

WCCC 2023

Brother Dana Congdon

Keep the word of My patience (3)

We would like to share this morning from Revelation 3, the letter of Jesus to the church in Philadelphia. Philadelphia is a church that received no call to repentance. Philadelphia was shining with the testimony of Jesus. And Philadelphia was also a church that was a threshold to the heavens. So let's read her story.

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write,

'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens": "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."'
Revelations 3:7-13

The church is temporary here on earth. One day it will be all together - every tongue, tribe and nation under the blood of the Lamb as the Lord's precious bride.

These seven churches represent the gathering of God's redeemed in the various cities across the world. And God has provided them to be a testimony of Jesus and to provide that threshold to heaven.

Since the beginning, our God has wanted heaven and earth as one. God's kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. He rules over everything in heaven and He created the earth in order that His Son might rule over all creation.

But we know back in the mystery of time there was a rebellion of Satan and some angels. This unity between earth and heaven was ruptured. This, which God wanted, heaven on earth, was delayed.

Now you understand that heaven and earth are two different realms. Heaven is not spatial, it is spiritual. You understand what I mean. Heaven, where God resides, is not just beyond Arcturus, somewhere in the cosmos. We will be surprised to know that heaven is right in our midst, but unseen by us most of the time.

Now this earth is a creation that is finite until heaven comes down and makes it infinite. This universe was created in that space-time continuum, but heaven is forever and ever.

Although they are two different realms, there are thresholds where earth could meet heaven. God set the garden of Eden to be such an intersection between heaven and earth. Before Adam and Eve sinned, daily in the garden, they walked and talked with God. It was called the days of heaven on earth.

Moses, as he speaks to the children of Israel, says, "one day, if you follow the covenant, you will live as days of heaven on earth." Now you might think your life on earth is good, but if it has that heavenly touch, it is that extra essence of Chinese ingredient.

Unfortunately, we know that Adam and Eve sinned. They lost that precious threshold in the garden. Heaven was sealed off from earth. And mankind lived an earthy life. A two-dimensional life, with a three-dimensional life. Where man created spirit / soul / body now could only live man / soul / body.

But God had better plans. So we find in the Old Testament, intersections where God had His people step across the threshold for a moment and touch heaven. When God appeared to Abraham; when Jacob saw the ladder; when the glory came down on the tabernacle. Heaven was touching earth. There was glory there. A sense of eternity there.

And down through the Old Testament God said, "I want to meet with man. Let me construct a house. I can't dwell there, but it can be a threshold."

Of course in the fullness of time, Jesus came and brought heaven to earth. Can you imagine what it was like when those seeking reality saw this heavenly man? Indeed, He was a man, but there was something transcendent and glorious about this man.

Of course we know when He came with His message, what did He say? "The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent!" And because of Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross and resurrection, we have been brought into the threshold of heaven.

Now we live in the kingdom of the heavens, and we live in the mystery there because we still live on earth. But there is a touch of heaven.

What I want to share, what my burden is for these 3 days is that the church repents that it might be the threshold of heaven. It needs to recover that heavenly atmosphere. The testimony of Jesus needs to be shining from its lampstand to give us an opportunity to touch heaven.

Every time we touch heaven we desire it more. In one sense, I could say for myself that this weekend has been very intoxicating. I found myself crossing that threshold several times at this conference. This is God's mercy to us. I think there are some people here who have perhaps crossed into a deeper threshold than they have ever known before.

One day the church the bride will come down out of heaven to earth and there will be heaven and earth clearly seen. But clearly we still live in a mystery. We want to find, through the gospel, as many of mankind as possible to enter through the threshold and begin to touch heaven.

We can't go into this mystery of the kingdom of heaven, except to make a few extraordinary comments.

