

Revelation 3:7-13

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[0 : 00] Do you find it tough to be a Christian? Does being a Christian close doors for you?

For some of you that might be at school or at work or in the community. We think more generally of the panorama in Scotland today. And I pose the question for you to consider what your answer might be.

Are Christians in Scotland today increasingly excluded or marginalized just because they try and hold to what the Bible teaches and demands?

Is it tough to be a Christian, a faithful Bible-believing Christian in Scotland today? Well, I think we can certainly say that it's getting tougher. It will depend on where you work. It will depend on where you live. It will depend on the circumstances of your life, the measure in which it is tough for you or becoming tougher for you.

But I think it's fair to say that in general terms, it is undoubtedly heading in the direction of tougher rather than easier.

[1 : 28] Well, I'll tell you something for nothing. It was tough in Philadelphia to be a Christian. There in Asia Minor, in the church that Jesus directs these words to, the words that we've read in chapter 3 of Revelation.

The church in Philadelphia was trying really hard to be faithful to God and His Word. And they're commended for that. They were holding on. They were trying to be, and in great measure were, faithful.

But they were weak and they were struggling. Don't take my word for it. Listen to what Jesus says about the church and the Christians in Philadelphia.

These are His words that He directs to them. I know that you have little strength. You see that there in verse 8 in the second half of the verse.

I know that you have little strength. We don't fully know what Jesus meant by that diagnosis or that description of the church in Philadelphia.

[2 : 35] But I think it's fair to conclude that the church was small in numbers, small, weak in resources, and perhaps also in its influence in society that, no doubt, was very marginal.

We can maybe also imagine that their little strength that Jesus speaks of was partly because the strength that they did have was continually being spent on just holding on against the opposition and pressure of a hostile world in which they lived.

And so just that very effort of holding on, of being faithful against so much opposition and hostility was draining.

It was exhausting. And so perhaps at one point they had a measure of strength, but it was being depleted. And Jesus recognizes that. And He says, I know that you have little strength.

I know that you're weak. I know that you are struggling. But I commend you for being faithful. It was hard work to be a Christian in Philadelphia.

[3 : 49] As in Smyrna, Jesus speaks of the presence in Philadelphia of a synagogue of Satan. There in verse 9, I will make those who are the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews, though they are not.

And then He goes on. But this language that we saw Jesus employing already when He spoke to the church in Smyrna. It's a very hard language to speak of a synagogue of Satan.

But as with Smyrna, it seems reasonable to conclude that Jesus was referring to the actual synagogue in Philadelphia. And certainly it's leadership that were hostile to the Christians.

It would maybe be unfair to say that all the Jews in Philadelphia were hostile to the Christians. But certainly those who were influential, those who were responsible for the synagogue, were hostile to this sect as they saw it.

And it seems that their opposition may have taken different forms. But one of the forms that it took was that of slander. Jesus speaks of their lies.

[5 : 00] Those who claim to be Jews, though they are not, but are liars. And again, we're not told exactly what are the lies that they were propagating, but it seems reasonable to imagine that some of these lies were lies that were slanderous accusations against the believers to provoke trouble and difficulty for them.

But their opposition, it appears, was particularly focused on excluding the Christians in different ways. Now, what obvious way was from participation in the life of the synagogue?

And this would have been particularly painful for Jewish Christians. We imagine that the church in Philadelphia was made up of Jewish and Gentile Christians. But for those who were Jewish, to be excluded, to be kept out from the synagogue, to be barred from the synagogue, would have been a difficult prohibition to have to endure, maybe even dividing families as a result.

But perhaps the influential leaders in the synagogue, described here very vividly as the synagogue of Satan, perhaps they were also exercising their influence to exclude Christians from other areas of city life, perhaps especially in the world of work and commerce, and so prejudicing and causing mischief and trouble for the believers.

The point is that for the Christians in Philadelphia, doors were closing. Certainly the doors of the synagogue, perhaps other doors as well. And there was nothing that they could do about it.

[6 : 45] And it was tough. Some of the believers, I imagine, were discouraged and were wondering if it was really worth it. Perhaps they should just go with the flow and blend in and save themselves a lot of grief.

