

To the Saints of God at Topeka, Kansas
March 13, 2016

The Church at Philadelphia - Part 2

Rev. 3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name.

9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

**I. Being One Accord Can Never Be an Excuse for Being Lukewarm or Timid –
*Thou hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name (Rev. 3:8). Thou
has kept the Word of My patience (Rev. 3:10)***

Beloved, we have an affirmative duty as a church to be of one mind, and to not leave our first love (Rev. 2 - which is our love for Christ, our love for one another and our love for our neighbor). But, in these wars of the Lord are we to sacrifice all for the sake of being of one mind? Are we to “dumb things down” to the least common denominator? Are we to water down the message to make it palatable to man to get consensus. No!

We must continue to be a soldier and fight against the flesh. We cannot lay our sword down, which is the Word. Unity of the spirit does not mean that. We must seek to be of one accord, have unity of the spirit, have one heart and one soul, and be perfectly joined together, but we must do it with boldness. The being of one accord always implies that we are not ashamed of Christ and that we are bold.

Ac 4:13 *Now when they saw the **boldness** of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.* Christ was bold, and we must be bold.

Ac 4:29 *And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all **boldness** they may speak thy word.*

Ac 4:31A *And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with **boldness**.*

2Co 7:4 *Great is my **boldness** of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you.*

Eph 3:12 *In whom we have **boldness** and access with confidence by the faith of him.*

Php 1:20 *According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all **boldness**, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.*

1Ti 3:13 *For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and **great boldness** in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

Heb 10:19 *Having therefore, brethren, **boldness** to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.*

1Jo 4:17 *Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have **boldness** in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.*

Mat 7:28-29 *And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*

When we have disagreements with one another we must seek God with the idea to be of one accord with boldness, esteeming others better than ourselves, not with pride, but with humility, not with stout words and raised voices but with a pure heart focused on doing the will of God. In Steve's sermon on having unity of the spirit he said *I submit to you that the notion of being of one mind and one accord has as much to do with our real, explicitly felt and expressed outlook toward one another [love, charity, Philadelphia, loyalty, compassion, respect], as members together in the body of Christ and as real brothers and sisters, as it does toward the veracity of an idea.* 1Pet. 1:22 *Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.* This is philadelphia. If we have philadelphia toward one another we patiently and with bowels of mercy and kindness bear along with one another, and forgive one another's offenses, knowing that we jointly seek God together and that He will reveal his truth to us and work in us to do His will and jointly resolve the issue at hand.

We cannot dumb down the words so that we deny His name and are ashamed of Him. We cannot let this become a vice that makes us lukewarm (see Rev. 3:16 – Church at Laodecia). The duty is to keep His word under great affliction, have accurate doctrine compatible with the scriptures, boldly walk through the open door that Christ has set before us and not deny Christ's name – while still maintaining the unity of the spirit and Philadelphia. This can only be done through Christ. Col 1:27 *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

Occasionally, looking at our doctrine to make sure it is 100% scripturally accurate and perfectly in line with Christ is not denying His name and not being lukewarm, it is rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Tim 2.15), which we must do.

II. Satanic Dysfunctional Behaviors are the Enemies of “Philadelphia,” Being of One Accord, Having Unity of the Spirit and Having the “Band of Brothers” Mentality

The list of Satanic dysfunctional behaviors that erode the unity of the spirit are well documented throughout the Bible. This is not a complete list, but it is a start. These behaviors give place to Satan (Eph. 4:26).

Pride – Definition: **A feeling that you respect yourself and deserve to be respected by other people; a feeling that you are more important or better than others.** *Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD (Prov. 16:5). Only by pride cometh contention (Pr. 13:10).* If you see yourself in a dispute with a brother or sister consider the role that pride is playing in it. *These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him - A proud look, (Prov. 6:16-17).* Examples: Korah, Dathan, and Abiram who with 250 princes of Israel, renowned men, said to Moses “*Ye take too much upon you seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them – wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?*” (Numbers 16). We must always be on our guard to tamp down our own pride.

Arrogance – Definition: **An attitude of superiority manifested in an overbearing manner or in presumptuous claims or assumptions.** Example: King Uzziah went into the Temple (where only the priests - the sons of Aaron could go) to burn incense upon the altar. The priests said *it pertaineth not to you Uzziah* and then leprosy arose in his forehead (2 Chron. 26:19).

Puffed-Up – Definition: **To inflate, to blow up, to cause to swell, to bear one’s self loftily.** *That not one of you be puffed up for one against another (1 Cor. 4:6).* Example: The people of the church at Corinth that had descended into factions (1 Cor.) and were devoid of humility. We must always be circumspect to not become puffed-up and become wise in our own conceit (Prov. 26:16) and change the focus of a discussion with our brethren on prevailing in an argument, but instead always be focused on being right with God and each other and doing so in a spirit of humility.

