
Church in Campbell Weekly News

December 16, 2012 Issue 12 - 51

THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA— RAPTURE BEFORE THE GREAT TRIBULATION AND A PILLAR IN GOD'S TEMPLE

In this message we come to the church in Philadelphia, the church in recovery (3:7-13). In Greek, Philadelphia means brotherly love. As a sign, the church in Philadelphia prefigures the proper church life recovered by the brothers who were raised up by the Lord in England in the early part of the nineteenth century. Just as the reformed church, prefigured by the church in Sardis, was a reaction to the apostate Catholic Church, prefigured by the church in Thyatira, so the church of brotherly love is a reaction to the dead reformed church. This reaction will continue as an anti-testimony to both apostate Catholicism and degraded Protestantism until the Lord comes back.

In 3:8 we see the condition of the church in Philadelphia. Firstly, this church had "a little power." Many times we estimate the church in Philadelphia too highly, thinking that this church was strong and prevailing. Actually, it was not so. Some may think that when the Lord raised up the brothers in England one hundred fifty years ago, every one of them must have been like David. While we estimate the church in Philadelphia very highly, the Lord says that she had "a little power." What pleases the Lord is not that we are strong, but that we use our little power to do the best we can. Do not try to be strong. The strong ones may not please the Lord as much as those who do their best with the little power they have. You can never surpass what the Lord gives you. Simply spend what you have received from Him. Do not usurp the Lord's grace. None among us can say that he has received nothing from the Lord. Even the least among us has received a certain amount of grace from Him. You must spend that grace, using it to do your best. If you do this, the Lord will appreciate you and say, "Good. You have a little power, yet you have kept My word with the power you have." Do not seek to be a giant. The Lord is not happy with giants; He is happy with the little ones who have an amount of grace. Although that grace may be limited in its capacity, as long as we use it, spending it to do as much as we can to keep the Lord's word, He will be pleased.

In verse 8 the Lord said that the church in Philadelphia kept His word. One outstanding feature of Philadelphia is that she kept the Lord's word. According to history, no other Christians have kept the Lord's word as strictly as these in the church in Philadelphia. Likewise, by His grace, we are keeping His word today. Although many condemn us, saying that we are heretical, among today's Christians no one regards the Lord's word more than we do. We keep the Word of God, not in the traditional way, but in the way of the pure Word. This offends those who want to hold the traditions

of their forefathers. The church in Philadelphia does not care for tradition; she cares for the Word of God.

In verse 8 the Lord also said that the church in Philadelphia did not deny His name. Since the brothers were raised up in England in the early part of the eighteenth century, they have not taken any name other than the name of the Lord. The word is the Lord's expression, and the name is the Lord Himself. The apostate church has deviated from the Lord's word and become heretical. The reformed church, though recovered to the Lord's word to some extent, has denied the Lord's name by denominating herself with many other names, such as Lutheran, Wesleyan, Anglican, Presbyterian, and Baptist. The recovered church has not only returned to the Lord's word in a full way, but has also abandoned all names other than that of the Lord Jesus Christ. The recovered church belongs to the Lord absolutely, having nothing to do with any denominations (any names). To deviate from the Lord's Word is apostasy, and to denominate the church with any name other than the Lord's is spiritual fornication. The church as the chaste virgin espoused to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2) should not have any name other than her husband's. All other names are an abomination in the eyes of God. In the recovered church life we have no teachings of Balaam (2:14), no teachings of the Nicolaitans (2:15), no teachings of Jezebel (2:20), and no mysterious doctrines of Satan (2:24); we have only the pure Word of the Lord. Amen! The recovered church has no denominations (names), but the unique name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The deviation from the Word to heresies and the exaltation of so many names other than that of Christ are the most striking signs of degraded Christianity. The return to the pure Word from all heresies and traditions and the exaltation of the Lord's name by abandoning every other name are the most inspiring testimony in the recovered church. This is why the church in the Lord's recovery has the revelation and presence of the Lord and expresses the Lord in a living way, full of light and with the riches of life.

In verse 8 the Lord said, "Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut." As the One who has the key of David and who opens and no one can shut, the Lord has given the recovered church "an open door which no one can shut." Since the recovery of the proper church life began, in the early part of the nineteenth century, until now, a door has always been wide open to the Lord's recovery. The more that organized Christianity tries to shut the door, the wider it is open. In spite of much opposition, the door today is open worldwide. The key is in the hand of the Head of the church; it is not in the hand of the opposers. Hallelujah, we have an open door! During the past fifty years, the denominations have tried their best to close this door. But the more they attempted to shut it, the more the Lord has opened it. No one can deny that there is an open door for the Lord's recovery today. The Lord has the key. As long as we are in His recovery, the door will always be open to us.

