

Little Strength, Big God.

Revelation 3:8 *I know your works: behold, I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it: for you have a little strength, and have kept My Word, and have not denied My Name.*

ὅτι μικρὰν ἔχεις δύναμιν, καὶ ἐτήρησάς μου τὸν λόγον, καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσω τὸ ὄνομά μου.

Word-by-Word Translation:

- ὅτι (*hoti*) "because" or "for"
- μικρὰν (*mikran*) "little" or "small" (feminine accusative, agreeing with power/strength)
- ἔχεις (*echeis*) "you have" (present tense)
- δύναμιν (*dynamin*) "power," "might," or "strength"
- καὶ (*kai*) "and"
- ἐτήρησάς (*etērēsas*) "you have kept," "guarded," or "obeyed" (aorist tense, denoting a completed action of faithfulness)
- μου (*mou*) "of me" or "my"
- τὸν (*ton*) "the" (masculine accusative article)
- λόγον (*logon*) "word," "message," or "statement"
- καὶ (*kai*) "and"
- οὐκ (*ouk*) "not"
- ἠρνήσω (*ērnēsō*) "you denied" or "disowned" (aorist [occurrence] middle/passive deponent)
- τὸ (*to*) "the" (neuter accusative article)
- ὄνομά (*onoma*) "name"
- μου (*mou*) "of me" or "my"



1. The Context of Philadelphia: "Little Strength" (*mikran dynamin*)

- **The Spiritual Link:** This church wasn't a massive, wealthy mega-church. They were small, tired, and felt insignificant - much like the ten virgins who fell asleep from exhaustion during the delay.
- **The Encouragement:** Jesus doesn't rebuke them for having "little strength." Instead, He meets them in their weakness and says, *"Your strength might be small, but My authority is absolute. Look at the door I just unlocked for you."*

In the natural, "little strength" sounds like weakness, failure, or exhaustion. But in the economy of the Kingdom, it is the exact prerequisite for supernatural power.

- When you are at the end of your own human strength - weathering intense personal trials, health battles, economic stress, or pain - your own ego is completely deflated. That "little strength" is the perfect canvas for the Holy Spirit to take over.
- As Paul said in **2 Corinthians 12:9** *"My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness."*



2. The Key of David (The Ultimate Authority)

To understand *why* no man can shut this door, look right before in (Rev 3:7). Jesus introduces Himself as the One *"that has the key of David, he that opens, and no man shuts; and shuts, and no man opens."*

- **The Old Testament Layer:** This is a direct quote from **Isaiah 22:22**, where Eliakim was given the heavy key to the royal treasury of King David. He carried the absolute proxy authority of the King. If he locked a door in the palace, nobody - not even the highest officials - could open it.
- **The Application:** Jesus tells the group, *"I hold the master key to reality. I control the doors of salvation, the doors of ministry opportunity, and the doors of protection. If the culture tries to lock you out, or if worldly systems try to cancel you, it doesn't matter. They don't hold the keys. I do."*

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■ 3. What is the "Open Door"?

- In the ancient world (*Alaşehir in Turkey today*), Philadelphia was known as the "Gateway to the East" to serve as a "missionary" outpost for Hellenism (Greek language, philosophy, and culture). Jesus is telling them, *"I have opened a door for you to spread the true Gospel into the surrounding regions, and no enemy can block your path."*

The Sovereign Open Door

- Because they stood fast in their little strength, Jesus sets before them an open door that no man can shut.
- This door is the ultimate door of divine access, authority, and intimacy. When the global systems begin to lock down, lock out, and squeeze the world, you can walk through a sovereignly opened door of supernatural provision and safety that no government, no economic collapse, and no demon can ever slam shut and to share God's Word.
- When Jesus tells the Church of Philadelphia that He has set before them an "open door that no man can shut," He is speaking to a spiritually faithful but physically exhausted congregation. They lived in a city with many earthquakes. He is declaring His absolute, un-comprisable control over history, geography, and salvation - assuring them that when the Master of the House opens a door of opportunity, protection, or eternity, no human or demonic force can slam it in their face.

