

## The Little Church That Could

### I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. **Slide2 Perspectives Class:** We are hosting a **15-week Perspectives course**. Thurs, Aug 10 from 6:00-9:00pm (after 6:30-9). Perspectives isn't a course solely about world missions. It's a study program rooted in Scripture, clarifying each believer's remarkable opportunity to join God in His global purpose. To register please visit our website or app.
- B. **Slide3 Community Groups:** Starting up in September **and we could use some more facilitators and hosts**. **If you are interested in leading a group, please complete a ministry application and sign up for the leader training.** It will be on Sundays during 3rd service (noon to 1pm) for the month of August, and childcare is provided. Please email Andrew Paulsen for more information.
- C. **Slide4 GriefShare:** If you have lost a loved one, join a caring group of people who will walk alongside you through one of life's most difficult experiences. **We begin with a session specifically for "Loss of a Spouse" Aug. 13th and continue with general sessions Aug.20th through Nov. 12th.** Register at [calvarymurrieta.com/griefshare](http://calvarymurrieta.com/griefshare)
- D. **Slide5 Expositors Collective:** Join Kelly & I for Expositors Collective on **Aug 11-12 at Reliance Church**. This is **an interactive training seminar** for those who desire to grow as **teachers of the Word**. You will hear insightful lectures, participate in Q&A panels, and more. There is a **\$99.00 fee** to attend this **2-day seminar**. Go to our website for more information.
- E. **Slide6 Prayer:** Lord help us to listen tonight, **not to a systematic treatise but to a love letter**. Help us to hear John's symbolic language. May the scene build in our imagination. May it evoke imagery. **Paint on the walls of our minds, pictures.**
1. **He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. & He who has eyes, let us see what the Spirit shows to the churches.**

### II. Slide7 Intro: The Little Church That Could

- A. I grew up on children's book, *The Little Engine That Could*. The story is used to teach children the value of **optimism** and **hard work**. Based on a 2007 online poll, the National Education Association listed the book as one of its "*Teachers' Top 100 Books for Children*". **Slide8**
1. Our Title: *The Little Church That Could*, but not by chanting, *I think I can! I think I can! I think I can!* Their chant was *I know HE can, I know HE can ...*
- B. **Slide9 Philadelphia** - Brotherly love. Our 6th church. Jesus had a very special love for this church.
- C. **Philadelphia** was a place in a **strategic spot** on the main route of the Imperial post from Rome to the East, **thus** it was called *Gateway to the East*.
1. It was also called *Little Athens* cuz of the **many temples** in the city.
  2. The principle deity was **Dionysus**, the god of wine. This town of Philadelphia sat on a **fertile volcanic plain** suited for **growing grapes & producing wine**, both of which the city was well-known for.
    - a) So Philadelphia was an agricultural success, prospered commercially.
  3. This church had **tremendous opportunity**.
- D. One **unfavorable** aspect about the city was its **earthquakes**.
1. A geological fault runs right beneath it. In **17ad** it destroyed the city (along w/Sardis & 10 other cities) followed by a series of **intermittent shocks**.
  2. Many that fled the city ended up staying out in what was called *the burnt land*.  
Afraid to go back in (buildings unstable) *Like Haiti 2010 after their earthquake*.
- E. **Slide10 Outline**: 1. *Jesus opens doors*. 2. *Jesus calls us to walk through open doors*. 3. *Jesus gives strength for the task at hand*. 4. *Open doors often lead to persecution*.  
*Conclusion: The great news is, we have a new name, and we're going to live in a new city that cannot be shaken.*
- F. **Slide11 Read All** - Rev.3:7-13.

### III. Slide12a [1] **JESUS OPENS DOORS**

- A. msg, *I see what you've done. Now see what I've done*. (8a)

- B. *JESUS OPENS DOORS* Because ... He is the holy One, the True One, & the Sovereign One.
- C. The Holy One - Jesus is Holy in: *His character, in His words, in His actions, in His purposes*. He is uniquely set-apart from anything else.
- D. Slide12b The True One - [2 Gk words truth: True & not false. True & not fake, used here]
1. He is Genuine. He's the Original. He's not a copy.
  2. He's the Authentic God, not a *manufactured* one. [remember there were 100's of gods in their culture, in their day]
    - a) 1 Cor. 8:5,6 *For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth - as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords" - 6 yet for us there is **one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.***
- E. Slide12c Who has the key of David (Sovereign) - The right to rule. *A metaphorical expression indicating complete control over the royal household.* (LKGNT)
1. It's all about **Him. His presence.** It all starts with **Jesus.**
- F. Slide12d Who opens & no one will shut - Indicates Christ's authority to *admit or exclude*
- G. Jesus has the authority to open & shut doors, lock and unlock doors.
1. From Is.22:22 *The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; So he shall open, & no one shall shut; & he shall shut, & no one shall open.*
  2. This may indicate that the believers in Philadelphia had been **excommunicated** from the local synagogue. The *synagogue of Satan* reference in the following verse, contrasted with the believer's establishment as *permanent fixtures in the temple of God* (12) supports this conclusion.

#### IV. Slide13a [2] **JESUS CALLS US TO WALK THROUGH OPEN DOORS**

- A. Doors are our **privilege** and our **responsibility**.
- B. In the NT *open door* = *opportunity for ministry*.

