

Revelation: A Message to Philadelphia

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[0 : 0 0] How we doing? Oh, that's terrible. Are you happy to be here? Okay, how we doing, guys? That's like a 6 out of 10, I think. I don't know. I guess we'd have to deal with that, huh? Hey, we are, so we're at West Island, as you know. So next week we will not be here. Appreciate your perseverance, as we're going to talk about today.

And being here, I know it's a hall, but this is where God has opened the doors for us today. So we're here to worship Him. If you have not been here before, my name is Tobin, and I'm one of the pastors here. And we have been going through the book of Revelation.

We've been following kind of a, there's a purpose to our sermons. We've been talking about the church and the people of God all fall. We've been talking about what does it mean to be the church, and how do we interact with each other? How do we have hope in the midst of hopeless times? What does it look like? And so we've gone to this place, and we've come to this sermon series on the seven churches in the book of Revelation, which is the last book of the Bible. And one of the things that's key in this is just that you realize that sometimes even as Christians, if you're here and you're not a Christ follower yet, we're really glad you're here. You're going to see some insight today. You're probably going to think we're very weird, and we are. But ask questions of the people who brought you, and that's a great thing. So welcome to the family.

[1 : 2 6] Anyway, but when we come to the book of Revelation, sometimes, and I talk fast, so I'm trying to slow down just a little. We talk about the end times and Jesus coming and people being lifted up in the air and Armageddon and all these really bad things. And sometimes we lose the focus of what the book is really about. The book is really about Christ. The book is really about Jesus, right? So sometimes we forget that. And I think that I forget that sometimes.

So when you read, we hope that you read and you're thinking about not so much what's going to happen in the end, but who Christ is. And more importantly, as who he is, how should I be? Because sometimes I think we look at Christ, but we don't change. We don't ask questions. We don't, we just stay the same. But what we want to do in the passages as we come to God's words is we want to look at Christ and see, wow. Okay, so what does he want me to do with this? And how can he change me? We've been looking at the seven churches. I put a map up here in the back. And basically this is what it looked like. So this is Turkey. And Paul is stranded on Patmos. It's a prison island. It's not a nice place to be. In about 90 AD, Jesus comes to him and takes him in a vision to heaven and tells him to write these stories, these messages to these churches that he's watching. And it's really clear that he's watching these churches. And so that is actually, that's the Roman mail route. And so if you want to know how the Roman army and the country sent mail, this is, this was that route that was sent through there. So later we went to Ephesus first and we looked at Smyrna, then we looked at Pergamum, we looked at Thyatira, we looked at Sardis, we looked and today we look at Philadelphia. And what we're going to see is out of all of these things that only two of them actually had nothing wrong with them. The letters start off with Jesus introducing himself, which is, which is key. Really, we can just read the first verses and you're going to know what the whole passage is about. Because again, he wants us to look at him to realize who he is. And as we realize who he is, that should change us and to affect us and to change how we see things here. And Jesus is writing this letter to these churches and what he's trying to do is he's trying to prepare them for massive persecution. There's going to be incredible persecution happening under Emperor Trajan. So it's just starting to kick off right now, but pretty soon Christians everywhere are going to be persecuted. It's going to be a terrible, they're going to experience persecution from the culture, they're going to experience persecution from the Jews, they're going to experience persecution massively from the Romans. And so Jesus is trying to help them and encourage them in this, this time of aloneness and difficulty. And so we get to this church at

Philadelphia, which was a very interesting church. It's, it's the smallest churches that he's written to. It's, it's the youngest church. Philadelphia was a city that's, its name means brother love or brotherly love. In

