jesus coming is the end. That's the end we want to have in mind. Literally in the first verses, verse of revelation, John, he writes that this book is about

the things that must soon take place.

They're happening soon. Jesus is the one who is and who was and who is to come. And this hope of Jesus's return carries all the way to the end of the book, where Jesus says, he says to us, surely I'm coming soon.

That's how he closes. And a big purpose of this book is as we read it, we might respond. We might have in our hearts to respond. Amen. Come Lord Jesus.

[39 : 50] And when reading revelations, we're meant to get excited about this and prepare for his return. This end that is coming. My question for us is, is do we hold onto this fact that Jesus is coming soon?

How often do we think of his return? There's a, there's a trend in this last month where people would ask their friends, how often do you think of the Roman empire, right?

For some people it's once every few weeks or for others, every day, right? There's aqueducts, there's paved roads, there's fit Roman soldiers. How often does it strike you that Jesus is coming soon?

Do you think of his return? That Jesus is coming. We need to have this end in mind constantly. He is coming. We need to be prepared for his return.

Right? Do we think there's a cross our minds that Jesus is coming. And if it does, how does this change the way we live our lives? Right? Have a think what, what motivates you?

[40 : 50] What, what's, what drives you every day? If we're slaving away, just looking forward to our next vacation, our dream home retirement, that's what we're working towards.

Only. I want us to consider if those are the main things on our mind, how does that, what does that tell us about how excited we are for Christ's return? I don't know about you, but as, as a kid, I, the night before family trips, I always got really excited and excited to the point where it was hard for me to fall asleep.

Cause I was just thinking excited about this thing that was happening on this trip. Um, are we excited about Christ's return in the same way, or does it not even cross our mind?

Right? Are we excited about Jesus's return as we would be about a trip to Bali? Um, cause I'll be even better than that. Or are we as excited as going to work on a Monday morning?

Um, but when, when Jesus returns, this, this day will be glorious. It'll be glorious like nothing we've ever seen. But do we even stop and think about it?

[41 : 52] Right? Does it come to mind? Cause Jesus will come like a thief in the night. If we're not, even if we don't have this in mind that he's returning, he'll come. And if we're not looking to it, he'll catch us by surprise.

He'll come like a thief in the night. Are we going to be ready? Cause we better be ready when he comes for his return. And for those of us who look forward to his return and looking around this room, I know there's some of us that really do.

I want us to be encouraged. That Christ being offered once to bear the sins of many will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

He'll save those who are eagerly waiting for him. It'll be a glorious day. So keep holding fast with patience and endurance and with eager expectation. Secondly, Jesus promises a crown to those who hold fast.

Second Timothy four, eight says that God promises us a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge will award to all those who have loved his appearing.

[42 : 59] The crown is promised to all those who love and are looking forward to Christ appearing, his, his coming, his, his return. Now in those times, um, a crown would be given to those who won an, an athletic competition.

So who here remembers watching the, the 2004 Olympic games in Athens, in Athens Olympics.

Yeah. Some of you, I don't know, maybe just born. Um, but in the Athens Olympics, in addition to giving out medals, so they give out gold, silver, bronze medals like usual, but they would also put an olive wreath on the heads of the winners following along this, this Greek tradition, um, of this Greek and Roman tradition of putting a crown on, on the winners, the crown, this olive wreath symbolizes victory that you won and you conquered.

And Jesus says to us to hold fast, hold fast so that no one takes this crown. We need to hold fast and persevere to the end in order to receive this crown, right? If you're running a marathon and you stop halfway, some of us run marathons.

What happens if you stop halfway? You didn't finish the race. There's no crown. There's no victory. There's no glory. If you're running a marathon and five steps before the finish line, you stop, you're almost there, but still you didn't finish the race.

There's no crown, no victory. And it'd be shame if we as a church made it so far, endured so much pain, but threw it all away at the end. We can follow God for decades.

[44 : 38] We can be leaders in the church, pastors, deacons, ambassadors, worship leaders, clan leaders. We can follow God for decades, but if we stop before the end, if we start to think at any point, now I made it life's easy and comfortable.

It's time to let loose. I worked so hard. I want my reward now. Remember, it'll all be worthless unless we make it to the end. There's a time for rest and there's time to pass on the baton, but remember this life isn't all that there is.

We need to make it to the end. Jesus is coming soon. Hold fast to what you have so that no one takes your crown. Remember the love that you had at first. Remember the love you had at first, like what Jesus said to Ephesians.

And what exactly is it that we hold onto? See, notice how Jesus says, he says, hold fast to what you have, right? The enemy wants to take a crown. Surely Satan wants to take away our victory, but Jesus doesn't say, hold onto your crown.

He says, hold onto what you have. We don't have a crown yet, but once we receive our crown, we won't have to worry about anyone taking it away.

[45 : 57] First Corinthians 15. We won't have to hold onto a crown on that day. First Corinthians 15 says, behold, I tell you a mystery in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet, we shall all be changed.

When Jesus returns in that moment, it's over. It's done. That's it. We will be made perfect and never again tempted to sin. No one can take away our crown. Then it shall come to pass.

Oh death. Where's your victory? Oh death. Where's your sting? The sting of death is sin. And the power of sin is the law, but thanks be to God who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ.

Our Lord, our crown will be secure on that day. The only method the enemy has to take away our crown is to chorus us, to lose sight of the finish line. Now, so that we stop running the race.

The only weapon the enemy has is to turn us away from Jesus. So we need to hold fast to what we have. We have to hold fast to our faith and the works that come as a result of our faith.

