

# MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT //

**STAY STRONG TO THE END | ASLEEP**

**RYAN BRAMLETT | SEPTEMBER 24, 2023**

Hey Traders Point family. So glad you're here today.

You may have heard that some big things are happening this fall and I want you to be a part of it. I've had a chance to be at a few Traders Point locations for Vision Nights where we're celebrating our church's history and looking ahead to the vision that we believe that God has for the future of our church. If you're at Northwest, your Vision Night is coming up next Sunday from 6 to 8 p.m. And I really hope to see you there.

We're calling this season *Awaken* and we'll be kicking off a message series in October where we'll look more closely at what it means to be awakened to a greater sense of purpose, asking God to do a work in us and through us.

I would love for you to join us every weekend of the series to hear the teaching, but I also really want you to experience it in community with others. That's why we've created a short-term group experience to help you dive deeper into the *Awaken* message content with those around you.

These short-term groups are designed for those who aren't in a group already. And in these groups, you'll walk through the content that aligns with the *Awaken* series. And you'll have the chance to process and grow along side of other people along the way.

We've got groups that will meet at every Trader's Point location and online throughout the week. They run for seven weeks from the beginning of October to mid-November. Be sure to register soon so you don't miss this opportunity to experience what it's like to be in a Traders Point group.

Well, today you get to hear a message from our teaching pastor, Ryan Bramlett. You know, I wish that we had a chance to just sit down and for me to share with you everything that Ryan means to me.

Over the years, I've watched him come to know the Lord, grow in his faith and to see him serve along the way to become the kind of pastor and man of God that he has become. He is an incredible husband and father and he has been a great friend and companion to me over the years.

I know that he is going to bring a great message today and he's going to encourage you from God's Word. So, would you please give him a great big welcome to the stage as he comes to preach today.

Ryan Bramlett



Far too kind. Far too kind. Thank you so much.

I do want to piggy back on a little bit of what Pastor Aaron was saying there with these Vision Nights, just to encourage you. Even if you missed the one at your campus, you can attend any of these. And these are nights you don't want to miss.

We've got Midtown tonight, Fishers on Friday, and then back here at Northwest on Sunday. I just want to tell you, our Plainfield Vision Night was something special. It was a night of worship and celebrating, looking back on God's faithfulness and then Pastor Aaron had an incredible message about where we are going in this next season. I'm telling you, you do not want to miss it.

As far as today goes, we are continuing in our series *Asleep*. We've talked a little bit and kind of made some jokes last week, but I am a big fan of sleeping. I love naps. And it's not just that I like them; I'm really good at them. What I've found is that I've always had this gift, but as I get older, I'm reaching new levels.

I can fall asleep anywhere at any time. And my family loves to document. So here's a little bit of evidence of me falling asleep when I should not have. How do I know, because I have on a flannel and my glasses are on, mouth open, on the couch. That's me.

We joked and we said that's one kind of sleeping, but then there is another kind and maybe you know what I'm talking about. It's that space where you're not fully asleep but you're not fully awake either. You're just in that fog filled space going through life full of action and even business, but empty of heart.

That's the space that we are speaking to in this series. And the way that we are doing that is we're looking at the book of Revelation. And we're seeing these letters that Jesus wrote to these seven churches. And we're looking at how he called them out in areas where they fell asleep or had the potential to fall asleep.

This is more than a Bible study. This is a moment in time to let God shake us out of our complacency. To raise our eyes up to see Him and to see what purpose He has for us in this season to be awakened to. So, if you have your Bibles, go ahead and get to Revelation, chapter 3.

I will just give us a little bit of background because I know, any time we talk about Revelation everyone is thinking 100 different things. Right? So I just want to lay the foundation of what we're looking at. Revelation is a unique book, but at the same time it's pretty familiar. At the base level it is an epistle, it's a letter written from a pastor to a group of churches. And it's not just written to one church, it's written to seven churches, for real people at a real time.