Lying – Definition: **A conscious and intentional falsehood.** *Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another (Eph. 4:25). Lie not one to another see that ye have put off the old man with his deeds (Col. 3:9). Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it (John 8:44). These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him - A lying tongue (Prov. 6:16-17). And there*

shall in no wise enter into it (heaven) any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev. 21:7). For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie (Rev. 22:15). Example: Ananias and Sapphira lied to Peter's face about how much money they received for a possession (a piece of land), so that they could keep back for themselves part of the money.

Deceit - Definition: **The concealment or distortion of the truth for the purpose of misleading, fraud, beguiling, or cheating.** *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ (Col. 2:8).* Example: Juda was full of deceit when he went to the high priest and betrayed Christ and then identified Christ by saying "Hail, Master; and kissed him" identifying Christ so He could be killed (Mat. 26:49).

Greed – Definition: **An intense selfish desire to have more of something (i.e., money, power, etc.).** *And thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbours by extortion, and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord GOD (Eze. 22:12).* Example: When Gehazi followed after Naaman and deceitfully concocted a lie about two young men from Ephraim needing some money (2 Kings 5:22); that was greed and a lie – he just wanted the money – and for it he received Naaman's leprosy.

Covetousness – Definition: **Feeling or showing a very strong desire for something that you do not have and especially for something that belongs to someone else.** *Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth (Luke 12:15).* Examples: King Ahab coveting Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21). King David coveting Bathsheba, Uriah's wife (2Sam. 11).

Envy – Definition: **Wanting what someone else has and resenting them for having it.** *And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him (Acts 7:9).* Joseph's brothers envied his relationship with his father (Gen. 37:3 *Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children*). Look what Joseph's own brothers did to him in the name of envy.

Backbiting - Definition: **To say mean or spiteful things about someone not present.** *For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be... backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults* (2 Cor. 12:20). Examples: The Jews did terrible backbiting against Christ. Nabal also made a backbiting speech against King David when he accused David of being disloyal to his master (1 Sam. 25:22).

Talebearing – Definition: **A person who maliciously gossips or reveals secrets about others.** *The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly* (Prov. 26:22). Doeg the Edomite reporting David's interactions with Abimelech to Saul which resulted in the deaths of many priests (1 Sam. 21). Some people in this world feel very comfortable stirring the pot and stirring up strife with this dysfunctional behavior. *These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him ... He that soweth discord among brethren* (Prov. 6:16-17).

Railing – Definition: **To speak reproachfully or reviling of another.** *But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another* (Gal 5:15) (Rom. 1:30). *Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee* (Jude 9). Example: Satan is a great railer and accuser of the brethren and he does so day and night (Rev. 12:10).

Busybody – Definition: **One who meddles or pries into others' affairs.** *But let none of you suffer as a ... busybody in other men's matters* (1Pet 4:15). *Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house; lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee* (Prov. 25:17). *These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him ... An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief* (Prov. 6:16-18).

Blocking – Definition: **The action or process of obstructing movement, progress or activity.** *And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?* (Gen. 4:9). Blocking is a verbal forensic and sparring technique where one of the parties refuses to engage in the subject matter at hand and instead seeks to change the subject, make an unrelated attack on

his/her opponent or otherwise obscure the point his/her opponent is making by subterfuge and misdirection. We should be quick to hear and to listen to our brethren and esteem them and their ideas better than our own.

Avoiding/Withdrawing – Definition: **To keep away from; keep clear of; shun.**

There are some people we are supposed to avoid and withdraw from - *Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us* (2 Thes. 3:6). But this does NOT apply to the brethren. *But exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin* (Heb. 3:13). It is sinful conduct to intentionally withdraw and avoid a brother/sister in Christ. It is an act of unforgiveness and harboring bitterness. Example: King Ahab said to King Jehoshaphat let us go and take Ramothgilead. Jehoshaphat asked if they could enquire of the Lord. So, Ahab brought in 400 prophets of Baal and they said Go up! Jehoshaphat said: but, is there a prophet of God, we can inquire of? Ahab says, there is one, Micaiah, the son of Imlah but I hate him [and I avoid him] (1 Kings 22). Beloved, we must be drawn to the brethren (everyone) naturally like two magnets seeking the company of each other. There is no scriptural basis for saying *I just cannot get along with X*. That is the world talking, not Christ, that is Satan-speak, not the Holy Ghost.

