



And I will write upon 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 that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He that has an eye, let him see what the eye sees.

I come quickly. Hold fast what thou hast, that no one take thy crown. He that overcomes him will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more at all out.

And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven, and my new name. He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Let's have a further word of prayer.

Dear Lord, as we gather here together in thy name, our hearts bow low in worship how we praise and thank thee for thy love for us. We thank thee because thou dost love us to the uttermost. It is because of thy love that we are here this morning.

So we want to give thee worship and praise this morning. We thank thee because thou hast promised us where two or three are gathered together unto my name there am I in the midst of them. Lord, there is nothing more precious to us than to have thy presence with us.

Who are we that thou should present thyself with us? Lord, we just bow ourselves before thee and worship thee. Bring all praises and worship unto yourself. Thou art the only one who is worthy to be worshipped.

Dear Lord, as we wait upon thee, may thou speak directly to each and every one of us. O Lord, we do not want to just hear it with our ears. We want to hear it with our hearts.

We give our hearts over to you, Lord, and pray that thou will speak and do thy work in each and every one of us. That thy will may be done and thy name be exalted. We ask in thy precious name.

Thank God for gathering us together this morning. I often feel that whenever God's people gather together, it is a clear indication of the love of God. It is a clear indication of the love of God.

How he wants to prepare us for his imminent return. He wants that when he comes that we are all ready for him. And I believe that is the reason for our gathering.

As I waited upon the Lord, I felt maybe it is of the Lord that we should share together on the two churches in the book of Revelation. We know that when the Apostle John was exiled to the island of Patmos, there on the Lord's Day, he was looking across the ocean. And he could look faintly the outline of Asia Minor.

And there he served before he was exiled. He could not help but thinking of their conditions. And as he was meditating, he suddenly heard a voice behind him.

He turned back and he saw seven golden lampstands. And in the midst of the seven golden lampstands stands one like the Son of Man. In other words, there he was given a vision of the ministry of our Lord Jesus in heaven.

He was most familiar with the ministry of our Lord on earth. But there you find he was shown the ministry of the Lord in heaven. How he was the great high priest, ministry unto his churches.

I think brothers and sisters, we all know that unless we know the ministry of our Lord in heaven, we will not be able to live our Christian life. It is by his earthly life what he had done on earth. How he fulfilled the work

that God has sent him to do.

How he cried out, it is finished. The work of redemption is finished. But now you find he is in heaven.

Now what is he doing there? He is there as our great high priest. While he was on earth, he was the apostle of God. He was sent by God to do a mission.

While he was in heaven, he was the great high priest. Ministering unto us. And he is able to save each one of us who comes to him.

And save us to the uttermost. But brothers and sisters, our Lord Jesus is not only ministering to individual believers. Here you find a vision of our Lord ministering to the churches.

Now of course we know the seven churches mentioned here are actual churches at the time of the end of the first century. In Asia Minor, there were more than seven churches. Because we know we have Colossia and Heliopolis too.

But here you find our Lord ministering to the churches because our Lord has picked seven churches. Because these seven churches represent the general condition of the church at the end of the first century. But the book of Revelation is a book of revelation.

It is a book of prophecy. Therefore we know that these seven churches represent more than the actual conditions of the churches in the first century. We find that these seven churches represent the whole church history in the centuries.

I wonder if any one of you have read the book called The Orthodoxy of the Church written by Washburn Lee. Now I heard him while he was giving these messages. It was during the war time in China.

It was about in 1940, early 40s. There was number of assemblies around Chongqing. And we gathered together for eight nights to listen to these messages.

It was in the winter time. And we do not have a meeting place as big as this one. We were meeting in a brother's home.

And that room was only able to accommodate 40 dudes. And everybody just sit there very tight. And at the back of the stairway people were sitting there.

And outside the door in the lane people were sitting on benches. And remember it was winter. But thank God you find brothers and sisters have such love for the Lord.

Some sisters who were on the south mountain and they have to start to walk in the afternoon. They have to walk down the mountain, cross the river and climb up to Chongqing. And walk through the whole city to the highest point in Chongqing.

That's where we met. And night after night they came. When they came back, returned back, they have to use torches.

And go back and the next day they came again. So you can see how they love the Word of God. And there our brother gave these messages.

He told us that these seven churches represent the whole church history. And you find one succeeded another. But when you read carefully you will find that the first three succeeded each other.

One after another. But when you read the last four churches you find words such as I'm coming. Wait until I return.

