

## 7 - Promise of Permanent Presence in Philadelphia

**Intro:** Revelation opens w the Apostle John being invited into the throne room perspective of reality. He gets to see behind the scenes of the unseen realities between heaven and earth. Yes, John receives info about the future, but more importantly he gets a vision of Jesus. The risen King, walking among His churches as He walked through the garden in the cool of the day. It revealed Jesus' authority over history, angels, death, and the nations. His presence is revealed among the churches (lampstands) which gives hope for today. He is *with* us. The churches of the day (7) were facing *persecution, pressure, compromise, sp exhaustion, false teaching*. We're reminded that those churches (and today) are embattled in a cosmic conflict. A spiritual war for worship, allegiance, endurance. **When Jesus promises blessing "to the one who conquers," we better understand the Christian life.** And Jesus sees them, hears their cry, knows their faithfulness. Some need to repent of their compromise, hypocrisy. **When we get to the church in Philly**, we're reminded again of Jesus' call to faithfulness. **At the basic level, that is God's call on our church and our lives for the purpose of His mission.** Endure in faithfulness. From heaven's perspective, we are participating in Christ's victory over the powers of darkness and kingdoms of this world. This gives courage!

**Text:** MPT-Jesus will vindicate the poor, patient church in Philly. MPS-s.

**Revelation 3:7-13**—we find a church in Philly that had "little power" yet remained loyal to Jesus. Philly was located right next to a volcano so it was susceptible to volcanic eruption and earthquake. **Likely the epicenter of the great earthquake of AD 17. Aftershocks on a daily basis for years;** cracked walls in houses; possibly few lived in the city; farmed on the outskirts on fertile land (grapes) **Poverty.** The people were worshipers of the emperor and Greek gods (Dionysus-wine). There was a Jewish presence.

**Revelation 3:7**—the words of the Holy One—distinct, set apart, He receives the glory! He is true, the reliable One. Unlike some leaders of Philly, false teachers. He holds the key of David (Is 22:22) which gives Him ultimate authority (open and shut the kingdom doors). This kingdom language is sp warfare language too; tied to sp rebellion, false worship. **In the ANE worldview, the nations existed under rebellious sp powers after Babel (Dt 32:8-9).** Earthly empires became extensions of those corrupt powers. Jesus is declaring Himself the holder of the key—a direct challenge to every false throne (human and spiritual). **Philly may be poor, powerless; but heaven recognizes a different King!** Your world, fellow believer is not controlled by earthly gatekeepers. Christ alone opens doors no power of darkness can shut!

**Revelation 3:8**—tho they have little strength, Jesus opened the door for them. (Like our exit doors here) The strength to open the door is not there, but faithful ones keep pushing. **In their weakness, Jesus steps in to be their strength. Folks, this is an under-resourced church!** It's life and ministry of an under-resourced church. Completely reliant on the King who opens doors! We don't talk about giving and generosity here in order to get you to give. **We do it because we're asking the Lord to open a door that no one can shut** (con't here if needed—connect to OV). **Jesus is always reversing appearances**—the slain Lamb conquers, martyrs reign, weakness becomes victory. *Abe went from nothing to the Father of a nation. Israel escaped slavery to the drowning Egyptian army. David-Goliath, exiles vs Babylon, the early church vs. Rome.* **Who still stands? God's people!! Eph 3:10**—the church (ppl) displays God's manifold (indescribable) wisdom to the powers! **We exist to display God's power to the heavenly places.** And that means something now! **A small faithful church can have more spiritual significance than a compromised one.** We see a lot of turnover here at OV (military, college, urban), but those of us who have been around a while can reflect on the many who have come through here to be equipped and sent out. That is why we do what we do. **It's why we partner for mission, too.** Jesus honors perseverance, obedience, loyalty under pressure. Influence≠faithfulness.

**Revelation 3:9**—just like Smyrna, bringing in the synagogue of Satan language is speaking of those who are not involved in the activities of יהוה, but doing the work of the adversary. **Jesus says, He will vindicate followers of Jesus before those nonbelieving Jews in the city.** Any effort towards non-belief in Jesus is an effort of the enemy. Satan energizes systems, accusations, idolatry, opposition. **Spiritual rebellion is going to show up thru earthly structures/systems/allegiances.** Bc we **Christ followers live in the overlap of heaven and earth**, we must know that every battle, pressure, temptation should not be shrugged off as merely political, social, or psychological. Also, every human behind the evil act is redeemable. **We can't demonize ppl, humans are not the ultimate enemy, the powers behind rebellion are.** This is why we must stay the course of mission!

**Revelation 3:10-11**—patient endurance leads to victory. Jesus is coming to deliver. This is our hope! He gives victory. Despite the chronology of these events, the point is this: **there is a coming event (Roman world) that forces worship toward the Beast (not יהוה).** Bc of their faithfulness, Jesus will protect them from that. Not sure about you, but that's where I want to be! **Any suffering that we endure along the way bc of our faith confirms where our allegiance lies.**

**Revelation 3:12-13**—looking ahead to the new heavens/earth there will also be a new city w a new temple. Bc of the earthquakes in Philly, buildings collapsed all the time—instability. Jesus gives permanence—no more fleeing, displacement, insecurity. The Temple communicates God's presence w humanity. His eternal sacred space. (*Eden, Sinai, Tabernacle, Temple, Christ, Church, New Jeru*) The faithful believer dwells WITH the Lord.

**Rap:** The scattered nations become one ppl, exiles become citizens, outsiders become pillars. The church is the reclaimed

family of God! So, your instability, cultural displacement, anxiety, loneliness, rejection, suffering... Jesus gives permanence with His presence.

**LS**

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE

In Revelation, John is given a “throne room perspective” of reality. How might your current struggles look different if you viewed them from heaven’s perspective instead of only earth’s perspective?

Jesus walks among the lampstands—His churches. What does it mean personally to you that Jesus is present with His people right now, not distant from them?

The churches in Revelation faced pressure, compromise, exhaustion, and false teaching. Which of those pressures feels most real in your own life right now?

Revelation presents the Christian life as a call to “conquer” through faithfulness and endurance. How is that different from the world’s understanding of victory or success?

Jesus tells Philadelphia that He holds “the key of David.” What earthly “gatekeepers” or fears are you tempted to believe have ultimate control over your future?

The church in Philadelphia had “little power” yet remained faithful. Where do you currently feel weak, under-resourced, or inadequate—and how might that weakness become an opportunity to rely more deeply on Christ?

The sermon noted that “influence does not equal faithfulness.” How can churches and Christians confuse visible success with true spiritual faithfulness?

Ephesians 3:10 says the church displays God’s wisdom to the heavenly powers. How does knowing your faithfulness has cosmic significance change the way you view ordinary obedience?

Revelation 3:9 reminds us that spiritual rebellion often works through earthly systems and allegiances. How can Christians stay spiritually discerning without demonizing people?

Jesus commends “patient endurance.” What practices or rhythms help you remain faithful to Christ during seasons of pressure, disappointment, or waiting?

Revelation 3:12 promises permanence and belonging in God’s presence. Where in your life do you most feel instability, insecurity, displacement, or restlessness right now?

The sermon closed with the picture of the church as the “reclaimed family of God”—outsiders becoming citizens and pillars in God’s kingdom. How should that shape the way we treat one another and live on mission together?