

02-10-06b Revelation

Okay, we're back now from our break and we're ready to resume our study. We spent a good deal of time in our last lesson looking at this allusion that Jesus makes when he says, I have the key of David. I open and no one shuts.

I shut and no one opens. And we saw the background for that. People who knew their Bible, which at that time was the Old Testament.

Many of the New Testament books were not really even circulating yet. But they knew the story of Shebna and they knew the story of Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah. And when they heard that term, key of David, it's only used one time in the whole Old Testament Scriptures and that's it.

God said, I will give the key of the house of David to Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah. So the people in Philadelphia hear that and they think, ah, so this is what he's talking about. There are bigger things in view here than just, I'm the son of David, I'm the king of Israel or some such thing.

It has a lot to do with opportunity. Because you have opportunity when you are given options, when you are able to take advantage of resources and relationships and accomplish things. But why are you doing it? It isn't that you do it.

There were two different men who were the stewards of the house of Israel. One of them was Shebna and one of them was Hilkiah. One of them had his eyes on his own advancement and his own security, that was Shebna.

Just like Satan in the throne room of God in eternity past. The other one, Eliakim, had his eyes on God. He wanted God to be honored.

He recognized that Israel was the nation of God, the people of God. And he did the same job, occupied the same position, but he was doing it for a different reason. One man wanted to honor himself, wanted to solve his own problems, wanted to get his own nest lined.

The other one, in the very same position, with the very same opportunities, wanted God to be glorified and God to be honored. God saw that. God is in his heaven and God sees our thoughts.

He sees our priorities. He sees our goals and the values that we set for ourselves. And God will raise up.

That's what that verb means. God will raise up the one who honors him. Now, let me ask you something.

If God decides to raise you up, who is going to keep you down? God puts his hand underneath you and says, I am going to raise you up. Is there anybody or anything in the universe that can stop God's hand from raising you up? There is not. A pastor I studied under for a long time used

to say, If God promotes you, you are truly promoted.

And if God does not promote you, you are not promoted. You might think that you've made a gain or you might think that you've secured a position, but if God is not in it, it's like that peg that is going to be snapped off. Well, now let's turn back to Revelation 3, verse 7 and following and see how this affects our understanding of this letter.

Now remember, this is just like going to the mailbox and getting an envelope with a nice solid gold emblem on it that says, From Jesus Christ to fill in your name. I would love to have a personal letter from the Lord Jesus Christ. And guess what? I do.

I've got seven of them and so do you. These letters were not just written to ancient people in ancient cities. They are preserved in Scripture.

And God said, Don't anybody take a single word away from this book. You go to the very end of Revelation and it says, If anybody subtracts even one word out of this book, I will subtract his inheritance out of the future kingdom. You can have done really well and if you start messing with God's book and start taking words out of it and twisting it and making it say things it doesn't say, you may be saved and you may not go to the lake of fire, but anything you had by way of inheritance, God says, it's forfeit.

You messed with the book. One yod. Yod is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet.

You know what an apostrophe looks like in English? That's the letter Y in Hebrew. It's the smallest word. And Jesus said, One yod will not disappear from God's book, God's law, until every single thing is fulfilled.

God's word will stand forever. Not the smallest letter, not an apostrophe, is going to be subtracted. And he said, If you go in and do that, this would be people like me who stand up and say, I'm going to tell you what God's Bible says.

I'm going to tell you what God says. And then you start saying, you know, God spoke to me last night. God told me that you need to put five dollars in the offering plate this morning.

God spoke to me and said you need to sow the seed of your financial good into my offering plate. That's adding something to God's word. God's word doesn't say that.

God says each man in his own heart decides if he wants to give or not. And who to give to or not. It's totally up to you.

He says you should be cheerful. You should do it because you believe in what you're giving to. That's the principle of biblical giving.

But you see people all over the place saying, God says you must give. Some people say God

says you must give ten percent. You figure out how much money that amounts to.

And there are people who say, well, ten percent, because that's what they did to support the Levites. Do not add. Do not take away.

Don't twist. Don't misinterpret. God's word says these things will be permanent.

So here's a letter from the Lord Jesus Christ to you and me. Letter number six, beginning in Revelation 3-7. To the angel, this is the messenger, the one who communicates.

That's why we call them angels. Angelos in Greek means you carry the message. And they're not just heavenly beings and they don't all necessarily have wings and so forth.