If you look at this map, this kind of shows us all of the churches which are in Asia Minor, or modern day Turkey. And Pastor John is writing from Patmos and he's writing an

individual letter, a message from Jesus to these churches. He starts in Ephesus and he gets all of the way to Laodicea.

What we've been doing in this series is picking a handful of these letters and saying, "What does Jesus have for me and you?" It's no coincidence that Jesus wrote to seven churches. You see, in apocalyptic literature numbers have meaning. And seven goes along with fullness or completion. So even though Jesus wrote these letters to those churches, He also wrote these letters to all churches at all times. That is where you and I fit in.

So what we're going to do today is we're going to open this letter from Jesus to the church in Philadelphia. And we're going to be in chapter 3, starting in verse 7. If you have your Bibles you can get there. If not, everything will be on the screen behind me.

We're going to read the letter in its entirety, how it would have been written, how it would have been received. And then we're going to go back, line by line, and talk about what's inside this thing? Without further ado, starting in verse 7. Look at the words of Jesus:

*"Write this letter to the angel of the church in Philadelphia. This is the message from the one who is holy and true, the one who has the key of David. What he opens, no one can close; and what he closes, no one can open: I know all the things you do, and I have opened a door for you that no one can close. You have little strength, yet you obeyed my word and did not deny me. Look, I will force those who belong to Satan's synagogue—those liars who say they are Jews but are not—to come and bow down at your feet. They will acknowledge that you are the ones I love.*

*"Because you have obeyed my command to persevere, I will protect you from the great time of testing that will come upon the whole world to test those who belong to this world. I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take away your crown. All who are victorious will become pillars in the Temple of my God, and they will never have to leave it. And I will write on them the name of my God, and they will be citizens in the city of my God—the new Jerusalem that comes down from heaven from my God. And I will also write on them my new name.*

*"Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches."* Revelation 3:7-13 (NLT)

To understand this message that Jesus has for the church, we need to understand some of the visuals, some of the symbols that He uses in this letter. In true Revelation fashion, this is filled with symbolism, pictures, and we've got to understand. And if you were tracking along there are three big ones that we're going to unpack: a key, a door, and a pillar.

Let's just work through each one of these to see what Jesus is talking about. The first image that we come across is one of a key. And before we get down and say: What does this key represent? What does it mean? let's first address who is holding the key, because that's really important. Look at what it says in verse seven. It says:

*"This is the message from the one who is holy and true, the one who has the key of David."*  
Revelation 3:7 (NLT)

### **Holy**

So this is Jesus writing and He says, "Hey, look. I have the key and I want you to know who has this key. I'm holy and I'm true." Let's just unpack that. The first word, *holy* means that He is distinct. It means that He is set apart. It means that there is no one like Him on this earth. In this moment when He is saying, "I am holy," He's making Himself equal with God. He says, "I am God. I am holy."

### **True**

And then He says, "I am true." This speaks to His authenticity. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Have you ever gotten to know people and from afar they looked one way, they portrayed this image, but then once you got to know them, you realized pretty quickly that that is not really who they are. But Jesus says, "I am who you see. I'm exactly the same. I am holy and I am true. And I hold onto the key."

### **Key = Authority**

What does the key represent? I think we know this. The key represents authority. A key represents access. If I have the key to something, I have authority over it, I have access.

Think back in your life when you got a key for the very first time. Maybe you were given the key to your house. You could come and go as you pleased. Maybe you got a key to your car and you got to turn that thing on and you had freedom.

For those of you who don't have a 19 in your birth year, think about when you got facial recognition on the iPhone. No, do they even make keys anymore you guys?

I remember growing up, my dad had so many keys. He had house keys and work keys and car keys. And he was kind of a hoarder so he had keys that he had found, and maybe one day they would open something. By the back door, right next to it, were these key hooks filled with keys. And I just thought, "This is the most powerful man in the world."

You'd almost think that anywhere in the world, he had a key to where we wanted to go, "I'm going to have a key like that." And now we live in a keyless world.