Greek it actually just means brother love. Someone who loves their brother. And it was founded about 130 BC by the king of Pergamum, who was up there in that chain letter. And he had such a strong affection for his brother. He, he named it that I love my brother. I'm going to name the city after him. It's about 30 east, 30 miles southeast of the church, the city we talked about last week, Sardis. And as you walk into it, it was basically this huge valley and the valley elevated and it was really fertile ground. And you're walking into it and the city actually is up on a hill above this valley. And around the back of the valley are these volcanoes. And these volcanoes would erupt every once in a while. And because of that, the land was incredibly fertile. I mean, it was like some of the richest land in the area. And so what do you do when you have rich land? You grow grapes. And so their, their main export was grapes. And they, they partied a lot. They, they exported wine. The god they worship was Bacchus. He's the god of party. And so, but what, what we don't realize, and we got to keep in touch here, is that when the king of Pergamum placed his city here, the Greeks placed his city here, its main purpose, its only purpose was to be a missionary city. I mean, it was established as a missionary city. Not for Christianity, but for the Greeks. And so the Greeks were looking at this part of the land and they said, well, how do we influence this land? He says, well, let's bring our culture into the land. And so he establishes this city as a missionary city in the hopes is as the Greeks live there and the people live there, that the people are going to look at them and go, wow, Greeks are really cool. Why don't we be like they are? And what we are told by historians is that the, the, the city is so successful that within a hundred years, everybody around them forgets their mother tongue. One hundred years. Everybody forgets their mother tongue and everybody starts speaking Greek.

So it's kind of like Texas sends me to Hong Kong and I'm here to be the ambassador for Texas. And I do such a good job at Watermark and everything else. Everybody starts thinking Texan, speaking Texan, acting Texan, which would not be a bad thing, right? And, and then within a hundred years, all of Hong Kong is, is Texan, which could be a really cool thing. And that's what this, this, that's what happened in this city. The downside to the city was there was earthquakes. I mean, there were a lot of earthquakes. I mean, the city was destroyed and rebuilt and destroyed and rebuilt.

[6 : 47] And, and some historians tell us that when you walk through the city that you would feel these tremors. And the minute you felt a tremor, everybody would just drop whatever they were doing and they would just run out. I mean, literally this historian was saying, he's talking to people, a tremor hits.

It's kind of like living in the Bay Area, maybe, or San Francisco or something like that. And you get hit by a tremor and your first reaction is just to get out. And so everybody would get out. And so when you came to visit the city, what you saw is people ran in, they ran out, they ran in, they ran out. I mean, this was, this was a continual thing. People had no security. They had no safety. They just dropped everything and they ran out.

The city walls were cracked and the city walls were supposed to be the strongest part of the city. And so there was no defense. The city was, was pretty weak. It was just a drunk city that was an ambassador that did its job really well. And even the wealthy people, they slept outside the city. I mean, no one actually slept in their homes because they were worried about the homes collapsing as they were sleeping. And so it was this place that was, it was just unsecure. But it was prosperous. But it was unsecure. And historians tell us that there's probably 50,000 to 100,000 people who live there. So it's 50,000 to 100,000 people. It was on a trade route. And what we know about the church is there are about 30 people in the church. So there's 50,000 people up to 100,000 people. And there are 30 people in this small, young church that was placed in the middle of it. And it's the only church that Jesus looks at it and says, I know what you're doing. You're amazing.

And so what I want to look today really briefly, because we're going to end in communion, because I feel like it flows well. I want to look at really quickly, what did they do? I mean, what did they do that Jesus praised them for? I want to look at what did Jesus promise them after they did it? Because you're going to see that he's promised them four or five things. And actually, these promises are true to us also as God's people, if we do the things that they did. So what they did, what Jesus

promised them, and then finally, I want to look at just basically, how can we do it also? How do we get the power to do that? How do we get the chance to do that? Does that make sense? And what they did, what Jesus promised them, how can we do that, and then communion. So that's where we're going. Okay, so what I want to do is just look really quickly, and I probably could camp all here on verse seven. If you've got your bulletin, open that up. Jesus introduces himself, and look at how he introduces himself.

[9 : 28] To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, he who is holy, pause. That word means holy.

It means sacred. It means pure. It means set apart. It means different. It means unlike all others. It means separated from sin. It means not like Tobin. It means morally perfect. It means Jesus has no cracks.

Throughout the Bible, holiness is the chief attribute that describes God and Christ, and it's always that attribute that's put on front of the adjectives that also describe him. So he's holy just, and he's holy kind, and he's holy peaceful. It just exemplifies who he is. The idea is that as Jesus says, this is who I am, we should be thinking, can I devote myself to him?