This is the messenger of the church. This would be the pastor of the church, the teacher of the church. In Philadelphia, right.

These things says he who is holy, he who is true. Shebna wasn't holy and wasn't true. He corrupted his office and began to broker influence and try to get rich.

He who has the key of David, he who opens and no one shuts, shuts and no one opens. He says in verse eight, I know your works. I know what you've done.

I know the good things you've done. I know the bad things you've done. I know it all.

And look, I have set before you an open door. Now, let me ask you this. You're walking along and you're walking beside a wall and all of a sudden there's an open door.

What's the purpose of an open door? What do you do with it? What's a door for? You go through, right? It lets you into something that you couldn't get to without the door. We don't put doors in every wall of our house because we don't want people just coming in any time they feel like it. A door gives you access to something that is denied by any other means.

We typically have a front door and a back door, right? Jesus says, look, let me tell you something. I'm writing you this letter. I have put in front of you a door and it's not a locked door.

The door is open. If you walk down the street here, I guarantee you unless somebody's moving or collapsed, none of these doors are open. All of the doors are shut.

Everybody's front door is shut. Why? They don't want me just walking in. They might be changing clothes.

They might be having a meal. They might be smooching in the back room or something. You don't know what they're doing in there.

But their door is shut because they don't want anybody in the street walking in. Jesus doesn't say

I've put before you a door and if you know the secret handshake and you know how to turn the lock and you have a key, you can get in. He says this door is open.

Now what does that mean to us? The Lord Jesus Christ has given us an opportunity and you don't have to have any special knowledge. You don't have to have any special key. You don't have to know the secret handshake.

What do you have to do? You've got to be willing to walk through the door. That's all it takes is walking through. Jesus says I've put before you an open door and no one can shut it.

Nobody can keep you from walking through the door that God has placed in front of you. Now what is the door? Why would you want to walk through it? Well, there are two ideas about this. If you go to people who comment on the Bible and interpret it, some, in fact most, the majority of people who look at this say this open door is the open door for evangelism because Paul in a couple of places in his writings, the Apostle Paul says pray that God will open a door so that I can go and give the gospel to these people.

He says that two or three times. So they say now see, there's a door. And so Jesus is saying I've put the door here so that you can go give people the gospel.

You can be missionaries and evangelists. Well, being a missionary and being an evangelist is a wonderful thing. It's a great thing to tell the good news of Jesus Christ.

But that's not what this door is. The door that Eliakim could open and shut didn't have anything. He didn't tell the Israelites go evangelize the Assyrians, did he? He didn't say I'm about to wipe out 185,000.

By the way, that's the rest of that story. If you read on down in Isaiah, it's pretty fascinating because the Rabshakeh and his army are sitting out there Hezekiah listened to Eliakim and he ignored Shebna. And he did not go to Egypt and he did not rely on human strength.

And God went out and in one day 185,000 Assyrians died. And Rabshakeh got discouraged and he went home. He looked around and all of his army was laying around dead.

And he said this whole attacking Jerusalem thing doesn't seem like such a good idea anymore. And he packed his little ditty bag and went home. God did that.

Here, Jesus says, I know your works. Look, I have set before you an open door. No one can shut it.

Why? Because you have a little strength. And Friday night we saw that this word for little is micron. You have a micron of strength.

It's small. Microscope. Microscopic, that's where we get the word.

He doesn't say you're a wonderful, powerful, saintly, up on a pedestal, apostolic believer. You're amongst the saints of glory. You're a big, broad-shouldered man of God.

He says you've got this tiny little grain of strength. You've got faith like a mustard seed. And that's all it takes.

How much strength does it take to walk through an open door? You don't have to batter it down. You don't have to squeeze through it because it's too small. It's a nice big open door.

All you've got to do is put one foot in front of the other and walk in. With a little strength, you can enter the open door. Where did this strength come from? He says you have kept my word.

Tereo is the Greek word used of Greek sentries, Greek soldiers, who had their machaira, their sharp two-edged sword, and their helmet and their breastplate, and they would stand guard. The soldiers that were stationed at the tomb of Christ were set there to tereo the tomb, to guard it, to keep anybody from getting in or out. They had shut the tomb and they didn't want anybody to open it.

They guarded it. Here it says you have kept my word. Now to guard something, you have to have it, right? It has to be there.

