

Dustin Logan / General

Foundations of the BFM 2000 / Re 3:7–13

The Church at Philadelphia: A Church with a Positive Testimony

We are looking at Revelation 3:7-13 this morning and I invite you to go ahead and join me in your copy of the word of God. Revelation 3:7-13

Introduction:

PICTURE OF A PIECE OF ART: This week I walked in the office and Daniel had left some of his artwork on the table. Isn't it amazing how a parent will respond to a child who brings them a gift or something that they made? The parent places value on the gift because of the who it came from. They ew and aw over the masterpiece in spite of the imperfections of it. It's special and valuable because of its giver.

How much more does our heavenly Father delight in giving out praise to churches that desire to bring Him good gifts by honoring Him and establishing a faithful testimony. He doesn't wait until our performances have arrived to a place of sinless perfection.

Surely the church at Philadelphia had to have its shortcomings but the Lord has no word of correction for them. Only a word of commendation. The reason is that they were a mission-minded church. They were a great-commission church. They were a church that had been impacted so greatly by the transforming power of the Gospel message that they wanted everyone to have the same witness they had.

Oswald Smith rightly said, "Any church that is not seriously involved in helping fulfill the Great Commission has forfeited its biblical right to exist."¹

I pray that it would be our desire from this passage for God would let us kindle our fire of fervency for missions. That once again we would be reminded of the great work that brought us to where we are. What does it look like to be a church that has a positive testimony for Christ?

TT - God wants the church to establish a positive testimony. There are three truths about the church with a positive testimony. Read Text Revelation 3:7-13

Revelation 3:7–13 KJV 1900

⁷ And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; ⁸ I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. ⁹ Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. ¹⁰ Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. ¹¹ Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. ¹² Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is new Jerusalem*, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him my new name*. ¹³ He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Transition:

In the Baptist Faith & Message 2000, the NT church is described as ... seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth.

That's the kind of church that has received a word of commendation from Christ in the text before us.

There are three truths that we can emulate in our church as well if we are going to have a positive testimony for Jesus.

1. Our Church Has a Conquering Savior -v. 7

⁷ And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith **he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David**, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

Someone has well said, “to know the love, the holiness, the power of God we need only look at Jesus.”

ILL - conversation with guy

I was talking with someone recently about their faith and hearing them talk about their religion for a while I asked them about their view of Jesus. Someone can tell you about how long their religion or denomination has been around. They can share about their rituals, traditions, and morals that find their root in the Christian Doctrine, but many deny what we believe about the essence and the person of Jesus.

Christ is the basis of our faith. Brothers and Sisters, without Jesus there is no other conversation. He was the object which all the OT events foreshadowed. The church at Philadelphia had a right view of Jesus. So what did the faithful church at Philadelphia hold to about Jesus?

A. The Savior is Holy

Now I want to remind you that we aren't talking about having a *popular* testimony for Christ. We're talking about having a *positive* testimony for Christ. We live in a day like any other where people don't want to hear about the holiness of God because it convicts them of the sinfulness of their own life. The first characteristic we see Christ revealing about Himself in this passage is that He is holy.

1. He is Holy in His Person

Luke 1:35

³⁵ And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Peter declared Him to be the Holy One of God -

John 6:69 (ESV)

⁶⁹ and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

Hebrews 7:26

²⁶ For such a high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

2. His victory over sin

There are genuine struggles we face daily and while we never will reach a sinless perfection until we reach eternity, the sinlessness of Jesus motivates us to strive to be holy as He is holy. Jesus experienced the full force and struggle of temptation, yet He overcame without sin.

Hebrews 4:15

¹⁵ For we have ... an high priest which was in all points tempted like as we *are, yet* without sin.

3. The testimonies of Christ's sinlessness:

- Judas: Matthew 27:4
⁴ Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed **the innocent blood.** And they said, *What is that to us? see thou to that.*
- Pilate's Wife - Matthew 27:19
¹⁹ When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with **that just man:** for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.
- Pilate: Matthew 27:24
²⁴ When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but *that* rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of **the blood of this just person:** see ye to it.
- Thief on the Cross: Luke 23:41
⁴¹ And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but **this man hath done nothing amiss.**
- The Father: Matthew 17:5
⁵ While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, **This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;** hear ye him.

B. The Savior is True

Mark 12:14

¹⁴ And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?

John 14:6

⁶ Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

C. The Savior is the key- holder

Throughout the Bible, the metaphor of a key refers to authority.

Matthew 16:19

¹⁹ And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Revelation 1:18

¹⁸ *I am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Isaiah 22:22

²² And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; So he shall open, and none shall shut; And he shall shut, and none shall open.

In the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power is given unto me** in heaven and in earth. ¹⁹ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

The foundational word of commendation begins with the conquering Savior. Next,

2. Our Church Has an Open Door of Opportunity- v. 8

⁸ I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

A. The Church Has An open door to Heaven's Throne

1. We have access through Jesus

Ephesians 2:18

¹⁸ For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

2. We can come with confidence

Hebrews 4:16

¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

1 John 5:15

¹⁵ And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

The church has an open door to heaven

B. The Church has an Open Door to Win Souls

The city of Philadelphia was strategically established in a location where the Greek culture and language could be dispensed throughout the area. People made their way along the trade routes through Philadelphia. Jesus wanted the church to see their opportunity. He didn't want them to waste their location. He wanted them to steward it for the advancement of His kingdom purposes.

