

The Church God Desires, Pt. 2

Revelation 3:7-13

August 11-12, 2007

Introduction

1. What do you look for in a church?

ILLUS – Baby Boomer Expectations

2. What is Jesus Christ looking for in His Church?
3. Today, we are going to continue a study started by Pastor Rich called, *The Church God Desires* and discover what matters most to our Savior about His Bride, the Church.

READ Revelation 3:7-13

Context

1. Philadelphia was located in modern Turkey, about 28 miles south-east of Sardis.
2. Named for the king of Pergamum who built it, Attalus II (159-138 B.C.). His nickname was “Philadelphus”, “brother lover,” because of his special devotion to his brother Eumenes II.
3. It was located in a wine-growing region with Bacchus (Dionysos) as the chief deity. It was called “little Athens” because of its many temples.
4. Though not a large city it was a strategic “missionary city “ because the Roman roads through it led into central Asia Minor. In fact, the city was used to promote “a unity of spirit, customs and loyalty” between Hellenism and the Oriental lands.
5. Yet it was afflicted with severe earthquakes because it stood on a geological fault which destroyed the city several times. After the earthquake in 17 B.C., many of the citizens moved to the nearby countryside and lived in basic hut-like structures for safety reasons.

I. Be A Faithful Witness (7-9)

A. Take the open door

1. “I know your deeds”

- a. Jesus Christ examines and tests the deeds of His people, so be faithful/steadfast
- b. The description of Jesus in verse 7 confirms the veracity of His testimony
 1. *Holy* – pure, standard of perfection, without peer, confirming He is God
 2. *True* – genuine, authentic God
 3. *Keys of David* – authority and right to rule (open and close doors)

Isaiah 22:15-23

2. The One who has the Key of David has the right to open doors for more ministry/outreach... when He says “Go” we must go!

ILLUS – Aaron sharing his faith during the Mexico trip

- a. We are His Spirit-empowered witnesses

Acts 1:8, “but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

- b. Resistance should be expected (c.f. v. 9)

1 Corinthians 16:8-9, “But I shall remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; for a wide door of effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”

ILLUS – Afraid to witness

- c. Leave the results with the Lord

ILLUS – Pastor John Stewart’s observation of fruitful ministries

1 Corinthians 3:5-8

B. Keep His Word

1. Though persecuted, they kept God’s Word
 - a. Doctrinal purity – what we believe matters

1. The identity of Jesus Christ

1 John 5:1, “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him.”

2. The Gospel of Jesus Christ

Galatians 1:9, “As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.”

- b. Practical purity – their lifestyle was conformed to the message!

1 Peter 2:11-12, “Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may on account of your deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

ILLUS – Romanian missionaries’ testimony to a real estate agent

2. Keep the Word by being in the Word

Colossians 3:16, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you; with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

3. Be in the Word and you will do the Word

James 1:22-25

ILLUS – The testimony of the founder of Next Step Ministries

C. Boldly proclaim His name

1. When opposition hits, it’s easy to just clam up
2. But the saints in Philadelphia did not deny their Lord
3. We can deny the Lord but what we say or don’t say

Luke 12:8-9, “And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the

angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.”

ILLUS – Polycarp’s testimony

4. We can also deny the Lord by our actions

Titus 1:16, “They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed.”

5. When tempted to deny the Lord, keep eternity in view when opposed (v. 9)

II. Hold Fast What You Have (10-13)

A. Finish strong (10)

1. Times were difficult for the saints in Philadelphia.

John 16:33, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

2. Yet there would come a time when things would get far worse
 - a. Hour – a unit of time
 - b. Testing – purpose of this period of time
 - c. Whole world – universal in scope
 - d. Dwell upon the earth – identified with world
 - e. When these elements are put together we have a description of the Great Tribulation
3. But the Lord made a promise to these saints and to the body of Christ as a whole – “keep you from”
 - a. Not keep you “through”
 - b. Not keep you “in”
 - c. Nor “take you out of”

ILLUS – Dr. Daniel Wallace from DTS said the warning label, “Keep out of the reach of children” has the same force to it.

- d. Therefore, the Lord will remove the Church before this universal period of testing comes upon the world

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

- 4. So, don't let anyone cut in on you

Galatians 5:7-9, "You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough."

- 5. We don't know the hour of Christ's return! He will come suddenly/quickly. Be faithful. Hold on to what matters most!

B. Christ's reward is worth the wait (11-13)

- 1. Jesus offers four promises to those who overcome
 - a. Make him a pillar in the temple of My God
 - 1. God's dwelling place
 - 2. Permanence – never leave
(comforting for earthquake victims)

Psalm 27:4, "One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to meditate in His temple."

- b. God's name written on us – We belong to Him
- c. New Jerusalem's name on us – Citizenship
- d. Christ's new name – We are His subjects

Revelation 19:16, "And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, 'KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.'"

ILLUS – *Discovering the origin of my last name*

- 2. "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Conclusion

Proverbs 20:6, "Many a man proclaims his own loyalty, but who can find a trustworthy man?"