Is he worthy of my devotion? He is holy. It means that he won't lead us into error. It means that we can follow him. It means that Christ is unchanging.

How many things that you know are unchanging in this world today? And Christ starts this letter out to this church of in the middle of 100,000 people.

[10 : 51] And he says, this is what I want you to cling to. This is what I want you to know. He goes on and he goes, who is true. And the word is true. It means no error.

It means there's nothing wrong found in him. It means that he's 100% reliable. It means he's trustworthy. It means that he's not fake. I remember when I first went to China, I was 89, and I was in my city, and I was walking through there, and I got my sunglasses.

I was there all summer, and I was looking at these little stalls, right, and I saw this pair of Ray-Bans, and it was amazing. So I didn't have them. It was 89. I couldn't, no one was going to come back from the States or anything. And so how much is this?

And the guy says, it's like five U.S. dollars. I'm like, what a deal! And so I bought it, and I wore it around, and I thought, wow, I really like these, and people thought I was cool, right? And they looked cool, and they were really good. And then one day, I'm looking at myself in the mirror, and I see Ray Bun.

And I'm like, Ray Bun? Maybe it scratched off somehow, or something like that. They're a counterfeit. I didn't know they had counterfeit things in China in 89.

[12 : 03] I just assumed, whenever they saw you buy, and it's real, and it's good, and so, hey, I'm going to wear my Ray Buns, and I'm going to be proud about it, because they're real Ray Buns. They're authentic. But you know what happened after that? Seriously, what happened after that was, I learned how to say certain words.

I learned how to ask, hey, is this fake? Or is this real? Shijada, shijanda. Shijanda. What do they say? Every time you say that, it's janda. Oh, they get so offended. No, no, it's not fake. It's real. It's janda.

Shijanda is pure. It's true. And here he's saying that Jesus is janda. He's genuine.

That he never changes. What if we lived in a culture where nothing was genuine? What if we lived in a culture where everything was 80% genuine?

Jesus says that he is 100% true. That we can trust him with everything. That he upholds everything. He protects everything.

[13 : 18] He's true, and you can give your life to him. He's holy. He's true. Look what he says next about himself.

He says, he holds the keys of David. And this is a special passage. This whole story is deep in Old Testament history. And this is a story that comes out of Isaiah 22.

And basically what was happening, I'm going to briefly share it. I don't want to waste a lot. Well, I don't want to just take up time. But the Jewish people were by themselves. They were in the land.

The Assyrian army was coming through, and they were just destroying everything.

And one night, the Assyrian army, 50,000 people camp outside the Jewish gates, and everybody's panicking. Everything's going to be destroyed. And God does this miracle through the prophet, and all the army is decimated.

They're dead. And the people walk out, and they go, wow, look what we did. We did this all. I mean, within an instant, within a twinkle of eye, they forgot that God was sovereign and in control of their life.

[14 : 20] And so what God says is he comes in and he takes these keys away, the keys of the stewardship of his kingdom, and he gives them to this guy who's very faithful. He gives the keys to Christ. And so when he says the keys of David, what he means is that Jesus is in control of everything.

Jesus is in control of everything. He has the keys. Whoever has the keys can open. Whoever has the keys can shut. Whoever has the keys is in authority. Whoever has the keys can get things done. He's sovereign. It basically means that Christ is in control.

He has authority. He's over everything. Nothing can open. Nothing can shut. Nothing can happen without Christ allowing it to happen. A little later on in Matthew, he's going to send out the disciples. He's going to tell them, go make fishers of men. I want you to go out there. But what does he say before he sends the people out? He says, before you go out, you need to know one thing. All authority is mine.

All authority belongs to God. And so whatever happens to you, whatever goes out there, however things happen, I'm in control. I am the one who's holy. I am the one who's true. I am the one who's not going to fail you.

[15 : 25] So the question is, do we believe this? I know my British friends would say it's not cricket to ask questions in the service.

