THE DANGER OF NOT TAKING ADVANTAGE OF

A GREAT OPPORTUNITY

 **DATE: 7/1/2018, 7/8/2018 pm**

**TEXT: Revelation 3:7-13**

**INTRODUCTION**

We are continuing to look at the Dangers that Face our Church

In the Book of Revelation, Chapters 1-3 we find the LORD telling the Apostle John to write letters to the churches in Asia Minor (Modern Day Turkey)

These letters are addressed to the Pastors (angels) of those churches and have a message for the whole church

So far, we have looked at the Letters to the Churches in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, and Sardis

-- In Ephesus the Main Message was that they had left their First Love

-- In Smyrna it was that of being Afraid

Warned that they would Suffer, they were not to be Afraid

-- In Pergamos it was the Danger of Compromise

-- In Thyatira the Danger was Tolerance

-- In Sardis is was the unusual warning of having a Good Reputation or becoming Proud

Today we will be looking at the 6th Letter written to the Church in Philadelphia

Each letter follows a reoccurring pattern

In each, Jesus provides …

-- A Description of Himself

-- A Compliment for the Church

-- A Correction with an Admonition to Repent (Not all)

-- Then in every letter He makes this promise …

***… “to him that overcometh” …***

A promise that applies even to us

-- Then He gives us insight into the Rewards that a child of God might receive

These letters can be viewed from 3 different perspectives

**1.** Practically – These letters were written to real churches functioning in real time

**2.** Prophetically – Each church represents a different period of church history from the Ascension to the Rapture

This particular church represents the period between 1,700 AD and 1,900 AD

During this period, the true Christian churches, though weak began the modern mission's movement

This was also the period that saw the “Great Awakenings” and revivals in America and Britain

**3.** Personally – These churches have something to say to every individual believer and to every church in existence today

Philadelphia was the youngest and smallest of all the cities addressed in these 7 letters

The city was located in a narrow pass between two mountain ranges

It stood as a literal doorway between Asia and Asia Minor

Because of its strategic location - it was used militarily

Enemy armies moving through the pass could be delayed by a small force at Philadelphia

The city was named for King Attalus II - the king of Perg-a-mum

He was renowned for his love for his brother Eumenes

And he came to be called “***Philadelphos***”

The name means “*one who loves his brother*”

Thus - Philadelphia became known as “*The city of brotherly love*”

Philadelphia was built on a geological fault

As a result, the city was plagued by frequent earthquakes

The citizens were often forced to flee to avoid being injured or killed by falling buildings

Philadelphia was also the home to numerous temples dedicated to the gods and goddesses of ancient Greece

Philadelphia was the last of the seven cities to lose its Christian testimony

There was a thriving Christian community there as late as 1,000 AD …

Until the city was captured by the Muslims

 It's to this church in Philadelphia that Jesus speaks

He comes to them with not one Complaint!

He comes to them with words of Praise and Promise

I think the Lord’s words to this Weak, but Faithful church

… Has a lot to say to us - today

If we are going to model ourselves after any of these seven churches - it should be this church

Let’s examine our Lord’s Words and find out why

And, at the same time, we need to be aware that there is …

The Danger of Not taking Advantage of …

**"A GREAT OPPORTUITY"**

We have a Great Opportunity before us – An Open Door

 Let's not Fail to recognize it!

**~~~Prayer~~~**

**I. THE "MASTER" OF THE CHURCH – vs. 7, 8 a …**

Jesus is Lord, therefore the Master of all things

**Philippians 2:10, 11 – *"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;" "And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"***

**A. The Master's 'Attributes'**

Jesus comes to this church and He identifies Himself in 2 powerful ways

**1.** He Describes Himself as the *Sinless* One

**v. 7 - *"He that is holy,"***

The word ***"holy"*** describe someone without sin

In the Bible we have this Testimony of Jesus

**I Peter 2:22 – *"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth:"***

**II Corinthians 5:21 – *"For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him"***

 In Christ we are Justified, therefore we are without sin Positionally

 Yet we are to live Holy - Practically

**I Peter 1:15 – *"But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;"***

Jesus is speaking to a church that is striving to be holy in the midst of a corrupt and sinful world

He comes to say to them …

*“It is possible to live for God! I am holy, and I can help you be holy too”*

Sin, Satan and this world are all against us and pressing in on every side

Yet, Jesus has the power to help us to live the holy lives He desires us to live

**Philippians 4:13 – *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"***

**2.** He Describes Himself as the *Sincere* One

**v. 7 - *"He that is true,"***

The word ***“true”*** here means *that which is genuine*

He tells His people that He is the real Saviour

He is the Real Deal, the Genuine Article

 These early believers were surrounded by nothing but phoniness

False gods and false worship abounded

 Jesus wants them to know that He is the real deal

They are not wasting their time serving Him

They did not make a mistake when they turned their back on their idols and pagan gods

When they came to Christ - they came to the only True Saviour

**Acts 4:12 – *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”***

 **John 14:6 – *“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me”***

It seems that everything's an imitation today

We have sugar substitutes - salt substitutes and meat substitutes

We have fake fur and fake leather

We have rent-a-date, virtual reality and surrogate mothers

We are surrounded by that which is fake and pretend

It's a comfort to be reminded that at least one thing is real!

