

The Church in Philadelphia

Little Power

The church in Philadelphia is **not made up of super-spiritual** Christians who do great works for God, but rather, in the Lord's eyes they are those who have a little power and have kept His word and have not denied His name, therefore the Lord has put before them an opened door which no one can shut... Many believers regard the church in Philadelphia as being strong, powerful, and prevailing, but the Lord said to her that she had little power. In the Lord's recovery, we are not those who are powerful but **the weak ones**, those who **love the Lord** and **keep His commandments** by **being in His word** before His face. We are simply learning to keep the Lord's word by being in His presence; we pray-read the word of God, abide in the Lord by letting His word dwell in us richly, and we speak only the word of God. What pleases the Lord is not that we would be strong and zealous for Him, that we use our little power to do the best we can. This is what He wants from us, that we do the best we can with the little power we have. *(Excerpt from the Ministry of the Word, Church in Philadelphia)*

Keep the Lord's Word

A superficial understanding of keeping the Lord's word is that the Lord speaks a certain word and we keep it; He tells us to do something and we do it. This is correct, but it is shallow. In order to keep the Lord's word we must do two things: **on the positive side** we need to receive all that He is into us, and, **on the negative side**, we need to kill all our concepts and opinions. It is not simply a matter of the Lord telling us to love one another or to wash one another's feet and of our proceeding to love others and to wash their feet. This understanding is too superficial. The Lord's word represents the Lord Himself. If we would receive the word as the expression of the Lord Himself, we must drop our opinions and concepts.

Most of us do not keep the Lord's word because we are hindered by our opinions and our concepts... Everyone is opinionated. Those who minister the Word often pray that the Lord would remove the opinions of those hearing the Word and take away the veils of their concepts. A word may be clearly uttered, but your concepts and opinions may frustrate you from keeping it. If we would keep the Lord's word, we must firstly drop our opinions and then **have the Lord Jesus added** into our being.

Not Deny His name

Now let us consider what it means not to deny the Lord's name. **A name always denotes a person**. When I call a brother's name, the brother himself comes. Therefore, not to deny the name of the Lord means not to deny the Person of the Lord.

[A] name means a great deal. Although you may not realize it, if you take a denominational designation, you are actually rejecting the name of Christ, and thus you are rejecting the Person of Christ. Although you may not intend to do this, this is nonetheless the fact. If it is not your intention to deny the name of Christ, then you should not have any denominational name. In the past some missionaries and pastors have consulted me about this matter. They have all told me that they do not care for the denominational names. I told them that, since they did not care for these names, they should **forsake** them.... One hundred and fifty years ago the Brethren saw the light on this matter and forsook every other name and declared that

they held just one name—the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the unique name. However, it is not merely a name in letters, but a name in Person.

If we do not deny the name of the Lord, then we have His Person as ours, and His Person becomes our **designation**. When you go to work, perhaps in a large corporation with hundreds of employees, there is no need for you to **label yourself** as a Christian. You simply need to express the Person of Christ. To fail to express the Person of Christ actually means to deny His name. We must live in such a way that Christ is expressed through us. If we express Christ, the One we express will, in the words of others, become our designation. Others will say that we are Christians. The Person we express becomes **our name, our designation**. People will not say that you are Chinese or a "Yankee." The only designation they will give you is that of being a Christian.

Approximately forty years ago, a brother was an employee in a large company. His fellow workers called him "Jesus." When they saw him, they said, "This is Jesus," apparently in a despising way. At the time of the Japanese invasion of China, many of the employees in this company were planning to escape. Having money and other valuables that had to be left behind, they looked for someone to whom they could entrust their possessions. After considering a number of possibilities, they finally decided to entrust their money and belongings to the brother, the one they called "Jesus." This shows that they were trusting in Jesus. The brother, of course, never said that his name was Jesus. Rather, he expressed the Person of Christ in his living, and his life was his designation. This is the true significance of not denying the name of the Lord. The church in Philadelphia lived by the Lord, and His life was lived out by that church. Therefore, His Person became the name of those saints.

To keep the word of the Lord and not to deny the name of the Lord means to forsake our opinions and concepts, to receive the Lord's word into us, and to gain more and more of the Lord Himself. If we do this, we shall live Him out as a Person. The name of this Person is Jesus. To keep the Lord's word is not merely a doctrinal matter, and to confess His name is not simply to utter a few statements. **To keep His word means to receive Him into our being, letting go of our concepts and opinions** that He may have the ground within us; and not to deny His name is **to live out Christ as a Person** so that He becomes **our designation**... *(Excerpt from the Life-study of Genesis, chapter 87)*

Brotherly Love

We have pointed out that *agape* is nobler than *phileo*. In quality and perhaps also in quantity *agape* is greater than *phileo*. Sometimes we may love the brothers in a **narrow, limited way** with a certain amount of brotherly love. In our love we may have preferences and love certain brothers more than others. We may claim that we love all the saints, but our love for them is not the same. Because Peter was experienced and knew the situation among the saints, he did not stop with brotherly love but went on to speak of love, of *agape*, the deep and noble love with which God the Father loves all mankind, both believers and sinners.

Actually, in the church life we may prefer a certain brother whom we regard as nice and love him, but we may not appreciate **another** brother as much. We may have love for both brothers, but that love is shallow. Therefore, we need a **deeper, nobler** love. This love is **agape**. When we have this kind of love, we love all the brothers **the same**, no matter what kind of brothers they may be. *(Excerpt from the Life-Study of 2 Peter, Message 6)*