

Open Doors

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, January 30, 2022

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us today! Whether you are here in person or watching via the livestream you are most welcome. Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take notes. We have much to cover in a short space of time.

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 1

This morning I want to offer a standalone sermon based upon the following passage...

Colossians 4:2–4 (NIV, Emphasis Mine)

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3 And pray for us, too, that God may **open a door** for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. 4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

FYI 1 – Herein Paul called the church at Colossae to the disciplines of prayer, watchfulness and gratitude (v. 2). However, he also called them to remember him in prayer! In particular, he petitioned them to pray for God to “open a door” for the gospel message. That is, Paul sought for the Lord to sovereignly orchestrate or provide opportunities for effective ministry (v. 3b), along with the capacity to maximize those opportunities in due season (v. 4). Clearly Paul valued “open doors” of ministry!

FYI 2 – In fact, this is not the only time the apostle speaks to the concept of “open doors” in Christian service...

1 Corinthians 16:5–9a (Emphasis Mine)

5 After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you—for I will be going through Macedonia. 6 Perhaps I will stay with you for a while, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go. 7 For I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. 8 But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, 9 because a **great door for effective work has opened to me . . .**

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 2

THUS SAID...

NOTE 1 – The student of Scripture notes many opportunities for ministry presented throughout the NT record. We could spend a significant number of weeks examining the doors God the Father opened for both His Son, Jesus Christ, and for the emissaries of Christ in the pages of the four Gospels and the Book of Acts—doors they rightly perceived and passed through, experiencing divine result in kind.

NOTE 2 – With the time we have this morning, let us consider a selection of passages from the Book of Acts. For those who may not know, Acts serves as the historical record of the Early Church, chronicling the exploits of the first generation of believers following the Ascension of Christ.

ACCOUNT #1

Acts 2:1–13 [Following the Ascension and Days in Prayer – App. 120 Christians]

1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?” 13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

Q. What do we see herein?

A1. We see a door for ministry beginning to open in their midst.

A2. We also see that the apostles have the wherewithal to pass through!

Acts 1:14

14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.

FYI – At this point the apostle Peter preaches a fearless sermon that responds to the query of the crowd, proclaiming Christ as the victorious Savior and Lord who has conquered death, hell and the grave (i.e., despite the opposition He experienced)! That is, a door for ministry presented itself and Peter and his peers had the courage to avail themselves of this God-moment!

Q. What was the result of rightly perceiving and passing through this “open door”?

Acts 2:37–41

37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

LET US CONTINUE ON...

ACCOUNT #2a

Acts 3:1–4a

1 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. 2 Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. 4 Peter looked straight at him, as did John.

Q. What do we see herein?

A1. We see a door for ministry beginning to open in their midst.

A2. We also see that these apostles have the wherewithal to pass through!

Acts 3:4b–6

4 . . . Then Peter said, “Look at us!” 5 So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. 6 Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”

Q. What was the result of perceiving and passing through this “open door”?

Acts 2:7–8

7 Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. 8 He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.

KEY – Amazingly, the effective ministry achieved through this open door led to MORE open doors...

ACCOUNT #2b

Acts 3:9–11

9 When all the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. 11 While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon’s Colonnade.

Q. What do we see herein?

A1. We see a door for ministry beginning to open in their midst.

A2. We also see these apostles have the wherewithal to pass through!

Acts 3:12

12 When Peter saw this, he said to them . . .

FYI – Herein Peter again preaches Christ fearlessly to the gathered multitudes (cf. v. 12b–26)

THUS SAID...

Q. What was the result of perceiving and passing through this “open door”?

Acts 4:1–4 (Emphasis Mine)

1 The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. 2 They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. 3 They seized Peter and John and, because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. 4 But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about **five thousand**.

LET US CONTINUE ON...

ACCOUNT #3

Acts 8:26

26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.”

Q. What do we see herein?

A. The Lord directing Philip unto an open door...

Acts 8:27–29

27 So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. 29 The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

Q. What do we see herein?

A1. We see a door for ministry beginning to open in his midst.

