

Sermon: The Unshakable Church

Text: Revelation 3:7-13

Introduction:

God has a way of using the small things of this world to bring about His greatest glory. He more often than not uses the things we would never notice to bring Himself the greatest praise.

A verse that speaks to this is **1 Corinthians 1:27**: *“But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.”*

Consider for a moment just how incredible it was that God chose David to fight the giant Goliath. David was just a young boy when God called him. He was so young in age and immature in physical development that the Bible says, *“Goliath looked David over and saw that he was little more than a boy, glowing with health and handsome, and he despised him.”* (1 Samuel 17:42). Goliath thought it was a joke when he saw who had been sent to fight with him. The giant *laughed* when he saw whom God had chosen! It may have looked laughable in the eyes of the world, but this young boy who fearlessly faced Goliath in battle was the exact person God had chosen!

With that in mind, look back at what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:27. The word “weak” is the Greek word “*asthene*.” It refers to something that is *weak, base, feeble, puny, or powerless*. This word *asthene* describes *something that is so substandard, second-rate, low-grade and inferior that it’s almost laughable!* When Paul wrote this epistle, the Corinthian church was the laughingstock of the city. In fact, believers were viewed as the laughingstock of the entire Roman Empire. Governmental authorities considered Christians to be a weak, puny, pathetic, useless group of religious idiots. They were literally the butt of all the jokes and were viewed as societal rubbish.

Yet these same Christians turned the world upside down in their day and evangelized the Roman Empire! Through their faithful endurance and commitment to Jesus Christ, they liberated Rome from pagan religion and paved the way for the Gospel to go into the whole world.

The same thing is true when we come to the church in the ancient city of Philadelphia, described in Revelation 3:7-13. Philadelphia was the youngest of the seven cities of Asia that Jesus wrote letters to here in the Book of Revelation. But unlike the other six letters that Jesus wrote, He has **NO WORDS OF CRITICISM** for this young church. More than that, Jesus refers to this church as having “little strength.” In other words, the church could be described as weak—possessing only a little power. But as we see throughout Scripture, God **LOVES** to use the weak things of this world to do great things.

- Discuss ways in which you’ve seen God using the weak or foolish things of this world to shame the wise.
- Has there ever been a time in your own life when God was able to do His Greatest work at a time of your greatest weakness?

Examination:

- Read **Judges 6:1-24**

- The setting of this passage is a time of great trouble and struggle for the children of Israel. For 7 years they had been oppressed by the Midianites. Things were so bad that people were hiding in caves. What, according to verse 6, did the people finally do?
 - God answered their cry for help by sending a prophet. (v. 7) What did the prophet tell them?
 - What's "wrong with this picture" in verse 11? Where was Gideon threshing wheat? What usually happens in a winepress? Why do you suppose Gideon was doing this? How much do you suppose fear played a part in this decision?
 - What does the angel call Gideon in verse 12? Why do you think he called him this?
 - How does Gideon answer the angel? (v. 13)
 - The angel charges Gideon to "go and save Israel" (v. 14). How does Gideon answer the angel this time? (v. 15)
 - Our lesson today is exploring how God uses the WEAK things of this world to confound and astound the wise. How does this account of Gideon support this truth?
 - Turn the page and read the first few verses of Judges chapter 7. Gideon is now commanding an army of 32,000 men. However, the Lord whittles that number down to 300 men. Why? What is God's purpose in defeating the Midianite army with only 300 men?
- Read **Revelation 3:7-13**
 - Each of these seven letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3 begins with a description of Jesus. How is Jesus described in verse 7?
 - What is this "key of David" a key to?
 - What do you think it means when Jesus says that He has placed before them "an open door that no one can shut"? What does this door open to?
 - The most significant clue that we are given regarding the church in Philadelphia is here at the end of verse 8: "I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my Word and have not denied my name." What are some of the things this could be referring to? What might it mean for a church to have "little strength"?
 - The primary opposition against the believers in Philadelphia doesn't come from "the world." According to verse 9, where is that opposition coming from?
 - Verse 10 describes "an hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world." What do you think this is referring to? Do you believe this to be true?
 - What does Jesus promise to do for the person who endures and remains faithful to Jesus? (v. 11) What do you think it means to be a "pillar in the temple of my God"?

Application:

Do you feel weak today? Do you feel powerless? Take this lesson to heart!!! God wants to USE YOU in this time of weakness. Ask Jesus to be your strength. Submit your heart to Him.