

Read: Revelation 3:7-22

'Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.'

Revelation 3:22

I am not ashamed to say that I absolutely love a plan! Furthermore, this is even more joyous when it includes a list. However, I have come to learn that in everyday life things do not always follow the intended plan. Yes, this is frustrating but some might say that it helps to build resilience. Ultimately, we learn that even when things do not go to plan, we should still plough on and never give up.

In today's passage we read of Christ's message to the church in Philadelphia and learn they have *'kept my word and have not denied my name'* (v.8). Crucially, they have done these things even though they have *'little power'* (v.8) and regardless of the fact that there are some who spoke against them. In brief, the people of the church in Philadelphia have remained faithful to Christ and their belief in Him regardless of their small numbers or the evil words they hear from others. No matter how challenging this might have been for them, they have not given up on proclaiming Christ as Lord. In turn their faithfulness to Him is rewarded by His promise to keep them from *'the hour of trial'* (v.10) and they are reminded that the door to eternal life will be opened for them. In contrast, the church of Laodicea is *'lukewarm'* (v.16), spoiled by their comfortable existence (v.17) they have called themselves Christians without really living it out. Those receiving this letter think that they have accepted Christ but He is still outside knocking to be allowed into their hearts (v.20).

On our own pilgrim journeys and in the life of our churches, there are times when we may be few in number, deflated by negative comments or exhausted by the toils of daily life. Indeed, we all experience times when things simply do not go to plan. However, we are to be assured always of the promise of Christ and remain faithful to His command. At other times we grow comfortable and forget about our need of Jesus as the Laodiceans did. As we await and prepare for our celebration of the Incarnation, ensure the door of your heart is fully open so that Christ can enter and be your guide and tune your ears to the Spirit. And, then, when things are not going to plan, worry not and be faithful to Christ because you are a part of God's plan and there is no greater path for us to tread.

Sam Walmsley, Ordinand.