

Seven Letters and Seven Churches (part VI)

Greetings precious ones, this week we come to the sixth of seven letters that Jesus would write to as many churches in the Book of Revelation. This is also one of only two letters that does not have any reproof or rebuke in them. It is a letter that any church that loves the Lord would like to receive.

The letter is found in Revelation 3:7-13, "And to the angel 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. 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 shall 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. And 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 I will write on him My new name. He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'"

There are a few important items in this letter that I want to draw your attention to. First, as Jesus has stated in previous letters to the other churches, He says: "I know your works." This is both comforting and troubling at the same time. It is comforting in that there is nothing that I may do for the Lord that does not go unnoticed by the Lord. It may escape man's attention but not the Lord's. We are assured of this in Hebrews 6:10, "For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister." And 1 Corinthians 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

It is troubling in that God also is aware of all that I do not do for Him; for His glory; when I ignore His prompting to or say something to someone. This too is noticed by the Lord.

The second point is that God opens doors (opportunities) to us that no man can close. I have seen this a number of times in my own ministry how God has opened doors to go into countries that others are not able to go into and for as long as I have been able to continue to go. This is not because of any effort on my own, it is all the Lord. The converse is true as well, as God did with the apostle Paul and many others, God will at times "close doors" that no man can open, try as we might.

Finally, Jesus commends them for having "kept His Word" and not denying His name. These two items are of great importance as well as closely related. God demands that I keep His Word, to not keep His Word is rebellion and is an act of denying His name. Jesus would confront His disciples with a powerful question, Luke 6:46-49, "And why call you me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and hears my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like' He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that hears, and does not, is like a man that without a foundation built a house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."

Dear precious ones, there is far too much "lip service" being paid by those who profess to be Christians today. It is not enough to "say" we are Christians; sing the songs; go to church; etc. How we live our daily lives need to be living proof that we believe what we say. I hope the words Jesus wrote to the Church of Philadelphia are true for you.