



feeding ... gathering ... carrying ... leading. (Isaiah 40:11)

August 13, 2014

My brothers and sisters,

It was a pleasure to be with you on Sunday and seek together this message to the church of Philadelphia. When I asked The Lord what He wanted to speak to COSC through this Revelation passage I felt Him say, "Speak about Me, My mission, and My love." I hope to briefly reiterate that again here with some words of practical application.

Philadelphia had been set up as a gateway into the unknown world of Asia Minor in order to spread the Greek language and culture. It was also plagued by great opposition physically through massive earthquakes, unstable politics, as well as spiritually by the "synagogue of Satan." But as Stuart coined on Sunday, where there is great opposition there is even greater opportunity!

It would seem the Philadelphian church knew Christ as one who is Holy and True. For the Church was set apart (holy) as those who believed Christ was more real (true) than the shaky foundations of their current earthy situation. In the midst of such great spiritual opposition they kept the word of God and would not deny the name of Christ. As such, Christ presented them with an open door. This door is not only represented as a door of salvation, but also a great opportunity to spread the gospel of the Kingdom of God. Out of the rubble of ruins would be built a great and unshakable city, the New Jerusalem. Furthermore, out of the ruins of our life, Christ can rise an unshakable pillar!

The exhortations from this letter seems to be:

SEE the open doors. Christ has opened doors for us every day to bring His kingdom to earth. As one example, I have heard it said that the places of brokenness we have overcome in our own lives, provide an open door to minister to others in that same area. Where there was opposition, there is now opportunity! Borrowing from Elisha's prayer in 2 Kings 6:17 may we ask - Lord, open our eyes that we may see the doors open before us. Through Christ's authority as the holder of the key, we are given His authority to bring the good news to a broken world. The door is open, the choice is ours.

KNOW the love of Christ, as it is this great love that spurs on our mission. The "synagogue of Satan" will fight hard to diminish our understanding of His love - to get us to question it and ignore it. But beloved, in the same fellowship with which the Father loves the Son, and the Son loves the Spirit and the Spirit loves the Father, this is the exact same love with which Christ

loves us. "As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you, abide in my love" (John 15:9). So, how do we cultivate knowing this reality? How do we abide?

KEEP the word. The Philadelphian church is exhorted twice for keeping and obeying the word of Christ. John 15:10 reiterates that as we follow His commands we will abide in His love. This is not to say His love is conditional on our obedience, but rather that in our communion with Him we will experience His love more as a reality in our lives. ***We cannot fully operate in the authority of Christ's mission until we submit to the authority of Christ's commands.***

Christ did not condemn their weakness, but exalted their perseverance. As the world crumbles around us, it will require long suffering especially in the areas we are vulnerable. Finally, Jesus draws their attention to the day when their perseverance will ultimately be put to rest, reminding us all that this is temporary. In that day to come our ruins will be made pillars, as we are permanently given the name of our Lord and a home where we can rest forever, in a city whose builder is God.

Until that day, may we hold fast to His love, which spurs on our mission!
In His love,
Monique