



WEEKLY STUDY

Week 3

We wrapped up the Doorpost series with an invitation to open the doors of our hearts and homes to Jesus. Of course the Son of God can go wherever he wants, so opening the door to him is more about us receiving the gift of his presence and recognizing Jesus for who he is. I asked folks to imagine Jesus seated at the head of their thanksgiving table. He wants to be invited into every aspect of our lives and he wants to serve as the host of our table. In what ways are you inviting Jesus into your celebration this year?

Peace of Christ,
Dr. Mark Youngman
Pastor of Discipleship

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture and follow the daily prayer prompt. Receive this blessing each day as you move into your day as a follower of Jesus.

May your home be a place where God's name is on your lips. May God's Word be impressed upon all who enter. May you talk about God when you sit at the table. May you talk about God when you walk along the road, when you lie down, and when you get up. And may you write God's commands on your doorposts asking for God's help and God's blessing. In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Amen.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: REVELATION 3.14-18

To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. ¹⁵ I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷ You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. ¹⁸ I

counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

- Don't you love it when Jesus' statements require an explanation point? ("I wish you were one or the other!") Jesus wants to see the passion of belief in the church. We should be alive and responsive to the good news. The city as a whole had been ruined by an earthquake and then rebuilt. The process of rebuilding gave a level of confidence to the city and to the church that led them to believe that they could do anything on their own. It's the classic downfall of a believer—to lose the passion that came with their conversion to belief in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Jesus didn't condemn them to this state of indifference forever. He demonstrated the presence of hope when he gave them advice. What are the indicators in your life that you might be lukewarm in your faith?
- *God, I want my life and my deeds to show a passion and fire to live my life for Jesus. Stoke the flames of faith in me. Amen.*

TUESDAY: REVELATION 3.19-22

Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent.²⁰ Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.²¹ To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne.²² Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

- Jesus is continuing to send his message to the church in Laodicea. The good news hinted at in yesterday's passage is now fully in view as Jesus gives the image of knocking on the door as he seeks after the lukewarm believer. If you struggle with the idea of being disciplined by someone who loves you, you are not alone. But Jesus ties his rebuke to his love for the church. He knocks and talks, and those who listen will experience victory. Where are you feeling victory in your life of faith? Where are you listening for the voice of Jesus?
- *Jesus, you knock and I listen. Speak Lord, come and rule over my table and my life. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: REVELATION 3.7-13

"To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.⁸ I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.⁹ I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.¹⁰ Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.

¹¹ I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.¹² The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name.¹³ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

- These words precede the words to the church in Laodicea. Jesus told them about a door that is open and can not be shut. In Rev. 3.20, Jesus talked about a request to open the door and let him in, here the door was opened to those who keep his word and honor his name. The members of the church in Philadelphia were told to hold on to their faith and wait for Jesus to return. When he does, they will have a new city to live in, a city that comes down from heaven. Can you imagine hearing this affirmation from Jesus? Can you imagine what your response might be?
- *Thank you God for the hope given to the Philadelphia. Help me to hold on to what I have in Christ and not grow complacent. Amen.*

THURSDAY: MATTHEW 7.7-12

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

⁹ *“Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! ¹² So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.*

- In these words from Jesus, he invites us to be the one to knock on the door. Clearly Jesus liked the door metaphor! Putting these two uses of that image together (Matt. 7.7-8 and Rev. 3.20), we get a full picture of our relationship with God. God pursues us and we pursue God. When have you felt God was chasing after you? When have you been drawn to pursue God?
- *Jesus, as I read your words I am reminded to seek you above everything else. Give me faith to continue seeking after you. Amen.*

FRIDAY: MATTHEW 25.31-36

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴ *“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’*

- Inviting a stranger in is the same as inviting Jesus in. When we feed or house someone else, we feed and house Jesus. Benedictine monks are known for their hospitality. They live by a rule (see Small Group Discussion below) that follows this principle. Welcome the stranger as you welcome Christ. In what ways are you serving Christ by serving others?
- *Jesus, I long to hear these words from you—that I gave you food and drink, shelter and clothing, that I visited with you behind bars. Open my eyes to this calling and lead me in your ways. Amen.*

SATURDAY: ACTS 5.17-21

Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy.¹⁸ They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail.¹⁹ But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out.²⁰ “Go, stand in the temple courts,” he said, “and tell the people all about this new life.”

²¹*At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people.*

- Sometimes God just bursts through doors to lead us out of one place and into someplace better. In the sermon on Sunday (November 20th), we talked about a few big doors that God has burst through.
 - The door to Jesus' tomb,
 - The door to a meal with his disciples (Luke 24.36-49),
 - The door (gates) of hell to rescue the lost.What door has God seemed to break through in order to rescue you? What doors are you praying he'll come through today?
- *God my prayer is that you will do whatever it takes to tear down the walls I have put up. Come to me and show me the way to life! Amen.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

The Rule of St. Benedict is a written description of how one particular order of monks are to live their lives together. As a whole, Benedictine monks are known for their gift of hospitality. They practice what Jesus described in Matthew 25.35. Below is the wording of that rule as well as an interpretation from a Benedictine monk.

All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, for he himself will say: I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Matt 25:35).

-Rule of Benedict 53.1

Guests are like Christ for us monks. There is a special place (perhaps honor) for those guests who share our faith. Nevertheless, all guests are received and in them Christ is received. Pilgrims are also special guests because they are traveling with a religious purpose. The first thing is to pray with the guest so that any evil can be held in check with prayer.

-Philip Lawrence, Christ in the Desert Monastery.

Read Matthew 25.31-36 from Friday's reading.

- Can you think of times when you missed an opportunity to do one of these things for “the least of these?”
- Where have you experienced extravagant hospitality?
- Who do you know personally that has a strong gift for hospitality?
- Is it easier to give or receive hospitality that comes from a desire to welcome others like Christ?