



## The Church in Philadelphia

Week Six

### *Look Back at Last Week*

- In his Sermon on May 5 about the church in Sardis, Pastor Emmanuel warned against a religiosity that is performative, but not personal. Discuss ways to nurture a personal rather than performative relationship with Jesus.
- When in seminary Pastor Emmanuel had a trusted mentor observe that he (Emmanuel) was good at talking about God, but challenged whether he was drawing closer to God by deepening his prayer life. What person or people in your life challenge you in this way?
- Discuss whether it is easy or difficult for you to think of yourself as beloved, as someone in whom God takes great delight.

### *Read Aloud*

Passage for this week: **REVELATION 3:7-13**.

### *Head | 15–20 Minutes*

OBSERVE THE TEXT AND THE AUTHOR'S MAIN POINTS

1. How is Jesus characterized to the church in Philadelphia? What seems especially significant to you? For "key of David," see Isaiah 22:22.
2. The word, "open" is used three times in verses 7 & 8. How do the following verses help clarify what "open" and "open door" mean: 1 Cor. 16:8-9; 2 Cor. 2:12; Col.4:3?
3. What is the result of following the counsel of Jesus in verse 12?

### *Heart | 15–20 Minutes*

ENVISION HOW THE TEXT—WHEN APPLIED—MIGHT TRANSFORM YOUR INNER LIFE IN TERMS OF YOUR THOUGHTS, ATTITUDES, AND BEHAVIORS

1. The church in Philadelphia had "little strength" (v.8), but still could be used powerfully by God. Peter walked on water although he only had "little faith" (Matt.14:28-31). Jesus said that nothing is impossible for those who have faith as small as a mustard seed (Matthew 17:20). What encouragement do you take from these verses? Where could you lean into your little strength, your little faith more?
2. In verse 8 Jesus notes the opportunity for the church: "an open door that no one can shut." Discuss open doors available to you and what you are doing with them. Who or what can help (v.7-8a)?

## *Hands / 10 Minutes*

APPLY THE TEXT BY MOVING FROM INWARD REFLECTION TO OUTWARD ACTION LOOKING FOR WAYS TO LIVE THE TEXT OUT IN OUR LIVES TO SERVE OTHERS

### **Reaching Upwards:** Growing in Your Relationship with God

- The church in Philadelphia lived in an unstable environment because of frequent earthquakes and aftershocks. What instability are you facing? To what or to whom do you look to in unstable times? Why is it important to keep your eyes fixed on Jesus during such times?
- What is significant about the image of being “a pillar in the temple of my God” (v. 12) for those in an earthquake prone area? For us?

### **Reaching Outward:** Investing in Your Neighbors

The city of Philadelphia was founded as a missionary outpost to spread Greek culture, language, and way of life throughout the provinces of Asia. Here are two ways to be a missionary outpost for Christ at FPC:

- Pray for Alpha that is continuing at FPC on Thursday nights. The topic for Week 5 is "Why and How Do I Pray?" We praise God that attendance continues to be strong (40+seekers; 30+ volunteers), and ask prayer for all guests and volunteers to return each week. Pray for the guests to encounter Jesus, and for the guests to experience the love of Jesus through our hosts and helpers. May 18 is the Retreat to be held at FPC. The Retreat topic is the Holy Spirit. Pray that it will be a meaningful experience drawing all involved closer to Jesus. Thank you for your continued prayers for those involved in Thursday evening Alpha at FPC - your prayers matter!
- VBS Volunteer for Vacation Bible School - June 10-14 - 9AM - 12 PM - This is a wonderful way to show practical love to neighbors and support FPC's mission. The theme is SCUBA, diving into friendship with God. Help others to experience the never-ending love of God! To volunteer, register at: [fpc-houston.org/ministries/children/vbs-2024/](https://fpc-houston.org/ministries/children/vbs-2024/)

### **Reaching Beyond**

Join one or more of these opportunities to learn more about how God is working outside FPC through its ministry partners:

- May 18, 9 am - 11 am, Volunteer training at The Crosswalk Center (2103 N. Main St.; 77009), a prison ministry that encourages and assists individuals as they prepare mentally, emotionally, and spiritually to re-enter society.
- May 19, Jericho Road Renewal Fundraiser Bingo Event 3-5:30 PM held at the City of Refuge Church, 3150 Yellowstone Blvd., Houston, TX 77054. For information about the great prizes and to RSVP by May 15 go to [jerichoroadrenewal.org/bingo/](https://jerichoroadrenewal.org/bingo/). Jericho Road Renewal is a community serving Southeast Houston through supportive housing for marginalized men and women.
- Pray for the persecuted church. The church in Philadelphia had little earthly power and faced serious opposition. Followers of Jesus today face opposition to the point of death in parts of the world. Pray for the persecuted church by using the Open Doors prayer list found at [opendoorsus.org/en-US/getinvolved/pray/](https://opendoorsus.org/en-US/getinvolved/pray/) or for a vulnerable front-line worker from the Voice of the Martyrs website [persecution.com/flw](https://persecution.com/flw).