

Rev 25-11-12a

Good evening, this is the 12th of November 2025. We're continuing our study in the book of Revelation. We're in chapter three, looking at the message to the church at Philadelphia.

Tonight, we are going to specifically look at the hour of trial that is about to come on the whole earth. What does it mean to be kept from it? What are the qualifications that pertain? And what does that mean for us? Let's ask God's blessing on our fellowship and study. We'll begin.

Father, it is such a privilege to have recourse to your word and to the Holy Spirit who ministers it to our hearts and souls and enables us to live a life that is supernaturally enabled by your grace. We are grateful for the Lord Jesus Christ and his example of faithfulness and obedience. We pray that we can follow in his footsteps in that regard.

And as we reflect on the truths that are contained in this portion of your word, may God the Holy Spirit bless them to each of us in a way that will be fruitful and thoroughly equip us for ever good work. We ask it in Jesus name. Amen.

Good idea to read our passage. This is Revelation chapter three, beginning at verse seven. And to the messenger of the church in Philadelphia, write, these things says he who is holy, he who is true, he who has the key of David, he who opens and no one shuts and shuts and no one opens.

I know your works. Behold, or see, I have set before you an open door and no one can shut it. For you have a little strength, have kept my word and have not denied my name.

Indeed, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not, but lie. Indeed, I will make them come and worship before your feet and to know that I have loved you because you have kept my command to persevere. I also will keep you from the hour of trial, which will come upon the whole world to test those who dwell on the earth.

Behold, I am coming quickly. Hold fast what you have that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God and he shall go out no more.

I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God and my new name. He who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches. Well, there is a great deal of information here in your New King James.

If it's anything like mine, this is labeled the faithful church. All different points of view, whatever they think of the book of Revelation, those who are in fact believers in the Lord Jesus like to imagine that we belong to the church at Philadelphia. That's our category.

That's our set of promises. But Jesus is very clear about what is involved in his commendation, what constitutes this idea of keeping his word. So we saw last time the key of David opening

and no one shuts, shutting and no one opens.

We went back to Isaiah chapter 22 and looked at that in context with regard to Shebna and so on. We pick up tonight in verse eight, I know your works. And the word see there is *edu*.

This is the that is always translated behold. And if the note on verse 11 that says that behold is omitted, which is the witness of the better text, the word that was added there is *edu*, behold. It's from the verb that means to see or to look at.

So interestingly, I know your works and behold. This is very interesting. He could have just said, I have set before you an open door, but he says, look.

And one of the first points of personal application is if we are faithful believers, God is going to weave into the tapestry of our lives opportunities. An open door invites someone to go through it. When we get to verse 20 in the final church at Laodicea, Jesus is going to stand at a closed door and knock on it.

And if anyone opens that door, you have the potential for the wonderful blessing of the presence and the fellowship of the Lord Jesus in a meaningful and personal way. So it is the open door speaks of opportunity. You'll remember that Paul talked about praying that he would have an open door to minister to a certain group of Gentiles.

So this speaks of potential and opportunity for service, for meaningful and fruitful function in the plan of God. So hands up everyone who says, I don't want an open door. I don't want an opportunity.

I don't want to serve. I don't want to bless and be blessed as God works in and through my life for the benefit of others. Not interested.

Of course, that's nonsensical. Obviously, if we stop and think about it, we would hope that we are equipped and qualified, that we are good and faithful servants, that we can be faithful in a few things so that God can use us to oversee greater things now and in the ages to come. So if there is an open door, how do you know that this is an opportunity that God has put in our path and has equipped us to enter, to pass through and to exploit? How do we know? It do.

Behold, look around. If we feel that we've kind of reached a neutral idling situation where we're in the car in the driveway, but we're not going anywhere. The engine is on.

Maybe we're enjoying the air conditioner or the heat as the season dictates, but we're not going anywhere. We can decide in our lives, I'm just kind of marking time. I'm marching in place here.

I don't really know that God is using me for anything meaningful. There are a number of things to consider if that is the perception, but the first and foremost one is there may be an open door in our life that God has put there, that the Lord Jesus Christ could speak to us and say, I've

put an open door here. How do we know if it's there? We've got to look.

Behold, this word behold is not just filler. It's not a conjunction. It isn't something to just help you glide from one sentence to the next.

