

B.O.S.S. Study Guide - Week of May 17, 2010
Studies in the Book of Revelation

Take a few moments to read Revelation 3:7-13

This letter is addressed to the church at Philadelphia. **From the reading and comments made on Sunday what was significant in the passage to you and why?**

At the end of verse 8, they are commended for two things: obedience and allegiance or loyalty to Christ.

In the life of a church and those who attend it; why are these things so important?

What or who else might a church be tempted to obey or be loyal to, other than Christ? Why would that be?

Many believe that what is being referred to at the end of verse 7, is the open door of evangelism that this church at Philadelphia took advantage of. That is the open doors of opportunity to spread the gospel.

An “open door”- **See: Acts 14:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 16:5-9; 2 Corinthians 2:12, 13; Colossians 4:3.** In each case Paul sees the opportunity to share Christ as an open door.

Why would it be important for us to see life this way?

Too often we don't see encounters with people that way. We are busy, have a schedule or somewhere to be. We have a different purpose for the meetings or time spent. **What would happen if we saw relational encounters as an open door of opportunity?**

Another reason that we hesitate to see the encounter as an open door is because we may feel that we have little if anything to give or present to the other party. You may be right, (such an opinion of yourself may be somewhat healthy) and Jesus knows that (see Revelation 3:8 “I know you have little strength or power”). You see, it is not what we bring to the open door; it's Who we bring to the open door opportunity. We bring at all times, whether we realize or take advantage of it; the Hope of the World. We bring Jesus, “Him who is holy and true, who holds the keys of David.” We bring the standard of God, the truth of God and the Kingdom of God on the earth, with us at all times.

Apparently this little church got that. They got that the world needed Jesus, and they had an obligation to take Him there. Many believe that the Philadelphian church depicted the church age of the 18th and 19th century when world missions was at its zenith. A time when missionaries were being sent around the globe with the support and blessings of

entire nations, to save the lost. Nowadays such efforts are seen as harmful to the indigenous peoples, as if the hope of Jesus was a harmful disease.

In Colossians 4:2-6, Paul gives us what instruction? In following it as a congregation we can model the church at Philadelphia and continue to take advantage of the opportunity as long as it lasts. **Read it together.**

1. It begins with prayer. Not so that God will open the doors, I believe they are already open, but pray that you will see them and be bold enough to say what God puts on your heart to say. Pray for “Clear proclamation”, know what you believe and be able to articulate it in any situation.

2. Act in ways that show you have thought about this in advance, that wisdom characterizes the way you behave in the world, so that you don’t miss out on any opportunities, through foolish, careless or thoughtless words or deeds. “Be wise” No one wants advice from a fool, well maybe another fool. People are looking for answers, maybe not in words, but in behavior, from someone who acts wisely in challenging and critical times. If you act hopelessly, bitterly, angrily, crudely, worldly, what makes you so different from anyone else?

3. Be gracious, in a world of hatred and bitterness, arguing and fighting, be gracious. Sin, righteousness, holiness are tough things for people to chew on so be like salt, not jalapeño peppers. Err on the side of gracious if you err at all. We won’t always say the right thing at the right time, but let it not be said, that what we say was not full of grace. I think this causes us to guard our words, our jokes, our put downs, our attitudes, our boastful political comments, our gossip (oh those Mormons and a Mormon overhears you; oh those liberals and a liberal overhears you; oh those homosexuals and a homosexual overhears you – I think you have lost out on many opportunities to share the holy, true and life changing God with them).

4. Be thankful for every opportunity to be God’s person on the scene, “as we should.”