Strife – Definition: **A very angry or violent disagreement between two or more people or group.** Example: In the Luke account of the Lord's Supper (Luke 12:24), *And there was also a strife among them (the apostles), which of them should be accounted the greatest.*

Debate/Argue/Posturing – Definition (argue/debate): **Contention by words or argument; strife, wrangling.** Definition (posture): **To behave in a way that is intended to mislead others.** *Being filled with all... debate* (Rom. 1:28). Discussions can quickly move from truly helping one another with a spirit of philadelphia and seeking God, to who can win the argument and at any cost and who is right. *And the contention was so sharp between them (Paul and Barnabas), that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus* (Acts 15:39). Beloved, this contention that was between Paul and Barnabas is not something that we should emulate. This is not a justification for such unscriptural

conduct. But instead we should flee this sin and pride to maintain the unity of the spirit. Matthew Henry says it was their infirmities that led to this heated debate, but that we must never use it to excuse our own intemperance and passion.

Bitterness (Resentment) – Definition: **Anger and disappointment of being treated unfairly; resentment.** *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour (outcry/drama), and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice (Eph. 4:31). Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled (Heb. 12:15). For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity (Acts 8:23).* Example: The Jews had great bitterness toward the Samaritans (John 4:9) – they could not even be civil to them.

Revenge - Definition: **The action of inflicting hurt or harm on someone for an injury or wrong suffered at their hands.** *See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men (1 Thes. 5:15).* Example: Joab' revenge upon Abner (2 Sam. 3:27). *Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord (Heb. 10:30).*

Anger/Wrath – Definition: **A strong feeling of displeasure or hostility.** *But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice...* (Col. 3:8). Example: Cain's slaying Able (Gen. 4:5-8).

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca [indignation/contempt] shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, [thou wicked man or ungodly wretch], shall be in danger of hell fire (Mat. 5:22).

Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, breaks the sixth commandment (Thou shalt not kill) and is in danger of hell fire. By our "brother" means all people. Without a cause means without any just provocation given; either for no cause, or no good cause, or no great and proportional cause;

- When we are angry for that which could not be helped, which was only forgetfulness or mistake, it violates the sixth commandment.
- When we are angry and rashly given way to unruly passion based on groundless speculation, or for slight/trivial causes not worth speaking of, we violate this admonition. Our duty at Eph. 4:2 is to *forbear one another in love*.
- When it is without any good end aimed at, merely to show our authority, to gratify a brutish passion or to let people know our resentments, and excite ourselves to revenge we violate this warning.
- When it exceeds due bounds; when we are hardy and headstrong in our anger, violent and vehement, outrageous and mischievous, and when we seek the hurt of those we are displeased at we violate this.
- When our anger, which ought to be turned to ourselves is turned against our brethren. This is a breach of the sixth commandment.

Beloved, these are the words of Christ, and if you are angry with your brother ... this is dangerous, scary stuff in that you put your soul in jeopardy of hell fire. This should not be taken lightly and justified in your mind. You are as they say, “flirting with disaster.” I do not know what this “cause” is, but my speculation is that there is not one. Christ says at Luke 11:4 in the Lord’s prayer - *And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us* and at Mat 6:12 *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*. And, Christ said at Mat. 6:14-15 *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses*. Christ said at Luke 17:3 *Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him*. We must control our own spirit and not give in to the flesh. Prov. 25:28 *He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls*. The only “cause” may be something like when Phinehas took the javelin and thrust it through the man of Israel and the Midianite woman who were committing fornication in the sight of Moses and the congregation (Numbers 25:6-8). And that was partially for the whole country committing whoredoms with the daughters of Moab, worshipping and sacrificing to their gods and being joined to Baalpeor.

Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil (Eph. 4:25-26). The thought is: *Take heed that ye be not angry, lest ye sin.* Anger should not be continued; it should not last at furthest more than a day. We should not sleep with it. Anger is sinful when it is cherished and embellished upon and when there is an unforgiving spirit. Do not let anger remain in your bosom past the setting of the sun. The thought of the verse is NOT that you get a day to be angry. That violates the spirit of this verse. There is a duty to quickly suppress our anger so it does not gather strength. Anger is like a fire that the longer it burns the more fuel it gathers and the stronger it becomes until it is burning out of control. We have a tendency to explain away this verse, or marginalize it. The duty to not let the sun go down on your wrath is an absolute affirmative duty to put away wrath. Retaining anger gratifies the devil.

I have sometimes heard that *A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle (Prov. 18:19)* as a justification for being angry with a brother. That is not the spirit of Christ in the New Testament, irrespective of that verse is the affirmative duty to forgive your brother and if you do not, you are in danger of hell fire. Matthew Henry on Prov. 18:19: Great pains must be taken to compromise matters in variance between relations, with all speed, because it is a work of so much difficulty, and consequently the more honourable if it be done.

Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath (James 1:19).

I love you all. Amen.