He doesn't use this word in most of the letters. He says, take a look, pay attention, behold. This is something you need to make a priority to watch for and think about.

So behold, not an idle exhortation here. It's an imperative. Look! Exclamation point.

And I would put that in the margin, in all caps, with an exclamation point or two after it. Circle, behold. Jesus, it's the first word.

Look, I have put before you an open door. That's an opportunity. And He wouldn't put it there if we weren't ready for it.

He didn't give Ephesus an open door. He didn't give Smyrna an open door. You want to escape the 10 days of trial? Here's an open door.

Just take a right and you'll be out of that area. He didn't give it to Pergamos. He didn't give it to Thyatira.

He didn't give it to Sardis, but he's giving it to Philadelphia. Why? They are commendable. He says, I know your works, and He doesn't detail the works.

Remember in the previous letters, He says, you have a name that you're alive, but you're dead. He says, especially to Thyatira, your works, your love, your service, your faith, and your patience. As for your works, the last are more than the first.

He breaks it down. He talks about the areas of strength, then He goes on to the criticisms or the areas of weakness. And they're doing a good job, but it is being undermined and undercut in Thyatira by what they permit.

They're a little too interested in the positive, and they are not doing house cleaning. They are not purging out the leaven. And the problem is, you can have a wonderful dish that someone has prepared, a wonderful, great group gathering size meal that is beautifully done, perfectly prepared.

But if there's a dead roach in the middle of it, nobody is going to want to eat that food. Waiter, there's a fly in my soup, right? And that's the problem in Thyatira, because they countenance and tolerate these who have heinous practices and heinous beliefs. It negates the momentum and the approval that would otherwise attach to what they are doing well.

You could be a wonderful Levitical priest in Israel. You could be diligent. You could be as good as can be in preparing sacrifices and doing the other ritual ordinances that belong to that priestly system.

But if you accidentally brush up against something dead or otherwise defile yourself, that one instance of defilement negates, obviates, and renders useless all other sanctified actions that you might want to perform as a priest. You are suddenly completely disqualified. You get a bleeding sore.

You nick yourself while you're cutting up the sacrifice and take off the end of a finger, and you're no longer qualified to serve by one small, even momentary, omission of diligence and faithfulness. So, behold, verse 8, chapter 3, I have set before you an open door. No one can shut it.

The door is open. Jesus opens and no one shuts. That doesn't necessarily mean that we will pass through that door.

But if we don't go through that door, if we don't exploit what is on the other side of that door, it's not because somebody slammed the door in our face. Jesus put the open door there, and it's going to stay open. So, if we do not pass through it and move into those opportunities that lie beyond it, whose fault is it? There's nobody to blame.

There's nobody to accuse. There's no one to shift responsibility on. If Jesus puts an open door in front of us, we are the ones who have to walk through.

Notice, we are not Calvinists. Jesus was not a fan of reformed theology. He doesn't say, behold, I put an open door in front of you.

Now I'm going to reach through it and pull you across. This is a choice. I've set before you an open door.

Are you going to walk through it or not? Same thing when we get to Laodicea. I stand at the door knock. Are you going to open it or not? So, how important is it for us to be watchful, to be alert, to notice? Wouldn't it be tragic if the Lord Jesus sets before us an open door, but because we are not beholding, we don't even consider the option of exploiting that opportunity, of entering into that area of ministry or service, whatever it may be.

If we're oblivious, we're the ones who lose out. God is going to get his purpose accomplished, but if we don't do it, he will have to use someone else. Israel failed, God goes to the Gentiles.

Israel fails, God's going to accomplish his purpose in and through the church. But as Paul warns in Romans, faithless branches were broken out so you could be grafted into God's plan. But if you are not faithful, if you are not diligent, if you are not watchful, you can be broken out the same way they were.

This tree of fruitfulness and usefulness to the one who cultivates it, who prunes it so that it can be more fruitful. So, you have a little strength, have kept my word, and have not denied my name. We've seen some of this because of the parallel looking at the chiastic structure.

Since this is the second to the last church, we can also look across at the second church, which is Smyrna back in chapter two. And you remember those who say they're Jews or not, in a synagogue of Satan in chapter two, verse nine, almost identical language here in chapter three, verse nine. I will make them come and bow before your feet and to know that I have loved you.

