

The Candlestick - Philadelphia

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the strength found in humility and dependence on God, as exemplified by the church of Philadelphia and the life of David.

Duration: 46:08

Scripture: Matthew 6:1-4, Matthew 7:21-23, Luke 18:10-14, John 10:7-10, John 20:1-10, Revelation 3:9, Revelation 3:20

Topics: "Philadelphia"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of relying on God's strength rather than our own. He uses the example of Jesus carrying his cross to illustrate this point. The preacher encourages those who feel weak and defeated to recognize that their strength comes from God and that they have not failed Him. He also reminds the audience that just as Jesus was raised from the dead, they too can overcome any obstacles and rise out of obscurity with the power of God.

Transcript

Wise. God, I stand here in weakness and in foolishness, and I thank you, Lord, that the wisdom that I have comes from you and the strength that I have comes from you. Every good thing within me, Lord, I acknowledge comes from your hand and from your hand alone.

And I ask tonight, Lord Jesus, that you would be lifted up and glorified. God, that you would touch lives and hearts, that you would break down the powers of darkness, that you would destroy the works of the enemy. God, that you would release your people with a shout in this house tonight.

Father, I thank you for everything that you have done and everything you will continue to do. I thank you for your faithfulness until you bring us all home. God, we give you praise and glory tonight.

Lord, I ask for an absolute revelation of Jesus Christ tonight, as you gave to John on the Isle of Patmos. Father, I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

The key of David, Revelation chapter 3, beginning at verse 7. And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write, These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that has the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth. I know thy works. Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.

For thou hast a little strength. Does that apply to anybody here tonight? I know it does to me. Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie. Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Behold, I come quickly. Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.

And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God. And I will write upon him my new name. He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Now Jesus Christ appeared to John when John was exiled on an island of Patmos for the testimony of Christ. I've shared before each one of these messages that it was a time when the churches that had been established by missionary journeys were not that distant from the resurrection of Christ, yet even though there were good things in these churches, there were some things that had begun to settle in to each one of these churches, well almost each one of these churches, that had caused them to fall short of the glory of the risen Christ. Revelation is not a book, it is the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ to John.

The revelation of Jesus puts an end to all religious misunderstandings, puts an end to foolish works that have called themselves anointed of the Spirit of God, and brings absolute truth into perspective. And if you and I are to cry for anything in our lives in this last hour of time, we need to consistently cry for an ever-increasing revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ in our own personal lives. My prayer is, O Jesus, reveal yourself in me, reveal yourself in me, just like you did to John.

You walked in the midst of those seven candlesticks and everything was brought out into the light. And O God, if there's anything in my life or heart that's displeasing to you, if there's any area in my life that you want to change, bring revelation of yourself, bring revelation of your nature. O God, that I may see it and lay it down and trust you for the strength to change.

That's got to be the cry of everyone who's truly called by the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Now, Jesus described this church in Philadelphia as a church of little strength. Interestingly enough, he said, I've set before you an open door that no man can shut, for you have a little strength.

Now, this didn't mean that the church in Philadelphia was a weak church. On the contrary, I firmly believed that they were a mighty army of God moving forward. They were going through an open door that Jesus himself said, no man can shut.

This little strength people, but marching with great might. It reminds me of the story in the Old Testament of the three lepers that sat outside the city gates. The city was under siege and the lepers weren't allowed into the city because they were lepers and they couldn't go into the camp of the enemy because they would be slain.

And they sat at the gate and they said, well, what's the sense of sitting here? We're just going to die. They said, we might as well go up into the camp of the enemy or if they, at least if the worst can happen, they're going to kill us. We're going to die here anyway, so we might as well go down.

And you can see these three leprous men heading down the sand dune, heading into the camp of the enemy. And the scripture says, God made the sound of their approaching foot, footsteps sound like the rushing of a mighty army. He so magnified the footsteps of these three weak lepers coming down the sand dune that the whole army got up and fled.

They left their tents, they left their food, they left their horses. And there was nothing but a trail of all kinds of things that they were throwing and leaving behind all kinds of clothes and pottery and everything they were throwing as they're running because of this mighty army of three lepers that were coming down the sand dune. You see, the church of Philadelphia was a church of little strength, but yet they were a mighty army moving forward.

