

Isaiah 60: 1-14; Revelation 3: 1-13

Lots of key words in these prophetic instructions, words which we hear often in scripture and sermon and which we will place in our hearts again this evening.

**The reading from Isaiah** is full of promises for the once exiled people of Israel. One of the phrases which particularly links to our New Testament reading is verse 11 – your gates will always stand open, they will never be shut, day or night, so that people may bring you the wealth of the nations – their kings led in triumphal procession.

The prophet speaks of the tables being turned – those who once oppressed Israel – and it would seem that there were many – will be queuing up to make obeisance instead, bringing costly gifts with them.

**In Revelation, the church of Philadelphia** is given an open door which no-one is able to shut. When we heard about Jesus's first appearance to the disciples in the locked upper room, we heard how he greeted them and then said that he sent them as he was sent. Like our church doors, open every day, which let anyone in to come and discover God, and let us out to go and show God's love to everyone we meet.

We also hear here how the promise that the world would bow down before Israel, is now that the world will bow before Jesus – here expressed as bowing before the people of the church – and they will then learn how they too can be, even are, loved by Jesus. It will be a sign of the Philadelphians' constancy and faithfulness to Jesus that others will be drawn to the church.

Even a church which has been faithful has more to do – and maybe the expectations are upped even.

**The instruction to the church in Sardis** has more of a flavour of frustration, of dissatisfaction. This is the church that we want to avoid being like!

Sardis was an ancient city which had known ups and downs – once a city on a cliff top, like a watchtower, which expanded into the fertile valley below but which had on more than one occasion over the centuries become over confident and fallen to its enemies.

The church is resting on its laurels, living off its reputation, but actually falling far short of God's expectations.

We hear -wake up- remember – obey – repent – listen.

Those who are recognised as still pure will, we are told – walk with Jesus.

This is where we want to be. Walking with Jesus. Speaking with him, sharing joys and sorrows, comforted by his strong presence in our lives, strengthened to travel out of our comfort zone because he is with us, leading us.

**Let us pray that we are these people and that together we are a church that is alive in Christ's name.**