Well, Jesus had good news for the Christians in Philadelphia, and He has good news for you. Do you? Are you excluded or marginalized in different ways at school or at college because you're a Christian, because you will not keep quiet about Jesus and about the demands that Jesus makes upon you and others?

Well, Jesus has good news for you. Do you find that doors are closed in the world of employment, or perhaps in your prospects of promotion, because you seek to be faithful to Jesus?

Well, Jesus has good news for you. Are you finding that even to speak a word for God arouses suspicion, or perhaps even outright hostility? Well, Jesus has good news for you.

And the good news is about open doors. Jesus opened doors for those facing closed doors. If a door has been slammed in your face because you're a Christian, Jesus comes and says, Check this out.

[8 : 13] I have a key that opens all manner of doors. So the good news is about open doors. And we'll identify four doors in particular that Jesus can and does open for His people.

But before we do that, let's just consider who it is that brings this good news. Well, how does the passage begin? There in verse 7, To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, These are the words of Him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David.

But our concern at the moment is simply the first part of that statement. These are the words of Him who is holy and true. Of course, it's Jesus who is speaking.

That's not any great revelation. You know that already. But what I want to just note is the manner in which Jesus describes Himself. He describes Himself as Him who is holy and true.

Now, one curious element about this part of the description is that here Jesus is not drawing on language that we find in the vision described in chapter 1.

[9 : 24] Largely, when we've seen the introductions to all of these letters, Jesus draws from that vision in presenting Himself. On this occasion, He does so when He speaks about holding keys.

There's an echo of something that's seen in the vision. But in this part, where He describes Himself as the one who is holy and true, these are words that He is owning for Himself without reference to that vision.

The important thing to note is that these words are not, in the first place, to be understood as adjectives. Now, it is true that Jesus is holy. It's true that He is true.

That is the reality. But the way in which the words are being used on this occasion are not, in the first instance, as adjectives, but as titles.

Jesus is describing Himself as the Holy One, as the true One. Now, why is that significant? Well, it's significant because these are divine titles.

[10:28] In the Old Testament, we often find God described as the Holy One of Israel. And He's described in that way on so many occasions, it would be a pointless task to draw attention to all of them.

But let me just draw attention to one occasion, because we'll come back to this verse a little later on for another purpose. So, let's just look at it at this point, just to notice how this is a title that is used of God.

In Isaiah chapter 60 and verse 14, we read, The children of your oppressors will come bowing before you. All who despise you will bow down at your feet. Already you see echoes of something that we've read there in Revelation.

But particularly, then it said, And we'll call you the city of the Lord, Zion of the Holy One of Israel. God described as the Holy One of Israel.

And here Jesus says, well, that's me. I am the Holy One of Israel. I am the one who is altogether true and faithful and holy.

[11:30] Indeed, here in Revelation, in this very vision, the saints are recorded calling out to God in the same language. In chapter 6 of Revelation and in verse 10, we read the believers being described as calling out in this way.

They called out in a loud voice, How long, sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?

How long, sovereign Lord, holy and true? So, in this very vision, this language is used explicitly of God. And Jesus, as He introduces His message to the church in Philadelphia, He owns this language for Himself.

I am the one who is holy and true. Jesus attributes to Himself divine names and divine attributes. Jesus identifies Himself as God.

It is God in the person of Jesus, the eternal Son of God, who brings good news to the Christians in Philadelphia and to us this morning.

[12:36] To those who have little strength, who are struggling and are finding that doors are closing left, right, and center.

Well, now let's listen to the good news. We've already read the words there in verse 7. Let's read them again. These are the words of Him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David.

There in Revelation chapter 3, verse 7. These are the words of Him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. Did you hear what Jesus says of Himself?

He says that He holds a key. What do keys do? Well, keys open doors. And this key, we'll soon discover, is no ordinary key, but a key that opens all manner of doors.

It is this quite remarkable master key that opens all kinds of doors. But what doors does this key open?

[13:38] Well, I want to suggest four doors that Jesus opens for His people. And I want you to listen carefully and be encouraged by this. Jesus wants you to see that the doors that are closing to you are, in the grand scheme of things, as nothing compared to the doors that He opens for you.

