

TWO OPTIONS

As the Titanic sank, pastor John Harper put his daughter onto a lifeboat and began shouting, "Women, children, and the unsaved into the lifeboats." He went person to person telling people about Christ. Harper gave away his life jacket to a man who refused the Gospel saying, "You need this more than I do." Even in the frigid water, Harper swam to as many people as possible that they may enter eternity in glory.

The Titanic boarded passengers in three classes—324 in first class, 284 in second class, and 709 in third class. Some accommodations were meager, while others were palatial. After the tragedy, the company that sailed the Titanic had a board outside of its office with only two groups: "Known to be lost" and "Known to be saved."

Many people navigate life feeling invincible as they steam ahead. They identify in this group or that. They pursue and possess valuables. However, like the church we will read about today, we must understand that people are not invincible. All people will meet their end. On that day, the only thing that matters is on which board your name will appear.

REVELATION 3:7-13

⁷ "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 'The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.'

⁸ "I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

⁹ Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. ¹⁰ Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. ¹² The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, 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 from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. ¹³ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This city was founded in ~150 BC after Attalus II, became king of Pergamum upon hearing his brother, Eumenes had died. When Eumenes was discovered alive, the Romans secretly contacted Attalus, promising to help him overthrow his brother and assume power. Attalus refused Rome's offer demonstrating "philadelphia," brotherly love. Eumenes, the rightful king, so thankful for his younger brother's actions, renamed one of the cities in their kingdom "Philadelphia" to forever honor his brother's love.

DISCUSSION

If you were famous, what would you be famous for?

ICEBREAKER

1. Describe the one who wrote the letter. (7)

2. What victory did Christ commend? (8)

3. How does Christ describe this church's enemies and what does he say will happen? (9)

4. What rewards does Christ promise for obedience? (12)

OBSERVATION

5. In your own words, what does it mean when Christ says in verse 11...

- "I am coming soon"?
- "Hold fast to what you have"?
- "that no one may seize your crown"?

INTERPRETATION

6. How does this passage help you as you consider sharing your faith?

APPLICATION

Jesus said the Great Commandment is to love God and love others. Loving your neighbor includes caring for their eternity—but that doesn't mean it's easy. Talk to your coach today.

STUDY NOTES

SEIZE THE MOMENT

In January of 2018, the world opened their hearts to the Philadelphia Eagles. Even their opposition recognized their phenomenal performance and Super Bowl LII victory. However, after the Eagles clinched the first Super Bowl for the city of Philadelphia, the team's top stars seized the opportunity for something far greater.

First, Head Coach Doug Pederson talked with NBC's Dan Patrick. The coach's first words: "I can only give the praise to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for giving me this opportunity." Next, tight end, Zach Ertz, who caught the game-winning touchdown pass praised, "Glory to God first and foremost." Just days before the Super Bowl, Ertz told the crowd, "Our No. 1 goal is to make disciples."

Then, just moments after he'd been named Super Bowl MVP, quarterback Nick Foles spoke to the massive TV audience, "All glory to God!" Earlier that week, he said he'd like to become a pastor when his football days are done. God opened doors for the Eagles to share Christ and they eagerly walked right through. However, this wasn't the first time God opened doors to a receptive Philadelphia.

Philadelphia is well-known for meaning "city of brotherly love." Interestingly, this is the one city of the seven that loved the lost. More than anything else, the Lord noticed and commended how they seized the opportunities to tell others about the salvation Christ brings. However, their efforts faced stiff opposition, not primarily from Romans, but from Jews.

OUR EVANGELISM WILL FACE RESISTANCE

Jesus introduced himself in very specific ways to this church in Philadelphia, "**The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.**" To this congregation, so familiar with Jewish opposition, he strongly identified himself as the Messiah. As such, he is holy, true, and the Anointed One with every right to rule over the Messianic kingdom. Further, he alone determines who may enter into it.

This letter contains two important uses of the word "**Behold.**" It's not a word many of us commonly use. However, although John is writing in Greek, this is a common Hebrew expression. "Behold" isn't just telling us to "look," which is the literal definition of the word. It's telling us to pay attention. Don't just observe, understand.

The *first* "behold" focuses on what Christ has done for them *personally*. **Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.** They were ordinary people with an extraordinary devotion and commitment to the Lord.

The *second* "behold" focuses on what Christ has done on *their behalf*. Christ wanted them to **behold** what he would do to their spiritual opponents, unrepentant Jews. Christ promises they will **bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.**

Christ encourages the Philadelphians, saying, **I am coming soon.** Like the student making fun of the principal that just walked up behind them, we don't want to get caught unaware. For that reason, Christ says, **Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.**

CHRIST'S GLORY IS REVEALED BY OUR EVANGELISM

Although the previous promises relate to time on earth, verse 12 begins focusing on the promises after they leave this earth and spend eternity with their Savior. If these promises are true, and they are, any price is worth it. Also, if we really believe that anyone who doesn't know Christ is destined for an eternal punishment away from God, how can we *not* share? Like the Eagles who leveraged their moment in the spotlight, we must use our platform to help others know Christ.

In the end, sharing Christ with another person is simply telling them what Christ has done for you. Skills and methods can help, but any person that has received the life-changing message of the Gospel can pass it on. Just tell them what happened to you and ask if they want it too.

SHARE CHRIST WITHOUT FEAR

Begin with 5 open-ended questions

1. Do you have any kind of spiritual beliefs?
2. Who is Jesus Christ to you?
3. Do you believe in Heaven or Hell?
4. If you died, where would you go?
5. If what you believe were not true, would you want to know?

Then, if they want to know...Open the Bible

1. Are you a sinner? (Romans 3:23)
2. Do you want forgiveness for your sin? (Romans 6:23)
3. Do you know why Jesus came? (John 3:16-17)
 4. Are you willing to believe and trust in Jesus Christ right now?
 5. Are you sure of where you are going? (1 John 5:13)