

December 3rd, 2017  
Pinecrest Baptist Church  
a.m.

Sermon Series: What the Spirit Saith Unto the Churches  
Sermon #7 Title: The Church that Got it Right!  
Sermon #7 Text: (Revelation 3:7-13)

I read this week from the National Catholic Register an article citing the World Christian Encyclopedia, giving the statistics on all so-called Christian denominations in the world. The article is from February of 2016 so it may be a little off now, but it goes something like this . . .

Independents: 22,000 denominations  
Protestants: 9000 denominations  
Marginals: 1600 denominations  
Ortho-dox: 781 denominations  
Catholics: 242 denominations  
Angli-cans: 168 denominations

According to someone who works at the Washington Post – there is an estimated 37 million churches in the world today – To hone that down for us, there are 39 different Baptist associations/conventions/or groups in the world –

- It is no wonder people ask – With so many denominations, and so many churches, it is impossible to know which ones are right!
- without the Bible – you’d be exactly right . . .
- But this morning, we look at one church that Jesus said Got it right and it is that church that we need to learn from.

Philadelphia – the sixth letter in the letters to the churches of Asia Minor – another city filled with Roman temples, and pagan worship – but it also had one of the Lord’s bright and shining churches that every church ought to want to be like.

## I. The Absolute Perfection of Jesus

\*Note – When the Lord identified Himself to this church, He identified Himself as the one who never gets it wrong.

- He is the Master with no mistakes! – So what He is going to tell them, “Is not too good to be true!”

- When Jesus says something is wrong, there is no argument, excuse, alibi, or explanation – whatever He says is wrong, is wrong . . .

- When Jesus says something is right . . . it’s no trick – there is no fine print, no punchline or hidden catch, it is right, and can freely be received and embraced.

\*Note – Now notice the qualities of Jesus that He calls to their attention . . .

### **A. In Moral and Divine Purity – “He that is Holy”**

#### 1.) “Hagios” in the Greek language

a.) – to borrow from Dr. Strong – it speaks of being “Physically Pure, Morally Blameless, and Sacredly Consecrated.”

\*Note – In the sense that this word is used, There is absolutely no impurities, iniquities, infirmities, or inequities, mixed in within Jesus. – He is Unmixed, and Unadulterated Purity both in his Moral Construction, or Divine Composition!

- Now this is what all of heaven knows about Jesus!  
- Isaiah 6:3 – when the old prophet got to look into heaven he saw the angels - *“And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.”*

- It was this holiness of the Lord that Isaiah saw, that made him realize just how wicked and sinful he really was – It made him shout in verse 5 – *“Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the*

*midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."*

\*Note – Fast forward almost 500 years later, John the Revelator got to look into the same heaven, and he saw the four creatures of heaven singing the same tune – Revelation 4:8 – *"And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."*

- In short, Jesus Christ is everything that is right, and pure, and holy, and He has absolutely nothing that is not!

**B. In Factual and Final Certainty** - "He that is True"

1.) "aleythenos" - True, and Truthful

\*Note – Only on earth and under the sun do we have to distinguish between what is true and what is not true. – There was no lie, no error, no falsehood before Lucifer's fall.

- There is no lie in heaven, or from heaven, or to be contended with in heaven –

- But on earth, true has to be distinguished from false, and Jesus reminds them that He is "Aleythenos"

a.) True – In the broadest sense of the word, it is still categorically narrow. – In the context of the Philadelphians, their city was full of religions. They were saturated with the superstitious, and overrun with the Roman faith.

- It is in the middle of the religious cacophony of the culture, Jesus reiterated what He had always taught, and what the Bible teaches, there are no other religions, there are no other gods, there are no other ideas . . .

