

TO: Whoever has ears,
let them hear...

Letters to the CHURCH

FROM (the):
Book of Revelation

STUDY GUIDE

Week 2

WEEK 2 - PHILADELPHIA

Monday

Read: Revelation 3:7, Isaiah 22:22, Job 12:14, Matthew 16:19, Psalm 115:3

Philadelphia was a small but strategic city with a heavy Greek influence. It experienced heavy earthquakes due to being built on a fault line, and was likely to have been economically and politically weaker than its neighbours. It wasn't the best or the biggest city of its time, but that did not mean it was worthless. In the beginning of His letter, Jesus reminds the Philadelphian church that 'what He opens, no one can close, and what He closes, no one can open'. Jesus speaks into their city's specific context - one that didn't have a lot of people, a lot of money, or a lot of power - and points out that as long as His hand is on their church, they cannot fail. He makes sure that the first thing this church hears is that He does not make mistakes, and no matter what their circumstances, His design has authority.

What stands out to you about these scriptures?

Have you ever worried that you're not able to do what God is asking you to do 'well enough'?

How can you be encouraged by this verse?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for reminding me that you have authority over everything in my life. Thank you that your plan is greater than anything I could imagine, and there is no way that I or my circumstances could ruin that plan. Please help me to be receptive to this reminder whenever I need to hear it. Amen.



This week in your Discipleship Group discuss how Jesus' encouragement can help us when we feel discouraged about our ability or our position in the world. Discuss how we can change our thinking and be encouraged by what Jesus has said to the church in Philadelphia.

Tuesday

Read: Revelation 3:8, Matthew 14:13-21, 1 Samuel 17:40-50, 2 Kings 4:1-7

In this verse, Jesus shows the Philadelphian church, and us as well, that He is not worried about how little we have - only what we do with it. The Philadelphian church, like the city itself, was small. The church was under pressure, possibly experiencing exclusion, economic pressure, and social shame. It wasn't the most persecuted, or the most influential. Yet, because the church obeyed the Lord with the little they had, Jesus honoured them. He showed them that their faithfulness was the most important thing to Him, and that their little strength had no bearing on the amazing things He could do with them.

What is the Holy Spirit revealing to you through these scriptures?

What 'little strength' can you use for God? How can you take the skills He has given you, the position He has put you in, and be faithful with it?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank You for the gifts You have given me and the position You have put me in. Please show me how I can use what I have and be obedient to you and show me how You can multiply it and use it for Your Kingdom. Amen.

Wednesday

Read: Revelation 3:9, Romans 11:25-26, Ezekiel 14:39-40, Revelation 2:6, 2:9, 2:14-15, 2:20

Here, Jesus warns the church against false believers - people who may be a part of the church but do not act like it. Though Jewish people were originally God's chosen people, that doesn't mean that all of them followed

Him or His ways. In fact, we see throughout the Bible they turned from Him time after time, worshipping idols and compromising their values in order to fit into society. Multiple churches in Revelation struggled with false believers, such as the church in Smyrna (Revelation 2:9), Ephesus (Revelation 2:6), Thyatira (Revelation 2:20), and Pergamum (Revelation 2:14-15). Jesus does not believe these people are beyond saving, as he says that one day they will worship him again. However, he does warn the other members of the church not to listen to or be led astray by them. Unbelief sees these people as obstacles, but faith sees the opportunities. Do I see these people as opportunities or obstacles? He holds the keys (v7). He is in control of the outcome.

What stands out to you about these scriptures?

Is there someone in your life whose thoughts, behaviours and ideals don't reflect Jesus'? Ask Holy Spirit to help you be a godly influence to them, encouraging them to return to Christ.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you that you see into people's souls, and you know our hearts. Please help me to listen to that still, small voice so that I take guidance from the right sources. Give me the discernment and grace to not be led astray, instead being a positive influence to those that aren't walking in your ways – whatever their confession. Amen.

Thursday

Read: Revelation 3:10, Proverbs 8:32, Psalm 119:2-3, Matthew 7:21

Jesus protects those who obey Him. Not those who do the most, who are the best, who make the greatest impact - those who obey Him. He does not arrange us in order from most influential to least influential. In the broken world we live in, in the face of opposition, cultural shifts, and spiritual warfare, it can be difficult to persevere. It may feel as if we will never be rewarded for our work. But it is important to remember that our reward is the Lord's protection. It's relationship with Him. It's the salvation of even a single person. So remember in the moments where it might feel easier to give up, that we are working towards Heaven – and that is the greatest reward we could ever hope to gain.

What do these scriptures reveal about Jesus?

How can these verses encourage you in times where you are finding it hard to persevere?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you that you see what I'm up against, and that you reward every act of obedience and perseverance in Your name. Please remind me when I feel like giving up, that you will protect me, and heaven is my ultimate reward. Amen

Friday

Read: Revelation 3:11, Colossians 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Though the Philadelphian church is one of only two in Revelation that Jesus doesn't give a correction to, He instructs the church how they can continue in what they've begun. He sees the world they live in, and how easy it can be to become apathetic or compromising, to lose their fire for Christ. He tells the church, and by extension us, to 'hold on to what we have', not meaning our physical possessions, but our relationship with Christ – our desire to be more like Him. Talking to Jesus is the most important thing we can do to strengthen our relationship with God, and it's something we need build a habit of so it becomes a natural rhythm in our life. We live in a noisy world, where there are dozens of things commanding our attention from the moment we wake to the moment we fall asleep. When life gets busy or hard, or we can tend to grow complacent and allow other influences to pull us away from doing the things we know to do. It's easy to fall into the traps of compromise, apathy, or sin – so we need to be proactive in the strengthening of our faith. Going to church weekly, meditating on the Word of God, eating together, spending time in solitude, silence, prayer, fasting – all of these are building blocks for a life of intimacy with Jesus.

What is Holy Spirit highlighting through these scriptures?

How would you describe your current season?

Ask the Holy Spirit how you can be proactive in strengthening your relationship with God in this season
Ask Him to reveal where the river of life is flowing today and how you can live in it.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for everything you teach us. Thank you that you are by my side in every season. Please help me to seek you every day, in every season, so that when I am challenged my first thought is to look to you. Amen.

Saturday

Read: Revelation 3:12, Psalm 22:1, John 20:28

In this verse, the phrase 'My God' is used three times. 'My God' is a deeply personal way to refer to God. Other examples of its use are Psalm 22, where David cries out, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' and John 20:28 when Thomas exclaims, 'My Lord and my God!' when he sees the resurrected Jesus. Both instances are said in times of deep vulnerability, when David and Thomas needed to connect with their God. In the time period Revelation was written, the Roman Empire was alive and well, and cities under Roman control had to take part in worshipping the Roman gods. There were many Roman gods, and they were thought to be very fickle and could be cruel. Any natural disasters, economic or military losses could be blamed on the gods' displeasure. However, worship of the gods was also intrinsic to everyday life, such as economic and social behaviours, so communication with the gods could also be ordinary and impersonal. When Jesus says 'my God', He is reminding the Philadelphian church that there is one true God, and He is a deeply personal God, seeking individual relationships with each one of us.

What do these scriptures reveal about the heart of God?

What does it mean to pray 'My God'?

Would your relationship with God look different if you reminded yourself today that same God knows your heart and wants nothing more than to spend time with you?

Prayer: My God, thank you that you are a personal, loving God. Thank you that I can bring my tiredness, my sadness, my pain, my frustration, my joys, my hopes, my expectations and my dreams to you. I pray that I will feel your closeness today. Speak to me. Strengthen me. Raise me up as I bring glory to your name. Amen.