To look at this very quickly, this idea of synagogue of Satan, Jews and or not, we've looked at that exhaustively, but to make them come and bow at your feet, you have the condition that you have kept my word. You have kept my word. Therefore, we're going to find out more about that word upcoming.

You kept my word and have not denied my name. So, this particular kind of keeping is facing a challenge to step back from Christian identity. The classic illustration is Peter at the fire on the night of Jesus' arrest and trial.

Aren't you one of them? I can tell by your Galilean accent, I know not the man. He flings curses and so on, and he denies association with Lord Jesus. We can do this in a number of ways beyond verbally.

If we are not diligent to be watchful, why are we here? If we are supposed to represent the Lord Jesus as members of his body and to do what he did when he was here in his body, and if we fail to do that, we're denying his name. We're supposed to be present and active as the Lord Jesus would be, to speak words of truth, to reflect the glory of God, to let our light so shine that when people see the good in our lives, they glorify our Father in heaven. That's what Jesus did.

So, because you have kept my word, you have a little strength, took on board the word of God and grow in grace and knowledge, strengthened by might in the inner man, as Paul says. Strengthened with might in the inner man. You look at that in Ephesians chapter 1. And because of that strength, because of the power that God provides and accessing that and living in it, how does the power of God come into our lives? How can we be strong? I am assuming that we want to be strong.

We want to be heirs to the promise to this church. I want to have a little strength. How do I do that? How does the power of God come in? It is the word of God, which we're looking at tonight together, and the Spirit of God.

We cultivate the meaningful and effective ministry of the Spirit in our lives. This requires attention, to know that it's there. It shouldn't be unconscious.

We shouldn't rely on it as some sort of instinct that we don't have to think about. We cultivate the presence and ministry of the Spirit in prayer, in reflection on the word of God that we have taken in, in times past. Crack open the Bible, read a passage of scripture.

It's a little more meaningful if we look at ones that we've seen recently, and we can look a little bit behind the text and recognize the principles, review the things that we've learned. Typically, when we learn them, God will put them to the test. We will have an opportunity for application.

To ensure that there's not the obstruction of sin, unconfessed disobedience, apathy, indifference, faithlessness, take it before the throne, wash our robes in the blood of the Lamb. He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us. The Holy Spirit doesn't go away when we sin.

As some of us in times past, there was this sort of on switch, off switch, that when you commit a sin, zap, it's like the light goes out and the room is completely dark because you're, quote, out of fellowship. The role of the Holy Spirit shifts when there is sin, especially a duration of time where sin is present and it's moving in the direction of evil. It's going to become a pattern or we have a momentary failure and we don't come to the throne of grace and acknowledge that sin.

The role of the Holy Spirit changes. We have the permanent indwelling of the Spirit. And to the extent that we are not completely filled, it is because the role of the Holy Spirit changes from affirmation and insight and understanding of bringing the Word of God to our mind for positive application.

Now the Word of God is coming to our mind for conviction, to show us our sin and its repercussions and its consequences and the pain that it can cause in our own life and the life of others. And this becomes remediation. If I'm a wonderful athlete or I'm a wonderful person at a job, but I get sick and have to go to the hospital, instead of my body's strength being used to accomplish meaningful tasks or accomplishments of an athletic nature, whatever it might be, maybe I can serve and be useful to get things done on behalf of others.

Now my body's strength is going to healing and recovery from a deficit, from an injury or an illness. And I don't want to be somebody that's constantly ill and the Holy Spirit is having to use His presence and the Word of God to try to get me back to zero, to not being in a deficit. I want to be healthy and have that power go in the positive so that I can lay up treasure in heaven, so that I can have a light that shines and draws others to the light and asking us a reason for our hope and so on.

So this is what happens when sin enters our lives and is not removed, is not remediated. It is a cancer and if you don't nip it in the bud, it is going to metastasize and grow. And the Holy Spirit is going to spend His time and His presence in pointing our attention to our personal problem.

You see this in these letters. Jesus says, I know your works, but this is what I have against you. Here is where you are erring and you've got to repent here before I can put any kind of an open door in front of you, before you can be a lampstand that shines brightly enough to be useful to those around you.