4. Keeping the Word and Not Denying His Name

Let's look at Matthew 24 & 25 and see its relation to Revelation 3:8

Matthew 24:3b-4 "...and what shall be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the world?" And Jesus answered and said unto them, "Take heed that no man deceive you."

Matthew 24:13 But he that shall **endure** unto the end, the same shall be saved.

- The Greek word for *endure* is "**hupomeno**". From "*hupo*" to *stay under* or *behind*, and "*meno*"; to *remain*. Literally, it conveys the idea of "*remaining under a burden*" or "*bearing up under pressure*"
- Keeping the Word doesn't mean just memorizing verses; it means locking your shield like the Romans did a formation under a heavy attack and refusing to retreat.

Matthew 25:1-13 Trials are the Oil in the Parable of the 10 Virgins

- The trials you are going through are not a sign that God has abandoned you. It is quite the opposite; the trials are the squeezing of the olives for the oil supply (...see *handouts*).

Acts 14:22 (Paul speaking:) *Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*

- In the ancient world, a clay vessel was cheap, fragile, ordinary, and meant to hold something far more valuable than itself.
- The New Testament consistently uses this exact imagery of clay jars/vessels to describe human beings:

2 Corinthians 4:7 *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels (clay jars), that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

1 Thessalonians 4:4 *That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;*

Note that all ten virgins started with oil in their lamps. They all went out to meet the bridegroom with burning wicks. *The critical turning point in the parable is the **delay**.* The bridegroom took much longer than expected, stretching the wait deep into the night.

The Wise Virgins: Matthew 25:4 notes that the wise "took oil in flasks *along* with their lamps". They carried separate accessory jars filled with backup olive oil. They anticipated that the night might go long. When they woke up at midnight, they simply uncorked their secondary flasks and topped off their reservoirs.

The Foolish Virgins: They only brought the oil that was *already inside* their lamps. They planned for a standard timeline. As they slept through the delay, their small reservoirs slowly burned down to empty. When the midnight cry went out, their wicks were sputtering and going out.

The foolish virgins didn't fail because they lacked initial faith or identity - they failed because they didn't anticipate the long haul and lacked the personal reserves (the secondary vessel) to sustain their light through the delay. they were not ready for anything that involved waiting, suffering, or a delay.

- **Matthew 25** warns us **not to trust the short-cut methods** of the "eschatology salesmen." Hype burns out fast - we need the deep, crushed, and pressed oil of real intimacy to survive the long haul.

Difference between 'Never Knew' and 'Don't Recognize' You...

1. Matthew 7 (*Ginosko*) vs. Matthew 25 (*Oida*)

There is a massive distinction in the Greek between the rejection of the wicked fakes in Matthew 7 and the rejection of the foolish virgins in Matthew 25:

* **The Fakes** (Matthew 7:23): Jesus says, "*I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.*" The Greek verb here is *ginosko*, which means an intimate, relational, experiential knowing (like a husband knowing his wife). By saying *ou-pote ginosko* (*not at any time ever*), Jesus is telling the false prophets: "*You were complete fakes. We never had a single second of true, saving relationship.*"

* **The Foolish** (Matthew 25:12): Jesus does not say "I never knew you." He says, "*Ouk oida hymas*" which translates directly to "I do not recognize you" or "You stand in no relation to Me right now."

2. What *Oida* Implies for the Foolish Christians

The Greek word *oida* is a form of "*to see*" or "*to perceive*." It means to recognize someone based on their present state or appearance.

* When the Bridegroom looks through the peephole of the door at midnight, He is looking for the burnished, glowing reflection of the Holy Spirit - the oil.

* Because the foolish virgins have empty lamps, they are standing outside in total, pitch-black darkness.

* The Bridegroom is saying: "I don't recognize you in this condition. You look just like the rest of the dark world. You didn't maintain your connection to My light, so right now, you have no standing to enter this room."