So if this is your reality, that you are seeing doors being closed, you are experiencing being excluded and silenced, or at least an endeavor to silence you, and you're discouraged by that, I want you to listen to Jesus.

Jesus comes to you this morning and says, yes, I know that doors are being closed, but I am the one who opens doors. And the doors I open are way more significant than the ones that are being closed.

I think this is the whole tenor of what Jesus is saying and doing here as He addresses His people in Philadelphia.

So what doors, then, does this key open? I am the one who holds the key of David. Well, first of all, let me suggest that it opens the door to a place of belonging.

[14:50] Jesus claims to hold the key of David. And He speaks of this, or He speaks of how this allows Him to open and shut. These are the words of Him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David.

What He opens, no one can shut, and what He shuts, no one can open. And the reference there, as I indicated when I introduced the readings, is to the verses that we read in Isaiah chapter 22.

There in Isaiah, and time doesn't allow us to enter into the original passage and circumstances, but basically what you have there described is this character, Eliakim, who is described as enjoying

kingly authority over the house of David.

And this authority that he enjoys is most vividly represented by him being granted the key that opens and shuts. So you have this character, this character in the palace, as it were, who has this key, and this key gives him and represents the authority that he enjoys to open doors and to lock doors, to let people in and to cast people out.

This was a key that opened the door into the kingdom, into the palace, into the inner circle of the king. Eliakim was the man who could get you inside the palace.

[16:20] If you wanted inside the palace, if you wanted an audience with the king, you had to speak with Eliakim. Because he had the key. He had the authority. He was the man you had to speak to. He could get you into the throne room, to the very presence of the king.

And Jesus takes this language for himself. And what Jesus is declaring is that he is the man who opens the door for us into the household of God, the family of God, the very presence of God. By faith in Jesus, we are welcomed into the embrace of God Almighty. And Jesus has the key. He holds the key. And if we can just mix the metaphors, related metaphors, and they're Jesus' metaphors, we can joyfully acknowledge that Jesus is the very door to forgiveness and friendship and intimacy with God.

What Jesus is saying to the Christians in Philadelphia is this. So the Jewish leaders won't let you into the synagogue. No worries, my friend. I have the key that opens the door into the very presence of God.

Don't despair over the doors that are closing in Philadelphia, but rather rejoice in the door that is open to you to fellowship and friendship with God himself.

[17:40] And the question for all of us this morning, the question I pose to you this morning is, have you walked through that open door, that door that has been opened by Jesus?

Are you trusting in Jesus as your Savior and serving him as your Lord? He who holds the key. He who opens the door. He who bids you to come in.

That's the first door that Jesus opens with this key. This key is a key that opens the door to a place of belonging. But let me secondly suggest that it is a key that opens the door to a place of witness. Let's just notice what we read in verses 8 and 9. Well, let's just begin with verse 8 and we'll move on to verse 9 in a moment. Verse 8 says as follows, I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut.

So the same language is being repeated. I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

[18:49] So here in verse 8, Jesus again speaks of an open door. And the question, of course, is what door is he speaking about? Is it the same door that he has just referred to in the previous verse?

Or is it perhaps the door to the new Jerusalem that he will speak of in what follows? Now, if I'm being honest, I don't know for sure. But I want to suggest that here Jesus is referring to another very particular door, namely an open door for service and witness.

In the New Testament, we often find that language used to speak of opportunities for witness. They're spoken of as open doors.

Paul in particular is very partial to that language or to using that picture. Let me just give you a couple of examples. There are more, but we'll limit ourselves to a couple of examples.

In Acts chapter 14 and verse 27, Paul is delivering his report to the church in Antioch. And notice what he says there in verse 27.

[19:54] On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. An open door through which the Gentiles were coming to faith in Jesus.

Then Paul again in his letter to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians chapter 16. Let's read verses 8 and 9. 1 Corinthians chapter 16 and verses 8 and 9 we read as follows.

But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost because a great door for effective work has opened to me and there are many who oppose me.

So here's Paul in a context of opposition and where things are really very difficult and yet he delights in and rejoices in the fact that an open door has been opened for him for witness.

And I think that is what Jesus is speaking about. Notice how he goes on to acknowledge that the Christians in Philadelphia have little strength. And if we try and connect these statements, it's as if

he is saying to them, I know you're weak.