- He is the TRUTH making all others who say different are FALSE.- Jesus is the EXCLUSIVE Truth

- This is another reiteration of our Lord's announcement in John 14:6 – "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

b.) Truthful – The word also is used to describe being "truthful in character"

\*Note – The One that is the TRUTH, cannot be a disseminator of UNTRUTH. –

\*Note – What Jesus teaches in Doctrine is the Truth  
What Jesus reveals in Assessment is the Truth

(Now if you're on the right side of Jesus, When He pronounces good, it is never too good to be true.

- If you're on the wrong side of Jesus when He pronounces judgment – it is always too true to be good.)

- He is Absolutely perfect in Moral and Divine Purity, in Factual and Final Certainty, but also in Earthly and Spiritual Authority

**C. In Earthly and Spiritual Authority** – "He that hath the key of David, He that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth;"

\*Note – This is a direct reference to an Old Testament history. In Isaiah 22, the Lord had rebuked and condemned a man named Shebna who was the royal treasurer over the house of David . . .

- Shebna had abused that office for the benefit of himself, and the Lord God had enough . . . and he said to him . . .

Isaiah 22:17-22 – "Behold, the LORD will carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and will surely cover thee. He will surely violently turn and toss thee like a ball into a large country: there shalt thou die, and there the chariots of thy glory shall be the shame of thy lord's house. And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah: And I will clothe him with

thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.”

- Now from an earthly standpoint, Jesus is the one with the Key to the throne of David, the house of David, and the earthly ruler of national Israel. – that is the authority of Jesus on earth – pertaining to Israel.

- From a Spiritual Sense – “the keys are to the Kingdom of God”

- He is the gatekeeper – He holds all the keys –

- The keys to death and hell

- the keys to God’s dominion on earth

\*Note – The one with the keys is the one with both Power and Permission –

- When He opens the door of the kingdom – “it is not by vote, committee, permission, or regard for the opinion of all humanity. – It will be open!

- When He closes the door to the kingdom – like the door on Noah’s ark – it is shut, and all of humanity cannot pry it open.

- This is why, when the Spirit opens the door, and swings wide open the narrow gate for a sinner to enter, he must enter . . .

- That is why when the Spirit opens the door, and swings wide open the narrow gate to the harvest – the soul winner MUST harvest!

- When the Spirit of God is convicting, moving, driving, and burning in the bones – the world cannot stop it. – they may resist it, quench it, reject it, or blaspheme it – but they cannot stop it from coming.

- When the Spirit of God is not convicting, moving, driving and burning bones – 10 million preachers cannot manufacture it.

All of that being said, Jesus identified Himself to this church in Absolute Perfection – perfection in Divine Nature, perfection in Final Discernment....

## II. The Ideal Appraisal From Jesus

\*Note – In verse 8, our Lord expresses to Philadelphia what He expressed to each and every church, and what we are to hear through the Spirit today . . . “I know thy works.”

- If you will ever let that settle in on you, and soak down through to your deepest thoughts it will totally sober up your life!

- When Jesus says, “I know thy works” – He is saying, “not only do I know what you say you do – I know what you are actually doing . . . I know the eternal value of what you are doing . . . I know what you actually are intending to do, and what you actually have done!” – Meaning there is nothing for you to inform him of.

- When we say, “You’re going to have to explain yourself to Jesus” that won’t be so you can inform Him of anything – that will be so you will say with your mouth exactly what He sees with His eyes.”

- Now that works both ways – not only does Jesus see and say what is good and right, but He sees and says what is sinful and evil.

When He addresses this church, there is something that is glaringly missing – the Faults they didn’t have!

### ***A. The Faults they Didn’t Have***

\*Note – Thus far, in each of the previous churches except for Smyrna, Jesus addressed particular problems that if they

didn't' do something about they were going to suffer particular consequences. – What were those problems?

1.) Ephesus was Doctrinally sound, but had no active love for Jesus.

2.) Pergamos was a church that had no Doctrinal conviction, and allowed false teachers to influence their people.