John the Baptist and Jesus both preached the same message of the coming of the kingdom of heaven. They said, "repent for the kingdom of God is [eggus](#)". I know I threw in a Greek word eggus. I am sure that Chinese has an exact translation of eggus, but in English there is none. Some of our English translations say "repent for the kingdom of God has come". And some say "repent for the kingdom of God is near".

Eggus. What does it mean? It is a mystery.

The great doctor Robertson, the famous Greek scholar, translated eggus into English this way: "Eggus means the kingdom is near, but not here. Now, but not yet."

So that is why Jesus could walk through this world and some people looked at Jesus and say "I see the King, therefore I see the kingdom". The way every one of us first saw the kingdom was when we saw the King.

As I tried to explain to young people. In the kingdom, first you see the King, then we are the dumbs. So John the disciple said, "I was walking with Jesus one day and suddenly it was unveiled to me. Jesus is the Word of God, come in the flesh. It is heavenly. I am beholding a man and I see the glory of God."

Now many people looked at Jesus and all they saw was a man. But to them that received the gospel and repented they saw Jesus was a King. So we live in this earth today in the kingdom of heaven where it is seen and not seen, it is now but not yet, it is near but not here.

The church is to be such a threshold that people might find heaven. We have an opportunity this week to cross the threshold.

I asked our dear brother preacher Eddie - he never leads the singing, he only preaches. I asked if we could sing "We are marching to Zion". I remember brother T. Austin Sparks. He always commented on this hymn that he loved. He said, "I just wanted to change one word. We need to sing according to the scriptures. We're **standing** in Zion." That comes from Hebrews 12. That is exactly what he is talking about in Hebrews 12:22.

I am sorry I don't know any Chinese whatsoever, but the Greek translation for this is that you **are** in Mount Zion.

You are come now to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

Hebrews 12:22-24

The writer of Hebrews is giving us a sojourn in his book. It starts in Hebrews 3 which some of our brothers have quoted. "Now, brothers, partakers of the heavenly calling, I want you to begin to travel with Jesus the Apostle and High Priest of our faith right to Mount Zion. So he talks about how Jesus the Apostle brought us through the wilderness and into the Promised Land where we found rest.

But then he says "now we must sojourn further". Now the High Priest in heaven can take us further than our salvation. There He is interceding for us, do you see Him? Now by faith, draw near to His throne. He takes us through the outer court, takes us through the first veil into the Holy Place, then invites us with boldness through the sprinkled blood of Jesus to enter into the Holy of Holies with the High Priest. This, he ends with this statement, "Now we have come to Mount Zion".

Now we are still on this earth waiting for the perfect to come, but by faith we live in the assembly of the Living God. We live among the saints. We live with God. We live with Jesus, our mediator. All of these are threshold realities that we see by heavenly vision.

Here we have a large gathering today. And in the temple of the Living God, we know that there are different ones who have gone through different thresholds at this point. There are some dear saints, some teenagers perhaps here this morning, they have been saved through the outer court by the precious blood of the Lamb.

Now we can't explain the mystery of how somebody comes through the threshold of the outside, through that threshold and into the outer court, but thank God they are saved.

There are some, whom John calls "little children". They know their sins are forgiven, they know their Heavenly Father, but they are afraid to go into the Holy Place. The Holy Place is pretty scary. To cross that threshold, there has got to be real consecration.

You know that many Christians stay at the outer court. They thank God for the Lamb slain. They thank God for His precious blood. But that is all they know of their Lord. There are many of those in our churches. That is why the Lord gives us an opportunity like this week. Maybe this is because these are people who are saved, but actually they still live under the sunlight of the world, they like the world, they like being saved in the world. They run out under the curtain, do some business, get scared and run back under the curtain. "Thank God I'm saved!"

Ah, but you made the mistake of coming this week. You hear the Spirit saying "come through the first veil. Present your body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, and come into the Holy Place." And as our dear brothers have already said, many of us have received lampstand-revelation teaching.

And some of us have even been there before the altar of incense with wonderful worship this evening. Once you get into that Holy Place, you start eating the food of God, and the Word of God begins to dwell within you.

