

AN OPEN DOOR

⁷ *“To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. ⁸ I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.*

Revelation 3:7,8

¹ *“This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: ² I will go before you and will level the mountains; I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron. ³ I will give you hidden treasures, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by name.*

Isaiah 45:1-3

because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.

I Corinthians 16:9

- I. A Word from Jesus the doorkeeper to his little love Church.
 - A. The humble church of Philadelphia was located 28 miles southeast of Sardis, in the area of modern Turkey. It was a church marked by suffering and faithfulness in the midst of an age of unbelief.
 - B. It was a church unrebuked, but only commended, by the king who holds the keys of the universe.
 - C. Their little strength was itself the source of their power and favor.
 - D. Their faithfulness to Christ’s word--to neither distort, delude, nor repudiate it--was a blessing to the King.
 - E. Their acknowledgment of his name in love both before him and the world received a new and unparalleled reward.
 - F. An open door was given to them as well as an acknowledgement by their former enemies. (Revelation 3:9) They would also be preserved from judgment soon to fall all around them. (Revelation 3:10)

[Rev 3:9-10 NIV] ⁹ *I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars--I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.* ¹⁰ *Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.*

* Jesus's little love church of mercy, grace, and balance received an open door no other Church experienced.

II. Understanding closed doors.

A. Some of the greatest advances in the world are made not as a first choice but as a second choice.

B. The Bible and the world abound with examples of those who achieved far more than they anticipated with what they considered a second choice.

C. The Apostle Paul's first choice was to go to preach in proconsular Asia--Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, and Bythinia--where he would have encountered the great cities of Ephesus, Smyrna, Sardis, Thyatira, Philadelphia, Nice, Nicomedia, and Chalcedon. It was a "good idea" but not a "God idea".

D. Paul received four No's to his plans, which were never explained in his lifetime. (Acts 16:6-8)

[Act 16:6-8 NIV] ⁶ *Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.* ⁷ *When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.* ⁸ *So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas.*

E. Closed doors are necessary. Closed doors are not a rebuke. Close doors lead to an open vision.

III. God's open door for Paul transcended his capacity for dreaming.

A. Paul wound up in Troas, near Ancient Troy, which marks the geographical, psychological, and historical turning point of the gospel moving from its eastern birthplace to the Western Hemisphere--from Asia to Europe!

B. Paul was standing at the climax of a period of heartbreaking frustration and perplexity.

C. He arrived at Troas unemployed, exhausted, with closing doors all around him, puzzled at the divine refusals.

D. Yet 60 miles across the straights from Troy was Greece. A whole New World opened up in Paul's vision!

E. Just behind God's open door lay the funding of the gospel mission to Europe (Acts 16:13-19), victory over demonic powers (Acts 16:16-18), and a foothold of the gospel in the city of Philippi. (Acts 16:25-27).

[Act 16:13-19, 25-27 NIV] ¹³ *On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴ One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. ¹⁵ When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us. ¹⁶ Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." ¹⁸ She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her. ¹⁹ When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. ...*

²⁵ *About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. ²⁷ The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped.*

Conclusion

God is opening a new door. Don't be distraught and discouraged by closed doors.