I believe that with all of my heart. They were a church that had come to know the key to David's success and victory. You see, Jesus said, I'm the one that has the key of David.

And David had always stayed small in his own sight. That was the key to the success in David's life. In all his ways, he acknowledged the Lord.

And as such, God could use him to subdue kingdoms and use him to bring the promises of God into effect for him and also for those of his generation. David was a man who had found the heart of God, but he found the heart of God in his own littleness. Even though David was a king, he consistently cried out to God.

He consistently acknowledged that without the anointing of God on his life, he was nothing. Without the presence of God, he could do nothing. Without the assurance of God, he couldn't move.

You see, David was little in his own sight. And in that little strength, God was able to pour through his life and mighty, mighty giants were brought down and kingdoms fell and nothing could stop this, the kingdom of Israel that moved through the leadership of David. There was an incredible key in his life, and that key was his own weakness, his own littleness in the sight of God.

In contrast to this, we see King Saul, a man who was anointed. He was truly anointed by God to lead Israel. And what a sad indictment against Saul, the day that Samuel was sent by God to tell Saul that the kingship was going to be taken away from him.

And in 1 Samuel 15, 17, the scripture says, And Samuel said, When you were little in your own sight, were you not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed you king over Israel? You see, when Saul was little, God could use him. And God can use any people who know that they're of little strength. God can use anyone who's small in their own sight.

But Saul got lifted up, and Saul took away the office of the priesthood unto himself. And Saul began to move and add his own things to the kingdom of God. He began to exalt himself above the knowledge of God.

He got big in his own sight, and his own fears began to overtake him, so that God had to reject him. And what could have been a life of victory ended up a life of disaster, because he never, he missed the revelation of that principle of littleness in the sight of God. But in contrast to Saul now, we see the heart of David.

Look at Psalm 25, please. I love the Psalms, because it so reveals the heart of David, which God says is the heart of a man that's after my own heart. Listen to the dependency of David.

You have to understand that David is the king. David has armies at his disposal. David has the riches of this earth at his disposal.

He has the admiration of men. He has it all. But there was a key in David's heart.

He knew that without God, and without the favor of God, he had absolutely nothing. He knew that without God, he was no better than any other man. In Psalm 25, verse 1, listen to David.

He said, Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in thee. Let me not be ashamed.

Let not mine enemies triumph over me. You see, David, at this particular point in his life, is not talking about any past victories or any giants that have been defeated. He knows that without God, his enemies would literally overpower him.

But he said, God, I trust in you. Let me not be ashamed. Let not mine enemies triumph over me.

Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed. Let them be ashamed which transgress without cause. And now, look, you see the dependency of God, of David, rather.

In verse 4, he said, Show me thy ways, O Lord. Teach me thy paths. There was no arrogance in this man.

It's not that he said, I have found it all, and I know which way to go, and thanks, Lord, I can take it from here. But he says, Show me thy ways. Now, there's got to be, as I shared earlier, that consistent cry for the revelation of Jesus Christ.

If ever that stops in your heart, that's a danger sign. Right till the time when we breathe our very last breath, we've got to have that prayer, that cry upon our lips. Show me thy ways, O Lord.

Teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me, for thou art the God of my salvation, and on thee do I wait all the day. I wait for you, Lord God.

Show me, lead me, forgive me, teach me. I am weak, but you are strong. Oh, that the old hymns of the church are filled with an understanding of these truths, of our inherent weakness, but yet the strength that we have comes because of him.

It doesn't come because of ourselves. And woe be unto the man or woman who forgets that the strength and victories that we experience is because of our weakness. And in that weakness, the strength of the Lord has become our clothing.

And it's been God's mighty hand that has gone before us and opened prison doors and poured in healing oil and made a way to impossible places. It's not been by our own wisdom. It's not been by our own strength.

You see, God so cherished this attitude of heart in David that he was not willing to lose it for anything. David, even numbering the armies of Israel, was a danger to the heart of David. When David told Joab to go and number the armies of Israel, there was a danger that he would begin to think that by the might of the army of Israel that he had won these victories.