This is a wonderful place to be. But we hear "psst...there is another place beyond the second veil. That is where the heavenly vision is. Are you ready to go there?"

"I don't know, let me continue studying the Word of God."

Now who will go into the Holy of Holies? A Christian has to grow to the place where they say like Paul, "I want to lay hold of the One who lay hold of me."

Are you willing to go in to see Him face to face? It is captivating you. Jesus Lord, I am captured by your beauty. That is a Holy of Holies song. There is that desire in your spirit to be one with the Lord above.

Now the church is to be a place for people to go through the first threshold, into the Holy Place, into the Holy of Holies. And it is when we are in the house of God that we are able to hold fast to the things we have, as we wait for the Lord to come.

Philadelphia was in such a place. But before we get into Philadelphia, I want to make one very important point that we will see as we look at Philadelphia.

How do we receive heavenly vision? Some of you are mystics. You close your eyes right now and you see a bright light. "Oh that's God!" But some of you close your eyes and you are a mystic. "Oh it's my breakfast."

We have all kinds of people. There are some people I know here who are saying "I would give anything to see a vision of Jesus."

*O Lord I want to know you
I want to see Your face
I want to know you more*

This is the cry of teenagers' chorus. But it just hasn't happened because they haven't understood something. I am going to say - I am making up a percentage - that 75% of your seeing a heavenly vision comes from the Word of God. So if you are sentimentally singing but you are not touching your Bible...

Now listen. I know it is not fair. John had a first-hand experience of going up the heavenly elevator and seeing the Lamb of God up in heaven. You probably won't go up that elevator.

Paul saw that heavenly vision in the great shekinah glory that struck him blind. Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up and said "I have seen the glory of the Lord!"

Now there are a couple of mystics in Seattle Christian Assembly who have had such an experience. But John, when he wrote the gospel of John, knew that most Christians would not receive such a vision. But he knew how to bring the saints into that vision. So he presented Jesus as - no mistake - the logos of God.

John was confident that if you saw the logos of God, by the Holy Spirit's unveiling, you would see the reality behind it. You know the Word of God is so important, but you have to get beyond the Word of God to the spirit of the Word of God, not just the letter.

I confess to you my sin: I used to be a Baptist pastor. And the Southern Baptists sent me up to New York to where the heathen lived to preach the gospel. There was a sister Baptist church in the Bronx and they asked me to come and preach. A beautiful group of almost all Jamaican, black people.

A brother introduced me and everything. He said, "ok brother, we want you to speak". So I got up to speak, but the saints started singing. So it turns out that before they let any of the preachers preach, they have to sing a song. And it was always the same song: "Break Thou the bread of life, dear Lord to me".

I had already been a pastor, I was ready to be raptured. But as they sang that song, one phrase stood out like the first time when I heard that song although I had sang it many times before:

*Beyond the sacred page
I seek Thee Lord*

Then I realized that there was more than just the Word. There was the Word unveiled of the Lord.

The point is, that Philadelphia was a threshold for people entering the heavenlies because it was a church of the Word of God.

Now I want to quote a little passage from a famous preacher A.W. Tozer. He was a Canadian but a pastor in the American churches in the 20th century. But he was more than a preacher, he was a prophet.

"The inward kernel of truth has the same configuration as the outward shell. The mind can grasp the shell, but only the Spirit of God can lay hold of the internal essence. Our great error has been that we have trusted the shell and believe that we were sound in the faith because we were able to explain the external shape of the truth as found in the letter of the Word. We have forgotten that the essence of spiritual truth cannot come to the one who knows the external shell of truth unless there is first a miraculous operation of the Spirit within the heart."

I must say being saved as a baptist, going to a baptist seminary, all we ever did was study the letter of the Word. And nobody was ever as surprised as I was when I started reading books by Watchman Nee and saw the spirit of the Word. You know, unfortunately, many Christians have crossed the threshold into the outer court, but they only know the external Word of God. They understand the shell, they claim its promises, but they have no idea of the internal meaning.