3. Tying the Timeline Together

This perfectly preserves the Manchild vs. Corporate Woman blueprint:

* **The Wise Virgins** (The Manchild): They had the *oida* and the *ginosko*. They had the oil of suffering, stayed awake, and were snatched away (*harpazo*) directly to the Marriage Supper.

* **The Foolish Virgins** (The Lukewarm Church / The Corporate Woman left behind): They are genuinely saved, but they were spiritually lazy, full of self, and lacked the oil of deep surrender. When the door of the *harpazo* slams shut, they are locked out of the Wedding Feast.

They missed the early escape. But notice they aren't instantly cast into the Lake of Fire. Instead, they are left standing outside in the dark, forced to go "buy oil". In other words, they are left on earth to face the Great Tribulation, where they will finally have to buy their oil the hard way by giving their literal lives as martyrs to get their white robes clean.

It's not a declaration of damnation for the foolish; it's a strict, terrifying disqualification from the Bridegroom's private feast due to their lack of preparation.

This linguistic distinction between harsher rejection (*ginosko*) and lack of recognition (*oida*) is a massive milestone in our study.

little strength + *hupomene* = an open door that no man can shut.

When you strip away the soft, modern Western translations and expose the original Greek, this verse completely shatters the "name it and claim it" mindset. It provides the exact structural blueprint for how a believer moves from a lukewarm "tag-along" to a mature, oil-filled **overcomer**.

In the King James Version, Paul writes:

*"That I may **know Him**, and the **power of His resurrection**, and the **fellowship of His sufferings**, being made conformable unto his death;"*

Let's put the original Greek under the microscope to see how this serves as the ultimate "oil factory" for your talk on Thursday:

1. "That I may know Him..." (Greek: *Ginosko*)

Paul doesn't use the word *oida* (factual, superficial recognition). He uses *ginōskō*.

- This is a deep, experiential, intimate knowledge that can only be forged over time through shared history.
- Paul wrote this near the very end of his life. He *already* knew Christ on a theological level, but he is crying out for a deeper, ongoing experiential relationship. He wants to know Christ intimately in the middle of his current trial.

2. "...and the power of His resurrection..." (Greek: *Dynamis*)

The word for power here is *dynamis* (where we get our word "dynamite"). It means inherent, supernatural, explosive ability.

- Notice the divine order here: Paul doesn't ask for power so he can escape trouble. He connects the *dynamis* directly to what comes next: **suffering**.
- In the Kingdom economy, resurrection power is not given to make your life comfortable; it is given to provide the supernatural stamina (*hupomene*) needed to endure the crushing of the flesh without breaking.

3. "...and the fellowship of His sufferings..." (Greek: *Koinōnia*)

This is the phrase that causes the Laodicean church to run for the exits, but it is the absolute key to your message. The Greek word for fellowship is *koinōnia*.

- *Koinōnia* means **intimate partnership, shared participation, joint-tenancy, and deep communion**.
- Paul is stating a terrifyingly beautiful truth: there is a specific, elite level of intimacy with Jesus that *cannot* be accessed in the sunshine. It can only be found when you are sharing in His cup of suffering.
- When you are walking through pain, sickness, or intense persecution and you choose to stay *surrendered* to the Holy Spirit, you enter into a business partnership (*koinōnia*) with Christ. You are literally sharing the weight of His cross. **This is where the extra oil is produced.**

Romans 5:1-5 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

4. "...being made conformable unto His death." (Greek: *Symmorphizō*)

The Greek word here is ***symmorphizō***, which literally means "to bring to the same form" or "to be molded into the exact same shape."

- Think of a blacksmith pouring molten metal into a specific mold.
- Suffering is the mold. The Holy Spirit uses the pressure of your trials to break down the hard edges of your ego, your self-reliance, and your fleshly desires until your character is perfectly conformed to the self-sacrificial shape of Jesus.

When people are going through intense trials, the enemy whispers, "God has abandoned you." But Philippians 3:10 proves the exact opposite. Their pain is actually an invitation into ***koinonia*** - a holy partnership where resurrection power (*dynamis*) sustains them while their flesh is being molded (*symmorphizō*) into maturity.

