

THRESHOLDS

2. OPPORTUNITY

HVC, Feb. 9, 2020

Revelation 1, 4-5a, 9-11, 3:7-13 (NIV)

What is the greatest opportunity that ever came your way? What did you do with it?

Revelation 1:4 (NIV)

John,

To the seven churches in the province of Asia:

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne,

How do you think you would have felt if you had been in one of those 7 churches and read this?

Would you like it if Jesus wrote a letter specifically to HVC ... and it was public? Why/not?

Revelation 1:9-10 (NIV)

I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,

Why are “*suffering and kingdom and patient endurance*” ... “*ours in Jesus*”? Do you think those things characterize our lives today? Why/not?

What do you think “*in the Spirit*” means? Is this a normal, or an exceptional, experience or reality for believers in Christ? Why/not?

Have you ever had an “exceptional” or “special” experience (maybe not this extraordinary!) of God while worshiping or praying?

How would you react if you heard a loud, trumpet-like voice right behind you? How would you feel?

Revelation 1:11-12 (NIV)

...which said: “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.” I turned around to SEE the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands...

What might John be feeling and thinking here?

What difference would it make if you viewed individual, local churches as golden lampstands? Why do we not view the church that way?

In what way(s) have you seen the church function as “light” in the world?

Revelation 1:12–18 (NIV)

I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

What struck you the most as this was read? How did it make you feel?

What do the various images suggest about Christ, do you think?

What two or three things about Christ are most necessary for you at this time?

Revelation 3:7-8 (NIV)

“To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

*These are the words of him who is **holy** and **true**, who holds the **key** of David. What he **opens** no one can **shut**, and what he **shuts** no one can **open**. I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open **door** that **no one can***

***shut**. I know that you have **little strength**, yet you have **kept my word** and have **not denied my name**.*

What does it mean for you that Christ is “*holy and true*”?

What questions does Christ holding a key bring to your mind?

What does it mean to “*deny Christ’s name*”? When have you “*kept his word*” in the face of opposition or suffering of some kind?

Revelation 3:9 (NIV)

*I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who **claim** to be Jews though they are **not**, but are liars — I will make them come and fall down at your feet and **acknowledge** that I have loved you.*

Have you ever had the experience of being “locked out” or shunned or excluded from a group?

Has that ever happened because of your “*testimony of Jesus*” (v.9)?

Who might these “enemies” be for you today?

Revelation 3:10 (NIV)

*Since **you have kept** my command to endure patiently, **I will also keep you** from the **hour of trial** that is **going to come** on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.*

To what “*hour of trial*” do you think he is referring?

Using your imagination, what might such an hour look like for us today? What would constitute an “*hour of trial*” for you?

What does the prospect of such a trial feel like for you?

How does the thought of Christ “*keeping you*” help you?

Revelation 3:11 (NIV)

I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.

This was written over 2,000 years ago. Is it still applicable today? What would you say to someone who said Christ did not come “soon”?

Revelation 3:12 (NIV)

The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my **God** and the name of the **City** of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name.

Where do you tend to be unstable in your life? What would it look like if God made you a “pillar” instead?!

How do you feel about the fact that God “*writes*” on you (as a pillar)?

the name of God?

the name of the city of New Jerusalem?

God’s new name [for you]?

What does the prospect of a New Jerusalem “*coming down out of heaven*” bring to you mind?

What do you think that will be like? What would you most like it to be like?!

On a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), how much ... do you believe this will really happen? are you looking forward to this event?

Revelation 3:13 (NIV)

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Do you feel like you, personally, have “*heard what the Spirit is saying*” to the church in Philadelphia? Did God speak to you at all during this message about an open door in your own life? What do you think He might be saying to you?

Talk about open doors that you think might be in front of HVC at this time. THANK God for those doors in prayer and ask God to lead our church in the coming months.