I remember many years ago I went to a conference. There was a guy up on the stage who wanted to have a time to pray for people's healing. And he wanted to base it on the Word of God, so this is what he said:

“now we are going to pray for people’s healing. We are going to agree together that the Lord is going to heal. Because the Bible says that if any of you two agree, the Lord is going to do it.”

You know what that means? It is almost impossible for Christians to agree. And if by chance any two Christians agree, it is a miracle and God is going to do it.

Brothers and sisters, that is not at all what that scripture means. It means if we sense agreement, it means that God is agreeing with us. But many churches today are trying to hold fast by holding the shell without the reality.

So to hold fast involves seeing the Lord through His precious Word. Let me just read 4 scriptures regarding holding fast to the Word.

by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—
1 Corinthians 15:2

holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ.
Philippians 2:16

And Titus 1:9 as Paul is speaking regarding overseers, he says,

hold fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.
Titus 1:9

And in 2 Timothy 1:13, Paul says to his dear brother Timothy,

Hold fast the sound doctrine which you have heard from me.
2 Timothy 1:13

Now we come to the church in Philadelphia. But it is really not difficult, because it is a picture of what the Lord wants for all churches - to be a threshold.

So now here in John and he sees the High Priest in heaven looking at Philadelphia’s golden lampstand and speaking words of perfecting them. And immediately we notice He introduces Himself differently from the other 6 churches. We have noted that Philadelphia is one of the two churches that weren’t asked to repent.

But there is another difference here. As the Lord introduces Himself to the other 5 churches, He relates His revelation to that heavenly vision that John just saw in chapter 1.

John saw Jesus holding the lampstands in His hand. So Jesus comes to the church at Ephesus and says, "I, who hold the lampstand, am looking at your lampstand, and unless you repent of your lost first love, I will take that lampstand away." You see, His revelation is related to His message.

To the second church Smyrna. This is a church that is in intense persecution and some of them are at the point of being martyred to death. And He says in His final word, "Be faithful even unto death."

But how does He introduce Himself?

"I am the Living One. I was once dead, but now I am alive forevermore. So I am saying to you, you will be alive forevermore."

One more example. He comes to the church at Pergamum. Instead of holding fast to the Head as truth, they are holding on to the doctrines of Balaam and doctrines of the Nicolaitans. So Jesus comes as the sharp two-edged sword that is the Word of God that will divide these doctrines and bring them back to recovery.

But when He comes to Philadelphia, He doesn't introduce Himself in one of these revelatory pictures. As you notice in Revelations 3:7,

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write,

"These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David,
Revelations 3:7

Now He is not introducing any new revelation. He is introducing Himself as He is eternally by nature.

"He who is holy."

Now we know when we study the Word of God, there are 4 things that God is by nature. Out of all these 4 all the attributes of God come. I think you know the 4.

"I am holy." God is holy. God is righteous. God is light. And truth comes out of that light. God is love.

Now this is who God is by nature. He doesn't have love. He is love. He is not trying to be holy, He is the definition of holy. He isn't telling the truth, He is the truth.

So He comes to Philadelphia with perhaps the most wonderful commendation one could ever make. He is coming and saying to the church at Philadelphia, "I am looking at your golden lampstand, and I see on that lampstand the image of a holy God. I see the image of the light of truth. I see the image of the authoritative One with the key."

Now we see immediately what the essence of the testimony of Jesus is. It is when the church, which is very imperfect, but the church reflects something of the reality of God as He is. So when people looked at Philadelphia and looked with the eyes of faith, they saw a holy God. They saw a God who is true. They saw a God who holds the keys.

Let's just talk about this for a moment. Do you know how precious it is to God when His church, whether it is His church in Seattle or L.A., if the church reflects His holiness? There is nothing more beautiful, as far as aesthetics is to God, as the beauty of holiness.