No, Jesus says, "I have the key. I have the key to the city of David." He's saying, "I have been given authority and access over this physical world and the spiritual world, over heaven and earth. I have access." He points to this in Matthew, chapter 28, verse 18 in the Great Commission. He says:

*"I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth."* Matthew 28:18 (NLT)

And this is really good news because He is holy and true and He holds the key.

The next thing—it kind of sets us up for this—is this door image. He said, “I have the key and I’ve opened up some doors and I’ve closed some others.” And if you think back to the Great Commission, when Jesus said, “All authority has been given to Me, then what did He say? “Now, go. Go and make disciples of all nations. Teach them to obey all that I have taught you. Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. And know that I will be with you always. You can trust that because I’m holy and I’m true.”

So the second thing that He points to are these doors. Take a look at this in verse 7 through 8. He says:

*“What he opens, no one can close; and what he closes, no one can open: I know all the things you do, and I have opened a door for you that no one can close.” Revelation 3:7-8 (NLT)*

So Jesus says, “I’ve got the key and I’ve decided to open some doors and close some others.” Now, what are these doors and what do they represent?

### **Open Doors = Ministry Opportunities**

An open door represents ministry opportunities. So what Jesus is telling the people in Philadelphia and all of us is that there are open doors around us, there are gospel opportunities. This is language that is used in the New Testament, like in 2 Corinthians. It says, “The Lord has opened a door of opportunity for me.” An opportunity to do what? Well, to live out the Great Commission, to lead with love, to love the people around us. To share the gospel with them. To advance His kingdom. He says, “There are open doors everywhere.”

I just want to ask you:

### **How are you with open doors?**

A lot of times we can get in, following Jesus, and looking to Him and we spend all of our time trying to avoid not doing this or trying to avoid those doors and those opportunities. How are you with the open doors in your life? Are you paying attention to the doors that God has opened, the people He has given you, the platform He has entrusted you with? Are you taking advantage of those open doors?

I think a lot of us get caught up in another set of doors. Those are closed doors. And what are closed doors?

### **Closed Doors = Suffering**

I think closed doors represent suffering. Right? That’s what suffering is. You got to a space in your life, you got to a season, you came to a door and you thought that at this time that door would be open, but it remained closed. You thought the door to money would be opened or the door to your career or the door to marriage or the door to having kids. You thought the door to that relationship... Or even this one—you thought the door

to personal health would be open. But it seems like it's just one closed door after another.

### **How are you with closed doors?**

How do you do in pain and suffering? I want you to think about that. Suffering and pain and closed doors really do a number on us. You've seen people who have walked through that. What's the natural response? "I just want to go lay down." At the end of a long day, "I just want to go to sleep." And that just kind of funnels its way into our every day life where we just become motion, just moving, but without any heart. We're asleep because it's just so heavy.

I get it. But Jesus looks at them and He says, "Hey, you're small in numbers, there are very few of you, but you've remained obedient, you've paid attention to the open doors and you walked through those and you don't crumble by the closed doors and I just want to celebrate you." He says, "Keep going. Remain faithful, because when you do," and this is where we get to the third image, "I'm going to make you a pillar. I'm going to make you a pillar." Look at this in verse 12. He says:

*"All who are victorious will become pillars in the Temple of my God, and they will never have to leave it."*

Once again, let's go back to the original context. This is a letter that they are getting—the people in Philadelphia—they are living in a time and space where they are hated and rejected by everyone. The Jewish people, we've already seen that the Jewish community Jesus called Satan's synagogue. They aren't even welcomed inside the Temple. They can't even go there.

And in all of Rome, the whole empire hates them. They are not accepted by them either. But Jesus said, "Hey, I don't want you to get caught up in that. I want you to pay attention to this. I'm going to make you a pillar."

And this would have hit them right in the heart because pillars were what held up the temples. Pillars were what held up all of the buildings in ancient Rome. And on those pillars, the most prominent people in the city would have their name etched into the stone and everyone would know: These are the successful people. These are the people we want to be like. These are the people who are welcome in our city.