The whole purpose of a lampstand is to illuminate the area, right? There's no other reason to have a lampstand unless you want to light up a room or light up a place. Got a whole drawer full of flashlights, but if you're never in the dark, you don't need a flashlight. This is a light shining in a dark place.

That's what we should be. But if we're supposed to be a flame and we're sputtering and our

wick keeps drowning in the wax and if you've ever messed with candles and tried to rehabilitate old ones and use pieces and make new ones, you know that there is an art and a science to getting a candle to burn properly and you can't just stick a piece of string in the the thing can sputter and gutter and go out and, you know, drill a hole, stick a birthday candle in there, try to make it go, try to use the wax. We don't want to be that.

We don't want to be a problem where God is spending all of His time and energy trying to fix us. We want to be the means by which He gets positive things done in our neck of the woods. So behold, I've set before you an open door.

Take a look at it. And if you're going to be qualified to step through it, you have to have a little strength. You can't be spending your strength on self-repair.

You've got to be strong. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, Scripture says. You have a little strength.

You have kept my word. To keep it, you have to know it. That's why we're a Bible church.

That's why we meet for four sessions a week, so that we've got access to the Word of God. Dig in it. Think about it.

Marinate in it. Digest it. Figure out its meaning and application for me personally.

All Scripture is breathed into by God, inspired by God, and it's all profitable. And you've not denied my name. You take your Christian faith seriously.

Wake up in the morning. Who am I? Why am I here? First and foremost, I am a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, saved by grace, redeemed by His blood, rehabilitated into relationship with God for service and function. I've got His Word.

I've got His Spirit. I've got direction. I've got meaning and purpose and definition in my life.

I know how to pick myself up and dust myself off by God's grace and through the shed blood of Christ when I stumble and fall. God's given me the power to stand up. Take up your bed and walk.

Get with it. Go. You've not denied my name.

Verse 9, I will make the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie. This, in that day, and you go back to the times of the Lord Jesus, and for several decades after, you had the religious establishment that was stuck in its old ways, that refused to understand the importance of seeing the change in dispensation, that God was doing a new thing. These who say they are Jews and are not.

When you look at their testimony, going back to the times of the Lord Jesus, you find Romans 2, 28 and 29. He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision something you just do to

your flesh. He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not from men, but from God.

These who say they are Jews and are not, all you have to do, just put in the margin, if it's not already there in your study Bible, Romans 2, 28 and 29. You can say that you belong to God, claiming to be a Jew, claiming to be children of Abraham, claiming to be heirs of the promise, and it's all external. You're a whitewashed tombstone.

You wash the outside of the cup, and inside it's corrupt. I will make them bow at your feet. Many Old Testament passages in this regard.

There's an interesting little mini-study you can do in Scripture to look at what wives have contributed to their husband's decision-making process. You think about Pilate's wife having a dream and telling him, have nothing to do with this man. You think about Job's wife, curse God and die.

There's a little-known one, and I had kind of forgotten this. It's by a while since we did Esther, but if you go to Esther 6, verse 13, when Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends, everything that had happened to him, his wise men and his wife Zeresh, she's mentioned twice by name, said to him, if Mordecai, before whom you have begun to bow, to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him. You will surely fall before him.

If he's of Jewish descent, you're messing with the wrong guy. His wife knew this. His wise counselors, he's an upper-level cabinet, he's got staff, and they all told him, don't mess with the Jews, and he ignored it.

He thought he could wipe them all out, and you know how that turned out. And you remember, especially in chapter 8, when they can't revoke the first decree, but they can issue a second one, and in every province and city, wherever the king's command and decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a holiday. Many of the people of the land became Jews, because the fear of the Jews fell upon them.

So, you can research this idea of those who are willing to serve will be exalted, the humble will be exalted, the last shall be first, and so on. We've done this study many times. Jesus goes on to say, they will know that I have loved you, that I have loved you.

Just within our own context, what do you think of here? You can go back to chapter 1, verse 5. Grace to you and peace from him who is, who was, who is to come, from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. These exalt the Lord Jesus above any creature that you can name. He is a faithful witness.