You can't keep something you don't even have. It's impossible to keep God's word if you don't even know what it says. You have it and you've kept it.

And you have not denied my name. What does it mean to deny His name? There was a marine, has the uniform of a marine, represents the Marine Corps, has got his high and tight haircut over in Okinawa, and he and a buddy got drunk and they went to an Okinawan. The Okinawans are kind of Japanese, but they don't like being called Japanese.

But they are like the Japanese in that they are mostly Buddhists and they are ancestor worshippers and they think Grandpa comes back as a cricket and that kind of thing. And there are cemeteries that are considered shrines and holy places to the Japanese. Well, these two marine buddies got looped and drove out to one of these cemeteries and they desecrated it.

They did things to it that should not be done. They defaced the markers, they knocked over the little urns that had the ashes of the bones of the ancestors and that kind of thing. Now, they got put in Okinawan prison for that and the U.S. government says, hey, if you are in trouble with the Okinawans, you are on your own.

And it made an international incident. It made the newspapers and it was a horrible thing. Now, is that kind of behavior reflective of the highest traditions of the United States Marine Corps? Is that the way we want an American to act overseas? They are Americans and they are Marines, but they did not keep that name.

They didn't act in keeping with those traditions and with that duty and responsibility. Just the opposite. And they were court-martialed and kicked out of the Marine Corps.

And if it was up to me, they would lose their citizenship and they could just go live in Okinawa and see how they like it. For all I know, they may still be in Okinawan jail. But here's the point.

It's not just saying something. It's how you live. If you say, I believe in Jesus Christ.

He's my Savior. I represent Him. That's what it means to be a Christian.

You say, I claim Christ. Then you have a responsibility to live in that light. You bear that name.

And Jesus says, these people have done a good thing. They have not denied the name. They haven't acted out of keeping with the name that they bear.

If your name is Christian, you don't adopt a lifestyle, you don't adopt a pattern of behavior that is unchristian, because you bear a name. You are branded with that forever. It will never leave.

You have not denied my name. He says, there are people, he calls them the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not. These were the ones who said they were religious, but they're really not.

He said, I will make them come and worship before your feet, and I will make them know that I have loved you. These were the oppressors. These were the people who were giving the Christians a hard time.

They were the religious crowd. They said, you're not religious enough for us. Well, he says, I have put before you this open door.

You have a little strength. You've kept my word. And I'm going to make people who are trying to put pressure on you, I'm going to put them at your feet.

They are going to be your servants in that sense. It's not worshiping. It means they will be subservient.

These that are trying to dominate you and oppress you, how do I know that? Well, this word door is the Greek word thura, T-H-U-R-A. And we have a couple of other passages in the word of God that talk about the door. Luke chapter 13 and verse 24.

We saw this in our Luke study some months ago. Jesus said to his audience, a person, Jesus was going through teaching and preaching and so on, and somebody said, Lord, are there only a few that are going to be delivered? Is it just a few that are going to get into the kingdom? And Jesus said, strive to enter through the narrow gate. Now, we don't strive to get saved and not go to the lake of fire.

We just claim Christ as our Savior. It requires no work, no change, no gumption on our part. We just claim him by faith.

But Jesus said, strive to enter through the narrow gate. Now, if you have to strive, if you have to work at it, in fact, the word strive here is agonizo. Can you think of an English word that might come from that? Agony.

Agonize. Agonizo was used of athletes in the Olympic Games or athletes who were running a marathon who were pushing to the upper limit of their strength and their endurance to finish well and to win the prize. Jesus said, agonizo, push hard, work hard, to enter through the narrow gate.

So this narrow gate is not salvation because there is no amount of pushing you can do to get saved. You can't work hard enough to get saved. This narrow gate is the gate that leads to life.

What kind of life? You know how people say as they're basking on their boat with a chilled beverage in their hand, looking over the seas and the cloudless sky and it's sunshiny and they don't have a care in the world, they say, ah, this is the life. This is the life. It's life in the sense of fullness, life of prosperity, life that's enjoyable, life that's meaningful, life that gives you peace and security and a sense of fullness and well-being in your soul.

That's life. To be drudging and under pressure and upset and discouraged and hemmed in on every side, you may be alive, but we don't say, ah, this is the life when we're having all kinds of distress. Jesus said, work, push, strive, to enter through the narrow gate.