And Jesus said, "Hey, I know. I know you're not on that list. I know you're not welcome in the Temple. But I'll tell you something. You'll be welcome in Mine. There is going to come a time when you will be a permanent fixture in a Christ filled eternity. Hold on."

I just want to put that out there to us too. It can get really messy when we begin to look at life and we're not accepted here, we're not wanted over there. And we begin to take that and project that onto God, "Maybe that's God's view of us as well."

Can I just tell you this? That is in no way a reflection of how God feels about you, the life that God has for you. And we need to hold onto that in this moment and not give way, not to back down but to know that there is a promise before you.

If I remain faithful, if I walk through the open doors and I handle the closed doors, there is a promise for me. My God loves me and wants me and I'm on His list and I'm etched into a pillar in His temple.

So what do we do in that gap? That promise is there. It's coming because it's from the One who is true and faithful. I know it's going to come true, but at the same time, we're living in this reality where we're not always wanted or loved. And it's not always an open door. Sometimes it's suffering.

### **How do we suffer well?**

So how do we suffer well? Suffering is coming. Whether you're in it right now or you're about to step into it. It's waiting for all of us. So how do we handle it in a way that doesn't swallow us up? How do we go through it in a way that we actually become mindful of the opportunities that we have and we allow them to form us in a way that nothing else could. We can learn from them. How do we do that? That's what we're going to be doing—super practical—with the rest of our time.

I want us to look at one word that Jesus uses for what He celebrates this church for. It's actually a word that is used for Jesus, Himself. And it's one characteristic trait that we all need to hold onto as well. Did you catch it? Look at it in verse 10. He says:

*"Because you have obeyed my command to persevere..."* Revelation 3:10a (NLT)

To persevere. What does that word mean?

### **Persevere: to endure a difficult situation without giving way**

To persevere is to endure a difficult situation without giving way. How? That is the secret. Right? How do we go through life and no matter what we face, no matter what we go through, we can continue moving forward? We may get knocked down seven times, but how do we stand up eight? What does that look like? I just want to give you three things for how we can do that.

### **PERSPECTIVE**

The first thing that we're going to need is perspective. We have to kind of bring everything back and have a new mind set when it comes to suffering. A lot of times when we go through life we think open doors equal good opportunities, closed doors bad opportunities and I need to avoid the closed doors at all costs.

God doesn't want me to go through pain and suffering. God only wants good things and happy things and, strangely, God only wants what I want. But that's not the perspective we need. And that's one that will actually lead to more pain and more suffering. The truth is, the perspective that we need is that:

## **There is always a purpose for my suffering**

Always. If Jesus has authority over heaven and earth and He holds the key. If He's in control, then no matter what I face it can be used and there is a purpose behind it, even if I can't see it. This will really mess with your theology. If you think that God is only leading you to good times and good moments and good feelings and more money, you've got to wrestle with the idea of who led Jesus into the desert to face the devil? God. Who led Jesus to the cross to be killed? God.

This is where faith really comes into play and to have this perspective, "God, I wouldn't have chosen this. I didn't want this. But I trust You're involved and You're going to carry me through it, even in this I believe that there is an opportunity for something You want to do." And when we get to that place, that perspective, that rightful view of God, He is holy, He is in control, and all powerful and true, it puts us in our right spot. And you know what that gives us? It gives us:

### **HUMILITY**

It gives us humility. Because there's this strange thing that happens when things are going well, it is easy for pride to kind of creep up. It's easy for us to believe the lie that we are in control of more things than we are. When things are going well and the money is right and the family is doing well—everything is moving in the right direction, we get this false sense of security.

Suffering comes along and humbles us. We're reminded that we are not as in control, we're not as powerful, we're just like the people in Philadelphia. We're small in the grand scheme of things. And the best place we can be is in a posture of humility. Realizing and recognizing and worshipping the One who is in control.

