

Thou Hast a Little Strength

Revelation 3:7-13

Before I share this message, I need to ask you a question. Are you saved, or are you lost? The Apostle Paul makes a reference to the lost in the following passage from the book of 2 Corinthians chapter four. The Scripture says:

“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.”

Pay close attention to the statement in this passage which says Satan, the god of this world system, has blinded the minds of them which believe not. Listen closely: *the most dangerous thing you can do is hear the gospel and reject it.* Satan cannot arbitrarily blind your mind to the truth of the gospel. However, when you refuse to believe the gospel, then he is free to blind your mind to the simplicity and necessity of trusting Christ as your Savior.

I fear for many of you. You are lost and not even concerned about it. Satan has blinded your eyes. You are in a desperate situation. However, there is hope if you will heed the call of God. Christ can open your blinded eyes as you become aware of your lost condition.

But know this: if you refuse to turn from sin and confess Christ as your Savior you are lost. Lost! Destined for outer darkness where the soul will languish under

the express wrath of a holy God while the eternal ages roll without end. I pray your eyes will be opened before it is everlastingly too late.

Now, may we read our text from Revelation 3, beginning at verse seven:

7And 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;

8I 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.

9Behold, 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.

10Because 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.

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

12Him 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.

13He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

The verses of today's text encapsulate the message of Jesus to the church at Philadelphia. Historians tell us the city was named after its founder, Attalus Philadelphus, king of Pergamos. He named the city in honor of his brother with whom he was very close. Philadelphia means *brotherly love*.

You no doubt noticed our Lord has no word of rebuke for this church. He also had no word of rebuke for the church of Smyrna. Smyrna was a persecuted church and Philadelphia was a weak church. Again, Jesus had no word of rebuke for either one.

Now look again at verse seven which says, *"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."*

The late Dr. Henry Morris makes a very interesting comment about this verse. He says quote, *"The Lord here claims to have "the key of David," referring to Isaiah 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 Isaiah's context, this promise was made to Eliakim, a servant of King Hezekiah. The "key" was the key to the national treasury, and figuratively to control of the government. Eliakim thus was a type of the Messiah, and Christ here asserts in effect that He controls the governmental economy of the whole world and all that happens therein."* (unquote)

Now you think about that as you chew on the economy of America and the world. It is Christ who opens, and it is Christ who shuts! It is our Lord who holds the

economy in his hand. Our eyes need to be upon him to see what he is about to do. It is my prayer he will not shut the door of a free economy wherein lies the power to get wealth. Instead of hanging on every word of the Federal Reserve we need to embrace the word of the one who holds the whole thing in his hands!

Now look again at verse eight: *“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.”*

The church of Philadelphia was a faithful church, but she had a little strength. This is exactly the condition of the authentic church in the world today. We have a little strength. Compared to the world we have little money. Compared to the elite of this world we have little influence. Compared to the corrupt in high places we have a little power. Opposed by the confluence of the wealth, influence, and power of the world we have but a little strength.

However, hear this word today: *“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.”*

Furthermore, the Apostle Paul says, *“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: FOR WHEN I AM WEAK, THEN AM I STRONG.”* Hear this today: God needs a church with a little strength that is on its knees through whom he can prove himself strong!

We have a little strength, but we have a big God, and he is our confidence! Do you know what we need to do in this troubling time? Like the church at Philadelphia, we need to keep his word and we need to confess his name in the face of whatever may betide in the days to come. Let us stand though our strength be small. Indeed, the Lord will stand with us. Amen!

