

DEALING WITH THE DOOR OF ADVERSITY

Pastor Jerry Lewis

Summary: This powerful message confronts us with a profound truth: God opens doors of opportunity, but those doors often come with adversity attached. Drawing from 1 Corinthians 16:9, we discover that the Apostle Paul experienced a great and effective door opening for ministry in Ephesus, yet he immediately acknowledged the presence of many adversaries. This paradox challenges our modern expectations that divine opportunities should be easy and obstacle-free. The sermon unpacks the critical importance of spiritual discernment in decision-making, reminding us that everything hinges on proper choices. Using the imagery of scales, blindfolds, and swords from the justice system, we're taught that God weighs and examines the motives and intents of our hearts. The Hebrew concept of 'weighing' means to suspend something on a scale to determine its value, while 'examining' involves testing quality through heat and adversity. This means God actually uses adversity to position us correctly. The message urgently calls us to stop making excuses about waiting for doors to open when the door has been open for over 2,000 years through Christ. Our greatest adversary isn't always the devil—sometimes it's our own self-limitation, wrong mindset, bad attitude, or poor time management. The sobering reality is that minutes matter, and while we're going through religious motions, people are stepping into eternity. We're challenged to examine whether we're truly ready to walk through the doors God has already opened, or if we're spiritually, emotionally, and mentally unprepared for the opportunities before us.

Scripture Reference:

- 1 Corinthians 16:9 (King James and Amplified versions) - "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries"
- Proverbs 16:1-3 - God weighs and examines the motives and intents of the heart
- Galatians 5:7,9 - "You did run well; who did hinder you?" and "A little leaven leavens the whole lump"
- 1 Corinthians 9:24 - Running the race to obtain the prize
- Romans 8:14 - "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God"

Key Points:

- Great opportunities from God are accompanied by adversity and opposition
- Everything hinges upon proper decision-making guided by the Holy Spirit
- God weighs and examines the motives and intents of our hearts before blessing our plans
- Believers must develop discernment to properly evaluate opportunities and make right decisions
- Opposition is anything that resists your present position and attempts to keep you from going the distance
- Often our greatest adversary is not the devil but self-destruction, self-limitation, and seeking acceptance from people
- Wrong interpretation, wrong discernment, wrong mindset, and bad attitudes can cause us to miss God's opportunities
- The door of opportunity has been open for 2,000 years - we must stop making excuses and get spiritually ready
- Minutes matter because time cannot be recovered - we must seize the moment and stop wasting time
- The church must move beyond popularity to conviction, repentance, and power
- Two essentials for ministry effectiveness: know your Bible and pray a lot
- We must stop tolerating what God wants changed in our lives

Quotes:

“Everything hinges upon proper decision making. Right decisions position us. Likewise, wrong decisions can and will get us out of proper position and out of proper alignment.”

“When you get close to God, your worship goes to another level. Your lifestyle goes to another level.”

“If you don't get yourself under control, you'll be the one that'll sabotage your journey. The devil is not going to steal your journey. He's hoping that if he keeps putting enough pressure on you, that you'll bail, that you'll cave, that you'll give in.”

“When God presents a great opportunity, it triggers opposition. When you're on the verge of that breakthrough, it triggers opposition because the enemy is a spiritual being and he sees your advancement.”

“The door has been open for over 2,000 years. We're saying we want a door open because it's an excuse not to do anything. What good is an open door if we're not ready to walk through it?”

5-Day Devotional: Processing Spiritual Doors

Day 1: Weighing Every Opportunity

Reading: Proverbs 16:1-3

Devotional: God examines the motives and intentions of our hearts, weighing them like precious metal on a scale. Before pursuing any opportunity, we must submit our plans to Him for divine inspection. Not every good thing is a God thing. The Lord uses adversity as a refining fire to test the quality of our decisions and reveal what truly drives us. When we commit our works to Him and respond to His will and guidance, our plans will succeed. Today, pause before making decisions. Ask yourself: Am I being led by the Spirit, or am I being driven by convenience? Let God's Word be the standard by which you measure every choice, ensuring your steps align with His purpose for your life.

Day 2: Running the Race with Endurance

Reading: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Devotional: We are in a spiritual race, not competing against one another but striving to obtain the prize God has set before us. The word "obtain" means to seize eagerly, to lay hold of with your mind—to get it in your head that nothing will stop you from finishing well. Victory requires self-control and discipline, bringing your body into subjection so you won't be disqualified. The enemy watches your body language, looking for signs of defeat. When he sees your determination, your faith kicks in. You think like a winner, talk like a winner, and act like a winner. Today, examine your spiritual stamina. Are you running with purpose, or have you grown weary? Renew your commitment to press forward, knowing your season of breakthrough is coming.

Day 3: Great Doors and Many Adversaries

Reading: 1 Corinthians 16:9

Devotional: When God opens a great door of opportunity, adversity often accompanies it. Paul recognized this pattern: wide doors for effective service came with many adversaries. Opposition is any resistance that tries to keep you from going the distance. The enemy is relentless, hoping that enough pressure will make you quit. But when you've properly evaluated the situation through prayer and God's Word, and the Holy Ghost is pushing you forward, nothing formed against you will prosper. The presence of attack doesn't mean you missed God—it often confirms you're exactly where He wants you. Today, if you're facing resistance while pursuing God's call, don't retreat. That adversity is proof you're a threat to the enemy's plans. Stand firm, knowing God will work everything for your good.

Day 4: Minutes Matter—Redeeming the Time

Reading: Ephesians 5:15-17

Devotional: Time is the one resource you cannot recover. Minutes matter because the door of salvation has been open for over two thousand years, yet people continue stepping into eternity unprepared. We cannot afford to waste time tolerating what God wants changed or ignoring what He's calling us to do. While we go through religious motions, souls are being lost. The urgency of the hour demands that we seize every moment for Kingdom purposes. Are you spiritually ready to walk through the doors God has opened? Have you dealt with wrong mindsets, bad attitudes, and low self-esteem that keep you from fulfilling your calling? Today, repent for wasted time and commit to making full use of every moment. Know your Bible. Pray—pray a lot. Let your life count for eternity.

Day 5: Dealing with Your Greatest Adversary

Reading: Romans 7:15-25

Devotional: Sometimes our greatest adversary isn't the devil—it's ourselves. We can be guilty of self-destruction, self-limitation, and seeking acceptance from people rather than God. We tolerate what we should change and ignore what God wants transformed. The first adversary that must be dealt with is you. What good is an open door if you're not spiritually, emotionally, and mentally ready to walk through it? Wrong interpretation, wrong discernment, wrong mindset, and wrong attitude can cause you to miss God completely. But when you surrender fully to the Holy Spirit, He empowers you to overcome every internal obstacle. Today, ask God to reveal any area where you're hindering your own progress. Confess your need for His transforming power. Remember, the enemy is afraid of you—afraid of your calling, your anointing, and the potential God has placed within you. Rise up and become who He created you to be.