

Church is Changing

Week 6

Doors revealed.

Ask Marjo about her experience of constructing a bible passage church.

When you think about doors in churches quite often we think of them as closed. In the first week of this series I told you about a road trip that I took and looked and photographed little country Churches. Over the 40 churches I viewed over those two days only 2 had open doors.

While it is logical as it was mid week, I think it says something about the state of our faith in rural NSW. Our faith is often closed off to people. That may sound a bit harsh but the fact that doors are closed, buildings sold, denominations pulling out of rural areas, I think is indicative of the lack of missional attachment to our rural communities.

As I have reflected on this over a couple of years I have thought of the concept of doors being opened in God's word.

Strangely enough, I went to the book of Revelation and today we will look at three verses from there.

Listen to this:

Rev 3:8 "I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

Ok, those who know your passages from scripture realise this comes from one of the letters to the seven churches. The church at Philadelphia (In Turkey not the USA)

A couple of points for us here:

1. **God knows our work.** Just as God knew theirs.
2. **God sets an open door.** I find this interesting – God opens doors – not us. Too often we are trying to make things happen when we should be letting God set agenda and open the doors.
3. It is stated that **the church is of little power,** influence and control of the situation. (Hey don't we identify with this– we have no control over the regulations we have to keep and adhere to!!)
4. Stay faithful. **yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.**

What a great reputation to have. Sometimes we think we need to be growing numerically or doing amazing things. It appears that staying faithful is more of a priority.

OK, that was the first passage. Listen to this one.

Rev 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

OK we will do the same thing and unpack it a bit. Ok what is this about? Well it sounds great but in actual fact it comes from the middle of the Letter to the Laodiceans.

Rev 3:16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.

Rev 3:17 For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

Ok now the verse we read first is God saying "I'm here for you I'll be part of who you are and what you do. But you need to recognise, you ain't doing as well as you think. "

Oh this is a great verse. WE can get back to God, we can stop being lukewarm or off the boil and let Him in to set the way for us. Yep, Yep, Yep.

It is not about evangelism, it is about discipleship – OUR DISCIPLESHIP. The passage talks about an open door and yes the door is open for people to come to Jesus yet here it is about a door being open for us to return to a right relationship with God. The other interesting thing is it is talking about a corporate coming back to God, it implies individuals will also return but it is addressed to a church body. All of us.

Does that mean we need to make a corporate decision to return. Probably yes. It is about all of us getting back to God, letting Him call the shots and opening doors for us.

And again, who opens the door? God.

Ok, what's next?

Rev 4:1 After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."

Different scenario. The letters to the churches have finished, actually straight after the letters to churches and their evaluations and warnings, this is about the future. A door open in heaven.

After this verse is this awesome image of heaven. Then there is the rest of Revelation which can be scary, exciting, powerful, humbling etc etc etc.

But the image of the door being open for us to see. We have talked about church for 6 weeks. Yet, this is the image we need. And what it is all about – heaven, being with God and His people. Awesome.

I find it funny. Some of the people I don't get on with will be in heaven, some people I don't agree with will be in heaven, some people who are weird will be in heaven – and I don't care as long as I am with them. We won't have issues when we get there.

What is being said to us about church? Come up here and have a look. Come up here and see what is going to take place, come and look and put our church into eternal perspective.