Just as Paul in [Philippians 1:12](#) saw his difficulties as an open door to advance the Gospel, Jesus wanted the church at Philadelphia to see their opportunity through the open doors He had entrusted to them.

Proverbs 11:30

³⁰ The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; And he that winneth souls is wise.

Where are the Christians who will reach their hand through the smoke of hell to lay hold of some lost soul. One great Christian said, 'Though there were as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the housetops, I will go in.'²

Many people have viewed the churches in [Revelation 2-3](#) as representing various stages of the church during church. The stage often referred to by the Philadelphian church is the modern missionary movement that was sparked during the 1700's-1900s.

Think about the great accomplishments of the efforts of men of God:

- Jonathan Edwards
- John Wesley
- George Whitefield
- William Carey
- Adoniram Judson
- David Livingston
- D.L. Moody
- Charles Spurgeon

Just as the church at Philadelphia was strategically placed, I submit that churches within the SBC are blessed to strategically cooperate together to reach our world.

59% of the world today is considered **unreached** — meaning **Jesus is not known** or named among **4.5 billion people**.

- In 2021 - 582,408 people heard the gospel
- In 2021 - 176,795 - new believers
- In 2021 - 22,744 - new churches

We have an open door to reach lost souls,

C. A door that no man can shut

Governments have tried to shut the door, religious leaders have tried to shut the door, satan has tried to shut the door but the door cannot be shut. Remember when Jesus was presented to the before before Pilate they demanded, "Crucify Him!" They did that but [Matthew 27](#) records the great events following Jesus being crucified at Calvary.

Pilate wrote an inscription "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS" - [Matthew 27:37](#)

- There was a supernatural darkness over all the land from noon until 3pm - [Matthew 27:45](#)
- Jesus gave up the ghost - [Matthew 27:50](#)
- The veil was torn in two from top to bottom - [Matthew 27:51](#)
- The earth did quake - [Matthew 27:51](#)
- The rocks rent - [Matthew 27:51](#)
- The graves of the dead were opened - [Matthew 27:52](#)
- They sealed tomb - [Matthew 27:66](#)
- Jesus rose again - [Matthew 28:2](#)

He says of the church at Philadelphia that they have kept his word and not denied His name. Its a great testimony for a church that will stay true to the Word. Liberals today want to teach that the Bible certainly contains the word of God but they refuse to affirm that every word of God is inspired of God.

The church establishes a positive testimony when it has Christ as its Conquering Savior, takes advantage of the open door of opportunity, and finally,

3. Our Church Has a Secure Future - v. 9-12

He transitions from dealing with what we already have in Christ to what future is secured for us

⁹ Behold, **I will** make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, **I will** make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. ¹⁰ Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also **will keep thee** from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. ¹¹ Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. ¹² Him that overcometh **will I make** a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is new Jerusalem*, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and **I will write** upon him my new name.

A. There will be a revelation of true v. false believers - v. 9

⁹ Behold, **I will** make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, **I will** make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

The Parable of the Wheat and Tares

Matthew 13:24–30

²⁴ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: ²⁵ But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. ²⁶ But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. ²⁷ So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? ²⁸ He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? ²⁹ But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. ³⁰ **Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.**

The separation of the sheep and the goats

Matthew 25:31–34

³¹ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: ³² And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats: ³³ And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

³⁴ Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

Matthew 25:46

⁴⁶ And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

The church has a secure future when the separation of the true believers from unbelievers

B. We will be delivered from wrath - v. 10

⁰ Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also **will keep thee** from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

13X the word wrath is used in the Revelation. This is not a threat of the wrath that will come but it is a promise of the deliverance that the Church will experience.

Revelation 6:17

¹⁷ For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

John 3:36

³⁶ He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Romans 5:9

⁹ Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

1 Thessalonians 1:10

¹⁰ And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

The church has a secure future from the wrath and also,

C. We will receive a crown - v. 11

¹¹ Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

The Bible talks about 5 different crowns to be given out at the judgement seat.

2 Timothy 4:8

⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me a **crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

1 Corinthians 9:24–27

²⁴ Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. ²⁵ And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an **incorruptible**. ²⁶ I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: ²⁷ But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

1 Thessalonians 2:19

¹⁹ For what *is* our hope, or joy, or **crown of rejoicing?** Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

D. We will have a new home - v. 12

¹² Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and ! will write upon him my new name.

1. Being prepared right now

John 14:1-3

¹ Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.

2. To be revealed after the judgment

Revelation 21:2

² And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3. The invitation:

Revelation 22:17

¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Closing - v. 13

Picture of Daniel's Artwork

While God may not be looking for the perfect church, He is looking for a church that will give Him their very best. A church that is mission-minded.

Dustin Logan
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Morning Worship

¹ (Expect Great Things, Marvin Newell).

² Alexander MacLaren, Expositions of Holy Scripture: 1 John 5, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, and Revelation (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009), 260–261.