WHAT IS PRAYER

Issue No. 1 The Present Testimony (Br Nee)

Prayer does not change what God has ordained. Prayer never changes anything. Prayer only accomplishes what God has ordained. On the contrary, the lack of prayer and the absence of prayer changes things. When God's people do not work together with God, He will allow many of the things ordained by Him to be delayed and not be fulfilled.

"Truly I say to you, Whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in heaven" (Matt. 18:18). These two sentences are very familiar to us. But they refer to prayer. This is why following this, it says, "Again, truly I say to you that if two of you are in harmony on earth concerning any matter for which they ask, it will be done for them from My Father who is in the heavens" (v. 19).

This passage explains clearly the relationship between prayer and God's work. God in heaven will only bind and loose what His children on earth have bound and loosed. Many things that God should bind, He will not bind alone; instead He wants His people to bind them on earth first, and then He binds them in heaven. Many things that should be loosed, God will not loose them alone; instead He has to wait for His people to loose them on earth before He will loose the same for them in heaven. Every action in heaven is directed on the earth! All the moves in heaven are restricted on the earth! God is willing and happy to let all of His works be managed by His people. (I am not saying such words to fleshly persons, for they are not qualified to hear such words. We should listen carefully, lest the flesh comes in, and we offend God even more.) In Isaiah there is one passage which says the same thing as it says here: "Thus says Jehovah, / The Holy One of Israel and the One who formed him, / Ask Me about the things to come... / And concerning the work of My hands, command Me" (45:11). When we read this, we should be fearful and not allow the flesh to come in. God wants us—the humble human beings—to command Him! His work is carried out through our commanding. Whether it be binding or loosing, all of God's work in heaven is carried out according to our command on earth.

It must first be bound on earth before heaven will bind. It must be loosed on earth before heaven will loose. God will not do anything against His will. It does not mean that when something is bound on earth God will be forced to bind what He does not want to bind. God in heaven is binding what has been bound on earth because He has already intended to bind what has been bound first on earth. He is waiting all the time. When His people on earth bind what He in heaven intends to bind, He will follow their command and bind according to their requests. The fact that God is willing to follow His people's command to bind what they are binding shows that it has been God's will all along—which is eternal—to have such things bound.

Then why will God not bind such things sooner? Since it is His will to bind and since His will is eternal, why will He not bind what should have been bound long ago according to His will? Why does He have to wait until they are bound on earth before He will bind in heaven? Does it mean that He will not bind in heaven if it has not been bound on earth? Does it mean that when the binding on earth is delayed He will also delay the binding in

heaven? Why is it that what God has desired to bind for a long time will only be bound when it is bound on earth?

If a believer can answer these questions, he will become more useful in the hands of God. We know that God created man for the purpose that man would become one with Him to destroy Satan and his works. Man has a free will, and God's intention is that man would will to join his will to God to oppose the will of Satan. This is the purpose of creation; it is also the purpose of redemption. The life of the Lord Jesus demonstrates this. Although we do not know the reason, we know that God would not act independently. If God's people would not sympathize with Him, if they would not subject their wills, and if they would not express their oneness with God in their prayer, God would rather delay and sit back, than do anything alone. God has shown great honor to His people to allow them to work with Him. Although He is omnipotent, He loves to be restricted by His children. Although He is zealous for His own will, He would rather allow Satan's evil plots to run rampant, if His people neglect His will and do not sympathize with Him or work with Him. Oh! If God's children will not be as cold as they are now, and if they will be willing to stop themselves, to submit to God's will, to care for God's glory, and to keep His word more, God's eternal purpose concerning what He intends to accomplish in this age will be fulfilled much sooner. The church also would not be in so much confusion, sinners would not be so stubborn, the Lord Jesus would return sooner, the kingdom of heaven would descend sooner, Satan and his hosts would be cast into the abyss sooner, and the knowledge of Jehovah would spread over the earth sooner. It is because believers care too much for themselves and do not work with God that so many enemies and so much lawlessness remain unbound, and so many sinners and so much grace are not loosed. Oh, heaven has been too restricted by men on earth! Brothers, God has entrusted so much to us. Do we trust in God in the same way? (To be continued)

Burdens for Church Prayers

- Strengthening of prayer in the church life on all levels: personal, husband and wife, vital group, church prayer
- Pray for the gospel friends of past Thanksgiving gathering.
- Pray for the English-speaking testimony and gospel preaching on West Valley College campus.
- Pray for the burden of raising up next generation for building up of the body of Christ.
- For GOW training: Vital groups be raised up, attending prayer meeting, prophesying on Lord's day by daily enjoying His word and pursue the truth.

Announcement

- Bible Reading Schedule of Revelations:

LD	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3:1~3	3:4~6	3:7~9	3:10~13	3:14~18	3:19~22	4:1~5

- 12/18 prayer meeting at brother Peter Liu's home.
- Jan, 1-4, to receive saints from New Zealand.
- Registration for 7th term GOWT due on 12/16.
- Financial needs for Boston Training center and Church in Hayward.