This is the exact mechanism that separates the Wise Virgins from the Foolish. The Foolish want the *dynamis* without the *koinonia*. But the overcomers know that the fellowship of His sufferings is the only place where the oil of true, unshakeable faith is pressed out.

God does not put sickness on people.

Jesus went around doing good and healing *all* who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with Him (Acts 10:38). Sickness is a fruit of the fall, a work of the enemy, and has no part in the nature of our Heavenly Father.

So when Paul writes about the "fellowship of His sufferings" in **Philippians 3:10**, what is the Greek inference? What kind of suffering are we actually partnering (*koinonia*) with?

The original Greek text and context make a very clear distinction that will beautifully protect your message for Thursday:

1. The Greek Word: *Pathema*

The word for sufferings here is ***pathēma***.

- In the New Testament, *pathema* is overwhelmingly used to describe the **hardships, pressures, and persecutions endured for the sake of the Gospel**.
- It refers to the friction that happens when the Kingdom of Light collides with the kingdom of darkness. It's the hatred of the world, the loss of reputation, the financial squeeze of refusing the system, the weariness of the spiritual battle, and the emotional pain of being rejected by people you love because you stand for the Truth.

2. Christ's Sufferings Had No Sickness

Think about the literal, historical life of Jesus. Did Jesus ever suffer from a disease? Did He have the flu, cancer, or a virus? No.

- His sufferings consisted of **rejection, betrayal, intense spiritual warfare, persecution from religious leaders, the weight of carrying human brokenness, and ultimately, laying down His life on the cross**.
- Therefore, if we are entering into the *koinonia* (partnership) of *His* sufferings, we are partnering with the same things He faced—the systemic, spiritual pushback of an adversarial world.

3. How Pain and Sickness Fit into the "Oil Factory"

While God never originates sickness or inflicts it on His children, we live in a fallen world where we still experience physical pain, bodily frailty, and environmental attacks. Here is where the *symmorphizō* (the molding) happens:

- Even when an attack comes from the enemy or natural brokenness, **God will never let a good crisis go to waste.**
- When you are battling physical pain or weakness, and you refuse to get bitter, refuse to blame God, and instead say, "*I am choosing to stand fast (hupomeno) in my little strength right here,*" the Holy Spirit hijacks that trial.
- He turns the enemy's attack into an immediate training ground. Your response of faith in the middle of that physical pressure presses out the extra oil of intimacy.

We do not chase suffering, and we certainly do not welcome sickness as a 'gift' from God.

Instead, the *fellowship of His sufferings* means locking shields with Jesus when the world, the flesh, or the devil brings pressure against your faith. It is the suffering of **self-denial**—choosing to die to your own comfort and pride so that the life of Christ can burn brightly through your lamp.

Yes, *pathēma* is absolutely the root of several heavy-hitting English words that we use every single day.

In the Greek, *pathēma* comes from the verb *paschō*, which simply means "to experience a sensation, to feel, or to suffer." When that idea migrated into Latin and eventually into English, it brought its entire DNA of deep emotion, feeling, and shared experience with it.

Here are the primary English words birthed directly out of this exact Greek root:

1. Sympathy (Syn + Pathema)

* The Blueprint: Syn means "together with," and pathema means "feeling/suffering."

* The Definition: It literally means "suffering together with someone else." This links perfectly back to your September 17th video about praying for one another! When your group chose to have sympathy - shifting their focus to bear someone else's pain - the Holy Spirit released that healing breakthrough.

2. Empathy (En + Pathema)

* The Blueprint: En means "inside or within."

* The Definition: It means "entering inside another person's feelings or suffering." It's not just feeling sorry for someone from a distance; it's putting your feet in their shoes and feeling the weight of their trial in your own spirit.

3. Pathos

* The Definition: In literature, communication, and art, pathos is the quality or power that stirs up deep feelings of pity, sorrow, or intense compassion. It is the language of the heart. Paul writing from that cold Roman prison cell, you are using pathos to help listeners feel the raw, human reality of the text.