Did I do it right? I did. But it is. And we want to be a church that asks questions. And I want to ask questions a lot. And sometimes I have people come up to me and say, hey, we're thinking about leaving because you ask too many questions.

Literally. But we want to be a church that asks questions because we don't want you just to come and to listen and feel good about yourself and then leave and never look at God's word, never look at who Jesus is, never ask, is there something I need to do to change myself?

Am I like what Christ wants me to be? Because we all want these blessings in this scripture. But sometimes we don't realize how far away we are from acting in the way that allows us to receive these blessings.

So the question is this. Do you believe him? Do you believe that he's holy? Do you believe that he's true to his word?

[16 : 36] He's never going to let you down. Do you believe that he's in control? He has the keys. Everything happens. There's nothing that can happen that doesn't happen. He's an authority. It basically says he's holy. He's true.

He's unstoppable. He's unchanging. He's sure. Do we believe that? I ask because I think there are a lot of people in Hong Kong and maybe some people in Watermark who are trusting in something else besides Jesus.

I mean, it takes a lot of honesty to say that. But I think there's some of us in here who are trusting in something besides Christ, and we've put our trust in this thing and we have to ask ourselves the question about whatever we're trusting in, whether it's our health, our ability, our business smarts, our education, our family, our connections, whatever it is that we're trusting in besides Jesus, we have to ask ourselves the question about this thing.

Is that thing holy? Is it true? Is what you're trusting in right now besides Christ true?

100% true. Janda. Bushijada. You can't say 88% true. It's either janda or is it false or true. And so what you're trusting in is it holy?

[17 : 58] Is it true? Is it unstoppable? Is it all powerful that you're trusting in? I mean, do you trust in whatever you're trusting in more than Jesus enough to lay down your life for it?

Do you trust in it more than Christ to lay down your kids' lives for it? There's a lot of people in Hong Kong and a lot of people, I think, in our churches who've been kind of vaccinated to Christianity.

I mean, they've experienced it, they see it, but they don't really understand who Christ is and who he is and what he does and that he's holy and that he's true and that he has all authority and he's unstoppable. And so we kind of live this partial Christianity.

And then when hard things happen, when we have 100,000 people against 30, we kind of bail. You know, the last couple months have been some of the hardest months of my life.

I mean, we've been in this situation here and I love the settings here, but it's just, it's kind of an out-of-the-way place, right? And I've had people come up to me and say, hey, we're not going to come to the church anymore as long as we meet at West Island because it's just not convenient for us.

[19 : 16] Inside, I just, I'm dying, right? Because we don't know where God's kind of place is. We don't know what door he's opened up. But I have to keep clinging. Is he holy?

Is he true? Does he have authority? Is he in control of all things? Can we trust him? I mean, think about it.

When I say he has authority, I mean he has authority. I mean, the reason you haven't gotten that bonus yet is because Christ hasn't opened that door for that bonus. The reason you're not married yet is because Christ knows that you're not ready for it and he hasn't opened the door to marriage. The reason you haven't had kids yet, the passage says he's holy, he's true, he's in complete authority, he controls everything. Because God hasn't opened that door for you yet.

The reason some of us aren't healthy and we're fighting cancer and sickness because Christ has something to teach us and he wants to do something amazing in our lives.

[20 : 25] And unless we understand that he's true, that he's holy and he has authority above all things, when the hard things happen, when things go on, we're going to bail, we're going to run out, we're going to give up because it's not worth it, it's not worth it because it's changing.

But Jesus tells us at the very beginning, I'm with you. I'm unchanging. I'm for you.

I'm true. No matter what happens in your life, I have all authority. There's nothing that can happen to you if you're my child that I'm not allowing to happen.

Do we believe that? He goes on, he says, this is what they did, verse 8. He says, in the midst of all these struggles, in the midst of the persecution, I mean, you think about it, they're a young church, they're a small church, they're surrounded by a culture and the culture's purpose is to change them, right?

Philadelphia's purpose is to change the people who enter into it. So if you go into Philadelphia, the purpose of Philadelphia is to make you Greek. And so this little church of 30 people is in the middle of it and they're fighting all these things and do you think it must have been hard?