For many, I say to you, will try to enter and will not be able. There's going to come a time because that life, this is the future life. This is when Christ comes back.

This is when God sets up a better world and a better kingdom. This is the whole entire future. This life is very short and eternity is very long.

Did you know that all of us are going to live forever, even people that are not saved? Everybody lives forever. It's where you live that counts. Now, people say, I'm going to plan for my old age.

I'm going to have a retirement program. I'm going to have a 401k or work for a non-profit. It's a 403b.

I'm going to have a Keogh plan. I'm going to have IRAs. I'm going to have CDs and certificates and stocks and all of this.

I'm going to have a portfolio that will sustain me in my old age. People are smart enough to look ahead and say, when I get old and can't work, I want some money so I can live comfortably. We don't often look beyond old age and death and say, what about the illimitable number of years in the future? What about that? Where am I going to live? How am I going to live? Am I going to say this is the life or not? Strive to enter through the narrow gate because there's going to come a

time when people are going to see this life that God has created.

It's a great life. It's a fulfilling life. It's a desirable life and everybody's going to want it.

Well, we're getting a sneak notification of that ahead of time. God's saying, look, there's going to be this very desirable life. You're going to want it.

Everybody's going to want it. But when you see it and want it, that's not when you're going to get it. You have to believe in it now and claim it now and you'll get to go through the narrow gate later.

Many will seek to enter but they will not be able. Once the master of the house has risen up and shut the door, this is like the door to the ark closing. Do you think when the rain started falling and the water started rising and it got too deep to stand in and everything started washing away, you don't think there were some people pounding on the outside of the ark saying, I'm ready to come in now? Too late.

You should have listened when Noah said, there's a flood coming. There was an open invitation. Anybody that wants to come, join us in the ark.

I don't need that. It's ridiculous. I've never seen rain in my life.

It didn't rain before the flood. Nobody had ever seen it. They had to believe in something they had not seen.

They thought he was foolish. They thought it was a waste of time. I've got more important things.

I've got my brand new stone trough for feeding my ox and I'm going to go out and admire it. I've got a brand new addition to my house. I've got a brand new ox cart.

I'm going to hitch up my little chariot and go for a ride. I'd rather do that than spend time in this musty old ark. There's animals in there.

It doesn't interest me. You can bet they were wanting in when the rain fell, but they just didn't believe it. Strive to enter.

Once the master of the house has risen up and shut the door, you will begin to stand outside and knock at the door saying, Lord, Lord, open for us. He will answer and say to you, I do not know you. I do not know where you are from.

How can that be? Because this is a saved person. This is somebody who's not in the lake of fire. This is somebody who's resurrected, who goes into the kingdom, goes into the kingdom age, but when they want to go into the kingdom itself, they want to go in where the life is, where the glory is, where the blessings are, where the wonderful things are, they say, wow, that's where I want to be.

Door is going to close. They're going to be knocking saying, hey, I know I'm supposed to be in there. I was more good than I was bad.

He's going to look through and he says, I don't know you. It's one thing to be saved and have Christ's name stamped on you. It's something else to know Him.

Do you think there are Christians who have believed in Christ but they don't know Him? How do you get to know somebody? You have to spend time with them. You have to hear what they have to say. You have to talk back to them.

You have to have a relationship. You have fellowship. That's how you know someone.

Jesus is going to look out at these people who are saved, but He says, we've never had a talk. When did you pray? When did you listen to what I have to say in the Word of God? You don't belong in here because this is the place of fellowship. This is the place where people who enjoy the presence of Christ are and you're not one of them, so you stay outside.

He says, wait, wait. We ate and drank in your presence. You taught in our streets.

He will say, I tell you, I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from me, you workers of iniquity. There will be weeping.

There will be gnashing of teeth. This is signs of distress and anguish. People are going to say, it was available to me and I missed it.

I can't believe I was that dumb. I can't believe I didn't listen when I had the opportunity. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

You'll see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves pushed out. Jesus was talking to religious people when He said that because they were like Shebna. They were doing what they did because it gave them position and made them admirable and they were looked up to and admired and people introduced them and had them speak at engagements and things.

He said, you're thrust out. Many will come from the east and the west, the north and the south and sit down in the kingdom of God. And there are many who are currently last, who are unknown, who are little and small.

