

# THE WAY OF THE CROSS

## Part 4 - The Door

Open doors mean different things to different people...

An open door is an invitation.

As we'll discover as we walk through today, there was an invitation to mystery and wonder when the first followers of Jesus discovered the open door to His tomb...

Matthew 28:1-8

Luke 24:1-10

That Easter Sunday morning, the women were presented with an open door, an empty tomb, suddenly the sorrow of the Stone, the finality of death, the death of their hopes, was brought into question...

What does this door mean?

To the disciples of Jesus, the open door meant a rebirth of wonder, of possibility, of life being restored – of resurrection!

### He's Not Here

A central belief of our Christian faith (arguably the most significant) is that Jesus died, was buried, and was raised to life in accordance with the scriptures (see Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

This was part of the plan! The open door was part of God's reconciling work in this world.

God was re-opening the way to have relationship with us. There was a door opened to make a way back into relationship. And in case you're not getting it, there's more!

In Matthew's account of the Crucifixion: Matthew 27:50-54

Firstly, Jesus gives up His spirit, in accordance with scriptures. John 10:17-18

Secondly, the temple curtain was torn in two.

Thirdly, a whole pile of tombs opened up and people who loved God, who'd already died, started to walk around.

Another door is opened; more tombs; the final door of death, it seems, was opened as well...

Jesus removed all doubt at all when He referred to Himself AS the door (John 10:9-10)

But, this all begs the question – what is this open door giving us access to?

## Mixing Metaphors

As we can see, the open door offers us life: life eternal, life abundant, life with God in a restored relationship.

Jesus used a parable to illustrate this, that kind of paints the picture of the welcoming in through the open door!

Matthew 22:1-10 (ESV)

Jesus has opened up the way to all who would come to His feast, the King's wedding feast – here is a metaphor for the final culmination of all things, when God sets everything right.

I wonder if the women at the tomb had any inkling that it was the open door to the wedding feast of the King? That King Jesus is inviting all people into a place of love and redemption through this open door.

## Lukewarm Responses

There's a recurring motif of doors in Revelation as well.

The open door is a door of invitation, of welcoming, but its more than that...

John records the words of Jesus in Revelation 3, to the Laodicean church: Revelation 3:15-20

This door is a door we have control over – the door to our lives.

This message is addressed to those who follow Jesus, but have become settled, stagnant, still in their faith life. Those of us who have forgotten that we're poor in Spirit. Maybe those of us who hear the good news that Jesus

is the door, and that everyone is invited to the wedding, but we know, we're going, but there's just a lot going on now...

An open door to a believer is one of restoration, of re-igniting the fire in our lives to be in a relationship with the King!

I wonder if those first followers at the tomb could have imagined a whole church of people who knew Jesus, who knew His presence, but needed an open door to their own hearts again, to feel the fire of passion and the love of God again?

## Sent Ones

The last door that I want to talk about is also in Revelation: Revelation 3:7-13

This is the most powerful door for a church who, once we've entered the door of welcoming, opened the door to restoring the fire of our love for God, are ready to be about God's business.

This is the door to calling and mission – to be about God's kingdom work, with HIS power and HIS presence.

When we see the open door of the tomb, we are invited to remember the open door of calling, of being about God's work in God's world, to see God's glory in the earth!

I wonder if Mary and Joanna and Jesus' mother could have imagined that an open tomb would lead to a world transformed, to the dead being raised, to the spiritually dead and imprisoned finding life and deliverance, to bodies and minds and hearts healed, to the good news of their Lord going out, and of the mighty harvest of people coming into the loving embrace of Father God?

I don't know which door is open to you today – but there is a door open for each one of us.

If you need to respond to the open door of invitation – to come to be a part of Jesus' family today – then come!

If you need to let Jesus back in to a dry and dusty life, full of self-dependence and lack, then come!

If you want to be filled and step into the open door of calling that God gives us – then come!

## Discussion Questions

1. What do you think is the main difference between the lukewarm believers in Revelation 3:15-20 and the faithful church in Revelation 3:7-13?

**Context:** The passage mentions lukewarm believers needing repentance and restoration, and the open door presented to the faithful Philadelphia church represents a calling to mission and God's work.

**Apply it:** Are there any areas in your own faith journey where you might be lukewarm, and what steps can you take to embrace the open door of mission and commitment to God's work?

2. What is the significance of the wedding feast parable in Matthew 22:1-10 in relation to the open-door metaphor?

**Context:** The parable is explained as God's generous invitation to all, symbolising celebration, inclusivity, and a restored relationship with God.

**Apply it:** Who can you invite to this open door in your own life?

3. What do you think Jesus means when He refers to Himself as the door in John 10:9-10?

**Context:** Jesus' words about being the door emphasise that He offers abundant life, salvation, and an invitation for everyone to enter through Him.

**Apply it:** How can you ensure that you are entering through Jesus, the door, in your daily life and decision-making?

4. Why is the tearing of the temple curtain significant in representing an open door?

**Context:** Matthew 27:50-54 mentions the tearing of the temple curtain as a powerful metaphor for an open door, signifying Jesus' sacrifice and the restoration of access to God.

**Apply it:** How can you apply the meaning of this open door to your personal relationship with God? What does that access mean to you and how you live your daily life?

5. How does the open door to Jesus' tomb represent the restoration of life and a rebirth of wonder?

**Context:** One way of looking at the open door to Jesus' tomb, in Matthew 28:1-8 and Luke 24:1-10, is that it symbolises mystery, wonder, and the resurrection of Jesus.

**Apply It:** In your life, what are some examples of open doors that have brought about wonder, restoration, and new possibilities? What does responding to God's calling look like for you?