So in other words, the last four churches represent the churches during the last age. So from the Tartarra to Laodicea these four churches prophetically speaking represents the churches to the end of the age. Now brothers and sisters we know that the church in Tartarra represents the Roman Catholic system.

And Sardis represent the Protestant system. So what are left of Philadelphia and Laodicea? In other words, outside of the Catholic and Protestant systems. You will find the general condition of the church is either Philadelphia or Laodicea.

So brothers and sisters my burden is to share with you on these two churches that we may see where we are. And what is the expectation of our Lord Jesus? Here you find our Lord Jesus wrote to the church in Philadelphia. Now, we all know that Philadelphia in Greek means brotherly love.

So this church is noted for its brotherly love. I have to confess that in recent years as I look at the condition of the churches the more I feel there is some kind of misunderstanding among God's people. We misunderstand what is meant by brotherly love.

Because I found that among God's people how quickly they do love one another. But their love does not seem to come purely from God. It seems as if there is more of human nature behind it.

You know the word philio is affection. It has the sense of friendship. And I found that among God's people there is more tendency of a kind of friendship.

In other words it seems as if we love those who are of same kind of nature character with us. Our love seems to have a kind of condition. And it seems as if that we cannot love our brothers as God loved them.

So I began to wonder what exactly is brotherly love. Now it is true that the word philio is affection, is friendship. God's love is agape.

In other words it is absolute. It is unconditional. It comes out of God himself.

Without considering our condition. So more or less we sometimes say philio is human affection. And agape is God's love.

Now it is true brotherly love is philio love. So here you find philadelphia. So how can you see the difference between them? When I was waiting upon the Lord I feel that probably his illustrations were unable to understand it better.

I feel that among God's disciples no one knows philio love than Peter. You know how he loved the Lord Jesus. His friendship with our Lord was unquestionable.

Even when our Lord Jesus says he will go to Jerusalem and suffer. Peter will say well I will suffer with you. I am willing to die with you.

Even other disciples should flee away. Certainly I will follow you to the end. But we all know what happened to him.

Quite simply. When he was under testing he did love himself more than our Lord Jesus. But after the resurrection of our Lord Jesus how our Lord restored him? By appearing to him alone.

And then you find in the 21st chapter of John how he restored him among before his fellow disciples. So the Lord asked him a question. Do you love me more than these? We know that the word love the Lord used was agape.

Do you love me with absolute love above these things? Above the fire. Above companions. Because he denied the Lord for fire and companions.

So the Lord said do you love me more than these? And Peter having learned his lesson he could only answer I am friendly, affectionate towards you. And the Lord said And the Lord asked him the second time Do you love me? No comparison. Just love me.

And again it is agape. And Peter said I am affectionate towards you. And the Lord asked him the third time Do you love me? And the Lord used the word philio.

And you remember how Peter was said. He couldn't rise up to what he should be. But having learned his lesson he could only humbly say Lord you know I feel good about you.

And brothers and sisters so you see that his philio love has been disciplined. And he was the one who knew what philio love really is. So when you turn to 2 Peter 2 Peter 2 Peter Chapter 1 You find from verse 5 onward He said but for this very reason also using herewith therewith all diligence And then you notice this In your faith have also virtue In virtue knowledge In knowledge temperance In temperance endurance In endurance godliness In godliness brotherly love In brotherly love love So brothers and sisters this is what brotherly love really is.

In other words it is a kind of affection of friendship. But it is not based purely upon our natural affection. It is based upon our affection our love that has been disciplined and refined.

And only this kind of brotherly love it is above prejudice. It is above selection. And it can be general and towards all.

So dear brothers and sisters this is the way I feel about brotherly love. I feel there is much that we need to learn yet. Because if we love one another with our natural love and affection we will find it will cause lots of problems in the church.

That's where parties come from. But when we really let our love be refined through tribulation, through suffering and through all these learnings then we will be able to really love our brothers as god loves us. And then we are bringing a unity among god's people.

And only on that basis you will find Psalm 133 fulfilled. So dear brothers and sisters this is Philadelphia. God wants his people to really love one another.

And I discovered a verse in John. In John chapter 13 in verse 34 a new commandment I give to you that you love one another as I have loved you that you also love one another. And here you find the Lord gave us a new commandment.

He wants us to love one another in the way as he has loved us. And that is the way that we should love one another. And there is another verse in John 16 verse 27 For the Father himself has affection for you because he has had affection for me and has believed that I came out from God.

So here you find even here God has affection for us. And as we have affection for our Lord. So you find even with this filial love there is a higher degree there.

And this is the kind of love of brotherly love. And thank God this is Philadelphia. So may we all rise above our natural love.

