

The open 'door'

1. *1 Corinthians 16:9* tells of a 'door' that God has opened which extends into our circle of influence and beyond in terms of us making a difference in the Kingdom.
2. We are reminded in *1 Corinthians 16: 13-14* to be strong. In *Joshua 1:9* we are commanded do this courageously, and courage comes from faith and trust in the Lord. Discouragement stems from fear and unbelief, in other words Satan's lies. We need to look beyond our own abilities, failures and limitations, and instead always seek God. He is omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (all-knowing) and omnipresent (all-present). If we do so, we can rise up in the name of Jesus and the power of His Spirit, and establish the kingdom of Heaven upon Earth. In other words, God doesn't just want activity, but rather effectiveness - He wants results!
3. Along the way, we will definitely encounter opposition, but this importantly serves to test and strengthen us. It is also testimony to the fact that we have Satan's attention, and that he realises just how dangerous we are to him. Though Jesus overcame Satan's temptations in the desert and triumphed over him on the Cross, Satan still fights on like a rabid dog – doomed, but dangerous until the end.
4. *Romans 12:5-6* Each of us has through God's grace been given different gifts, and it is vital that we discover what they are and follow our calling. *2 Timothy 1: 6,9*
5. In doing this, we need to first realise that simply being 'good' does not necessarily mean we will experience overcoming power. There are many good, kind, generous people in Hell at the moment. The power of holiness is found in heart purity with a purpose. Goodness has to be good for something, otherwise it remains purely theoretical. A self-absorbed holiness is really not holiness at all – it is self-centred personal piety / self-righteousness. Even the Pharisees who opposed Jesus had that, and He rebuked them. On the other hand, heart purity with a purpose fills the life of the individual and projects that life to others, because love compels one to care about others and to share the love of God with them.
6. OPEN:

O – open grave – With His Resurrection, Jesus defeated death and broke the power of sin. In *Revelation 1: 18* we are assured that Jesus is very much alive and holds the keys to Death and Hades. Quite simply, the gates of Hell cannot be locked because Jesus has the keys! Furthermore, in *Revelation 3: 8* it is made very clear that the open door to God cannot be closed by anyone. Our crucial role and mission is to lead the lost through this open door before it is too late for them.

P – promises – There are many, many promises and blessings in the Bible, and we are made to realise that we cannot live according to our own strength and understanding – we need God's promises. In *Psalms 16: 5-6* we are promised

manageable boundaries (although it often feels like they are not) and a wonderful inheritance. In *Matthew 16: 18-19* God promises that He will build His church and the gates of Hell will not overcome it. God will give us the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, and Jesus has the keys to Hades. Satan has no keys! In 2 *Peter 1: 4* mention is made of promises that enable us to see through and avoid the corruption and depravity of the world.

E – empowerment – When Jesus was baptised in the Holy Spirit, He was empowered. It is noteworthy that He did not begin His Earthly ministry without this source of power. Similarly, God will never send us forth to do His will without first making sure we are properly equipped for the task. In *Luke 4: 18* we see that the Spirit of the Lord is upon us to make a difference in the lives of others, but must remember that it is definitely not possible through our own strength and efforts.

N – no weapon – in *Isaiah 54: 17* we are told that although there will be opposition, it will ultimately not prosper because we have God’s protection. *Jeremiah 29:11* promises a unique plan for each of us. He wants us to have eternal life – Hell was created for Satan and his angels and demons. Whereas the Evil One seeks to steal, kill and destroy (*John 10: 10*), God wants us to have an abundant life.

Name – each of us made a covenant with Jesus when we received Him as our Lord and Saviour. As a result, He took our name! Our name was sin, weakness, fear, poverty and every other evil we inherited from Adam. He took those names from us and gave us His own in exchange - *Ephesians 3: 15* says that the whole Body of Christ has been named after Him, both in Heaven and on Earth. Isn’t it amazing to know that we have its authority!

In closing, these are some of the names Jesus is known by (some you will have heard before, others not):

Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Wisdom, Deliverer, Word of Life, Advocate, Provider, The Great I Am, Helper, Saviour, Prince of Peace, Wonderful Counsellor, Lamb of God, Lord of Hosts, Root of David, Author and Finisher of our Faith, The Way, Healer, Son of God, The Truth, Chief Cornerstone, King of Kings, Light of the World, Chief Shepherd, My Strength and Song, The Alpha and Omega, Righteous Judge, Son of Righteousness and Resurrection and Life.