4. Pathology / Pathogen

* The Blueprint: Pathos (suffering/disease) + Logos (the study of).

* The Definition: This is the medical branch. A pathogen is an organism that causes suffering or disease (like a virus), and pathology is the study of that disease. Even though we established that pathema in Philippians 3:10 refers to spiritual and situational pressure from the world, the medical world still borrowed the root because it ultimately deals with the physical reality of human suffering.

5. Compassion (The Latin Twin)

While not directly spelled like *pathema*, our English word "compassion" is the exact Latin translation of the Greek word *sympatheia*. Com means "with" and *passio* means "suffering" (like the Passion of Christ).

When Paul asks for the *koinonia* of Christ's *pathema*, he is asking for the ultimate state of divine empathy and sympathy. He wants to feel what Jesus feels, stand where Jesus stands, and share the

weight of the cross in the middle of a hostile world. It's not a dry, clinical theology—it is a deeply emotional, relational partnership.

The true danger of that extreme theology. It turns a platform for grace into an **engine for guilt and merchandise** [2 Pe 2:3].

When TV evangelists tell someone that their sickness is strictly due to a "lack of faith" or some hidden "bad sin," they are doing something incredibly destructive: they are piling condemnation onto a person who is already in severe pain. And then, to add insult to injury, they slap a **\$49.99 price tag** on the solution! That is the ultimate, textbook definition of the **"eschatological salesman"** using a crisis for personal gain.

The insight about **"who are you going to trust or look to first"** is the real, golden core of how a believer actually walks through physical weakness or an attack of sickness.

Let's look at why our perspective is the true, mature, oil-filled way to stand fast (*hupomeno*):

1. The Redefinition of the Trial

When an attack of sickness or physical pain hits your body, it is a work of the enemy or a result of living in a fallen world - it is not God's will for you. But the moment it lands, **the battle shifts from the physical to the spiritual.**

- The question stops being, *"Why did this happen?"*
- The question becomes exactly what you just asked: *"In this moment of weakness, where my human strength is low, am I going to look to the digital grid, human panic, or am I going to look directly into the eyes of my Heavenly Father?"*

2. The Conditioning of Absolute Trust

When your body hurts, or your energy is completely drained, you are brought face-to-face with your own **"little strength" (Revelation 3:8).**

- If you have been conditioned by a flashy "name it and claim it" doctrine, you will get frustrated, panic, and feel condemned when the quick-fix button doesn't work.
- But if you have the mindset of a **Wise Virgin**, you use that physical pressure to drop to your knees in total surrender to the Holy Spirit. You say, *"Father, my flesh is weak right now, but You are my Source. I am planting my feet on Your Word, and I am going to trust You through this dark night."*

3. The Oil is Pressed Out

That choice to trust God when your body is screaming in pain is the exact place where the **oil of intimacy is pressed out.**

- God doesn't cause the sickness, but He supernaturally hijacks the moment to build an unshakeable spiritual muscle inside you.
- When you choose to praise Him, walk in grace, and - just like your group saw on the 17th - **pray for someone else's healing while you are still dealing with your own pressure**, you shatter the enemy's trap. You mature into an overcomer.

4. The Internal Nature of the Kingdom

In **Luke 17:21**, Jesus explicitly tells us, *"The kingdom of God is within you."*

- The light burning from the lamp isn't a spotlight cast on a path; it is the **inward manifestation of Christ in you, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27).**
- When the midnight hour strikes and the world is plunged into darkness, you cannot navigate the spiritual terrain using your pastor's faith, your wife's relationship with God, or a favorite ministry's book. If the light isn't burning *inside your own spirit*, you are functionally blind in that atmosphere, no matter how close you stand to a wise virgin.

5. The Failure of Riding Other's Coattails

The Laodicean lukewarm culture has trained a generation of people to be consumers **of other** people's spiritual experiences. They go to a big conference to get an "impartation", or they rely on the corporate energy of a crowded room to feel connected to God. They are hitchhiking on the oil of others.