[21 : 09] I know you're tired. I know some of you are exhausted. But I have a job for you to do. I have a door that I want you to go through. An opportunity that I want you to grasp.

I have placed before you an open door. Even the time of it, the tense of it suggests a present opportunity.

He's not speaking about the door they had already gone through, the door of faith. He's saying you are believers and today there is a door open for you. We'll see in a moment that he speaks of a future door that they are to go through.

But here he's speaking about the here and now, this door of opportunity for service. And what is this opportunity for witness? What is this open door?

Well, it is to tell others, yes, even those who are opposing them, to tell them about Jesus and about the wide open door to God for all who trust in Jesus.

[22 : 08] I think it's noteworthy that Jesus commends the believers for not having denied my name. That's one of the things that he commends about them, that they have not denied my name.

And this language of not denying my name is the language of witness. They have not kept quiet about Jesus. They have not hidden their light under a bushel.

They have, even in the face of mockery and persecution, boldly proclaimed the name of Jesus as the name that is above every name. And Jesus says to them, you are to keep on lifting high the name of Jesus.

There's an open door for you to witness and to proclaim my name, even to those who oppose you, and even to those who make life so difficult for you.

Now, as we continue thinking along these lines, the question then arises, what will be the outcome of their witness? What will be the outcome of the believers obeying this urge, this encouragement, this command to walk through that door?

[23 : 19] Well, I wonder what do you make of verse 9? I'll give you just a few moments to read verse 9 yourselves. And just read it and just see what initial impression that it creates for you as you read it.

So chapter 3, verse 9 of Revelation. Let me just, I think you've probably had time to read it now. Let me just read it as well. I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews, though they are not, but are liars, I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.

So again, what would you make of that picture that is being painted? Is this a picture of their enemies being humiliated?

Is it the case that the believers in Philadelphia are to be excited at the prospect of their enemies being humiliated? Is Jesus anticipating a day when the lying Jewish leaders and, no doubt, the Roman persecutors will kiss the feet of the believers?

Is this what is being anticipated? I don't think so. I think the picture being painted is not of humiliation but of repentance. The picture is of men and women bowing down in worship.

[24 : 32] The word that is translated there, bow down, the Greek word translated bow down, is often translated worship. Of course, it does refer to a physical posture, but it's so identified with worship that often it is translated, depending on the context, as worship.

And it could be so translated here. Bow down is a perfectly reasonable and correct translation, but it could reasonably be translated worship. And if we go down that road, it's also important to note that in Revelation, worship is never forced.

It is always voluntary. Sometimes the object of worship is a very foolish one, but nonetheless, those who are worshiping are doing so voluntarily. And so the picture, I think, is not so much of bowing down before the Christians, but bowing down with the Christians.

What is being anticipated is that as the believers go through this open door of witness, and as they boldly, in the face of much hardship, share the good news concerning Jesus, even with their enemies, God will own that witness, that courage, that faithfulness, and He will draw some of their enemies to come and to acknowledge that Jesus is indeed the Messiah and bow down before Him as the believers do.

The irony is that in the Old Testament, and we read the verse in Isaiah chapter 60, which is one of them, there are many prophecies that anticipate a day when the nations, the Gentile nations, will bow down before the Holy One of Israel.

[26 : 13] But here it is the Jews who are brought to bow down before their own Messiah, the ones who had rejected Him. They are the ones who are bowing down, or of whom it is said they will bow down and worship the one they had pierced.

And as I say, we can just remind ourselves of that verse that we read in Isaiah chapter 60. We read it the first time around just to focus on the language of God as the Holy One of Israel.

But as we read it again, we see how it ties in with what is being said here in Revelation. The children of your oppressors will come bowing before you. All who despise you will bow down at your feet and will call you the city of the Lord, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

And notice what especially draws the enemies to Jesus and to His disciples. Well, what especially draws them or what they especially remark upon or are struck by is that Jesus loves His people.

I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. That I have loved you. It's interesting, isn't it, that Jesus doesn't say that they'll acknowledge who I am.

[27 : 27] They'll acknowledge my identity as the promised Messiah. Of course, all that would be true. But what He draws particularly to mind or anticipates is this acknowledgement and the part of those who are erstwhile enemies that God loves His people.

