

Remnant Life Church
April 19, 2026
The Seven Churches of Revelation:
Philadelphia
Revelation 3:7-13

To this point we have read and examined the letter written to the church in Ephesus

The second letter to the church in Smyrna

The third letter to the church in Pergamum

The fourth letter to the church of Thyatira

The fifth letter to the church in Sardis

As you know there are 7 letters in total to the 7 churches

- Of the 7, only 2 were given no correction or rebuked for their sinful behavior
- And it is because of that, I would like to focus on a particular segment of what Jesus says
- The first church without issues was Smyrna and this morning we come to the second one – the church in Philadelphia

READ – Revelation 3:7-13

By way of background - This Philadelphia is not the historical city that sits in the south-eastern corner of Pennsylvania which also happens to be the birth-place of a pastor who you know very well...

- It is a much smaller city that was located about 28 miles SE of Sardis in the same region of modern-day Turkey as the other 6 churches in the cities whose names identify each letter
 - It is a fairly young city at the time of John's writing having been founded only a little over 200 years prior
 - It was established as a center of Greek culture for that region by King Attalus II who was also called Philadelphus
 - He was given that name, meaning brotherly love, because of his loyalty to his brother Eumenes, King of Pergamum
 - The city was well known as a region of wine growers
 - Which explains why the primary pagan deity temple located there was to honor Dionysus the Greek god of wine
 - And, like Sardis, the city was also destroyed by the great earthquake of 17 AD
 - It too was later rebuilt by the Romans under the direction of Emperor Tiberius
 - But not to the same scale as Sardis meaning its influence was not as great
- Nevertheless, this church, like the others, had to persevere in the face of many obstacles
 - **V 10** – *Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who are on the earth.*
 - Jesus does not specify what they had to endure with patience

- Nor does He tell us what the trial is that is going to come upon the whole world
 - But He does assure them, as He does us today, that He will protect them and see them through the time of trial
 - Note that He does not promise to exclude them from that time
 - The phrase ‘keep you from’ IOL does not mean prevent
 - Rather it means to attend to carefully and guard with care
- What is also of great importance in this passage is what I want us to more closely examine this morning
 - In the 8th verse John writes these words of Jesus...
 - *I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut and what He shuts no one can open.*
 - Jesus is saying several things here
 - First is the declaration of His might and power
 - If He opens the door, no one can close it but Him
 - If He shuts a door, no one can open it but Him
 - But there are also other meanings of when a door is opened to us by God
 - The open door can mean intimacy with God, being in His presence
 - In the next chapter of Revelation as a continuing part of his vision John writes
 - **Rev 4 :1** - *After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."*
 - But in this verse to the church in Philadelphia, what an open door most often represents when seen in Scripture, is an opportunity
 - In particular we see the Apostle Paul utilize this metaphor often for the opportunities God gave Him to preach
 - **I Cor 16:8-9a** - *But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost because a great door for effective work has opened to me...*
 - **Col 4:2-3** - *Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 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.*
 - **2 Cor 2:12** - *...when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ I found that the Lord had opened a door for me...*
 - Paul was always seeking and grateful for the open doors God provided for him
 - Jesus is telling the church of Philadelphia that He has opened a door for them – provided an opportunity – that no one can close
 - What were the opportunities for that church?

- It was to continue to do the good that had Jesus' attention
 - To continue to resist those who are of the synagogue of satan (v 9)
 - IOW the worship and practices of the pagan religions that several of the other churches had fallen in to
 - And I think it is very interesting what He goes on to say in verse 10 that they are a church that has little strength
 - That may mean they are tired from the fight
 - Or it may mean that they are small in number
 - Why they have little strength is not as important as knowing that their strength comes from their obedience and endurance in the face of the opposition
- What opportunities are there for us as a church and for each of us as individuals?
 - When they are placed before us, when the door is open, do we recognize them or do we more often miss it?
 - You know, when people talk about regrets, especially as their lives are deep into their later years, rarely is it about things they did that they wish they had not done
 - It is most often those things they did not do that they wish they had
 - An opportunity that was placed before them that they did not take
 - Those things are so often what comprise the regrets of our lives
 - But there is always hope when we are seeking God first
 - Jesus says that the open door is one no one can close
 - I can tell you, this should resonate with each and every one of us
 - Certainly every pastor who stands in a pulpit on Sunday morning
 - Not one of us is deserving to serve God in this manner
 - It is only His mercy and grace that kept the door of opportunity – His call if you will – that in spite of our shortcomings and failures the door remained open
- Now you must also understand that satan is actively working to thwart every opportunity
 - If God desires for a door to be open, satan wants it closed
 - If God wants it closed, satan wants it open

- Look again at **Eph 2:10** - ...*which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them*
- God does not push us through those doors of opportunity
 - We are always given a choice to either walk through or stand still
 - But standing still often means missing what God has in store for you
- What if I walk through the wrong door?
 - That is more of the beauty of God's love
 - He will guide you, direct you, and keep His door open even when you get sidetracked down a wrong path
 - And that all comes about in the life of one who wants to follow Him
 - Ask Him for His direction and guidance when you are making decisions about your life
 - He will answer you!
- The church of Philadelphia was not a huge mega-church from a booming metropolis city
 - It was a group of people who were taking advantage of the opportunities God was giving them
 - In fact the only exhortation or instruction that Jesus speaks to them is to *hold fast* (vs **11**)
 - IOW – don't let anyone take what God has given you
 - Don't let the enemy steal your joy, your love, what Jesus called their crown
 - Why?
 - Because as He says to them in verse **11**, I am coming soon
 - Those words are never more important to know and embrace than today
 - Jesus is coming soon and we must hold fast to His promises and the truth of His Word
 - To remain ever faithful in spite of opposition and the temptations of this world
 - And be watchful for the opportunities that He gives you to live your life in His service, be a blessing to those around you, and to bring glory and honor to His name!