- But the Tribulation and the midnight cry are designed to completely isolate the individual heart.
- When the global grid goes down, the big church buildings are closed, and the systems break, the "tag-along" option is completely deleted. You are left standing alone in the dark with nothing but your private history of surrender to the Holy Spirit.
- If you haven't died to self and allowed the fire of suffering to produce your own oil, you cannot survive the atmosphere of that day.

6. The Door Closes on the "Tag-Alongs"

Because the foolish virgins spent their entire lives tagging along instead of building an actual personal history of intimacy and **hupomone** (*steadfast endurance*), look at the tragic response they get from the Bridegroom in Matthew 25:12: *"Truly I tell you, I don't recognize you."*

The connection between the **Oil of Intimacy** and Paul's desire to know **"the fellowship of His sufferings"** (Philippians 3:10). *"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;"*

1. The City of Perpetual Shaking

Ancient historians like Strabo and Tacitus recorded that Philadelphia sat right on a violent fault line and was devastated by a **massive earthquake in 17 AD** and had many aftershocks.

- **Living "Ready to Run":** Because they were terrified of heavy roofs collapsing on them, the vast majority of the citizens actually **refused to live inside the city walls**. They lived in tents out in the open fields, constantly ready to flee at the first rumble.
- **The Spiritual Side:** Revelation 3:12 with the guys: *"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out..."* Jesus looks at a congregation that spent their entire lives terrified of falling bricks and running out of the city for safety, and He promises them: *"In My Kingdom, I am making you a permanent, unshakeable pillar you won't have run anymore."*

2. The Original "Missionary City"

Philadelphia was originally founded in the 2nd century BC by the King of Pergamon. He didn't build it as a military fortress, but as a cultural launchpad.

- **The Cultural Goal:** Its deliberate purpose was to be an **"open door"** to spread Greek language, culture, and customs into the wild, un-Hellenized regions to the East. It was highly successful; by the first century, the local native languages had practically vanished.
- **The Spiritual Side:** Jesus hijacks their own civic history in verse 8: *"I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it..."* He is saying, *"For centuries, your city was an open door to spread a worldly culture. But now, I have repurposed your geography. I have opened a door that no Roman emperor or hostile critic can block, to spread the Gospel of the Kingdom to the ends of the earth."*

3. The Identity Theft of Renaming

After the horrific earthquake of 17 AD, Emperor Tiberius generously gave the city a massive tax break and funded their reconstruction.

- **The Constant Renaming:** Out of sheer gratitude, the city completely discarded its historic name and renamed itself Neo-Caesarea ("New Caesar"). A few decades later, under a new emperor, they changed their name *again* to Flavia. The citizens were completely accustomed to having their identity constantly erased and rewritten based on whatever political power was currently paying for the rebuild.
- **The Spiritual Side:** Look at the end of verse 12: *"...and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God... and I will write upon him my new name."* Jesus tells them, *"The empire keeps renaming your streets to brand you as their property. But when you belong to Me, I am etching a permanent, eternal identity onto your soul. You aren't branded by Caesar; you are signed by the King."*



Some interesting Trivia and how it applies to us:

An olive is naturally bitter and protected by a tough skin and a hard pit. Before it can yield anything useful, that outer defenses must be broken down.

In our faith walk *the crushing stage* is often where God breaks our pride, our self-reliance, and our stubborn independence.

Then in *the process* stage God allows us trials, even failures like humbling circumstances to serve as that heavy rolling stone.

It doesn't feel good - it feels like our life is being turned into a messy "mash." God isn't destroying us; He is breaking the hard outer shell of our ego so that the soft, usable fruit of our spirit can finally be accessed. This is what **Psalm 51:17** calls a "*broken and a contrite heart*."

🎀 Tying it All Together

- **The Process:** Trust God in the quiet crushing and pressing, letting the bitterness drain away so the pure oil can rise.
- **The Promise:** Even when your strength is small, the King holds the keys, the door is wide open, and your place as an unshakeable pillar is completely secure.

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."