

KEEP THY HEART

A Bible-Based Devotional

Turn to: **Revelation 3:7-13**
“**The Ultimate Vindication**”

Perhaps some people have mocked you for living for Jesus or have attempted to make you feel like a loser. But as we will see from this church in Philadelphia, those who love Jesus will one day be completely vindicated and victorious. I think we can find three instructions and three rewards for following Jesus in this passage.

Instruction #1: Enter the open door (v7-8a). Jesus Christ is **holy**, and we should be too (Leviticus 20:26). A piece of fine china is special, something that you wouldn't think of using for filthy tasks such as cleaning out the muck and murky water of an aquarium. Likewise, Christians should not allow themselves to participate in things that are morally unclean. I think the church really needs to ask itself more, "Is this movie holy? Should I watch it?" But Jesus is also **true**; His is not a false holiness (cf. Ephesians 4:24). Insincere holiness without truth is like a whitewashed grave (Matthew 23:27).

Jesus Christ **has the key of David**, or the royal lineage legally required to take the throne; yet He has the keys to all other doors as well, since **He opens, and no man shuts**. If God has given you an open door, then ask God for "mission gear" (John 14:14) to complete the task He has set before you, and don't be afraid to go inside. A door can be "open" yet *look* closed until you try the knob, which is why we sometimes yell, "It's open!" when someone knocks. When you're not sure what God wants for your life, don't be afraid to "try the knobs" prayerfully and see which doors are open and which are not.

When Jesus **shuts** a door, then **no man** can **open** it; the most serious example is of salvation and the ark (Genesis 7:16). When you die, it will be too late for you to get into God's Ark of salvation, no matter how much you pound at the door (Matthew 25:10-12). But the

fixed security of the door is also a great comfort to those *inside* (Genesis 7:26); a genuine Christian is completely safe, and God will never accidentally lose anyone (John 10:29; 17:12).

(v8) God **knows their works**; He has perfect knowledge and memory of every individual's life and church life and never gets anyone mixed up! Has Jesus **set before you an open door**? Just as a tiger in a cage can roar and swipe but cannot stop you, so **no man can shut** a door that Jesus Christ has opened in your life until Jesus decides to close it.

Instruction #2: Don't back down (v8b). This sweet church wasn't commended for their **strength**, which was **little**; nor for their wisdom, ingenuity, or weapons. They were commended for their faithfulness to God's **word** and **name**. When it's all said and done, I think Jesus will be much more concerned with whether you were faithful to Him than whether you had a lot of money, talent, or strength. Don't worry as much about appearing to be successful to others as to remaining loyal to Jesus Christ.

How does Satan try to intimidate Christians into backing down? The Bible says he is like a roaring lion (I Peter 5:8), and a roar is meant to paralyze with fear. It can be intimidating standing up to evil and to evil people, but sometimes all you must do is simply stand and refuse to back down, weak as you may be, and allow Jesus to take care of the rest.

Reward #1: Vindication (v9). Though many ungodly people today may think, "I will *never* bow to Jesus!", yet **Jesus will make them**; surrounded by the splendor and glory of heaven, with complete humiliation and fright due to their own sinfulness, not a single knee will be unbent on that day. Some churches that claim to be following God are actually **synagogues of Satan**, run by the devil. Satan isn't against all worship, so long as people are really worshiping him and doing what he wants. I picture the unsaved **to come and worship before the saints' feet** in the sense that we will be standing on the sidelines, close enough to bump them with our sandals or shoes, as they bow before Jesus Christ. This will be the *ultimate* vindication for saints throughout the ages as their enemies are made **to know that**

Jesus has loved us; perhaps Jesus tells them outright; but I'll also bet our radiating, heavenly glory will make that obvious as well. Imagine all Christians aglow with perfect happiness and splendor, undeniably loved by Jesus.

Reward #2: Deliverance (v10). The Christian life isn't so much like a sprint, but more like a marathon, being **the word of His patience**. And this church was given a sweet promise that because of they **kept** this word, God would **keep** them from the hour of temptation. If you hold tightly to God's Word in your heart, it will hold tightly onto you when you need it most. Are we living for God faithfully and wholeheartedly, as they did? What an honor to be kept **from the hour of temptation** (Matthew 24:21). Because it **shall come upon all the world**, there won't be anywhere on earth to escape it, even if you were to move overseas, unlike the terrible reign of Hitler, which was geographically limited. The purpose will be **to try them that dwell on the earth**; I'm afraid the church roles will drastically drop as the true hearts of people surface, both inside and outside the church (cf. Luke 2:35). Let's strive to live as this church did so that we can claim its promise and be kept from this terribly dark time (cf. Isaiah 57:1).

Instruction #3: Cling to your crown (v11). When Jesus Christ physically returns, it will be **quickly**; many people think they have plenty of time to get right with God, but once they stand before God in judgment it will be too late (Revelation 22:11). Until Jesus returns, we must **hold that fast which we have**; have you ever seen a toddler clutching onto car keys? They have quite the grip! Satan may try to grab our rewards away from us; but weak as we are, God has given us the strength through Him to tightly grip onto the rewards He has given us. Satan may then try to offer us something instead, such as wealth or fame or friends by means of compromise, so that we'll have to release our grip on our crown to grab it. But **no man**—not your boss, your wife or husband, the president, the king, or your worst enemy—can **take your crown** unless you let them. As an aside, how does Satan "take" our crown? Doesn't he simply "smash" it? Or does he actually take possession of it in a sense? Well,

because he is perverted, I think he receives a sense of twisted joy when we lose our joy or our rewards. And so in that sense, he's not just a *vandal* of joy, but a *thief*. So cling tightly to your crown.

Reward #3: Legacy (v12-13). What does Jesus mean when He says He will **make** us a **pillar**? A pillar is permanent; you can't just start removing functional pillars from a building and expect it to remain standing! Jesus is saying that He will make us a *vital* part of heaven's worship; He will make it such that we're actually necessary. To feel that you belong to something, even *needed*, is a wonderful feeling, and God will make those of us who love Him to be like that in heaven. But pillars also imply a legacy; many times, people put plaques on pillars to signify important people or events. Similarly, Jesus will make us important in heaven; not because we deserve it, but because He loves us that much.

The fact that we **shall go no more out** doesn't imply a "trapped" feeling at all; in fact, it implies safety, and God's temple is *huge*! The heaven of heavens cannot contain God; but you will be within His temple and won't have to worry about some evil person lurking behind a corner somewhere. You will be completely safe. Your address in **"the city of my God"** will be written upon your forehead, branding you as a permanent citizen of heaven; and Jesus will also **write His new name** upon us, implying personal and permanent ownership.

This is a very sweet church that was commended by Jesus. He encourages them to enter the door He has opened, taking divine opportunity. When in God's will, we shouldn't back down, since Satan can't stop God's will for our lives. We should cling to our crown, not allowing the devil steal our joy or rewards. Jesus will reward us with vindication as we see the enemies of the saints and of Jesus bowing before Him as we watch from nearby; He will deliver us from this wicked world and is capable of keeping us from the darkest hour of history; and He will give us a legacy in heaven forever.