

Open And Shut Doors

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To The Philadelphia church, Jesus said, “I have set before you an open door and no one shuts it” (Rev. 3:8.) Jesus was claiming to them to be the promised Messiah and that he had the right to include or exclude. He had let the Philadelphians into the kingdom and not all the Jews in the world could shut that door and stop it. Open doors speak of easy access to something and it is through Jesus Christ that folks enter the church. “The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47) and all the forces of Satan combined can’t stop the one who would come to Christ to have his sins washed away.

But Jesus also shuts doors (Rev. 3:7.) The Lord said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me” (John 14:6.) Only by coming to Jesus can one hope to find the Father and be saved. Only by coming to Christ may one have hope of eternal life. The Jews in Philadelphia were slanderous, “of the synagogue of Satan”, and liars according to verse 3:9. The door of salvation was closed to them and all the pleading of their descent from Abraham was not going to open that door of blessing. As Jesus once told the Jews of his day, “You will not come to me that you might have life” (John 5:40.) Their law, ceremonies, and rituals could not open that door. After all, Jesus had the keys of David.

There is a lesson to be learned just here. Read John 14:6 again. Jesus is the “way” and the “truth.” There are not multiple ways or truths just as there aren’t multiple “lives.” Yet today people seek Jesus through their own means rather than listening to and following what He said. The Lord says, “He who believes and is baptized shall be saved. He who does not believe shall be condemned” (Mark 16:16.) Some stress belief and some stress baptism but the truth is that both are necessary for salvation and the one who follows what Jesus said knows the truth and will find an open door to salvation. And all the religious dogmas, denominational creeds, and religious threats can’t shut that door.

On the other hand, those who change what Jesus said find themselves staring at a closed door. All the cries of parental beliefs, popular religion, and feel good teaching can’t open it. Today’s Christianity is very belief oriented and everyone’s a Christian as long as they believe in Christ. But that’s not what Jesus said. He spoke of “belief” and “baptism” to be saved. That’s very simple and folks have to have help to misunderstand that. Some will argue, in an attempt to discredit baptism, that in the second phrase Jesus didn’t say “he who is not baptized will be condemned” but that won’t due either. Baptism is useless without faith. Or put another way, without faith in Christ motivating a person, that person is not going to listen to anything else Jesus said. That’s why there is no mention of baptism in the second phrase. Baptism is part of the obedience of faith. It is not a work of man to do what the Lord says is it?

This may be quite blunt, but we do no one any favors by not pointing out what the Lord says. Look at how Jesus described those Jews - He said they were Jews but were not. That’s pretty blunt but no less true today. We don’t show the Jews any kindness but not telling them about their spiritual condition. They are without Christ and therefore without a High Priest. They are separated from the Lord and apart from him there is no hope. But the same is true of Christians today isn’t it? Of how many could the Lord say that “they say they are Christians but are not?” How many seek forgiveness through a creed rather than the revealed word of God? Until we have the faith to follow Jesus in all he said, our faith is lacking. That goes for every person in the church or out of it. Jesus set an open door in front of the Philadelphians and they walked in. Will folks do the same today?