Might it be that that very love is what had drawn them to that place of worship? I wonder, is that what folks see when they see us?

Weak and ordinary folk loved by Jesus. But what about us? What about you? Listen to Jesus speaking to you this morning.

I have placed before you an open door. These are the very words that He addresses to the church in Philadelphia and that He addresses to you. I have placed before you an open door. Are you listening?

What is that Jesus-given opportunity for you? Who will you serve this week in the name of Jesus? To whom will you affirm the name of Jesus? Or will you by your silence deny His name?

[28 : 33] Is there anything that the Christians in Philadelphia are commended for not doing? Now some might say, but nobody wants to listen. Those who oppose me, they don't want to listen.

They won't listen to me if I speak to them about Jesus. Well, can you imagine that the residents of the synagogue of Satan in Philadelphia were very enthusiastic about the Christians forever naming the sweet, sweet name of Jesus?

No, I imagine they didn't particularly enjoy the Christians always speaking about Jesus. But the Christians. But the Christians didn't remain silent. Even in the face of the hostility or antipathy or apathy of those to whom they spoke.

Maybe some of you say, but I'm weak. I'm scared. I'm frightened. Well, if that's true, then pretty much like many of the Christians in Philadelphia, who Jesus says had little strength.

So this key that Jesus holds, it opens the door to that place of belonging in the very family of God. It opens a door to witness and service for God.

[29 : 41] But it also opens the door to a place of security. Notice in verse 10 we read, Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.

This is a difficult verse. Another difficult verse. And the difficulty really, the particular difficulty of this verse is trying to identify what the hour of trial refers to.

It seems to be a time of suffering and crisis that will affect everybody, believers and unbelievers. Jesus is quite explicit in that regard.

A time of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. So this isn't a trial that is going to be limited or restricted to the believers. It's bigger and broader than that. It also seems to be for a time-limited period. It speaks of, or Jesus speaks of, an hour of trial. What is Jesus speaking about? Well, I'm going to plead ignorance on identifying precisely what Jesus is speaking about.

[30 : 48] But I do want to draw out one key truth. That Jesus will, in the midst of the trial, indeed in the midst of any trial, He opens a door to a place of security.

He is going to protect His people in the hour of trial. There's another issue in this verse with regard to how we translate a preposition.

Translating prepositions is actually quite a delicate matter. The Greek word that is translated from there in verse 10, where Jesus says, I will keep you from the hour of trial, could also be translated in.

I will keep you in the hour of trial, in the midst of the hour of trial. And I think that captures the idea. Jesus is promising protection for His people, not a promise that we will not face trials of many kinds, some particular to our Christian witness, but others simply the trials of life.

We're not being promised that we won't face those trials, but we are being promised that Jesus will keep us in the midst of multiple trials. This is a wonderful promise, but it comes with a demand.

[32 : 01] In fact, there's a beautiful symmetry of language in the verse that captures this demand. Notice what Jesus says there in verse 10. Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you.

You see the symmetry there. He says, Since you have kept my command, I will keep you. And so Jesus is saying, These things must go together. As you keep my command, as you endure patiently, as you hold on with your little strength, be assured that I will keep you.

You keep my word, you keep my command, and I will keep you safe and protected in the time of trial. But let me mention one final door that is opened by this key.

It is a key that opens the door to a place of glory. And here I'm thinking of the final couple of verses of the section, or verses 11 and 12. Now, just to recap, Jesus has employed His master key to open doors in the past, the door of salvation that the believers in Philadelphia had already walked through.

He is opening doors in the present for them. Doors of opportunity, doors of service, a door of safety is being opened for them in their present, in the here and now.

[33 : 23] But here at the end of the letter, He wonderfully describes the opening of another door in the future, the door into the new Jerusalem.

And who will He open this door for? Well, He tells us in verse 12, The one who is victorious, I will make a pillar in the temple of my God, that He then goes on to speak of as part of, or related to the new Jerusalem.

The one who is victorious, for him, for her, the door will be opened. But what does victorious look like for Jesus?

Well, it's about holding on. You can see that's what He's just said in the verse before. I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown, the one who is victorious.