People don't think anything of them. They're going to be first. They're going to be the Hilkiahs.

They're going to be up on that high peg because God is going to raise them up. And there are many who are currently first. People know their names.

They publish books. They're on Christian TV. They're admired and well known, but they did it all

for themselves like Shebna.

And they're going to be chopping cotton on somebody's plantation. They're going to be out there hoeing the peas and beans in the fields outside the city because they didn't care about the things of God. They didn't want to know God.

They didn't want to be known by God. We make that choice. And whether we agree with it or not, whether we accept it or not, it is just as true.

There are certain realities that hit no matter what. That's Luke 13, 24. Matthew 7 is another place where a door is mentioned by Jesus.

Matthew 7, verse 13. Jesus says once again. It's an imperative.

This is right in the middle of a bunch of instructions to people who already believe in God. He's saying this is how you should live. He says, Enter by the narrow gate.

Now, if these people are saved, the gate can't be salvation. They're already through that gate. He says, Enter by the narrow gate.

Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction. And there are many who go in by it. You know what this means? The crowd, most people, are on the big wide road.

That's where most people are. If you find yourself in a big crowd, you're probably on the wrong road. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way that leads to life.

And there are only a few who find it. The word here for few is oligos. We have a political term.

If you study political science or something, you talk about an oligarchy, a kind of government that's an oligarchy. It means ruling of the many by the few. Well, there are only a few who are going to go into life.

You know why? Because most people aren't smart enough. Most people aren't interested enough to think about the things of God and put God first. Most people are more Shibna than they are Eliakim.

Because it's a hard thing. It's easy to get caught up in what we see, what we hear, what other people are doing, what other people value, especially in our American culture. But if you're smart, if you look ahead, and you think, this is kind of like kindergarten compared to the whole rest of school and the whole rest of my life.

Why invest myself in kindergarten and forget about the whole rest of my life? Think ahead. Plan ahead. Look beyond even retirement.

Look into the eternal future. That's why Jesus said, lay up for yourself treasure in heaven. This

life is short.

The next life is a long, long time. Now, when it says enter by the narrow gate, it says the way is difficult. This is from the verb phlebo.

It's the same place we get the noun phlipsis. We've already seen that tribulation word, phlipsis. Phlebo means to press or to push, to put pressure on something.

And our testing and our pressure in this life, that's exactly what it is. It is pressure. It is being oppressed.

Have you ever felt like something was just weighing you down? Have you ever felt like something was squashing you? Phlebo in Greek means to squash, to press. And sometimes we think, this is just going to squash me and I'll never be able to stand up under it. I'll never be able to get up on my feet again.

I've just been pushed to the ground by this thing. Well, the way that leads to life has pressure. It's not an easy thing.

Nothing that's worthwhile comes easy. You've heard this. It's a truism even in normal human life.

Things worth having don't come easily. It takes effort. It takes agonizo.

It takes pushing against the pressure. And Jesus said it isn't easy. I've put an open door before you, but you've got to walk through it.

And that walking through is not as easy as it looks. In the Septuagint, this word was used for the slavery of Israel in Egypt when they were in hard bondage. It was used of Joseph's brothers when they threw him in the pit.

And they said, we threw him in the pit and we looked down and we saw the thlipsis. We saw the pressure. We saw the fear and the uncertainty that was in his eyes when we threw him in the pit.

And we were unmerciful. We left him there. We sold him to the slavers.

They took him down to Egypt. And then Joseph rose to become second to Pharaoh. He was holding that steward of the household position.

And Joseph's brothers come down. Now the situation is reversed. They're under pressure because they're in a famine.

And they're wondering, well, will he look at our thlipsis, at our pressure, and be merciful when we looked at his and we were unmerciful? But Joseph has a picture of Christ because he does. He feeds his family. He brings them down to Egypt and gets them through the famine and gives them their own land, gives them an inheritance in the land.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4.8, we are in everything hard pressed. And it's from phlebo. It's the same word.

Jesus said, in this world, you will have thlipsis. You will have tribulation. People try to twist the word of God and say, oh, just come to God and he's the big band-aid and the big aspirin pill.

You'll take him and your problems will go away. No, they won't. Jesus never promised that.

Just the opposite. Jesus said, if you're in the world and you're called by my name, you will have problems. You're not going to be delivered from all problems.

