



Title: The Loving Church (Philadelphia)

Date: September 25, 2022

Scripture Text: Revelation 3:7-13

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

We continue our look at the seven churches mentioned in Revelation 2-3. Today's focus is on the sixth church – the church in Philadelphia. Philadelphia was founded c.140 BC and was located forty miles southeast of Sardis. It was not unjustly called 'the gateway to the East'. Its founder, Attalus II Philadelphus of Pergamum, from whom the city derived its name, intended it to be a center of missionary activity for the Hellenistic (Greek) way of life. The city was prosperous, partly from its strategic situation, partly from the grape vineyards that flourished in the vicinity. It was a center of worship of the god Dionysos but also contained temples to many other gods. The church was evidently small (v. 8), but of good quality. Its enemies came from outside, not inside, for there is no mention of heresy or factiousness. It had a good deal in common with the church at Smyrna. Both receive no blame, only praise. Both suffered from those who called themselves Jews and were not, both were persecuted it would seem by the Romans, both are assured that the opposition is satanic, and both are promised a crown.

I. The Introduction of Christ (Revelation 3:7)

The letter to the church in Philadelphia starts with an introduction of Jesus Christ. What a great expression of a church, to start with a description of Christ and how the church was a reflection of Him. Jesus is described in three areas:

- The Purity of Jesus
 - "He who is holy"
 - Describe in your own words the purity of Christ
 - How can His purity be a reflection of His deity?
 - How does His purity show how He is worthy of your praise?
- The Perfection of Jesus
 - "Who is true"
 - How does Jesus' perfection give us a model to follow as His disciples?
 - If we are to be '*Jesus with skin on*', what do we need to remember as we live our daily lives?
 - What is needed for you to be a good reflection/witness for Jesus?
- The Power of Jesus
 - "Has the key of David", and is the One who opens and closes doors

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- How can the power of Christ enable you to live obediently for Him?
- Describe how Christ's power keeps you going through the day.
- Why are there times when we decide to do things our way, under our power, and not Christ's?

II. The Control of Christ (Revelation 3:8)

For a church, or individual, to be successful, they must realize they have 'little power', and must submit to and rely on the power and control of Christ. It is Christ who opens and closes doors for ministry. We must be careful not to try and push open doors that are not meant to be open.

- Verse 8 begins with the statement that Christ knew the deeds of the church in Philadelphia. What assurance or motivation do you get when you're reminded that He knows your deeds.
 - How might remembering that influence the decisions you make?

III. The Commendation of Christ (Revelation 3:8b)

There wasn't anything necessarily impressive about the church in Philadelphia. It could be said they were a church of nobodies. But God does some of His greatest work through nobodies who are willing to *embrace* His word and *exalt* Him. It is by that practice that His people are blessed, and He is glorified.

- What are the two things the church in Philadelphia did that Christ was so ready to give them an open door?
- Why is it so important for a church, or individual, to be fully committed to keeping Gods word and not denying Him?

IV. The Comfort of Christ (Revelation 3:9-12)

Even though the church was experiencing persecution from those Christ labeled as the "Synagogue of Satan" and were in the midst of a pagan culture, they stayed the course, living completely committed to Christ. Christ in turn comforts them as He describes His provision for them and the rewards, they will one day receive.

- What is "the hour of testing" referenced in vs. 10?
 - What is the outcome for the church?
- How can focusing on the promises of what awaits us encourage us to live obediently now, even if we do experience suffering as a result?
- How can you express your appreciation to Christ for His promises?
 - How can that encourage you to be loving, like the members of the Philadelphian church?