And having our natural love we can really be disciplined that we may really have a brotherly love towards one another. And then you find at the head of each letter the Lord introduced himself first and he gave us a revelation of his own self. Why? Because his revelation is our testimony.

What is the testimony of the church? The testimony of the church is the revelation God gave to them. Whether we are faithful to our testimony depends upon whether we are true to the revelation God has given us of Christ. So here you find our Lord gave a revelation of himself to that church.

These things says the holy, the true, he that has the key of David, he who opens and no one shall shut, and no one shall open. Here you find our Lord reveals to the church in Philadelphia as the holy. I think when you hear the word holy you cannot help but think of Isaiah chapter 6 because here you find Isaiah when he went into the temple to pray he saw a vision of God on the throne and you find the angels were crying holy, holy, holy Lord God almighty.

Our God is holy. Now what do you mean by holy? Holy means he is separated. He is alone.

He is all by himself. There is nothing that can be like him. So here you find a revelation of Christ as God.

He is the holy and because he is holy we must be holy. No one can see God without being holy. Therefore brothers and sisters we should see that our Lord Jesus is the holy.

He is exalted one. There is none like him. He is our God, he is our worship.

And he is the truth. Now what does it mean by he is the truth? He is the amen. So you find in 2 Corinthians chapter 1 all the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus.

And he has the key of David. Now of course we know David was a king. So it seems to me that the key of David means the key to the kingdom of the heavens.

Our Lord Jesus Christ came into this earth and he preached the kingdom of the heavens. He opens the key to that kingdom and he called all of us to enter into it. Who can enter into the kingdom of the heavens? The violent.

So you find in Matthew chapter 11 it says the violent seizes upon it. In the Bible it is a very strong word. Now when the Chinese translate the Bible they think the word violent is too strong.

It doesn't have a good connotation. So they try to make it gentle. But in the original it is the word violent.

Violent itself is neutral. Whether it is good or bad depends upon its connection. If you do violence to other people that is bad.

But if you do violence to yourself this is commendable. Our Lord Jesus while he was on earth he was the most violent one to himself. Though he could do lots of things nobody can do things that he could.

Yet he said I cannot do anything. But what I see my father is doing he cannot say anything. I only say what I have heard my father have said it.

He denied himself to the uttermost. Being obedient to the father even unto death. Even the death of the cross.

So dear brothers and sisters he called us to follow him. We who believe in the Lord Jesus we are all called to be his disciples. To learn of him.

To be yoked with him. And this is one thing that he calls us to do. If we are doing violence to ourselves violence in the sense of denying ourselves to obey God.

That is the condition to enter into the kingdom of the heaven. He has already opened the door for us. And he called us to enter in.

So you find these revelations of our Lord Jesus were given to the church in Philadelphia. One day a brother asked me a question. Is Philadelphia an ideal church? Now brothers and sisters as you read Philadelphia what is your reaction? Do you think it is an ideal church? It is ideal.

But if it is only an ideal church then it is something you can see afar but you cannot get hold of. Brothers and sisters Philadelphia is ideal but it is real. We find that in the early chapters of the book of Acts.

We can find it. We find it at the end of the first century. Why is it we cannot find it today? It is not an ideal one only.

It is one that God desires. And it is one that God works for it. Unless we be Philadelphia God's heart is not satisfied.

So dear brothers and sisters the more you read Philadelphia the more you are humbled by it. The Lord said, I know thy works behold I have set before thee an open door which no man can shut because thou hast a little power. Brothers and sisters power is something that we are all seeking today.

If you have great power then you can do great things. But here you find the Lord said I know you have a little power. Now why is it so? It is because the power that people are seeking today is the latent power of the soul.

You know when God created man he gave man great power. Think of that. Adam with Eve they are to take care of their big garden.

God commanded them to guard the garden. Not only to kill but to guard. Why? Because there was an enemy outside.

And Adam was supposed to be the wall of the garden of Eden. He has the power to do that. But he failed.

And after the failure of man we find the man's latent power is under the influence of the enemy. The enemy tried to develop that latent power of man. But God because this is the soul power and you find that in this world whether it is in the political area or even in the religious area and because of this God's way is

the opposite.

Even though when our Lord Jesus was on earth he was a man. He had a latent power in him. And yet you find how he put down his latent power.

And he only followed the power of the Holy Spirit. So brothers and sisters today people are seeking for power. But we want to ask a question.

What kind of power is it? Is it the latent power of the soul? Or is it the power of the Holy Spirit? So you find in Zechariah 4 verse 6 not by might nor by power but by the Spirit of God. Thus said the Lord. So dear brothers and sisters here you find this church.