And when we're at the feet of Jesus, in that humble posture, realizing there is a God and we're not Him, that's when we can learn. We can learn:

### **OBEDIENCE**

That's what suffering will teach us and show us if we're really obedient or not... Obedience is talked about quite a bit in the Bible and I don't think we really love talking about how big of a deal it is. But these are the words of Jesus in John 14, verse 15. He says:

*"If you love me, obey my commandments."* John 14:15 (NLT)

If you love Me obey My commandments. Have you ever noticed that it is really easy to obey and to love God when things are going well? I'm all in. More Jesus all of the time. You start following Jesus, implement some stuff you learned on a Sunday, you've got better relationships at home, work is going better, you're like, "This is... More Jesus, please."

Remember that song we used to sing *Oceans?* Lord, take me where my feet are flat. Keep taking me. Lord, take me where my feet will wonder beyond what I can stand, take

me into the oceans of Your grace, God. I want to go where my feet can't touch. I trust you, God. Take me. And God takes us. And we go all the way out there because it's so good. This is so good.

And then God takes us into a storm. And you're like, "Hold up." And you start singing a different song. It's like, "Lord, take me back to the shore, back to the shore. I don't want any more. I don't want any more. Had enough."

You see this though. We learned last week in looking at the church in Ephesus that:

### **Obedience without love is incomplete**

I think we also need to see that:

### **Obedience without suffering is incomplete**

Obedience without suffering is incomplete as well. And it's not just enough to be obedient when things are going well, but what does it look like to be obedient when things are hard, "What does it look like to continue moving forward and persevering when I didn't ask for any of this?" What's the perspective? How do we take that on?

### **Suffering reveals who we are**

We need to realize that the testing is actually good for us. It reveals who we really are. I can say that I'm a lot of things, but when I'm tested, that's when it comes out. And that's what James points to in his book when he calls to us and says, Hey, when you're facing... He says:

*"Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing."* James 1:2-4 (NLT)

It's this idea that when the trials come, when the closed doors come, they are actually being used in a way to develop me to form me so that I will be complete, needing nothing.

We've got to be very clear what these opportunities are meant to do. They are not just meant to give us the things that we want, they are meant to be used to form us, to shape us into the image of Jesus.

### **Suffering reveals what we've built our lives on**

You see, suffering, more than anything else, reveals who we are. Suffering reveals who we are. And here's the hard truth that we all need to wrestle with. The person you are on your worst day and the person you are on your best day are the same person. We like to believe that on the best day, that's who I am, that's who I really am. On our worst days when we blow up like that and we explode on that person, that's not really us, "I don't know what that was. But that is not me."

You know, I met with a guy once. He made a racist comment. And so I sat down with him and I am talking to him and telling him, "Man, you can't say things like that. That's not okay." But then I began... I'm curious. I want to ask him, "How did you grow up. Tell me your story. How did you get to a place where you say things like that?"

He really shook me with his answer. He said, "No, no, no. That's not who I am and that's not what I'm about. I'm going to be honest with you, I just haven't been sleeping well lately."

I said, "Hold, on man. I've missed a lot of sleep in my days. I never woke up racist." You know what I mean? I never... There is no connection between those two things.

What it did, and what suffering does for all of us, it gets to that bottom layer. It gets to what is deep down in our hearts. And sometimes that gets exposed and sometimes that is painful. But we have to deal with it and we have to address it. Suffering reveals who we really are.

I just want to ask you, what comes out when you are suffering? What comes out when you bleed? It is one thing to be loving and kind when things are going well, but when you face the pressure, when you face the conflict, when you bleed, what comes out?

I would love to say when I bleed it looks like Jesus, the fruit of the Spirit would just come out: love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and faithfulness and self-control. But that's not always the case. Sometimes it's anger and bitterness and frustration.

For you, what is suffering revealing about who you really are? It's nothing to be shameful of. It's an opportunity to repent. An opportunity to say, "God, I didn't even know this was in here. Thank you for revealing it to me."

You see, suffering reveals who we are, but also suffering reveals what we've built our lives on. We can live under the illusion that we've really placed our life and our faith in Jesus and the He's the most important thing and He's the bedrock to it all until life hits, until a storm comes, and things get shaken and we realize, "Man, I was really obedient to that thing. I was really looking for my value and my place in this world in that thing. And now that it fell, it is hurting really, really bad. I didn't even know."