So here is a group of people gathered who have been separated to some degree from the world, because they have seen a holy God. Their life is orderly. Their dress reflects respect. And everything in their service, whether worship or whether prayer, is holy.

Here is a church that is holding fast to the gold standard. What is your church's standard? More people in Sunday school? More money to buy an annex? Better preaching?

How about the gold standard? We want people to walk into the sanctuary and say "holy, holy, holy".

I have a daughter-in-law, and she grew up in the Catholic background. She was a good little Catholic girl until she came out and did graduate work at Berkley. She lost all faith. Strange to say, 20 years later, because her children were going to a Catholic school, they were having a little ceremony for the children in the church, and she came to see this little presentation. And she said, "I can't explain it, but I feel that these Christians respect God." There was a sense of holiness.

Oh, that people would accuse our churches of being holy. They have seen the holiness of God. Even though Sardis, their neighboring church, has filthy garments because they haven't taken care to be holy. And just 18 miles away, Laodecia is naked, totally uncovered, and needs to buy white garments. But the saints in Philadelphia are wearing white.

Down through the ages, every church in church history that has come to a true testimony of Jesus has been accused of being holy. "You are holy people, you have too many regulations!"

But if a church has no holiness whatsoever, it has no threshold to the heavens. And Jesus said, "Philadelphia, He who is true, I see your works."

Again, pursuing the gold standard, we want truth. We want reality. We don't want superficial stuff. This has almost become out of fashion today in the church: to believe that God is true, and that He speaks the truth. And that there is truth and error, there is sin and there is righteousness, there is right and wrong. "Oh that's just old-fashioned stuff!"

When Jesus came to the earth He came with the glory of God, full of grace and truth. A lot of churches today say, "we'll take the grace, forget the truth! It's all grace!" It's like the opera singer going "me me me me me me me! [vocal warmups]"

It is all about the grace of God. It is all about me. I have been saved. I have been taken care of. It's all me, me, me.

But they have not heard Beethoven's fifth. "O-be-dience! O-be-dience!"

Jesus came with grace and truth, and that is the true Living God.

The third thing He says,

"He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens"

Revelations 3:7

Now we are getting deeper into the life of Philadelphia. For our Lord says "I am holding the key to the kingdom of God, and I have opened the door before you." Now this is very strange, because the church's reality is that it is a church of little strength. Usually, when you read a Bible commentator, they say it is because the church at Philadelphia was small. Could be.

Some people relate to the fact - I think our brother Godwin mentioned - that there was a severe earthquake in Philadelphia, and aftershocks after aftershocks for 30 years after 70 A.D., so many people had to leave the city. They couldn't build there.

But Jesus doesn't come to His church commenting on outward things. He says, "I know your works. And I have opened the door which no man can shut before you because - **because** - you have little strength." Isn't that strange? He is talking about something which has been broken in that church.

Not many of you realize that Jesus could never say to the church of Corinth, "I know your works. I know you have little strength." Corinth was always in trouble because they always thought they had great strength.

We are talking about spiritual matters here, this little strength. This has happened because they have been broken. This is what Jesus talks about when He says "blessed are the poor in spirit,

for theirs in the kingdom of heaven." This is proof that the kingdom of God is an upside-down kingdom. The small are great, the weak are strong, the humbled are exalted. The leaders are servants.

Why would the Lord commend them for their little strength? Because they knew it. Circumstances have broken them. And what happens when you know you are weak? You hold fast to the One who is strong.

And so Jesus in a sense says this, "Do you remember, Philadelphia, when I gave Peter the keys to the kingdom? Well, I am giving you keys to the kingdom. But just remember that this is one of those two-lock safety boxes. I have the main key of the kingdom."

So this church with little strength would always ask the Lord, "Lord are you opening that door?" You remember how many times Paul says, "The Lord opened to me a door of ministry; pray for me that the door will be opened."