And God was not willing to let him get away with that. He so loved David and so loved the heart that was in that man because that man had found a key to unlocking the power of God within his life. In his brokenness, in his meekness, and in his weakness, Christ became all in all unto him and was able to move through him.

And he became a type and shadow of what you and I ought to be under the New Testament covenant that we have in Jesus Christ. In Psalm 61, again, we see the words of David. Hallelujah.

Psalm 61, verse 1. He says, Hear my cry, O God. Attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee.

When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me and a strong tower from the enemy. In other words, David is recounting the past. God, you have always been a shelter.

You've always been a strong tower. You've always been my protector. You've always been my deliverer.

You've always fought for me. But Lord, I don't take it for granted in the future. I know that I still have to retain the dependence and humility before you.

I cry unto thee, O God. When my heart is overwhelmed, David's saying, if it should happen again, Lord, if I find myself in places like I've been in the past, lead me once again to the rock that is higher than I. Lead me to that place of my strength. I will abide, verse 4, in thy tabernacle forever.

I will trust in the covert of thy wings. In other words, I will trust in the covering of your wings. Now here we see David the king and David the warrior, David the victorious one, declaring constantly his own weakness and trusting in the omnipotent strength of God.

I love the heart of David. I always have in the scriptures because David is saying, even though he's girded with strength, there's not a king would dare stand against David on the face of the earth. And yet David is saying, God, I choose to come under the covering of your wings.

He's declaring that childlike trust that Jesus said you and I need to have, or we cannot see the kingdom of God. Oh Jesus, I need the covering of your wings more than I've ever needed it in my life. Hallelujah.

In my weakness, you will become my strength. That's got to be the cry of the church in this hour, especially that we're living in. I believe that the church of Philadelphia was a church that was able to acknowledge its own weakness.

There's evidence in this because if they were a church that was strong in themselves, God would have to resist them because the scripture says God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble. But I believe the Philadelphian church knew that they were a weak church and knew they needed him. And consequently, Jesus said, I've set before you an open door.

In other words, I'm going to take you into places that nobody can stop what I'm about to do through your lives. Nobody can stop it. I've opened the door and nobody can shut it.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. They were a church that were weak, just like the apostle Paul.

Look at the book of second Corinthians, please. Second Corinthians chapter 12. The apostle Paul was a man that in the spiritual realm for certain certainty moved mountains.

Would you agree with me tonight? Paul, God through Paul moved mountains and yet Paul continuously acknowledged. And not only did he acknowledge, but he gloried in his weakness because he knew that in his weakness, that the strength of Christ was made perfect. Those that stand that are strong in themselves are a hindrance to the gospel.

You need to hear me tonight. If you've never heard anything I've ever said before, every man, every woman, every child that stands and has confidence in themselves becomes a hindrance to what Jesus Christ wants to do through their lives. We've got to acknowledge our weakness without God.

We can't draw the next breath in this assembly tonight. Without God, you couldn't blink your eyes again. Without God, your heart couldn't beat again.

Without God, you couldn't think the next thought that God's going to allow to come into your mind. He is everything. He's the one who formed us out of the dust.

He breathed the breath of life into our nostrils. He has made each and every one of us a living soul. Everything consists by him.

Nothing was made without him. Everything is in his hand. Nothing is out of his control.

We need to acknowledge and humble ourselves before God like we never have in our lives that we are weak, but he is strong. We will fail, but he will never fail. Hallelujah.

In 2 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 9, listen to the words of Jesus to the apostle Paul. He said that he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

There are so few vassals of the Lord in this and every other generation that are willing to become weak that the power of Christ may rest upon them. Therefore, I take pleasure, he said, in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then am I strong. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Philadelphia was a weak church, but Philadelphia was a mighty arrow in the hand of a mighty God.

People who learn that they have little strength are those who have truly walked the pathway of Christ. People who are strong in themselves have yet to understand what it means to be a cross-carrier of Jesus Christ. There are people who take the cross of Christ.

They read the scripture that says, If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. And they take up their cross and they head out to do good things for God. And you hear that even from preachers from time and again.

Let's do some good thing for God. And out they go to do some good thing for God. But what happens is many people fail to understand how far the natural man can carry the cross of Christ.

