

Discussion Guide – All Things New

The Letter to the Church in Philadelphia - Revelation 3:7-13

1. “How are we all doing?” (*High, Low & Buffalo*)

- i. High – What was a high point in your week? What was good or went well?
- ii. Low – What was a low point in your week? What was a challenge, disappointment, or struggle?
- iii. Buffalo – What was something else that happened this week? It can be anything – interesting, random, weird, surprising, or completely normal!

2. “The book of Revelation was read out loud to the churches, and there was a blessing for the reader! Can someone read Revelation 3:7-13 out loud? Try to read a little *slower* than usual. For the rest of us, try to imagine what John saw as we listen. Can we “see” what we hear?”

Have one person read this week’s passage out loud while everyone else listens. You can close your eyes if you’d like!

3. “What did you picture as you listened? What of the images were interesting or compelling? What did you find hopeful, strange, or even scary?”

For example, how did you picture Jesus opening and shutting doors with a key? What kind of open door cannot be shut and what kind of door cannot be opened? How do you imagine the temple and the New Jerusalem?

4. “Revelation is closely connected to the Old Testament. Can someone read Isaiah 22:20-22?”

- i. What similarities do you notice between these verses in Isaiah and Revelation 3:7-8?
- ii. How might Jesus who holds the key of David offer comfort to the church in Philadelphia?

5. “John tells us, the readers, to “hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.” Imagine you were sitting beside John as Jesus was talking to him. What do you hear Jesus saying in Revelation 3:7-13?”

- i. What do you feel curious about or confused by? Is there anything that feels clear, relevant, or powerful?
- ii. The church in Philadelphia had likely been excluded from the synagogue – the door had been ‘shut’ in their faces. Being kicked out from the synagogue could have led to direct persecution from the Roman government, but Jesus reminds the church that He has chosen them. Where in your life have you experienced exclusion? How does Jesus’ reminder that he has accepted you shape your perspective?

- iii. Like Smyrna, Jesus has no warning for the church, but He does command them to 'hold on' to what they have (v. 11).
 - a. What helps you 'hold on' when things are tough? What brings you hope, encouragement, or strength to keep going?
- iv. What promise does Jesus make to the church? How does that promise resonate with you?

OPTIONAL – If you'd like, break into smaller groups for this last section. You could also have one person responding to all of the questions at once rather than discussing one question at a time.

6. "Revelation 1:3 says that 'those who hear these words and take them to heart' are blessed."

- a. What did you 'see' or 'hear' most clearly from the passage? What resonated with you? What picture or idea do you keep returning to?
- b. Even though Philadelphia had 'little strength,' they remained faithful.
 - a. Have you had a season with 'little strength' when following Jesus? What did faithfulness look like in that season?
 - b. Is there an area in your life where Jesus is calling you to keep going and remain faithful?
 - c. How do Jesus' words, "I know you have little strength," encourage you?
- c. The church in Philadelphia was facing opposition from certain people, but Jesus promises that the roles will be reversed. It would be Jesus that would make this happen (v. 9), not anyone else.
 - a. Where do you see injustice in your life or in the world?
 - b. Who or what are you trusting to bring about that justice?
- d. How has feeling weak or limited impacted a decision you had to make?
- e. What does it mean to you that Jesus promises a permanent place to those who remain faithful?

7. "Thanks for sharing _____. Can I pray for you?" Take time to pray for each other.

8. "Thanks everyone! Same time next week? Who will lead / host / bring snack / etc.?"