He is the firstborn from the dead, the ruler over the kings of the earth, to him who loved us and released us from our sins by his own blood, loved us and released us, to him who loved us. And that love was expressed in a material act of service, of rescue, of release. You can think of all

kinds of illustrations and examples where if someone had not come along, a person would not have been rescued, would not have been delivered, would not have been saved.

Somebody knew CPR. Somebody saw that you're trapped. Someone came to the rescue.

And especially when it is at the risk of their lives, there have been cases where someone was trying to save others from the fire or from a flood. They rescue several people, and when they go to get the next one, they themselves lose their lives in the attempt. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for these in his periphery, his friends, these others.

So they will know that I have loved you. This isn't just, look, the Lord Jesus loves me. This I know.

The Bible tells me so. They are going to recognize the nature of the work that Christ has done as an expression of love. They are going to recognize this idea of atonement and redemption, reconciliation and propitiation, deliverance from slavery to sin.

They will see it. And they will see the distance between these faithful servants of Christ, people of God, and themselves. You were right.

I was wrong. I got off on a tangent. I see the difference.

They will see, they will know that I have loved you. And there's content to that love. We've looked at the spheres of love.

It isn't just an attitude. It's not a set of thoughts. It is a behavior.

It is a set of policies. The one another's by far the most discussed in the New Testament. What does it mean to love one another? We have abundant guidance, and we've reviewed it.

There are more than five dozen one another commands that express that love. Very important. If Christ is going to set an open door before us, in many cases, it is going to involve expressions of love, praying for one another, interceding for one another, looking for ways to be of service and of benefit, whatever our situation.

If we are still here breathing air, my old pastor used to say, if you're still here, God still has a plan for your life. Whatever our limitations, the older we get, the more limited we feel. Sometimes, I can do everything I used to do.

It just takes longer and hurts more. But there comes a time where we can't even do what we used to do. And over the progress of time, we feel circumstance and age and infirmity or whatever may limit us.

That doesn't stop the Lord Jesus. If we are faithful, if we have a little strength, if we don't deny his name, he sets before us an open door. Notice anyone who has an ear needs to be hearing what the Spirit says.

It isn't, well, that was Philadelphia, that's not me. It's us if we want it to be. If we are dedicated, if we love the Lord Jesus and want his love to be fully expressed toward us, meet the conditions, have a little strength, don't deny his name, and recognize, take a look, and see where the open door is.

Sometimes we have to look around. It's like looking for your glasses. If you look over the whole house and you find that they're right on top of your head, and you think, why didn't I stop and do a little thinking and a little checking near at hand? And I think I mentioned the other day, I was looking for my cell phone.

I heard it ringing and it sounded kind of muffled. It was in my hip pocket where I never typically keep it. So there can be an open door, and we need to be watchful that we don't ignore an opportunity the Lord Jesus is giving us, or give it a quick glance and say, oh no, that's not for me.

Pray, reflect, consider, has the Lord Jesus put an open door in front of me for meaningful service and function? I am a member of the body of Christ. Is there a way that I haven't thought of, that I haven't considered, that I haven't exploited to be a blessing to others in the body? All of us have a spiritual gift, and those spiritual gifts, with the possible exception of evangelism, are specifically designed to bless the body. The whole body fitly joined together by that which every joint supplies, ministers to itself, edifies itself, and builds itself up in love.

Jesus says, I have loved you, you should love one another. One of those 60-odd one another's. So they will come and bow, and they will know that I have loved you.

And if they know, we should certainly know. Verse 10, because you have kept my command to persevere. That is not what the Greek text says.

And this is an unhappy change in the new King James from the old King James. And I don't, I understand why they did this, but in my opinion, they should not have done it. This in Greek is because you have kept my word of patience, my word of perseverance.

It's word, the word is logos here. It isn't my command, my entole, or whatever. That's not it.

This is the word. And there's a distributive property to the word my. It's the word of patience of me.

Is it Jesus' patience or is it Jesus' word or is it both? And the answer is yes. He is the one who knows all about hupomene, to bear up under, to be patient, to persevere. And he has spoken of it.

And that's what we'll look at when we come back from the break. What does it mean to keep the word? He said earlier, because you've kept my word and not deny my name. What specific word? You've kept my word of patience.

You've kept my word of perseverance. You have kept on keeping on, as I said. Wonderful opportunity here for us to make personal application.

So this is where we'll pick up when we come back from the break.