

Doors

“Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and when a door was opened unto me in the Lord, I had no relief for my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother” (2 Cor. 2:12-13).

Troas is a familiar city to Bible readers. It is remembered as the place where Paul and his company received the so called “Macedonian call” (Acts 16:8-9). It was to this city that Paul came when he was bound for Jerusalem at the conclusion of his third journey and where he met with disciples to break bread on the week’s first day (Acts 20:7). It was here Paul had left a cloak with a person named Carpus and which cloak he asked Timothy to bring with him when he came to see Paul just prior to his execution (2 Tim. 4:13). And it was in Troas Paul had somehow expected to meet Titus bringing word to him as to how his first letter to the Corinthians had been received and where he was so disappointed that Titus was not there that he crossed on over to Macedonia hoping to meet (which he did) his messenger there. Although that door had been opened to him, Paul was so anxious to have word from Titus that he could not take advantage of the opportunity in Troas.

A door is an access from one place to another. Sometimes it may be open and sometimes it may be closed. In the parable of the ten virgins, the five foolish virgins had opportunity to enter into the marriage feast with the bridegroom when he came. They foolishly failed to make adequate preparation to do that and when the bridegroom did come, they weren’t ready. When they finally did get to the marriage feast, they found the door to that feast shut to them (Matt. 25:10-13).

Sometimes there are great opportunities for reception to the gospel. Paul and Barnabas spend the years of their journey together (Acts 13-14) in breaking new ground preaching to folk about Christ Jesus to audiences who had never heard such preaching before. And hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people (like people at Pentecost) gladly received their word. When Paul and Barnabas returned to the church which had sent them out on that journey they reported that God had “opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles” (Acts 14:27). Some years later Paul wrote the Corinthians that he would remain at Ephesus until Pentecost because “a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries” (1 Cor. 16:9). There are times when people seem to “hang on the word” eagerly intent on catching every utterance the speaker makes. Would to God that such were true at all times! Alas, it is not: Satan has a way of turning attention of men who need the gospel to other matters, and thus they become indifferent and unresponsive. He snatched the word out of the heart of hearers, as Jesus explained in His parable of the sower (Luke 8:12). And Isaiah spake of the attitude of many who alas, reject the word: “Go to this people and say by hearing ye shall hear and shall in no wise understand and seeing ye shall see and shall in no wise perceive; for this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed less haply they should perceive with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts and should turn again and I should heal them” (Mt. 13:14-15, Isa. 6:9-10).

We should watch for those times when doors are open to us and have courage to take advantage of them, for unfortunately open doors do not always stay open. The open door at Ephesus for Paul was abruptly shut by a riot provoked by Demetrius and the silversmiths with him (Acts 20:1). God sometimes opens doors for us as he did for the church in Philadelphia (Rev. 3:8), and our earnest desire to reach others with the word should make us pray that God will also open for us a door for the word (Col. 4:3).

Equally important we should never forget one of the most tender invitations of the scriptures given to a complacent, satisfied church who had shut out the Lord: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man will hear my voice and open the door I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20). Let us ever be watchful for doors that open to us to share the gospel with them but let us equally welcome the Lord's knock at the door of our own heart that we might give Him entry therein so that we might have sweet fellowship with Him!

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