



02.21.10/ Revelation 3:7-13

Materials Needed

Pencil and Paper

Opening Activity and Discussion

Together, have everyone make a list of their favorite sports. Then, choose a sport from your list (the analogy works best with a team sport, such as basketball or soccer). Tell the children that not every person on the team is always out on the playing field at the same time, but all members of the team have to be ready to spring into action whenever the coach decides to put them in the game. Brainstorm about ways that an athlete can prepare their minds and bodies so that they will be ready for the game. Possible discussion points include: practice with the team, eat healthy, get enough rest (so that the athlete's body will be ready to handle the physical demands of the game), memorize plays, watch video footage of both their play and their opponent's play (so that the athlete's mind will be ready to make wise decisions), pay attention to what's going on during the game (so that the athlete will be ready to jump in the second the coach needs him to).

Now discuss what would happen with an athlete that didn't do anything to prepare for the game – the coach might not even put them in the game. If they were put in the game, they probably wouldn't know what plays to make, and wouldn't be able to keep up with the rest of the team.

Tell the children that tonight we are going to hear about a group of people that were just like the first athletes we discussed – they were always ready. But instead of relying on a coach to win a game, they relied on God to lead them down the correct path.

Read Revelation 3:7-13

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 'The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens. I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie – behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet and they will learn that I have loved you. Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'"

Question 1

The church in Philadelphia was a special and unique church. We would do well to imitate a body of believers such as this one! What are some qualities that these believers had that God delighted in?

Though they were not very strong, they kept God's word; they did not deny the name of Christ, they were patient, endured, etc.

This passage speaks a lot about "open doors." God gives us opportunities to glorify Him and holds the door wide open when we follow him completely. An open door is a special opportunity to serve. The apostle Paul also spoke of open doors in 1 Corinthians 16:8 - "But I will stay at Ephesus until Pentecost, because a great door for effective work has opened to me." Just like a coach seeing an opportunity to put in a key player at a certain point in a game, God allowed Paul the opportunity to do a great work in Jesus' name in Ephesus. But just like the athletes have to keep their bodies fit and their minds sharp to be ready for the game, Paul had to be spiritually ready by following the word and being true to the name of Christ.

**Question 2**

God is always opening doors for the faithful – we just have to make sure that we are ready so that we don't miss the opportunity! Can you think of some areas in your life where God might be opening a door for you to serve Him?

Possible answers might include: inviting a friend or neighbor to church, taking a meal to someone who is sick, praying for someone who is going through a difficult time.

Question 3

The church in Philadelphia was commended because they remained faithful and kept God's word, even though a lot of the people around them had different beliefs than they did. Do you think that the same thing could be said about you? What parts of your life might need to change in order to be true to God's word in every part of your life?

Let everyone answer on their own.

Discussion

If our focus is not on God, we may not always recognize the doors that God opens for us. Can you think of a time when you may have missed a door that God had opened? Sometimes serving and following Christ can be scary – it might seem like other options are easier. Can you think of a time when you were perhaps unwilling to go through a door that God had opened? Brainstorm some ways that you can encourage each other as a group to look for open doors, and to boldly follow Christ wherever he leads.

The town of Philadelphia was plagued with frequent earthquakes. The people were constantly fleeing the city to avoid damage from these natural disasters. Then they would go back to their city and rebuild, but eventually another earthquake would come, and the cycle of destruction and rebuilding would continue. If you feel led, this could lead into a discussion and prayer time for Haiti, and the victims of the recent earthquake.

Question 4

What promises did God give to these believers?

They will become pillars in the temple of God, which means they will immovable by the things that are not of God. They will be forever secure in Christ and never have to be afraid.

Once we accept God's free gift of salvation, we belong to Christ! We can have the peace of knowing that our eternal fate is secured and that we too can be immovable pillars in the temple of God! Have some sharing time about what these promises mean to you.

Wrap Up

The church in Philadelphia was known as the "church of brotherly love." Because their focus was on Christ, God created opportunities for witnessing, outreach, and missions. The more we remain focused on Christ, the more doors we will see opened. As you close in prayer, ask God for the strength to keep His word and remain true to His name, just like the church in Philadelphia. Pray for the ability and wisdom to recognize the doors that God opens, and for the spiritual maturity to be ready at any moment to jump through the door and serve. Thank God for His promises and for the hope He has given us all for eternity!