

2021 Community Groups

WEEKLY GUIDE

November 7

Pastor Aaron continues to teach through Revelation as he takes us through week 6 of the "7 Churches" series. Again, what an amazing reminder that the book of Revelation is all about Jesus. If you are blown away by what God is revealing to you through this teaching, now is the time for a big "AMEN" and "THANK YOU JESUS".

In week 6 the Church of Philadelphia was covered. Just as the other five churches they all represent many churches that have existed in similar conditions throughout history. Pastor Aaron challenged us with a few great questions, on which to reflect:

- Does anyone feel unsettled in this season?
- Do you feel like the intensity of life has ramped up?
- Do you feel a little opposition in this world as we live out our faith?
- Do you feel insecure: Relationally, emotionally, financially, spiritually?

If you answered yes to any of these (and you likely did), turn to 1 Peter 5:7 "Cast all your anxiety on Him because he cares for you." (NIV)

Community Prayer:

Eternal Father, this is the day that you have made and we will rejoice and be glad in it. As we experience ups and downs in our lives we will give you praise not only in the ups but also in the downs because you are with us in every situation we encounter. As we unpack the Church of Philadelphia give us insight into what we should learn and empower us by your Spirit to grow in our faith and our love for you; in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Opening Questions

1. Where in your life do you feel unsettled in this season?
 - a. Relationally? Emotionally? Financially? Physically? Spiritually?

EXPLORATION

Read the passages below...what can you learn about what it means to follow Jesus from these passages? (Have someone read from their bible)

Philadelphia (Quick Refresher Details)

- Was established on ancient frontier land as an outpost to spread Greek culture/language/worldview/way of life.
- Located on the edge of an active volcano; the area had rich fertile soil, and oh yea, earthquakes.



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- 50 years before AD 17 an earthquake leveled the city; Roman Emperor Tiberias extended kindness and generosity: got rid of taxes for a while, gave money to rebuild and renamed the city Neocaesrea "The new city of Caesar."
- There were so many temples in the city that other cities nicknamed it Philadelphia 'Little Athens'
- Prominent citizens and others were honored by having their names written on pillars in the temples.
- Located on one of the greatest highways of the ancient world connecting Europe to the East: Strategically located for trade.
- Philadelphia is one of two churches that Jesus has nothing to correct in them...that's amazing!
 - This doesn't mean that they were perfect...but they were growing in obedience and repenting as needed.

Revelation 3:7

2. What is your definition of Jesus being Holy and True?
 - a. How is His Holiness and Truth revealed in your life?
3. What door (opportunity) has Jesus opened in your life in the last year that no one was able to close?
4. What door (opportunity) has Jesus closed in your life in the last year that no one could open?

Isaiah 22:22

5. Explain how this verse is talking about how Jesus is a door of Salvation?

If you have never gone through this door, today is your opportunity. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to communitygroups@hillsidechurches.com and one of our pastors would love to talk with you.

Revelation 3:8

6. What door of opportunity has Jesus opened to you but you have yet to go through it? Why? What is needed for you to step out in faith?

"The 'open door' is the door of opportunity to tell others about 'the gospel of the open door'." - Darrell W. Johnson 'Discipleship on the Edge'



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7. Your 'little strength' gets us started but whose strength gets us to the finish line? Why?
8. Why is keeping God's Word so important in your life?
9. How can you deny God's name, sometimes even without knowing it? Can you recognize those subtle denials in your life?

While Christian persecution takes many forms, it is defined as any hostility experienced as a result of identification with Jesus Christ.

- In the last year, there has been: 4,761 Christians killed for their faith; 4,488 churches and Christian buildings attacked.
- 4,277 believers detained, arrested, sentenced or imprisoned.

This is a call to look at the open door, talk about the open door, focus on the open door...but we so often obsess about the opposition, talk about the opposition, focus on the opposition; no wonder we are tired, afraid, overwhelmed, and pessimistic.

Revelation 3:9

10. How many people have you shared your story with over the years? How many have made fun of you for your relationship with Jesus? What does this verse say about you staying the course, not giving up on them, and knowing that God is able to do more than we can ask or think?

Revelation 3:10

11. What comes to mind when you hear the words 'perseverance' and 'patience' as a Follower of Jesus?
12. Explain what the word 'test' means to you in this verse?
 - a. How do you feel knowing that Jesus will protect you during this time period?
 - b. How does this motivate you to keep talking about the 'open door' with friends and family members?

Revelation 3:11

13. What is this verse directing you to do as you wait on Jesus to return?

Revelation 3:12

14. How do we become victorious in the sense it is used in this passage?

Revelation 3:13



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When I was growing up my parents would use the phrase “Going in one ear and out the other” to prove that I had not been listening to them.

15. Jesus used the term (“He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches”) with all the churches in Revelation. What is this saying to you about the importance of hearing, understanding, and doing?

THE TAKEAWAY

- Persecution is real...it happens all over the world...and it takes many forms.
- Don't misunderstand what real persecution is: It is any hostility experienced as a result of our willingness to identify ourselves as a Christ follower.
- If you have not responded to Jesus 'invitation' of an open door...then today is your day.
- Stand strong and persevere no matter what, by looking to Jesus.
- Never underestimate the possibility of an open door, just as you are facing opposition.

Parents' Corner

This week the topic of persecution came to the forefront again, and the quality of perseverance is important to have during difficult times. Since we've already covered perseverance in our faith, this week the parent questions will focus specifically on perseverance as a character trait in general.

Read James 1:2-5 to set up the background for how perseverance relates to parenting.

16. What is the link between trials and perseverance?
17. What is the hope for those who persevere?
18. Why do you think we're told to pray for wisdom in the context of going through trials?

Now relate this to your parenting...

19. How can we model perseverance as parents?
20. How can we help our kids see past immediate trials to the character traits that God is developing in them in the long-term?

Usually our kids (and us) go into panic or stress mode when trials come. The goal for spiritual growth, however, is to develop new habits that reflect trust in God's sovereignty and goodness, and to bring our feelings and actions under the control of God's Spirit and His Word.



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21. What are some practical ways that we can help our kids develop new habits of trusting in God and looking to him when trials come our way? (Discuss and come up with 2-3)

Verse to memorize or write down and meditate on this week:

Phil. 4:6-7 (NIV)

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

PRAYER REQUESTS