The Lord said you have a little power. But this power is of the Holy Spirit. It does not come from man's latent power.

And it is by that power that God would build his church. And he said Thou hast kept my word. Of course we know the word refers to the scriptures.

All scriptures are God's words. Every word of God is of the Spirit. And yet brothers and sisters how people today choose among God's word they do not follow the word of God.

But here as you find Philadelphia they follow, they keep the word of God. Whatever the word of God may be even though it does not fit them it seems to go against them. Yet they submit themselves to the word of God.

And this is a phenomenon of Philadelphia. And Thou hast not denied my name. What is the church? Where two or three are gathered together unto my name there am I in the midst of them.

This is the simplest definition of the church. Because one is where, a place. Two or three, a plurality.

And gathered together. But under my name. Not under any other name.

But under the name of the Lord Jesus. Now what do you mean by under my name? It means you put yourself under Him. You take Him as your head.

And you be obedient to Him. So that is what the church is. The church is under the name of our Lord Jesus.

Hold fast the head. And all the members will be united together. And minister one to another.

And as you read on you find the Lord has specially mentioned you have kept the word of my patience. Now what do you mean by the word of my patience? In other words our Lord is long suffering. How He was patient while He was in the world.

Even today He still suffers long. His long suffering is our salvation. Unless He suffers long for us we should be given up long ago.

We are here this morning. That is the patience of God. And we need to keep the word of His patience.

This is not the time for us to be great. This is the time for us to be small. This is the time for us to be insignificant.

Not to be proud of ourselves. And because they keep the word of His patience they live only for Him. And what is the result? And then you find verse ten.

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience I also will keep thee out of the hour of trial which is about to come upon the whole habitable world to try them to dwell upon the earth. I come quickly. Now here you find a special promise to the church in Philadelphia.

The Lord said, I also will keep thee out of the hour of trial which is about to come upon the whole habitable world to try them to dwell upon the earth. Now what do you think? What is this time point to? It points to the great tribulation. Brothers and sisters even the world is thinking about it.

The dawn day is coming. Especially we Christians. We know that one day the great tribulation will come upon this earth.

It is a tribulation that has never been seen before for three years and a half. But thank God. Here is a special promise.

Even before the time of the trial there will be a rapture. And those in Philadelphia will be raptured out of that time. This is what you find in Revelation chapter 12 the main child.

There you find a vision. A woman was in travail. The woman represents the church in the last days.

And there she was in travail. And then you find a red dragon waiting before that woman. He was not interested in the woman.

But was interested in the womb. Because the woman has failed in her test. He had no power over her.

But the womb, the main child that main child will be the finish of Satan. Brothers and sisters the whole church is in travail. To bring forth the overcomers.

When the overcomers came forth Satan tried to swallow the main child. But immediately the main child was raptured to the throne. Of course they are all different interpretations.

But here you find this child as soon as it was born it is raptured to the throne. Why? Because they have overcome. The headquarter of Satan is in the air.

And these are able to get through that headquarter. Go to the throne to welcome our Lord Jesus. To come from the throne to the crowd.

And from the cloud to Mount Olive. So dear brothers and sisters this is a special promise to the church in Philadelphia. This is a special promise for those who overcome.

They will be raptured out of the hour of trial. The Lord said, I come quickly. So dear brothers and sisters again we want to emphasize that the church in Philadelphia is not just an ideal.

It is an actual church. The Lord has made every provision for it to be fulfilled. And then as usual at the end of every letter our Lord Jesus called for overcomers.

And those who overcome He said, I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. And He will go no more out at all out. And I will write upon Him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem out of heaven from my God and my new name.

A promise to those who overcome. And this promise will be fulfilled during the kingdom age. But here as you read it seems that it goes even beyond the kingdom age.

Because it mentions the New Jerusalem which appears in the new heaven and the new earth. So what encouragement the Lord has given to us. And finally there is a call.

He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. By the grace of God, brothers and sisters that we may be those who have ears to hear. Not for ourselves.

But for the glory of God. Let us pray. Dear Lord, we want to praise and thank Thee because Thy has placed before us Thy heart's desire.

Thou has showed us that Philadelphia is Thy heart's desire. We pray by Thy grace by all the provisions, promises that Thou has given to us. We may be what Thou want us to be that our heart may be satisfied.

So we commit these words into Your hand no matter what our interpretation may be. The fact is Thou are looking for overcomers. Have mercy upon us.

We ask in Thy precious name. Amen.

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