There are some bravado Christians going around today saying, "I have the keys to the kingdom and I turn them whenever I want."

"Lord, bind that in Jesus' name", and He binds and you bind. That is kingdom correspondence. Oh, for churches that say, "Lord, are you binding, are you loosing?"

And so here is this little church, and a great opportunity. We have no idea what this big door was that was opened. But we have a feeling they responded like saints down in the ages have always responded.

"Moses, go through the door down to Egypt and deliver all the children of Israel out of Egypt."

Moses muttered many excuses. He knew he was very weak.

"Gideon, go and save the children from the Midianites!"

"Lord, do you realize that my family is from the half-tribe of Manasseh. We are the weakest group in the bunch!"

And so the Lord said, "I know. Go in my strength."

So this little group has been the keys and a kingdom opportunity, despite their little size. But we go on and see something more. We see that this church has been weakened by the persecution upon them from the synagogue of Satan. And the synagogue of Satan has persecuted them, opposed them, given them a difficult time, said that they are false Jews, brought the government against them, and the Philadelphia little church was always in trouble.

We don't know the whole story here, but we know that they had to suffer through a lot of persecution. Do you know what happens to people who go through that? They hold fast even more.

Brothers and sisters, I get frequent reports on what goes on in India right now. There are some provinces in India that are so pro-Hindu that they are burning down churches, arresting people just because they are Christians. And it is terrible because those churches are weak, they are not strong, they have to bear under such great persecution. It is not hard for me to prophesy that out of this will come such strong Christians in India.

And of course, we don't know the final history of the Philadelphia church, but God turned the whole thing around. You know what these brotherly love Philadelphians prayed? "Messiah, save these false Jews and bring them into the kingdom."

So we see that they were holding fast, which brings us to our last little part in the church at Philadelphia.

The Lord says, "I know you have little power. But that has worked for your good." It says 3 things resulting from this life that has little strength.

1. "You have kept my Word" (v8). How wonderful that this church has kept His Word. They are obeying the Lord despite the trouble. What a wonderful thing.

We have a dear sister who meets with us in New York City. She's from Australia, so she reported to us and asked us to pray. Her father, he is Chinese, has a business in Australia - a printing press. And there in Australia they also have gay pride month.

Some of the leaders of the events came and asked, "would you print out some things?" And he refused.

And it got in the newspapers across Australia. This man had a little franchise shop, and maybe the franchise would drop him. Maybe the people would boycott him and he would lose his business.

He was part of a fellowship of little strength. So they prayed. And nothing ever happened. He kept fast to the Word of God. There is a price to pay to keep fast to the Word of God.

Oh, the things we have heard by people holding fast to the Word of God. Occasionally, one of my former Baptist friends would say something like this, "Don't you know that you are a heretic?"

I say, "why's that?"

They say, "because you read Watchman Nee." And they forbid Watchman Nee books in their bookstore because it is tripartite - because they believe a man is spirit, soul and body. Which the whole church believed until the 4th century A.D. As you find in ample writings of the church fathers, and also since Martin Luther.

And then when the brethren spoke up of the second coming, "Oh they are heretics!"

But they kept the Word of God.

2. They have not denied my Name. That is another thing they did. This may sound like nothing to you, but in the Roman empire, you made a choice. Life or death. Two words. "Kaiser kurios", which means "Caesar is Lord", or "Christos kurios", Christ is Lord. This is exactly what this is talking about.

If the dear sister or brother said "Christos kurios", their head was cut off right there. It was either Christ is your lord, or Caesar is your Lord.

But they did not deny His name.

3. The third thing which I come to is "they kept the Word of my endurance".

The Lord told the disciples many times "watch and pray, for you do not know the hour of my coming." And the disciples believed that the Lord was coming soon. But years and years went by, and yet they still believed He is coming soon. They kept saying "Maranatha!"