It's God's mercy that He allows things to shake like that. You've got to think He's writing this to this church in Philadelphia, this city that was ravished by earthquakes, this city that would build these beautiful buildings and these temples and these structures and then an earthquake would come through and rattle them and bring them all down to the ground. And in this letter Jesus is saying, "Hey, I want you to remember what I'm building can't be shaken. The life I'm giving you can't be taken. The door that I open can't be closed."

And every time we get to this space, once again, there is no shame. Every day when we come to terms with the fact that we've built our life on something else other than the

bedrock of our faith, Jesus, and the solid rock that He is, it's an opportunity to build again on the rock.

So as we're going through our lives, as He reveals what we are and what we've built our life on, it's an opportunity to respond. Are we going to allow this humble posture to teach us obedience?

And then the last thing that we need is:

## **COMMUNITY**

I want you to think about this. it's fascinating to me that when we talk with people who stop going to church, they came out and you're like, "Hey, man. I haven't seen you for a while, what's going on?" And they will be like, "Well, it's been a really tough season. I'm really going through a lot so I've kind of pulled back." My mind almost explodes. That's the whole thing we're doing over there. It's for the hard times. It's for the struggle. It's to have faith that we can persevere through any circumstance. You need people.

But it's almost like human instinct that when we hurt or when we begin to suffer, it's to isolate, it's to withdraw, it's to be alone, "I don't want to see anybody."

Think about that. If you are in a group right now, chances are that if you're in a difficult season, a tough week, you get to that Thursday and you're trying to find any reason you can not to go before people. What is so broken in us? That's the number one place that we should be. We need community. We need this relational web around us so that when we struggle, when we stumble, when we fall we have people there who are not going to leave us there and are going to help us persevere through a difficult situation.

I'll tell you, one of the biggest pieces of feedback we get from people who stop going to group is this. It wasn't real, "I showed up. I went and it was the same thing every week. Everyone is doing great. The best days of our lives. Great appetizers. We would pray. Nothing personal but just general. And then we would leave. Who wants to be part of that?"

You ever been in a group with someone for months or years and you get to this spot and he is like, "Hey, I just want everyone in the group to know that I signed my divorce papers today." And you had no idea he was even struggling.

What are we doing? This is the space that if God is who He says He is, He's the perfect one, He's the holy one, He's in control and we humble ourselves it will give us permission to embrace our brokenness. We don't have to suffer alone. We can go first and say, "Hey, these things are going well, but also, this over here—I'm really struggling. I need some prayer. I need some advice. I need some encouragement." Leaders, go first. Share what's really going on.

And if you've backed out of a group or if you've been inconsistent or you've been showing up demolishing those free appetizers, I just want to encourage you to get back into group, real group, life-giving relationships.



If you don't have a group, but if you want that space, you want those people around you, we have spots for you. They are Awaken groups. Here's what they are. These are short-term groups. You can get connected with a handful of people to do life with, to figure out what it looks like not to just come to church on Sunday, but to live and to be developed into the image of Jesus and to not do it alone. Community is for you.

You can go to our app. If you don't have it, download it. It's right there on the homepage. That's how you can get signed up for one of these groups.

[tpcc.org/awaken-groups](http://tpcc.org/awaken-groups)

And I'll tell you, you can do all of these things. You can have that mind shift. You can have a new perspective. You can humble yourself. You can be obedient in the bad days and in the good. You can surround yourself in community and I promise you it will help you suffer well. You'll be better for it.

But I'll tell you you're still missing the key to it all. It's Jesus. The only way we can truly suffer well, the only hope to truly persevere is by faith in Jesus. Take Him seriously. Be obedient to Him and trust that He is with us always.

And I want you to think about this. I want you to go back to that key, that door, that pillar. Jesus makes the claim that He has the key, He has all authority, He has access to it all. But I want you to think about how He got that key. All religions, all people you meet who say that they have the access, they have the authority, they have the way to go through life, Jesus is the only One who opened the door from this side.