A natural man can pray and pray and pray. The scripture that Jesus, the parable of the Pharisee, says he went into the temple and prayed thus with himself. Nobody was listening to him.

He prayed to himself. The natural man can pray. The natural man can tithe.

He said, I tithe. I give a tithe of everything that I possess. The natural man can sacrifice.

The natural man can do good works. There'll be people standing before the Lord on the day of judgment and saying, Lord, Lord, did we not do many wonderful works in your name? Lord, I was a cross-bearing Christian. I was all over the place doing all kinds of things.

I was one of the strongest vessels you had in your kingdom. They failed to understand how far the natural man can go. Took me 10 years as a Christian to figure this one out.

Carrying the cross east to west and north to south, all over the place and way into South America, preaching and teaching and publishing and defending the gospel of Christ until I ended up in my face on a gravel road without any strength left. You see, the true design of the cross is to bring us to an end of ourselves. It's to bring us to the realization of how little strength we have without him.

We don't have any strength without him. We don't want to be strong without him. It's better to be weak that the power and strength of Christ may rest upon us.

For a man or woman who's strong in themselves will always be coming up with good ideas and always be putting their hand and their strength into everything that God commissions them to do. And what starts out of pure work gets tainted of the flesh because the human vessel is still involved in it. Oh, I agree with Paul.

I would rather glory in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may rest upon my life. Look at the book of John, please. Chapter 19.

Go ahead into the Old Testament, the New Testament again, rather. I want to look at the road of the cross. John chapter 19 shows us the judgment of Christ before Pilate.

In John chapter 19, verse 16, it says, Then delivered he him, therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led him away. Now, verse 17, here's a key.

And he, that's Jesus bearing his cross, went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha, where they crucified him with the two others with him, either on one side and Jesus in the midst. Now, verse 17 is the key. He bearing his own cross.

Jesus was condemned to be crucified. He took his cross and put it upon his shoulders. At least the part of it that was that was the center beam at the top and headed out to that place of crucifixion.

Now we go to the book of Matthew, please go back to the book of Matthew chapter 27. I want to show you a principle about understanding the cross of Christ. Jesus is heading off down the road to the place where he's going to be put to death.

And he's carrying his own cross. And most Christians, most Christians who really love God, when they start out serving God, do carry their own cross, just like Jesus did. They take that burden upon their shoulder and they begin to walk.

And one of the signs that you're carrying your own cross is that you're always under condemnation. Every time you fall or fail, you think you've failed the Lord. So you struggle to get back up again and try to be strong in yourself.

And down the road you go again with your cross. And it takes God sometimes so long to get through this simple principle that you find in Matthew 27 verse 31. And it says, And after they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him and put his own raiment on him and led him away to crucify him.

And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, and him they compelled to bear his cross. You see, this is the issue. Jesus headed out and John carrying his own cross to that place called Golgotha.

But we see an expansion of that in the book of Matthew, that as he was heading to that place, we can draw the assumption that that cross became too heavy for him somewhere along the line. And he couldn't bear it anymore. I've seen certain movies over the years that have depicted him falling.

And I believe that's exactly what happened. The cross became too heavy to bear. And finally, one last time, he just went down into the turf and couldn't get up anymore.

His human strength had failed him. There was absolutely no way he could pick up that cross and carry it anymore. And yet God already knew that.

God the Father knew that was going to happen and had planted another man called Simon of Cyrene, who was there and waiting and positioned by God. And from that certain point in the road, Simon was going to pick up that cross and carry it for Christ to Calvary. Now, my point is this.

If Jesus couldn't carry his own cross the whole distance to Calvary, how are you and I expected to be able to carry that cross in our own strength? That's why God has sent the Holy Spirit, that when you and I have finally exhausted ourselves, when we come to the end of ourselves, when we've fallen face down in the middle of the road, unable to go anymore, God sends the Holy Spirit to pick up the cross and begin to carry it. Then we begin to walk in his strength, no longer in our strength. That's why the scripture says, strive to enter into the rest of the Lord, for he has entered into his rest, has ceased from his own works as the Lord did from his.

Strive to enter into that rest, the place where you're no longer carrying God, but God now is carrying you. You're no longer carrying the works of God, but the works of God are carrying you. And you're moving now in the power and strength and anointing of God's Holy Spirit.