3.) Thyatira had embraced worldliness –  
- they had presented Grace as lasciviousness  
- they allowed a woman to teach their people that they didn't have to be obedient to the scriptures, and that fornication wasn't a big deal, that worldly living was not something to shun, but was perfectly acceptable to God, and could even be embraced.

4.) Sardis was a church filled with lost people – they were religious, and popular, but spiritually dead and what ministry was left was dying.

\*Note – Now all of that being said, the church in Philadelphia

- Didn't have any heart problems – their hearts were where they were supposed to be –

- Didn't have any doctrinal problems – what they taught was acceptable to the Lord Jesus

- Didn't have any moral problems – they had separated themselves from the world . . .

\*Note – Now no church is a perfect church, but Philadelphia was one church that had nothing wrong worth Jesus mentioning.

- In each of those other cases the Lord rebuked – Lovelessness, Tolerating False Teaching, Embracing of Worldliness, and Lost People living like they were saved!

\*Note – Now if you want to hear from the lips of Jesus the things that He rebukes in a church, take a look at those – Philadelphia had none of them.

### ***B. The Faithfulness They Did Have***

1.) Spiritual Strength – “thou hast a little strength”

a.) “mikros – dynamis”

- most likely this is not a reference to the degree of their strength, but the quantity available – indicating that this church was small in number.

\*Note – It is interesting, someone may have looked at them and said, “They’re just little group of people.” – but Jesus said, “They’re just a little group of dynamite.”

\*Note – A Church doesn't have to be large to be faithful – it has to be faithful to be faithful. – This small group of people like Thyatira, which was the city with the smallest population, held the attention of Jesus as much as the largest church in the Lord's kingdom.

- What energy and power they had, they used it for the Lord.

- What fellowship they had with Jesus was vibrant –

- What worship and discipleship was going on was with vigor –

- They had given the faculties of their lives to be servants of the Lord.

2.) Biblical Loyalty – “has kept my word”

a.) the word for “keep” is to “watch, to guard, to observe.”

\*Note – This is a broad word that speaks of many different concepts, to which believers are to be active in all of them.

- To keep means to watch like a sailor watched the stars

- To keep means to guard like soldier protecting an enemy

- To keep means to observe like a student training for a profession

- The Lord may have meant one of these things, but most likely all of these things . . . for all of them are to be the attitude of the Christian . . .

- This is a church that never thought outside the Book!

3.) Gospel Devotion – “hast not denied my name”

a.) Like all other cities in Asia Minor, there were temples to all kinds of false gods, and meeting houses for all different religions – and like all other cities, there was great pressure to deny the exclusivity of Jesus . . .

\*Note – The church at Philadelphia refused to compromise the name of Jesus.

(Now let me tell you there are people that believe they are not compromising when they say, “I believe in Jesus” . . . but I also believe that God allows for other religions who don’t know or believe in Jesus . . . – That is the exact same as denying the name of the Biblical Jesus . . .

Acts 4:10; 12 – “be it known unto you, by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth . . . neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved.”

- Philadelphia may very well have been small in number due to that very fact –

- We find in scripture several occasions when once people discovered the exclusivity of Jesus, and the intensity of the gospel . . . turned and walked away and refused to join in . . .

- Of course we all know the rich young ruler – Christ was too hard on his worldly feelings – so he left . . .

**John 6:65-66** – “And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given

unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.”

**Acts 5** – after the Lord killed Ananias and Sapphira, and allowed the Apostles to work some powerful miracles – vs 12-13 – “And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.”

{\*note – It is ironic that the next verse says that believers were added to the Lord – when the power fell – sight seers left, and believers joined in}

- Nonetheless, this was a church that was devoted to the gospel . . .

4.) Willing Endurance – “thou hast kept the word of my patience.” – vs 10

a.) they were steadfast, and unmoved by the ebbs and flows of social pressures and acceptances.

\*Note – It is not unlikely that persecution of believers was alive and well in their area, since it was in the surrounding cities.