Jesus, God Himself, became man, wrapped Himself in flesh and bones. He lived the perfect life. Our God knows what it is like to suffer. Our God came to the end. I want you to think about this. He was obedient every step of the way. He went through the open doors.

But our God also knows what it is like to meet a closed door. As He sat in the garden and He prayed and He knew the cross was what awaited Him, He knew the suffering that was coming, He did the most human thing you and I would ever do, He banged on the door and He wanted out.

He said, "God, I don't want to go through with this." But then He came to this space, it's the space we all have to live in. He said, "But not My will but Yours be done." That's the spot when we know we're really being obedient. But it's not just for show, it's not just for cultural Christians, but when our will and God's will collide, what do we do then? Will we be obedient then?

We see that Jesus was truly victorious because He stepped out of that garden and He went to the cross, the perfect life, perfect sacrifice for me and you.

Here's the thing. This is the hope for me and you. When people saw the cross, no one saw an open door. No one saw an opportunity. They saw suffering and suffering alone.



But if there is hope in the cross, then there is hope for me and you and our suffering as well.

Jesus would rise three days later proving that He truly did have the power to defeat sin and death and He holds the key. He holds the key to it all. And He is inviting us to be a part of this life. He's done all of this and He stands on this side inviting me and you into it. What we have to do is believe. Believe that He is the One who is holy and true. Believe that He is the One who went to the cross and resurrected.

And on this side He extends an invitation. We already know how He is going to respond. It's on me and you. Look at the words of Jesus in chapter 3, verse 20. He says:

*"Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends."* Revelation 3:20 (NLT)

That is there for anyone today. If you want to go through life in a way that you have purpose in everything, that you have strength to persevere through the closed doors and the open doors no matter what you face, that you want to know what it is like to become a pillar in the temple of God, to be welcomed in as family of God, that is available to you. Do not leave here without talking with someone.

Then for all of us, I pray that we are awakened to this idea that we can and we have what it takes to suffer well because He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world. There is nothing that we can't face. There is nothing that we can't handle.

So in this moment at all of our campuses I would love it if you would just stand to your feet. Stand to your feet. I want you to remember this moment in time. It might be hard for you right now to stand because you're remembering the suffering, you're remembering the pain, you know what awaits you on the other side of these doors.

But I want you to be reminded of this, God is with you and He was faithful then, He's going to be faithful now. He has a plan and a purpose for your life. And He has the ability to strengthen you for the mission and life that He has for you. So in this moment I just want you to dig your feet in deep, to come before this holy God and to worship. To confess to Him and let it be revealed who we really are and who we want to be.

Would you join us in this moment of worship?

Father, we come before You today and we want You to help us. We are humbled. We've been rocked by this world. We've been brought to our knees by this world. We've been exposed by this world.

But, God, we don't want to live on our backs. We don't want to live sleep walking through life. God, we want to have faith that You are who You say You are. We want to believe that You have the power. We want to believe that You have a plan. We want to believe that You are using all of this to form us. God, give us faith.

Father, strengthen us. God, I pray that You would help us to suffer well, to be obedient even when it's difficult. God, that we would be obedient even at the closed door, to be



obedient even when our love isn't reciprocated, to be obedient no matter what. God, help us have the courage to embrace our brokenness and to stand together united.

And God, in this moment of worship we lift our eyes to You. To the One who holds the key, God. To the One who has all authority, to the One who is holy and true, the One who never changes, the One who is authentic, the One who is here and present in this moment.

God, I pray that in this moment right now everything else fades away. God, we make a promise through this declaration right here that we will be obedient. God, if there has been anything that we have built our life on, God, I pray that we let it go and we stand here in this moment on the firm foundation, on faith in Jesus Christ, on His blood, on His sacrifice. And if we do that, God, we know that there is not a storm that can come that can move us. God, allow us to be pillars in Your temple, Father.

Jesus, we love You. It's in Your perfect and holy name we pray. Amen