Jesus is the real deal!

Jesus is not a substitute for anything!

When we trusted Jesus Christ, we got in on something that is real!

Salvation is real! - Prayer is real! - Grace is real! - Heaven is real! - His presence is real! - His Word is real! - His power is real!

**The Master's 'Attributes'**

Next, we see …

**B. The Master's 'Authority'**

Jesus identifies Himself as the One Who is in control!

He Describes Himself as the One with the Key

With 2 thoughts

**1.** He's the Key Man

He says ***"He … hath the key of David"***

Turn with to **Isaiah 22:20-25 …**

This passage speaks of a man named Eliakim

This is also an Old Testament prophecy that speaks of the Glory of God - the Power of God - the Authority of God …

… One day resting on the shoulders of Messiah

(Illustrate how the priest would carry the keys)

Then - we are told that He will be set as a nail in a sure place and that He will be cut off after a while

This ancient prophecy is a picture of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (Israel's Messiah, the World's Saviour)

God has placed on His Son, His Kingdom and His Government

**Isaiah 9:6 – *“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace”***

He set Him ***“as a nail in a sure place”***

 But - after a time – ***"He was cut off"***

This is a clear picture of the cross of Christ

We are told that He will have the ***“Key of David”***

What does that mean?

Well - what are keys for?

Keys grant you … Authority, Access and Availability

Jesus comes to this pioneer church and says, *“I have the keys!”*

What kind of keys does Jesus have?

-- He has the Key to Sleep (not the kind you think)

**Revelation 1:18 – *"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"***

**John 11:25,26 – *"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:" "And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?"***

-- He has the Key to Salvation

**John 10:9 – *"I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture"***

-- He has the Key to Service

**I Corinthians 16:9 – *"For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries"***

Not only does He Carry the Keys

**2.** He Controls the Doors

**v. 7 - *"He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;"***

Jesus is in the business of opening and closing doors in the lives of His people

We see this truth at work in the life of the Apostle Paul in **Acts 16:6-10** (The Macedonian vision)

When God opens a door of opportunity in your life

 Run through it as fast as you can

It may be a once-in-a-life-time opportunity

How tragic it would be to get to Heaven and see what we could have done if only we would have trusted the Lord and stepped through the open door He gave us

By the same token - when He closes a door - don’t try to force it open

You don’t want to be where God doesn’t want you to be (either)

The path to blessing is to be where the Lord wants us to be - when He wants us to be there

We need to pray that God will give us spiritual wisdom to see the doors when He opens & closes them

**The Master's 'Authority'**

**C. The Master's '** **Appraisal'**

***"I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it:"***

As He did with the other churches …

Jesus reminds them that He knows everything about them

He sees their works and He sees the Motives that drives their work

 **Hebrews 4:13 – *“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do”***

When Jesu looks at our lives and at our church life …

What does He see? Who's out Master?

**THE "MASTER" OF THE CHURCH**

**II. THE "MINISTRY" OF THE CHURCH – vs. 8 b – 11 …**

Philadelphia was a small church, yet with tremendous potential for the glory of God

These verses tell us something about their ministry

**A. The 'Opportunities' – v. 8 b …**

Their Ministry Involved Many Opportunities

In His sovereignty - the Lord had given this church a powerful open door

He tells them - ***“thou hast a little strength”***

This may mean that they were small in number and lacking in political and financial influence

They were weak - but they Lord was using them in a mighty way

They were weak - but they were making a tremendous impact on their city!

How & Why?

**1. *"and hast kept My Word"***

They Kept His Word

This means that even though they were weak in many ways

They were pure and strong in their doctrine

 **2. *"and hast not denied My Name"***

They had not Denied His Name

They were not ashamed of Jesus or of their relationship with Him

I think this means that they were not keeping the Gospel to themselves!

They were actively spreading the Word of God to a lost and dying world

God had given them an open door of ministry there in Philadelphia and they had stepped through it and were doing what they could

Because they were faithful to Him - He was blessing them!

They were preaching and exalting Jesus

And the enemies of the cross were powerless to stop them

Such was the power of God in their midst!

**B. The 'Opposition' – v. 9 …**

Whenever God is advancing, there is Opposition

Any time someone takes a stand like they did, …

… you will face opposition!

