

EARS2HEAR

WHEN ANCIENT LETTERS MEET CURRENT REALITY

PHILADELPHIA - MARCH 21

KEY SCRIPTURES

Revelation 3:7-13; 11:18

Matthew 16:18

1 Corinthians 5:6; 15:17

Colossians 4:3

Revelation 12:10-11; 13:16

Luke 12:32

1 Corinthians 16:9

Hebrews 11:11

Revelation 19:5,18; 20:1

John 10:7,9; 20:21-23

2 Corinthians 2:12; 12:9

1 John 3:2

Isaiah 22:15-25; 49:23

Acts 14:27

Galatians 2:9; 5:9

God opens doors for churches when they demonstrate the conditions that allow them. To move through those doors once they have been opened. This is how a church lives by faith.

1. Read the introductory words of Jesus (v7) to the church in Philadelphia alongside the introductory remarks in other letters? What differences do you note and given the personalized nature of many of the references in each letter, what do Jesus's words suggest about the context to the letter?
2. Look at Revelation 3:8 where Jesus says that He has opened a door for them due to three key conditions being evident in their lives. How do or could these three conditions apply to your life right now?
3. Jesus is never bound by a church's limitations, whether numerical weakness or social insignificance, providing that church allows Him to control what they have. Think back to a story which reveals this to be true. What factors or conditions precipitated God's work?
4. Strength is derived from the Greek *stem dúna*—and every word with that stem suggests being able or capable. Can you think of a time when you felt unable to do something, but God worked powerfully? What role did you play in making that happen? How did you surrender your 'little strength' to the Lord?
5. How easy is it to wait for God to open a door before you mobilize the qualities needed for God to open one? What new light does this requirement shed on living by faith? As you consider this, it may help to think of faith as an action.
6. Verse 9 suggests that if a little faith can move mountains, a little strength can "vindicate victims." Given the reality of opposition the Philadelphian Church faced, what do you think it would have felt like for them to have heard these words from Jesus?
7. With 1 John 3:2 as background, what do you consider to be the significance of the 'three names' in the letter? These three names are developed more fully later in Revelation (19-22) but what do you think it means for a believer to have the name of God, the new Jerusalem, and Jesus's new name written on them?
8. What did the Spirit reveal to you through this letter?