A2. We also see this figure has the wherewithal to pass through!

Acts 8:30–34

30 Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked.

31 “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

32 This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:

“He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
and as a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

33 In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.
Who can speak of his descendants?
For his life was taken from the earth.” [Isa. 53:7–8]

34 The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?”

Q. What do we see herein?

A1. We see a door for ministry cracking wide-open in his midst.

A2. We also see this figure has the wherewithal to pass through!

Acts 8:35–40

35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

36 As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” . . . 38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. 40 Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

KEY – Philip was “translated” to Azotus, wherein he would see even more fruitful on his journey to Caesarea!

Q. What was the result of perceiving and passing through this “open door”?

A. Salvation for the eunuch, impacting of the court of the Kandake and beyond.

LET US CONTINUE ON...

ACCOUNT #4**Acts 16:6–10**

6 Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. 7 When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. 8 So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. 9 During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” 10 After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Q. What do we see herein?

A. We see disciples who are rightly discerning closed v. open doors for ministry.

Acts 16:11–14a

11 From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. 12 From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

13 On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. 14 One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God.

Q. What do we see herein?**A1.** We see a door for ministry beginning to open in their midst.**A2.** We also see these figures possess the wherewithal to pass through!**Acts 16:14b–15**

14 . . . The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message. 15 When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. “If you consider me a believer in the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my house.” And she persuaded us.

Q. What was the result of perceiving and passing through this “open door”?**A.** Salvation for Lydia and her household; the first documented convert in continental Europe!

LET US CONSIDER ONE MORE ACCOUNT...

ACCOUNT #5**Acts 16:25**

25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.

Q. What do we see herein?**A.** We see a door for ministry beginning to open in his midst (i.e., listening prisoners).**Acts 16:26–30**

26 Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone’s chains came loose. 27 The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul shouted, “Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!”

29 The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

Q. What do we see herein?**A1.** We see a door for ministry opening in their midst.**A2.** We also see these men had the wherewithal to pass through!**Acts 16:31–34**

31 They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. 33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. 34 The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

Q. What was the result of perceiving and passing through these “open doors”?**A.** Possible impact of the prisoners in Philippi AND salvation for the jailer and his household!

TRANSITIONS

We have taken the time read a large amount of material from the Book of Acts re: “open doors.” It should be noted that many more examples could be provided from this work alone, let alone the four Gospels and the rest of Scripture! This is but the tip of the proverbial iceberg. Thus said...

Q. Why has the Pastor taken the time to present this material and touch upon this topic?

1) Personal Application

I believe that this message should have personal application for each of us. We should be a people who, like Paul, seek open doors for effective ministry (cf. Col 4:2–4). Like Paul et al., we should also seek to properly perceive and pass through said open doors as they present themselves, experiencing fruitful ministry in kind. In light of this...

Q1. To what degree do you pray for open doors?

Q2. To what degree do you rightly perceive open doors?

Q3. To what degree do you faithfully pass through open doors?

Q. Could this be why we fail to see the results the E. Church experienced?

2) Corporate Application

Moreover, I believe that we are entering into a season of open doors at New Life...

a) Current Ministries (C.Y.C., Infant/Toddler Nursery and Children’s Church)

b) Upcoming Ministries (Quabbin, Stetson, our Women’s Home, Bolivia, etc.)

James 1:22

22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

CONCLUSION

NOTE 1 – Those who wish to give online may do so at www.NewLifeBarre.org. Those who wish to give in person can utilize the offering boxes located throughout the church facility. Thank you for your faithfulness in supporting this local work of Christ.

NOTE 2 – Ministry schedule...

Prayer – Sunday at 8:45am

Sunday School – Sunday at 9:15am

CYC – Tuesday from 3–4pm and 4–5pm

Weekly Study – Thursday at 6:30–7:30pm

Women’s Ministry – 2nd Tuesday at 6:30pm

Men’s Breakfast – 2nd Saturday at 9am

Potluck – Final Sunday of the Month