The one who is victorious is the one who holds on. It's not that grandiose in some ways. Jesus is saying, if you hold on, that for me is victory.

[34 : 29] Hold on. Just hold on. Hold on to the gospel. Hold on to your faith. Hold on to Jesus.

And do so in the assurance that He is holding on to you. Such are victorious. For such the door will be opened. But what can I say?

What can we say about this door that Jesus will open for us in the future? It is a door into glory. It's the door of the new Jerusalem. The new Jerusalem which is coming down out of heaven, to use the language that we have there in the passage.

The new Jerusalem. The city of my God. The new Jerusalem which is coming down out of heaven from my God. Now this is picture language, and yet the picture painted describes a reality.

A reality that somehow involves the fusion of heaven and earth into a new heaven and a new earth. The very language that we find, of course, in this same book of Revelation.

[35 : 34] In Revelation chapter 21 and verses 1 to 3, let's just read what is said there about this new Jerusalem, this new heaven and a new earth.

Revelation chapter 21, Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride, beautifully dressed for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Look, God's dwelling place is now among the people, and He will dwell with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.

And of course, the chapter goes on to describe this wonderful prospect. This is a glorious picture and a glorious prospect. And Jesus will open that door for you.

On that day, every closed door that you ever endured will be long forgotten.

[36 : 39] But even today, the prospect of that door being opened is intended to encourage you and to excite you. What features of this new Jerusalem does Jesus especially highlight?

And we'll just have to very fleetingly notice some of them as we find them there in these two verses. Well, this new Jerusalem is presented as a place of permanence.

Jesus says of this new Jerusalem that never again will they leave it. There in the second sentence of verse 12, never again will they leave it. Those who are victorious, God's people, disciples of Jesus, for whom the door is opened into the new Jerusalem, Jesus says of this place that never again will they leave it.

It is a place of permanence, a place of security. There will be nobody there pushing them out. It's a place of permanence, but it's also a place of belonging.

When Jesus addresses the believers, He says to them, I will make you a pillar in the temple of God. The one who is victorious, I will make a pillar in the temple of my God.

[37 : 52] Now a pillar is an integral part of the structure of the building. It belongs to the building to the extent that without it, the building cannot stand. You can't contemplate removing the pillar.

It so belongs to the structure. And that's what Jesus is saying of God's people. This is a place of eternal belonging for you. You belong there.

To the extent that I speak of you as a pillar in the temple. But it's also a place of honor. This is the wonder of the threefold name written on the pillars that represent each of God's people.

We notice there that the names that are spoken of. Jesus speaks of the name of my God. He speaks of the name of the new Jerusalem. And then He speaks intriguingly of my new name.

What is this intriguing new name? Well, again, Revelation provides the answer to the questions that Revelation poses. In chapter 19 and verses 11 and 16, let me just quickly notice what is said there about this new name.

[39 : 00] But I think we can reasonably identify with the new name spoken of here in the letter to Philadelphia. And Revelation chapter 19 and verse 11 in the second half of the verse, we read, With justice he, or rather, I'll just read from the beginning of the verse, I saw heaven standing open, and there before me was a white horse whose rider is called Faithful and True.

With justice he wages, with justice he judges and wages war. And then if we just jump to verse 16 and it says there, On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

What Jesus is saying is, if you own his name today, he will honor you with his name into eternity. These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David.

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Well, let's pray. Heavenly Father, we do thank you for Jesus.

We thank you that he is the one who is holy and true. We thank you that he is the one who holds the key of David, the one who enjoys all authority, the one who ushers in his people into your very presence, who opens the door of heaven wide for all of his own.

[40 : 34] We thank you for the many doors that are open for us. We thank you for the door of opportunity and service. Forgive us for the times that we fail to see that open door.

Help us in this week that has begun to see the door open before us and to walk through it in your strength and to be thrilled in the manner in which you own our tentative and weak witness for you.

We thank you for all that awaits us as your people. We thank you that our future is a glorious one. We enjoy so much of your goodness and of your grace in the here and now.

But we look forward to an even more glorious future. We thank you for that new Jerusalem, for the new heaven and the new earth in which we will dwell in the very presence of God and in the very presence of his Son, Jesus, your our Savior.

And we pray these things in his name. Amen.