You will be delivered through your problems because if you have just that microscopic interest in the things of God, if you have faith like a mustard seed, I will strengthen you. Yea, I will help you. Yea, I will uphold you.

Uphold with the right hand of my righteousness. How strong is God's righteousness? It's the strongest thing in the universe. If God raises you up, you cannot be crushed.

You cannot be pressed down. And the times when we feel most pressed and most pressured are the times when we're trying to bear the load in our own strength. And we have to recognize that these things come for a reason because it is in our weakness that God manifests His strength.

God is glorified. God shows Himself to be God. God shows His mercy and His compassion when we're too weak to do something and He does it through us and does it for us.

That's why we're still here. That's why we live this life. That is the open door that Christ, who can open a door and no one can shut it, that's what He's put before us.

And there's going to come a day where He will close that door. When this life is over and we go into the next life, this opportunity to bear up under pressure isn't going to be there. It'll be a perfect world.

It'll be a perfect environment. And the opportunity to win approval from God by persevering under pressure, by letting His strength sustain us, won't be here. That's the drill.

That's why we're here. We're here to let God's strength make changes in us and enable us to do things we can't do in our own strength. That's why we're here.

It's an open door. If we'll walk through it, God will give us the strength. It's just a matter of saying, that's going to be the goal of my life.

That's what I want to do. I'm not going to be Shebna, hang my own peg and get my own plan going and have my own objectives and my own goals, because that peg is just going to snap and fall. What can we accomplish in this life that we can carry forward into the next that's going to last

forever? Can you carry any professional advancement or political advancement or personal advancement? Can you carry possessions? Can you carry status? Can you carry popularity forward? At the judgment, is God going to have a popularity contest and say, okay, everybody for Sam, raise your hand.

If more people raise your hand, I'll give him blessings and rewards. How popular was Sam? Okay, well, let's see. Four people.

Well, Sam, you go into the cotton-chopping mode. And here's somebody else that's hugely, wildly popular. You know, a sting or a rock band or something.

Oh, well, you're hugely popular. Here, you go be king of some big kingdom someplace. You get the big mansion.

You have all of the accoutrements and luxuries. That's not how it works. God judges us based on what we choose relative to Him now.

God isn't going to ask anybody's opinion, even our spouse. Unfortunately, you know, you may have a spouse that loves you to death, but God's not going to say, well, spouse, what do you think of this person here? How well should I treat them? We each stand or fall before God based on whether we took an interest and made any kind of claim on His grace now. It's an open door now, but there's going to come a time when the Lord Jesus Christ is going to close that door and it's not going to open again.

So, as the Bible says, now is the appointed hour. Now is the time of deliverance. If we're smart, if we heed what the Word of God says, we'll take hold of that each and every day.

And it's an opportunity that's going to have eternal consequences. We will thank ourselves if we seize it now. And we will kick ourselves.

There will be weeping and there will be wailing and there will be gnashing of teeth in the eternal future because we're going to think back and say, you know, I heard about this. I knew about this. That door opened, swung wide right in front of me, and I decided I would go a different direction.

I didn't walk through that door. Now the door's shut and there's no way I can enter. And I so wish.

It doesn't say that people say, oh, well, that's fine, closed door, no problem. I've got another big party I can go to over here. There is going to be religious people down on their knees, pounding their fist into the dust, crying because they didn't pay attention and walk through that door.

A lot of human beings. Wide is the way, broad is the gate that leads to destruction. So that is the open door of the church at Philadelphia.

That is in the letter that the Lord Jesus Christ wrote to you and to me. Will any of us have an

excuse at the judgment for not having walked through the door? He sent us a letter. He signed his name to it.

He said, I'm the true. I'm the holy. I have the key to this door.

I've opened it in front of you. What are you going to do? That's the challenge that stands before us this morning and each day of our life, as long as our life may last. Let's close in prayer.

Father, we thank you for the privilege of studying your word. We thank you for your grace. We have no right, we don't deserve anything from your hand, and yet you have been so gracious to open a door to life, to meaning, to fullness, to peace, to an opportunity to reflect your glory, both now and in the age to come.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will give us clear eyes to see that opportunity, that he will not let us rest until we have heeded that call and have walked through the door. We know that in so doing, the Lord Jesus Christ's work on our behalf is vindicated, and he will be the firstborn among many brethren who reflect your glory and fulfill your purposes in the age to come. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen.