

An Open Door

Revelation 3:7-8

“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.’”

Christ is holy. Christ is **true.** Christ opens or shuts the door of **service** and **opportunity.** **The church at Philadelphia was surrounded by heathens and wickedness.** But Christ can open and close the **door of service** for any church by His sovereign power.

I must say to you this morning this is true of our church. By a **miracle of grace,** **Christ used the ministry of modern technology to open a door for us to speak to churches throughout the world.** **Aaron and Billy Bradshaw** have developed U Tube ministry **that is literally touching this world for the cause of Christ!**

It is through our website we are giving help to pastors and missionaries throughout the world. We are now giving pastors and missionaries free full word-for-word sermon manuscripts in 169 countries.

From the jungles of Vietnam to the nations of Africa, from the blinded and enslaved Muslim nations of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan, from China, Thailand and Mongolia, our messages of biblical truth and salvation go out to struggling pastors and missionaries. From **Indonesia** to **Italy,** from **Moscow** to **Madrid** to **London** our message rolls forth from this church **every day** and **every night.** They are learning to preach the Gospel from us. **They are learning the difference between truth and error from us.** On the authority of the Word of God – **Christ has opened the door to the whole world to us** – and **no man can shut it!** **Glory to God and thank you Jesus!!**

Do you understand what I am sharing with you today? More than three quarters of the human race can watch us preach the Gospel! **Christ did it! Christ did it! Christ did it!** **And this is just the beginning!**

Matthew 28:16-20 contains what is called “The Great Commission” of our Lord to his followers. Of all the gospel writers, Matthew was the only one who gave us something that can properly be called **“an ending.”** **An ending, which looks forward to the continuing work of the gospel** by the **universal, mystical, Body of Christ**, better know as **“The Church.”** **This ending paragraph was relevant to them then and it is relevant to us today.** It gives us a mission plan to evangelize the whole world. **This simple, yet profound**, passage of Scripture reads like this, “Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him - but some of them doubted! Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

A careful study will reveal the last thing Jesus had on His mind before He left this world, was to give His bewildered disciples a “commission” that is global in nature. It is obvious Jesus was concerned about the **continuation and furtherance** of the gospel after he might have gone. **Therefore, he entrusted them with a mission to evangelize the whole world.** **The “commission” that was given to them then is meant for us as well; both individually and corporately.** In today’s study, we are going to see the **power for missions**, the **plan for missions**, and the **promise for missions**.

Look, first at the Power for Missions. **Verses 16-18 say,** “Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

We live in a world obsessed with power: *political power, military power, racial power, monetary power etc.* However, God has an **overcoming, victorious power** available to every believer through **the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.**

It seems to me we are living in some of the most fearful times in the history of the world. End time events foretold throughout the scriptures are being fulfilled before our very eyes. **Worldwide threats of diseases, the spread of terrorism;** and the list goes on. **However, we have the promises of God and enabling power of the Holy Spirit to take us through - just as the Christians of the New Testament did.** 1 John 4:17-18 says, "Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love."

In the midst of the darkness that surrounds our world God has given His people a light to make known the greatness of His power and might. The same **overcoming power** that was given to the early church is available to us as we **obediently submit ourselves to the guidance and leadership of the Holy Spirit.** 1 John 1:5-7 gives us this insight, "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."

In Matthew 28:16-20 Jesus is speaking to ordinary people just like you and me. They were **not intellectual giants.** They were not people of **great wealth or political influence.** **The truth of the matter is - these disciples had just failed miserably in their confrontation with evil.** Peter had denied the Lord three times. All had **fled and abandoned** Christ when the going got rough. **I don't think there were**

any inflated egos listening to Jesus that day. They had been through a few battles and had lost the confidence they once had in their own ability. **Therefore, Jesus was very aware they needed a power greater than themselves!**

The work of missions is not an easy task. No one could do it by **his or her own power.** It takes the **power of God** for anyone to **survive any missionary venture.** **Persons called to share the Gospel around the world or around the Community must be provided with confidence and authority as they venture into this area of ministry.** **Jesus understood how badly Satan wants to destroy the Church.** He also knew **His disciples could not function well apart from Him,** therefore He gave them this **warning** and **encouragement** in John 15:5, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

Second, look at the Plan of Missions. Verse 19 says, "Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." **The construction of the Greek here is simply, "As you go."**

America is certainly on the go! The average American family moves once every five years. **On a day-to-day basis we are on the go as well.** **We go from home to work.** We **go** from the **malls** to the **beaches.** We **go** on **social outings.** **We go on vacations.** No wonder most of us are out of breath most of the time! **Although we who know Jesus as our Savior are citizens of heaven, we are also living in this hectic, busy, "on-the-go" world.**

Jesus certainly understood this when He commissioned us in Matthew 28:19, and the Greek reads like this, "As you are going make disciples..."

Look again at what Jesus says, "But you shall receive power, after the Holy Spirit is come unto you; and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost of the earth.

The key word in verse 8 is “witness.” A witness is someone who has seen something and can say something about it. A witness tells what he knows to be true. If something has happened to you, you can tell someone else about it. Experts in advertising have long understood the value of the “satisfied customer” approach. One of the most effective ways to witness is to give your own salvation experience. This was frequently the method of Paul (Acts 22).

A witness, then, is someone who has something to say. Obviously we witness by the consistency of our life; but we also witness by what we say with our lips. Can you imagine a man sitting on a witness stand and saying nothing??

Also involved in a witness is the statement of certain facts. Along with your personal testimony it is helpful to share with a lost person the basic facts of how Jesus saved you. God will honor your efforts.

It seems the Holy Spirit has gone to great lengths to impress upon Christians the urgency of winning others to Jesus. This certainly indicates to us that personal soul winning must be the priority item of every church and every individual Christian.

The Captain of our Salvation has given us our marching orders. Wherever we are, wherever we go, we are to seek to bring others into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

The first century Christians took this commission very seriously as they “Believed God For A Miracle” in their world. The Holy Spirit has recorded for us their personal witnessing as they moved from Jerusalem to the capital of their world, Rome, - but they were far from perfect!

Let me ask you a personal question: Does fear ever keep you from telling someone else about Jesus? Would you be surprised (or

reassured!) to know that *fear is common to all Christians who try to be witnesses?* The disciples of Jesus were no different.

See them in the Gospels after Jesus had been crucified, cringing behind closed doors. But in Acts these same men were *bold and courageous!* In the Gospels *Peter's courage oozes out his toenails when a lowly maid questions him about his relationship to Jesus.* In Acts he boldly proclaims Jesus to thousands. What made the difference? The main truth of the opening verse of Acts 1 proclaims the fact that *Jesus is alive!!*

When Satan tries to use fear to paralyze your efforts, claim the presence of the living Christ. You do not have to try to witness alone. Jesus said in Matthew 28:20, “...lo I am with always...”

This truth has often encouraged me as I walked up to a strange door to witness for Jesus. As you share some verses of Scripture with a lost person, you will sense the *living presence of Jesus* with you. This is a *most exciting time for the Christian.* The presence of the living Lord transformed the early disciples from cowardice to courage; from fear to great boldness. The church is not a shrine to a dead leader; it is the shock troops of the living Lord. As we seek to win men to Him, He will be real to us. In other words, *we are not inviting the lost person merely to church, but to a personal experience with a living Person!!*

Last of all; look at the Promise of Missions. Verse 20 says, “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 1:23 remind us of *Jesus' birth* and *Him being called* “Emmanuel,” which meant, “God with us.” God is *with us*, and *not against us*. Interestingly, “the English adverb “always”... [means,] “The whole of every day. Not just the horizon that is in view, but each day as we live it.” This is exactly what He promised in Hebrews 13:5, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Notice *Jesus does not* say, “I will be with you only when your church is growing and thriving, when people are getting saved left and right, when the ministries are great and everything is perfect.” **No, in our successes and failures, our fears and faith, our doubts and delights, He is with us.** Child of God, you don’t have to pray for Jesus Christ to be with you, because His promise is sure. Pray that we will be able to see that He is with us! **Child of God, we have the Lord’s power at work within us as well as His promise to be with us to the very end as we obey “the Great Commission.”**

If you have never been saved, why not today?

Please stand for prayer.

Father,

Your Word is true. By Your grace, You have saved me. Help my not to be selfish when it comes to sharing Your love with others around me. In Jesus’ name. Amen.