God's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom. It does not go forward by the arm of flesh. It's not by might.

It's not by power. It's by my spirit, saith the Lord. Hallelujah.

Hungry, David says in Psalm 107, hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses. He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Some of you are here tonight, and you're hungry and thirsty, and you're in such a battle, and it seems like you tried to walk with God, and time and again you're face down in the dust. And you think that somehow you've forsaken God.

Somehow you've failed God. What's happened is your own strength has failed you, and you're in a good place. You're right on the road of the cross in this house tonight.

Now you need to understand there needs to be a transition from your strength to the strength of God. Hallelujah. Where you get up from under that burden of condemnation, you get up from under that feeling that somehow you've got to do something to please God, and you stand up in your weakness and just raise your hands to heaven and say, Lord, I'm hungry, and I'm thirsty, and I have no more strength.

I need you now like I've never needed you before. And it's at that point you begin to sense the pleasure of God. He looks down and says, Son, my daughter, you're right in the place now where I can set before you an open door that no man can close.

Hallelujah. I can do things now through your life that I never could have done before. You would have been mixed into the working of my spirit, but now that you've come to a place of exhaustion, learn your lesson this time.

Learn from your experience, and let me carry the work for you. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. I believe with all of my heart the true church learns to die with Christ.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, 36, thou fool, he says thou, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die. In other words, you can put a seed in the ground, but it will not spring to life unless it dies first. And that's what he's talking about.

That which thou sowest is not quickened. We will not be quickened until we learn what it is to really die with Christ. To die with Christ, the crossroad started in Gethsemane in a garden.

And Gethsemane is a place where we embrace His will, and we die to our own will. We say like Jesus said, Oh, Father, if it be possible, remove this cup from me, nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done. The cross is a place of being willing to endure the scorning and mockery of those who are unwilling to fully embrace Christ.

If you set your heart upon the Lord, one of the classrooms that you're going to have to go through, and no man or woman will escape it, is the mockery of those who are unwilling to walk the full price of what it costs to walk with Christ. They're unwilling to become weak. They're unwilling to die to themselves.

They're unwilling to pour their lives out as a living sacrifice for the purposes of God. And so they will stand in the road as you walk with Christ, and you will have to learn to endure their scorning. It's a classroom that you have to go through.

You'll never escape it. Don't respond with a like spirit. Don't curse those that curse you, but rather bless those that curse you.

Be like your Father which is in heaven. He sends rain on the just and on the unjust. Therefore be ye perfect, the scripture says, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

There can't be true life come into your soul as a Christian until you have also embraced the tomb. We try to escape it. There's a whole segment of Christianity in this generation that wants to get saved and live on the mountain for the rest of their lives.

Never any sorrow, never any cares, never any worries, happiness and peace and prosperity all the days of their lives. But that's a false Christianity. That's a false road.

It's a wide road that leads to destruction. The true road of Christ will lead you into a place of death, into the tomb. It's a place of isolation.

It's a place sometimes where nobody around you seems to understand you. Your family and friends are wondering what happened to you. Why are you becoming so extreme? Why do you have to get so intense in your relationship with God? Is it sufficient just to go to church and sing a hymn or two and give him the offering? Why do you have to get so radical? Why do you have to talk about going to the mission field? Why this talk about giving up your job if God should call you to do so? Why this talk about laying your life down for the purposes of God? So radical.

Why not eat, drink and be merry? Why not just have a good time until Christ comes back? There's a time of isolation. That's what it was for Jesus. The tomb was a darkened place, an isolating place.

It's a place of obscurity. It's a place ultimately of weakness. It's a place where you lay down and say, God, unless you raise me up, I'm not going anywhere.

Lord, I want to serve you with all of my heart and I've walked with you, but it's brought me to this place. I'm flat on my back. I'm isolated.

I'm in a place of obscurity. And if you don't raise me out of this place, I'm not going anywhere. There's absolutely no chance of me getting up without your Holy Spirit.

We see the Apostle John embracing this tomb of Christ. It comes in different forms, but we see John on the island of Patmos imprisoned in a very hard, isolated place for the testimony of Christ. He was in a tomb of sorts, as you can say.

He was in a place of isolation, obscurity and weakness. But I remind you that it was in that place that God gave unto him the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was in that place of death that the life of Christ came and was manifested unto him.

And because of that light that came into, that was revealed to him, you and I can sit here tonight and hear and see and know the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ through this last chapter, this last book in the Bible. All of the voices that surround you would say, we've sealed him up, we've shut him down. If you want to serve God, if you want to rise out of obscurity, there will be voices that rise around you to shut you down and seal you up.

That's what they did to Jesus. It will be no different for his disciples. They will put you in a grave, they will roll a stone across it, and they will put a seal on it and set a guard on both sides to try to keep you there.

We've sealed him up, we've shut him down. Isn't that what the devil said to Jesus and about Jesus? We've sealed him up, he's finished. But I remind you today that on the third day, hallelujah, the Spirit of Almighty God came into that place of death and raised a man that was shown in weakness in the power of Almighty God.

The grave couldn't hold him, the stone couldn't hold him. I could hear the voice of God the Father saying to his son in that tomb as the stone rolled away, behold, I've set before you an open door and no man can

shut it. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

He is the firstborn from the dead. Afterwards, we who shall be like him at his coming. Hallelujah, hallelujah.

There are some tonight that you're in this house and you've walked with God, but you feel so weak and you feel so locked up. You feel like the life that God's called you to has left you face down in the dust or in a place of darkness. It seems like you're all sealed up and you're going nowhere.

But I want you to remember the promise of Jesus to this church of Philadelphia. He didn't say you're a strong church. He didn't say you're a big church.

He didn't say you're a powerful church. He didn't even say you have a reputation. He said to Philadelphia, you have a little strength.

You're a people who know that without me you can do nothing. You have a little strength. You can breathe by yourself.

You can walk by yourself. But that's about the extent of what you can do without me. You have a little strength.

He said to them, you have kept my word and you have not denied my name. And I remember a day in my life when I stood on a gravel road in Canada walking, and that's all I had left after years of preaching the gospel up and from one coast to the other and all over the country. All I had left was a little strength.

I had enough left in my body to preach one sermon a week on Sunday morning and that's all I had. And I knew in my heart I had kept his word and I knew I had not denied his name. And that's all I had.

There was nothing else left. But that's a good place to be. That's the place where God wants every Christian to be.

That's the place where we can come out of obscurity. We can come out of that place of darkness. And God now has a hold of our vessel.

We're not desiring the praise of men and it doesn't matter what people say anymore. We're there for the glory of God and for the hallelujah. Some of you, you have, you are at this place of weakness.

You have been in a struggle in a battle for so long that all you have left is a little strength and all you can say to God. You have no big report to bring to God of all the wonderful things you've done, but all you can say is, Lord, as best as I can, I've kept your word and I've not denied your name. And the Lord speaks to you tonight and says, I have set before you an open door and no man can shut it.

I've set before you an open door. You have not failed. You have been on the pathway that I have laid out before you.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Look at John please.

Chapter 20. You haven't failed at all. You're on the roadway of the cross.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. It's so sad that so many people get right to the point where God can use them and they quit because they have failed to understand the deeper workings of God.

They failed to understand what God is doing, bringing us to an end of ourselves, that he may give us life, that we may bring honor to his name. John chapter 20 says the first day in verse one of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early when it was yet dark under the sepulcher and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher. Then she runneth and cometh to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved and said to them, they have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher and we know not where they have laid him.

Peter therefore went forth and that other disciple and came to the sepulcher, the grave, the tomb. And so they both ran together and the other disciple did outrun Peter and came first to the sepulcher and he stooping down, I want you to notice those two words, words we often miss in the scripture, stooping down and looking in saw the linen clothes lying and yet he went not in. You see verse five says stooping down, that's the doorway out of the tomb.

That's the doorway into light. That's the doorway back into life. It's a coming forth in absolute total surrender, having put on Christ and walking out of the grave in total victory.

It's a place of humility. The proud can't get through that door. They run into it face first into the stone.

It's a doorway for those who know how to humble themselves before God and acknowledge they have little strength and stooping down, they come out of that place of darkness. That's an open door out of death. It's called humility.

Humble yourselves, the scripture says, under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you, that he may lift you up in due season. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

I have set before you an open door. That's what he was speaking to John also in Patmos. I have set before you an open door.

Now I want to show you what that door is. John chapter 10, please turn back in your Bibles. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. John chapter 10.

I want to show you what is set before this church of Philadelphia. John chapter 10, verse eight. Jesus said, all that ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.

Verse nine, read those words with me. I am the door. I have set before you an open door.

And in John chapter 10, verse 9 says, I am the door by me. If any men enter in, he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal and kill and destroy.

I have come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the door. Jesus is saying to Philadelphia and for those that are weak tonight and have gone through some of the sufferings of Christ and have not fully understood what God has been doing in your life.

I am the one who's standing before you. I am the one that you are entering into and beginning to have revelation of and beginning to understand. I am the open door that stands before you as you walk forward, not trusting in yourself, but trusting in me.

You are entering into the very heart of Christ. You're entering into the nature of Christ. You're walking right into the revelation of the risen Christ like the apostle John did.

That's the open door. That's the putting on of strength. That's the new life that Jesus talks about.

That's the abundant life he came to give. It's not in things of this world. It's in him and him alone.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

The abundance that I seek is an abundance of him. It's love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, meekness, faith, and temperance. Against such there is no law.

Hallelujah. It's Jesus and Jesus alone. It's the putting off of the old nature.

It's the putting off of the old deeds and the putting on of Jesus Christ. It's being able to stand before heaven and earth and say it's no longer I who live, but it's Christ who lives within me. That's the open door.

He says you know you have a little strength, but you've kept my word. You've not denied my name. And what he's saying to Philadelphia, I am standing before you.

It's the Lord that stood before them. I'm the open door. No man can shut this door.

You see, because Jesus rose from the dead. Nobody can shut that door. He triumphed over the powers of hell.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. He says I am the door.

You come in through me. You'll go in and out and you'll find pasture. You'll be fed.

You'll be fat. You'll be flourishing. You'll be strong.

Not in your own strength, but as my servant David was, you'll be strong in the strength of the Lord. Hallelujah. You will come to know me as your righteous tower.

And in times of trouble and distress, you will run into me and find refuge. The enemy will not be able to exact against you, nor your wives, nor your husbands, nor your children. Hallelujah.

I will be your strength. Hallelujah. The Lord is our exceeding great reward.

There is none other besides him. All that ever came are thieves and robbers. There's none other besides Jesus Christ.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Now go back to Revelation. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Revelation chapter three.

He says, Behold, verse nine, I'll make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie. Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet and to know that I have loved thee. He said the mockers, the lukewarm, the haters of the Lordship of Christ will one day, some on this earth and some in heaven, they will fall before your feet and they will one day know that I have loved you.

You see, Jesus sets the weak to confound the wise and the, I mean, the strong. We sang it, give thanks. That's why it's such a beautiful song to sing.

That's why there's such an anointing when we sing it because it's a song of truth. He takes the weak to bring down the strong and the foolish to bring the, those that are wise in their own sight to nothing, that no flesh can glory in his presence. He said, those who have mocked you will one day stand and fall at your feet and know that I have loved you.

Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Verse 10, he says, because you've kept the word of my patience, I will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them to dwell upon the earth. In other words, I will shelter you in your hour of trial because you know me and you love me and you have come under my wings.

You have come under my lordship. I've set before you an open door of safety and nobody can close that door to you. A thousand shall fall at one hand and 10,000 at the other, but it will not come nigh you.

Hallelujah. You have come to trust me. You have come to dwell in my habitation.

I've set before you an open door of provision and protection that no man can shut unto you. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Behold, I come quickly. Hold that fast which you have that no man take your crown. Hold it fast.

Cherish, cherish everything that I've given to you through my word. He that overcomes, I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. He will go no more out and I'll write upon them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God.

And I will write upon him my new name. In other words, I have a new name for him. He that has an ear, let him hear what the spirit sayeth under the churches.

David said in Psalm 91, verse one and two, he that dwells in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the almighty. I will save the Lord. He is my refuge in my fortress.

He is my God in him will I trust. I have set before you an open door. Everyone who's here tonight who can hear this word.

