

First Baptist Church of Augusta
Revelation 3:7-13
Opening New Doors: Discovery
September 7, 2008
Stewardship Series

Rev. 3:7-13

*"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens: [8] "I know your works. Look, 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**. [9] I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but are lying--I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. [10] Because you have **kept my word** of patient endurance, **I will keep you** from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. [11] I am coming soon; **hold fast to what you have**, so that no one may seize your crown. [12] If you conquer, I will make you a pillar in the temple of my God; you will never go out of it. I will write on you the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem that comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. [13] Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches."*

There was this church in Philadelphia, not of Pennsylvania, but an ancient city off the Mediterranean. Now this church was not an impressively large church, but it was a faithful, persistent church. *"I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name."* Trouble quite often came its way because it was located on fault lines, so it was prone to frequent earthquakes. But crisis—no matter how intense—did not overcome the church. The people of the church held their ground, remaining faithful and trusting that God would see them through. It was a port city, located just off the Mediterranean, with sea merchants coming and going from all over the ancient Hellenistic world. Therefore the church of Philadelphia was very active in missional involvement. It played a strategic role in the spreading of the gospel.

There is this church in Richmond County, on the border of Columbia County, in the historic town of Augusta. Now this is no insignificant or small church. It has, shall we say, been around. This church has been no stranger to trouble, mostly the same type of trouble that visits many Baptist churches. Yet crisis, no matter how intense, has never overcome this faithful congregation in the CSRA. Like the ancient church of Philadelphia, it, too, is in the center of a strategic hub of activity.

The scripture spoken two thousand years ago thunders its truth in the life of this church today. *"Behold, I have set before you an open door which no one is able to shut."* The time is now, I firmly believe, that God has placed before us an open door. If we dare to enter in, we will discover opportunities and possibilities that will transform our lives, our church, and our world.

The theme of "Opening New Doors" will guide us not only for the next five weeks, as we focus on stewardship, but throughout the year ahead. Opening New Doors is in many ways a theme for life. My life – like yours - has been a series of open and closed doors. Opportunities have come and gone, many of which I walked through, others I faltered, still others I neglected. Doors for me, have both swung open wide and slammed shut. I am and remain grateful to God for the unmerited and undeserved grace that comes my way through open doors.

How about you? How has God opened doors in your life? Was it the acceptance in a choice college? A special love, who became your spouse? Was the open door children to mentor? Or a job that provides? Perhaps, a church to love and serve? Can you see the ways God has opened doors in your life where you have been given a chance, an opportunity?