[21 : 40] I mean, it says the doors to the synagogues were shut. They were kicked out of the synagogues. It says the doors to the businesses were shut because they weren't saying a little creed to Caesar, they couldn't be business people.

It says the doors to the Roman culture were shut because they weren't willing to worship Caesar and do all the bowing and all those things. And Jesus watches them and he says, I know, I see. And even though you're small in number and even though you have a little strength and even though you have just a little, little influence in this culture and all these doors are shutting against you because you kept my word. Because you were people that hung on to my word, because you didn't act like the culture, the idea is they didn't act like the culture around them.

They were in the middle of a culture that was trying to change them. There's 30 of them against 100,000. They didn't change. They stuck to the word instead of becoming worldly.

I mean, they didn't allow Philadelphia to influence them. They stuck to God's word and instead of changing them, they tried to change the culture around them. They were bound to God. They obeyed scripture. This was a whole church that followed God's word and trusted him.

[22 : 52] How about us? How about us? How about us? Are we following God's word today? Do we know God's word today?

Are we acting more like the world around us than God's world? If someone were to follow us around and our thoughts and our actions, what would they suggest?

Worldly word. How would they put us in what category? And Jesus looks at this small little church that was clinging to the word of God and said, we're not going to change.

We're going to be just like God wants us to be. The second thing he commends them for is he basically says, they kept to his word and they did not deny his name. The idea is they didn't give up their faith.

They didn't give up their testimony. I mean, there was 30 people against 50,000 or 100,000 people. The culture is totally against them. I mean, you think it would have been hard going to work? What do you think?

[24 : 02] I think it probably would have been hard just going through the market trying to buy stuff because everybody knew who you were because you weren't dressing like them, you weren't acting like them, you were living out a life that was counter to them. I think that they probably faced a lot of work difficulties and a lot of persecution.

They were probably ridiculed by their neighbors all the time, but they refused to look and live like the people around them. you know what's going on to me?

How about us? How are we doing? I mean, are we acting and looking and speaking and spending and using our money and our time any differently than the people around us?

When the people around us look at us, do they see something different? Do they see Jesus? Do they see Jesus? You know one of the number one complaints I get from people who aren't Christ followers yet when I talk to them and I try to talk to a lot of people every week because I just want to get to know people and things like that.

The number one complaint usually is that the people who they know who are Christians or say they're Christians in their workplace look no differently than they are. They use the same language.

[25 : 26] They betray people in the office just like non-believers do. They fornicate just like the non-believers do. Married and singles.

They act exactly like it. The number one complaint I get from people when I talk to them about Christ and what it means to be a believer is that when the Christians they look in their life they look no different.

You know the number one complaint I get to people when I invite them to church? I'm not making this up. The number one complaint they say to me is the church is no different than what I do already. It's loud. It's noisy.

It's flashy. It's high impact. High tech. A lot of different things. All these things I experience when I go to conferences and other things like that and there's nothing in it for me because it's already and he said quite frankly the world does it much better than the church does it.

The church thinks it's doing really well in high tech but it's really not because the world can do it a lot better. And they say I don't want to come to church because it's no different than my everyday life.

[26 : 30] And Jesus looks at this small little church that's surrounded by all these things and he said well done. You hung on to the word. You hung on to my testimony. You kept the faith and because of those things he says in verses 10, 11, and 12 he says I'm going to open these doors.

I'm going to give you these opportunities. I'm going to give you these things happen to you and almost always in scripture when a door is open what it means is God has given us an opportunity to influence people and culture with the gospel. Whenever Christ opens a door it means that he's wanting us to walk through it and share the gospel with people.

I mean scripture also says that when God opens doors it means that blessings come through to us. So there's this two sense focus. Because they were faithful because they were true God opens these doors and they have even more of an opportunity to share.

I wonder how big the church was after 10 years. I don't think it was just 30 people because the life that they were living and the words they were sharing and the actions that they were doing were so much different than the world around them that it had to attract people in the midst of a chaos and chaotic world.

Jesus says I'm the one who opens the doors I have the keys. Who has the keys?