The phrase ***“synagogue of Satan”*** probably refers to the local Jews who were persecuting them

In **Romans 2:28,29** Paul refers to those ***"which say they are Jews and are not"***

This church is suffering at the hands of people who claim to love God - but did not!

They have rejected the Saviour and are headed to Hell

**Revelation 21:8 – *“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death”***

Jesus tells them that He is aware of their mistreatment

But - He wants them to know that a day is coming when they will see those who oppose them bowing before them

He is probably referring to **Phil 2:10,11**

That day when ***“every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;" "And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”***

One day the enemy will experience total defeat

He wants them to know that He is in total control of the critics as well

**C. The 'Optimism – v. 10 …**

This is a precious promise to a suffering people

They have endured a lot - but they will be spared the horrors that will come upon the entire world and those who dwell in it

Something was about to happen!

Jesus promises them that their faithfulness will guarantee them deliverance from the terrible time of tribulation that is to come upon earth

The phrase ***“them that dwell upon the earth”*** can be literally translated *“the earth dwellers”*

**D. 'Obligations' – v. 11 …**

As the children of God there are certain things we are obligated to do

He gives this church 3 responsibilities

He tells them to Watch, Wait and Walk

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

Jesus was coming, and His people needed to be ready to meet Him

That means we are to live as if He might come at any minute and we are to work like our time is short

But - as we watch and as we work - we are to be careful of how we live our lives (wait)

We must not allow ourselves to become like the world around us

We are to Live for Jesus - Love Jesus and Look for Jesus

Guarding everything He has given us - so that we can be confident of a reward when He comes

We will face our Lord some day at the Judgment Seat of Christ

That day can be a day of reward - or it can be a day of loss - which depends on how we live now

**II Corinthians 5:10 – *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad”***

**Romans 14:12 – *“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God”***

As He relates to them all that He has given them and is doing for them and through them …

It's possible that they didn’t even know just how much the Lord was blessing them and using them for His glory

I think it is very likely that we don’t know the extent of our outreach and the strength of our influence

We may never know until we get to Heaven

But - I am confident that God is using Cornerstone Bible Baptist Church in ways that we cannot begin to comprehend!

He would tell us to Watch - Wait and Work

He would also tell us to guard what we have so that we can meet Him with joy one day!

**THE "MASTER" OF THE CHURCH**

**THE "MINISTRY" OF THE CHURCH**

**III. THE "MESSAGE" TO THE CHURCH – v. 12, 13 …**

Jesus closes His letter to this church by giving them a Message of Hope for the Future

This Message is just as valid for us today as it was for the people in Philadelphia

**A. A Hope of 'Stability'**

Jesus tells these believers that He will set them as a pillar in God’s temple and they wouldn't go out any more

This was a message of hope to these folks

In that city - the highest honor that could be bestowed on an individual was for a pillar in one of the pagan temples to be dedicated in their honor

Their name would be written on it and the reason for the honor would be inscribed there too

Jesus is saying to these saints - *“You might not be well known or honored down there, but things are different in Heaven. You might be a nobody today on earth, but you are a somebody in Heaven!”*

It’s the same for us - friends!

This world hates us - the devil hates us

And each day sees the church becoming the focus of their increasing attacks and hatred

But - in Heaven - we are somebodies!

We are the redeemed children of God!

We are the spotless – chaste - virgin bride of the Lamb of God!

Our names are known over there and one day – we'll enter that city and be firmly fixed there forever!

Praise the Lord!

**B. A Message of 'Security'**

God says that His people will be identified with 3 things

The Creator; The City; and with The Christ

**1.** The Creator –

***"I will write upon him the name of My God"***

God puts His name on them to establish ownership

(We are bought with a price / The Blood of Jesus)

He has redeemed them, and they are His forever!

**2.** The City

***"I will write upon him … the name of the City of My God which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God:"***

He places the name of the city of New Jerusalem on them because that is their destination

They might be living on earth today - but they are headed for glory tomorrow

**3.** The Christ

***"and I will write upon him My new name"***

Jesus writes His new name on them because they are special to Him

The name of Christ represents the fullness of His Person

And - in Heaven - they will see Christ in all His fullness!

In the Old Testament - His name was Jehovah

In the New Testament - His name is Jesus

In Heaven - He will have a new name!

**Revelation 19:12 - *"His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself"***

But we see Him willing to give the folks of this church His New Name

And I believe to all who Love His appearing

**II Timothy 4:8 – *"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"***

The world might not see our value - but God does, and He honors His faithful servants

The people in the church of Philadelphia had no security in the city where they lived

 But - they had Eternal Life in their relationship with Jesus Christ and in His kingdom!

**CONCLUSION**

**Let's be careful that we don't Neglect to take Advantage of such a Great Opportunity**

So – here’s the invitation

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

Has God been talking to you tonight

I suggest that you obey God

**THE "MASTER" OF THE CHURCH**

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