\*Note – We know at least there was an “opposing” Synagogue that gave them either resistance, ridicule, or worse because Jesus mentions them in verse 9.

\*Note – Whatever the “Synagogue of Satan” which was previously mentioned in Smyrna – (the other church with no rebuke) was doing to them, they patiently endured!

\*Note – Note this! – Don’t ever get the idea that the Lord surely wouldn’t expect you to put up with hardship, difficulty, and trouble – just to come to church! – YES HE DOES!

- He took enough note to commend them for doing so!

- When Church is not worth the trouble, Jesus is not worth your time!
- To the Philadelphian church, the assembling together, the listening, the singing, the serving, the teaching, the learning, the fellowship, the love, the act of giving, the act of sitting before the Word of God, was worth – whatever trouble it brought them, physically, socially, emotionally, economically – They endured with patience, not with attitude.

\*Note – When we look at this church that according to Jesus, got it right, we notice the Faults they don't have, and the Faithfulness they do have . . . now that's the kind of appraisal I want for this church.

### III. The Coveted Provision from Jesus – “I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.”

- \*Note – What a provision – the kingdom door is open!
- the door of “entrance” and it is an inviting door
  - this is the door every gospel minded person on earth longs to have
    - it is the door of access to win the Lost – without hindrance
    - it is the door of access to all the resources provided by the Spirit of God . . .

\*Note – Who did the Lord say that He would give greater resources, and responsibilities too? – The Faithful!

Luke 16:10 – “He that is faithful in that which his least, is faithful in that which is much”

Luke 19:16-17 – the parable of the pounds, or the talents – “Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.”

- That little church in Philadelphia had been faithful in little, and so Jesus said, “I've opened the door for you to access all you need from heaven, to do all you can on earth.”

### IV. The Ultimate Promises from Jesus

\*Note – Now here are the promises that Jesus foretells this little church.

**A. Total Vindication** – “I will make them to come and worship before thy feet and to know that I have loved thee.”- vs 9

- 1.) The synagogue of satan, and the hollow hearted hypocrites will know the shame of their guilt, and see the glory of my grace on you.

- Jesus told them point blank – all of your enemies will eat their own words – they will see that you have been right – but not because “THEY” have been right, but because they have been repeating what's RIGHT about Jesus!

(Preacher, you mean Jesus is going to Embarrass those people, and He is going to Humiliate them, while he Elevates the believers? – That doesn't seem like Jesus - Read what He has said all throughout the Bible . . .

Psalm 37:6 – “And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.”

Luke 13:28 – “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.”

Luke 12:28 – “Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God:”

Isaiah 41:11 – The Lord told Israel what would happen to their enemies – “Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.”

\*note – Now this is not to satisfy some sense of fleshly pride – but it is to demonstrate before the eyes of the wicked that:  
1.) truth was knowable – 2.) truth was known 3.) they too could have known it -

**B. No Tribulation** – “I will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world.”

\*Note – (I believe that this statement cannot be taken any other way than it sounds – that is the promise to the faithful that they will not go through the tribulation period to come.)

- Do you mean to tell me that the Lord said that to a church that would cease to exist by the time the tribulation got here?

- Yyyyep . . . 1.) Because they didn’t know when Jesus was coming, and the Lord always instructed to watch – but 2.) This is a specific message to Philadelphia, but it is a general message to who? – He who has ears to hear!

\*Note – As in all the letters the Lord was speaking to the church He wrote, and through the church He wrote to all who would hear!

- The Bible tells us there is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit – Romans 8:1

\*Note – Here is that glorious promise to them that they were not “looking for Antichrist to come” but they were looking for Christ!

**C. Sure Glorification** – “I come quickly hold fast that thou hast”

1.) A Crown to Wear – “thy crown”

2.) A Beauty To See – “a pillar in the temple of my God”

3.) A Name to Have

- the name of my God

- the name of my address – “New Jerusalem” - 77777

Conclusion – “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” – vs 13