[27 : 50] Jesus. I went to a conference many years ago huge mega church and we were there and we were watching these guys talk and it was it was it was it was it was it was it was it was a congregation about they had a sanctuary of about 25,000 people.

And one after another for about four days guys got up and said okay do a church this is what you gotta do. You gotta have a big venue you gotta have a lot of parking spaces you gotta have really cool colored carpet you gotta have relevant music you gotta look really different you gotta be looking just like the world but make it Christianized a little and if you can do that then God's gonna open the doors and things will happen people will come to Christ right?

And I'm sitting there and I'm just sitting there and go wow and I'm just and I look over about day two and there's this young guy I got to know and he's from he's from Ireland he's from this small country church in Ireland and I think and he was he was looking pretty depressed I said dude what's going on he goes I'll never be able to do any of those things I mean I'll be thankful that I get 30 people in

my church on Sunday I'm not gonna be able to have all the programs I'm not gonna have all the bells and whistles I'm not gonna I'm gonna be the only one they're doing it I mean we don't even have a parking place we have this small little church and he said if all the things they say are true then this is what it takes to grow a church then I'm never gonna be able to do that I'm never gonna be able to open the doors but who opens the doors?

Who? Christ, right? Christ opens the doors why does he open the doors? because we're relevant fun really cool and have all these things and there's nothing wrong with those things but is that why the doors get open?

here he says the doors get open because we're faithful to his word and we live lives that are so different than the world around us that people look at that and go I want that because I'm living in this earthquake zone my life is falling apart and I need stability I need strength I need hope I need something to help me go through you look in verse 9 through 11 he basically lays out four things and all these things again this is what Jesus is gonna give this church because of their faithfulness because of their obedience because of trusting them he basically says the first thing is that all the enemies all of our enemies all the people that mocked us all the people who've given us a hard time all these people who mock you in your office one day if you are faithful one day Christ will bring them before him and it says every knee in heaven and on earth will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and those people are gonna know that I love you I mean sometimes if we're lucky we see it happen nowadays when they have some tragedy happening in their life or something's going on and it's wrong and they go hey I'm really sorry for putting you down but can you tell me what this Jesus thing is all about but it might not happen that way but what Jesus says to this church and what he says to us is that it will happen if we're faithful and we obey him and follow him he says if you do these things later on he says

[31 : 07] I'm gonna keep you for this hour of testing that's gonna come over all the earth verse 10 he's talking about the end times when he says to test those who dwell on the earth you can just put a circle around dwell on the earth whenever you see those who dwell on the earth it means those who are not Christ's followers and what this passage is saying is that one day Christ is gonna come again and there's gonna be this massive turmoil and upheaval and it's not gonna be nice whatsoever and we're gonna see Christ come down because this is how this book ends and he says because the church is faithful because you have been obedient to my word because you have not changed and compromised your testimony because you've loved me more than the things around you you're not gonna face those things you're not gonna face the turmoil you're not gonna face the destruction you're gonna get a pass it's kind of like when you're you know yeah if you're a really good student I don't know I never experienced this but my senior year in high school for those who did really good they didn't have to take their final exams because the school just felt like well what's the need because you've already passed up to this point and this is kind of what he's saying to this church is that you've already passed these things here and so when this really difficult time comes when this really hard testing comes you're not gonna have to go through it because you've already done it and I'm gonna pass you verse 12 says what Christ is gonna do is he's gonna make them strong he's gonna make them a pillar and pillars are always a symbol of strength so that whenever a temple was built they built this strong pillar and people remember they lived in this culture where nothing was strong they lived in this culture where everything was changing where everything was shaking where everything was falling apart and Christ says because you love me because you keep my word because you keep my testimony