God through Jesus Christ has set before you an open door that no man can shut. You might be a Christian here tonight and you're the, you figure you're the most struggling Christian in all the body of Christ. You have almost no strength.

You come into the house of the Lord ashamed. Sometimes you say, God, I have so little strength to do anything. I, I so want to serve you.

I so want to carry the cross. I so want to bring honor to your name. All I can say tonight is I've kept your word God as much as I can.

And I've not denied your name and you expect almost like a condemning voice of God to come out in your direction. And instead he looks down at you and says, behold, I've set before you an open door and no man can shut it. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. In other words, get up. And in the strength of the Holy ghost, just keep on walking straight forward.

You're right in the place where I can reveal myself unto you. You're right in the place. You see, you've lost confidence in yourself and because you've lost confidence in yourself, you're now willing to turn to me.

You're now willing to look me in the face. You're now willing to meet me eye to eye and let me begin to speak to your heart. And I will impart my strength into you and take away your weakness.

Hallelujah. Would you stand please? I have such a simple altar call tonight. This is the last message to the last church in revelation that I'll be speaking on.

And the altar call that the Lord gave me today as I was preparing this message is just this, Lord Jesus, I have been in such a struggle that I have little strength left, but I want to walk with you. I want to follow you and I never want to deny your name. If that's you tonight, the Lord would say to you, come and let me minister to you tonight.

You come to this altar. We're going to sing that song again, give thanks. And as we do out of the balcony, go to the sides and come down either, either stairway, the main sanctuary come forward and God is going to meet you tonight and minister to you at this altar.

Hallelujah. He gives strength to the weak. He gives courage to the Hallelujah.

He gives life to those that are in danger of losing it and failing. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Those that have responded to this altar tonight, do you know you're in a blessed place where you are in your life right now? Do you know that you're on the very pathway of God? You're in the place of weakness. That's the place where you can become strong.

Some people never get there. It's so sad to say they spend their whole life trying to pump up this old flesh and keep it going rather than just let the cursed thing die and let the spirit of God take over. You're in a place of weakness.

God doesn't despise you for that. He's not bad at you. He's not angry with you.

He says, I've set before you an open door. It's in weakness that you can come through that door. You can't come through it strong.

You can't come through it proud. You can't come through that door in your own strength. It's in weakness.

It's when you know you've failed. It's when you know you're nothing. It's when you know that unless God touches you, there's no hope.

I remember the day that God had given me a promise 17 years ago that I would live to see a mighty, mighty revival. Awesome revival. And I set out across the country to make it happen.

Several years I preached all over the place and I burnt my body out in the process. And I remember being out on the country road finished. And at first I got angry with God.

I said, God, what are you sadistic or something? You know, you give a man a vision. I go out and do what I feel you've called me to do. And then nothing.

All I do is burn myself out. I said, God, I don't even have the strength to preach once a week anymore. It had been six months in that condition.

I said, God, if you don't touch me, I'm finished. I can't go on. And then finally, I just surrendered everything to the Lord.

And I said, Lord, I felt, I guess, like Joseph must have felt in prison in Egypt. I said, God, when it happens, please just remember me. Just remember where I am.

Let me see it. I don't care if I'm in the audience. I don't care if I'm on the street.

Let me see it. Remember where I am, God. And it seems from that day forward, there was a change and strength started to come back.

But yet I knew it wasn't my strength. It was the strength of the Lord. And I began to cherish it.

And I began to desire never to get strong again, never to get strong again, but to stay weak, that his strength could become my strength. I didn't understand what was happening, but I had come through a door into his presence. And that's where you are.

We get fooled into thinking we have to be the strong ones. Then we get saved and then we got to be strong and somehow do something and please God. And he's so displeased if we're weak and so displeased if we struggle and so displeased if we fail.

The reality is he's so displeased that we keep walking for so long in our own strength and don't finally come to that place where we say, Jesus, I can't do it. I can't. All I can say that I've tried to follow your word and have not denied your name.

I don't have anything else. And God just this big smile beams in the face of God and he says, behold, I've set before you an open door. Come all you who labor in our heavy labor.

I'll give you rest. Learn of me. I'm meek and lowly of heart.

You'll find rest for your soul. Hallelujah.

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