There is something about the church of Philadelphia, and if there is such a church today, you discover that they also believe the Lord is coming soon.

How can that happen? It is because in the church they have gone through the threshold and into the Holy of Holies, before eternity, they have a sense of K-T-Z.

Kingdom Timezone.

Who has had a heavenly vision? You had it in the Kingdom Timezone. John had such a vision of the Lord, and he also saw that the Lord is going to come any moment. If you see a heavenly vision of the Lord, you don't see a vision where the Lord says, "I am coming back in 2,500 years." As soon as you slip across the threshold and into the

kingdom, you realize that the kingdom of God is eggus.

So of course we have run out of time and I have just gotten started. But the Lord is calling the church back to holy ground.

You know the wonderful chorus by Bill Gaither, "*This is holy ground, we're standing on holy ground.*" This is what I pray for all of the churches represented here.

A new generation is being raised up, they are calling it Gen-Z. And something is happening. They are searching for holy ground. Now they have seen the shell of the church in the United States, but the shell is not really turning them on. But they are looking for the reality within the shell.

Now you know our dear brother Geoffrey Pittman is sure to have his reward because he has been taking care of your young people. I believe he is still alive and well even this morning.

This spring, some people were in a worship service like we had this morning. After the chapel service was over in Ashbury College, some Gen-Zs continued to worship, continued to pray, I believe for more than 8 days, 24/7. They are looking for reality. Is there a new wineskin that can contain these ones looking for reality?

You know down there in the beach of L.A., in a place called Pirates Cove. Just 2 weeks ago, 4,500 teenagers were baptized in the Pacific Ocean, and they are looking for a home.

Where can we continue to discover this new life? Are the churches too hard to receive them? Or can the church be humble and grow to this young generation?

You know, our dear brothers and sisters in India are wonderful saints. As all of you know, if any of you are lucky enough to have some folks from India in your assembly, they always pray longer than you do.

Our brother Bakht Singh was an apostle in India. There at the beginning of World War Two, he came to a city and began to preach the gospel. Madras. Hundreds, thousands, got saved.

He was just an evangelist so he went to other places. But after a few years he came back to Madras. And the Christians were all upset because these newly born again people had no place to call home. The church of India, the national church, was liberal and rejected everything of the gospel. So there were these precious new Christians with no threshold to cross over.

So our dear brother sought the Lord, and with the help of Watchman Nee and Stephen Kaung and others, he began to see the church, and began to build thousands of assemblies throughout India.

Now we say there is new wine being poured out on Generation Z, do we have to have new wineskins, new churches? No. Philadelphia would receive them, help them cross the threshold. They are humble enough to receive. And these young people find a home.

What is the condition of your local church? You may be happy with the way things are going outwardly, but what is happening under the shell? One thing we know about young people is that they can tell when there is no life.

They put up with a lot of us preaching so long, like me this morning. But if it is just *cough cough* [dry], they won't take it.

Gen-Z may be the generation that crosses the threshold and comes into the bride of Christ, and brings the fulfillment of the testimony of Jesus.

All of your present preachers here are walking around in canes. Old men. Is the Lord raising something up for His coming? I think we should keep our eyes open. Something is happening. It is because the Lord is coming. And the sooner He is coming, the more He works. May we be servants who are waiting, watching, waiting, ready for kingdom come.

Let's start by bringing our young people across the threshold and into the revelation of Jesus and His greatness.

I am so happy to have been here with you. Indeed I feel that we have been on holy ground. I sense many receptive hearts. Now when we return to our local assemblies, may the lamp express the reality of who Jesus is.

Lord, we take up the refrain of past generations and say "Maranatha!" We know indeed you are coming very soon. We pray for all those living on this earth, that they can see a testimony of Jesus before you return. We pray for our young people. Raise up apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. This hunger in the lives of the young people, help them press right into the Holy of Holies. Lord, grant us your heart's desire. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.