[46 : 54] Like the church in Philadelphia, let us keep God's word, boast in Jesus's name and patiently endure to the end by looking forward to his return. We need to press on and we can do that without worrying.

We can do that because he promises, I've set for you an open door. I am the way, the truth in life. I have the key to David. If I open, no one can shut. Who can separate us from the love of Christ? So tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, danger, nakedness, sword. No, and all these things were more than conquerors through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.

If we hold fast to him. Lastly, in verse 12, there's a third motivation for this command. He says, 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 out of heaven and from my God and my own new name.

[47 : 57] There's even more promised. If that wasn't enough to those who hold fast to his return and receive the crown, the one who conquers, that's another way of referring to those who receive this crown.

Jesus says of them, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it. And the church in Philadelphia would very much appreciate hearing this.

And to be clear so far, when we, when we're talking about the church in Philadelphia today, we're not talking about the city in America where the fresh prince and Joel and Bede live. This Philadelphia is a city, was a city in Asia, where, which is now modern day Turkey.

Um, as with the other churches, seven churches in Revelation, um, these churches were all in Asia in modern day Turkey. And Philadelphia was, was a prosperous city.

And as much as, but as much as the city was prosperous, um, it was also built on a spot that was prone to earthquakes. So in, in 80, 17, several decades before revelation was written, the city of

Philadelphia was hit by major earthquake.

[49:03] And it was so bad that a large portion of the population had to leave the city to go out of it, as you might say, and live outside the city for several years. And it was, it was so bad that the emperor at the time to various, he allowed Philadelphia not to pay taxes so that they could rebuild the city.

Um, because of this, these earthquakes and to this city, Jesus says, I will make the victor a pillar in the temple. My God, never shall he go out of it.

Jesus is saying that the reward is to be a pillar, strong, stable, prominent in the temple of God. The things that shake us now, the things of the world that we put trust in, these can all be hit by an earthquake and destroyed academics, jobs, relationships, status, power.

These can all be shaken, but the temple of God will be indestructible, unshakable. It will never crumble or fade away. We will always have access to, to, to God.

We who conquer will never be shaken by an earthquake and have to leave our home, cast out of the presence of God. Nothing again, will be able to separate us from the love of God and Christ Jesus, our Lord.

[50:10] We saw earlier in the letter to Pergamum that the Jesus promises access and intimacy. The victors in Pergamum was, were promised a white stone with a new name written on the stone, which James summarized for us as access and intimacy.

And here Jesus promises the same thing, but yeah, he promises that he will write some more names on the one who conquers the name of my God, the name of my city, the city, the name of the city of my God, and also my own new name.

And I want us to notice how personal this is. Jesus doesn't just say the temple of God or the temple or the name of God or the city of God. In generality, it's, it's not God as a general being, but it's my God, my God, my God.

There's a closeness about it. We're not talking about God as someone just out there, but no, he's, he's to Jesus. This is my God. He's near and dear to Jesus.

And through Jesus, we have the same act as an intimacy with God that Jesus shares. God has adopted us into his family and made us co-heirs with Jesus. Jesus shares the glory with us and he will write on us the name of his God.

[51:24] He will be our God and we will be his people. That's the promise we have. We'll also have the name of the new Jerusalem, the new city of Jerusalem written on us. I have a passport at home that says Canada on it.

It proves that I have citizenship there and I can turn home at any time. And in the same way, we will have citizenship in heaven, in the new Jerusalem that comes down from heaven and from God, my God himself.

We won't need a passport because his name, the name of the city will be written on us. And lastly, we'll have the name of Jesus written on us. I don't know if you've heard stories of two people falling in love and because they love each other so much, they, and they're going to be together forever.

They get their names tattooed on each other. But six months later, they're crying and then China get this tattoo removed with laser. Well, to the one who conquers, we'll have the name of Jesus written on us, but won't be foolish.

We won't regret it because on us is written the name that is above every name, that the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth. And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God, the father.

[52:35] That's the name that is written on us who died and rose for us. Isn't that great? So access and intimacy.

That's, that's what's promised to us, but not just that permanent access and intimacy. You'll never be shaken. You'll never be removed. That's what's promised to the one who conquers. So are you looking forward to that?

Are you looking forward to Christ's return? Let's remember this, that this week, let's remember these two things. First, that we are loved by Jesus. We're loved by him to the point that he died for our sins.

And how does this love for us change our identities? The way that we see ourselves, how does his love free us to be bold, to love others, not caring about what they'll say because he loves us.

We know that. Second, Jesus is coming soon. And let us as a church, look forward to his return. Let us patiently endure. Let's hold fast until that day. Lest anyone take a crown.

[53 : 38] Let's do something together. Raise our hand. Who here has an ear? Who's got two of them? Well, he who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches.

And we're loved by God. And he's coming soon. Let's hold fast until he returns. And let's pray that we'll do this. God, you are so good.

We don't deserve your love. We don't deserve the fact that you died for us, that you sent your son, Jesus to die for our sins. See what kind of love we have that we are called children of God.

And so we are. God, would your love pierce our hearts? Would it transform our hearts? Would we know in the depths of our souls that we are loved by you? And would that free us to love and good works?

Lord, help us as a church to look forward to your return, to know that you're coming soon and to be ready, to be preparing ourselves like a bride waiting for her groom, that we would be a church that is pursuing you, pursuing your holiness, never stopping, never relenting until the day you return for good.

[54 : 48] Let us not look to the things of this world. Let's not stop running the race. Help us Lord, to look forward to your return. We pray this in Jesus's holy, true name.

Amen.