1. Acts 14:27 *Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that **He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.***

2. 2 Cor.2:12 *Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and **a door was opened to me by the Lord.***

C. Slide13b With Doors *timing* is important.

1. Ever try to walk through a door before it was fully open?

D. With Doors *opening* is important.

1. Ever see what happens to a dog when the doggy door isn't open? (sliding board). After a couple hurt noses, they learn to nudge 1st & not just plow through it.

E. Slide13c The one thing to remember about Open Doors is to *WALK THROUGH THEM!*

1. What doors have been open to **you** recently? - Did you walk through them? What doors have you **missed**? Did **someone else** walk through them? Are you truly **waiting** on the Lord, or **procrastinating**?

F. When God opens a door to you, Nobody can shut it ... **BUT you can Ignore it. Or, Neglect it.** [*examples in Scripture?* Moses/speak, Jonah/to evangelize his enemies]

1. \* Having the faith to walk through those open doors & keep walking is not about *plans, charts, graphs, marketing, or self-confidence*. It's about **faith in Him!** It's about keeping **His Word**. It's about **a little power**. The power to take **one small step at a time, w/our eyes fully focused on Him.** Swindoll

## V. Slide14a [3] **JESUS GIVES STRENGTH FOR THE TASK AT HAND**

A. (Key) I know that you have but **little power** - (no rebuke to this church).

B. **Little power** but they were given an open door by the Lord ... a door of service. The Lord urged them to take advantage of it.

1. I remember *a very little girl trying to keep the door open for me at Starbucks*. Very sweet, but the door weighed more than her. And though she tried really hard to keep it open ... it was taking her with it.

2. Slide14b Remember, strength itself is *not the problem*. Looking for strength in the wrong places *is a problem*. [it's not that *poor & weak* is more spiritual]
- C. Lack of Strength - apparently *1st church of Philadelphia* wasn't a *large* church, *but* it was *faithful* one. *Small* but mighty. Small & maybe of *little importance*.
  1. They were true to His word & unafraid to bear **His** Name.
  2. It *isn't* the **size** or the **strength** of the church that determines its ministry, *but* **faith** in *the call & command* of the Lord.
  3. *His Commands are His Enablements*. warren wiersbe
  4. Slide14c *My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness*. 2 Cor.12:9

## VI. Slide15a [4] OPEN DOORS OFTEN LEAD TO PERSECUTION

- A. Ok Jesus opens doors *but* what's on the other side of the Door? [expect obstacles]
  1. Sometimes we can see through doors (eg. our office doors have windows in them) we can see what's on the other side *then* we walk thru.
  2. *But most times* we can't see through windows which involves **risk**.
  3. Their opposition was from the Jews - excommunicated from the synagogues. *Ours will be different right?*
- B. Slide15b Philadelphia had both **Opportunities** *but also* **Obstacles**.
  1. Like Paul in 1 Cor. 16:9 *For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries*. (NLT) *There is a wide-open door for a great work here, although many oppose me*.
- C. Slide15c Remember, *Unbelief sees the Obstacles, Faith sees the Opportunities*.

## VII. Slide16a [Conclusion] THE GREAT NEWS IS, WE HAVE A NEW NAME, AND WE'RE GOING TO LIVE IN A NEW CITY THAT CANNOT BE SHAKEN

1. He will **Avenge** them of their enemies (9b)
  - a) *If we take care of God's work, He'll take care of our battles*.

## 2. Slide16b He will Accommodate them (10,11)

a) It's **not** a local Tribulation, **but World-Wide!** (*whole world*). *Those who dwell on earth* (**not** just in Asia Minor). Preterist view - Latin *praeter*, *something past*.

(1) 1 Thes.5:9 ***For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

b) **Hold fast** - **God** has placed all confidence in **Jesus Christ** to **save us**, **now He wants us** to place **our all** in confidence in **Him**.

(1) So we **hold fast** in our **faith**. In our **trust** in Him. In our **believing** He'll pull us through. In our **attachment** to Jesus. In enjoying His **presence**.

c) **I am coming soon**/taXEEs (tachometer/measure engine speed. **So speed not length of time**). [I am coming *suddenly* or *quickly*]

(1) While Christ uses this phrase with some of the other churches to **indicate judgment**, **here** it refers to **deliverance!** :)

## 3. Slide16c He will Award them (12)

a) **Pillar** - The symbolism here would be very meaningful to people who lived in constant danger of *earthquakes*. Because **pillars** are known for the *stability*. [no need to go out of a city that nothing could destroy]

b) **Names** - Ancient cities often honored great leaders by erecting pillars w/their names on them.

## B. Slide17 3 Names - *I will write on him 3 tattoos?* (a means of identification & belonging)

1. **Interesting:** *The citizens of Philadelphia expressed warm gratitude on **inscriptions** and **coins** to the emperor **Tiberius** for his assistance in the process of rebuilding their city, and they later took the name **NeoCaesarea**.*

2. **YHWH. New Jerusalem. Jesus' New Name (?)**.

a) *God's name. His City's name. His Son's name.*

b) Just as **the high priest** wore God's name on their heads (turbans). *Holiness to the Lord.*

c) **Also** referring to *proof of ownership*. [may also be in contrast to *the mark of the beast*]

C. **END:** We are much like the Philadelphia church *in that* God has set many **open doors** before **us**.

1. If He **Opens** the door we must **Work**; if He **Shuts** the Doors we must **Wait**.
2. We must **see** the Opportunities **& not** the Obstacles.

D. Keywords: Philadelphia, little power, open & shut.