I'm going to strengthen you I'm gonna make you strong I don't know if anybody in here needs to be strong but as I said before these last couple months have been probably some of the hardest months for me and our family as we struggle through things and pray through things and look at things as a family and as a church and the venue finances all these things we're praying through and we're going okay God for some reason these doors aren't opening we don't know what's going on but we know that you have the keys are we gonna trust you or are we not gonna trust you and finally he says here if you remain faithful in verse 12 that Christ is gonna come and Christ is gonna write a new name on you and whenever you see somebody writing a new name on you it means it's a symbol of ownership that Christ is gonna come in and he's gonna say you're mine I own you I protect you I'm gonna take care of you it was a sign of intimacy it was a sign of who you are that whenever a new name was written on you it meant that you were owned you were protected you were loved you were guaranteed

Kip was six years old and for Christmas we got him a Buzz Light year it was interesting because about two months into it I came into the room and I was playing with him we're goofing off and I looked at the feet Kip had wrote his name on the bottom of the feet I said why did you do that because this is mine I want to take care of it the passage says that because the church and God's people love his word and love their testimony that God writes his name on you did you know that it means that he owns you it means that he wants you it means he desires you it means that there's nothing that's gonna happen to you that he's not gonna allow to happen it means that he cares for you no matter what you're going through right now I know some of us in here might not have God's name written on us but the truth is you only have two names you either have the world's name or you have not Kip but Jesus and he talks to this church and he says because you are faithful because you are true I'm gonna write my name on you I'm gonna take care of you I'm gonna protect you I wanna end now we're gonna do communion but the question I keep asking as I go through this is well how did they do that because I think the goal he says you persevered you persevered you persevered you hung in there you stuck in there you persevered and I'm thinking how in the heck did they do that I mean if somebody puts a pack of M&M;'s on my desk and they say don't eat it I have a hard time persevering not eating the M&M;'s let alone living my life out in front of 100,000 people and there's only 30 of us how do we do that and the passage says really simply and it says at the very beginning you go back to who Jesus is what Jesus is who is he look at

I think I put in there for your bulletin did I put in your your bulletin and I don't have my bulletin but you have your bulletin so you have a bulletin there and it has the Bible verses on it right and what is the very first Bible verse on the top can I borrow yours yeah thank you here's what he says and we're looking at how how do you do it how do you walk with God how do you persevere how do you hang in there when it gets really difficult what do you do how does it make it happen this is what he says Hebrews 12:2 and 3 looking to Jesus the founder and perfecter of our faith who for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross the word there is hupo mano I don't like using a lot of Greek words because ugh but this is a very special word mano means stay hupo means extremely stay sticky stay it's like a Velcro wall he stood there he stuck to it how do we persevere God's people how do we hang in there the passage says that the only way we can do it the only way that we can manifest his strength is we realize that Christ already did it for us in Hebrews it says [37:05] Christ stuck to the cross amidst all the pain all the ridicule all the suffering all the trauma he stuck to the cross hyper stuck to the cross because he loved you and he loved the father how do we persevere I can't give you five steps to do it because I think that's man made the only way you're going to be able to persevere is the same way this church persevered and realizing that we have a savior Jesus who's already persevered for us and as we realize what he's already done and by his perseverance he's been given the keys as we realize what he's already done he's already accomplished those things in faith we come to him and we say God I can't do that I can't stick up to the people ridiculing me in my office I can't live the way you've called me to I don't know how to do these things this is too much pressure and what the passage says is Christ says

I've already done it for you I've already done it on the worst situation the most difficult situation the hardest situation you're ever going to be in I've already done it on the cross if you just trust me if you just rest in me if you believe in me that I'm true that I'm holy and I'm in authority if you surrender your life to me I've already done those things for you and I'm going to give you the power to do those things it doesn't mean you're going to have to not make hard choices you are and some of you already have in big, big ways but what it means is the power to make those choices is available to you because Christ has already done it and the question is will you trust him will you allow him to change you will you realize that he's holy will you realize that he's true will you realize that he's in control and authority and you and I have been struggling with those things for so long we struggle every day we're going to have to repent every day but the moment we forget that we have a savior who's already done it we're going to try to work and fabricate and use our strengths to do it and we're always going to fail but the gospel of grace is the truth that Christ has already done it for you and will you rest in that and will you trust him you and I will you and I will you and will you see going in time and■■■■ will you sorry will you and you can you see things like oh and I will you and I will you