

NEWS AND VIEWS
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*“Southern Baptists with the Full
Gospel for the Whole World”*

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Not too long ago I opened the front door of my house and a skink scooted in! That's one of those little blue-tailed lizards common to our area. They really are not much of a threat, but the little fella proved to be a little unnerving since he was kind of hard to corner and catch. I don't know about you but there is something about a loose lizard in the house that keeps me on edge. You have to be careful about open doors.

Doors are interesting things. There are swinging doors that were typical of the old Wild West saloon entrances. There are revolving doors that are often difficult to negotiate. There are sliding doors with electric eye openers. There are garage doors that can be powered from the car outside. There are closed doors. Then there are open doors. Open doors can sometimes lead to a new set of challenges. So I've been thinking about open doors and the things that take advantage of them. From a ministry perspective consider the following scripture that mentions the experience of the Apostle Paul. I can see that open doors can surely bring open wars.

But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; for a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries. (1 Corinthians 16:8-9)

I once asked a pastor how to determine God's direction. I wanted to know if I was making the right choices in the major decisions before me. He told me that it is often difficult to know God's direction for a certainty. He said that he usually kept walking through the open doors that were set before him until one closed. Then he knew he was in the right place! I thought that sounded like a trap door. We can get hurt going through the wrong door. When doors of service are opened to us, the enemy may be waiting in ambush. He doesn't give up ground easily.

Though we may be caught off guard, God is not taken by surprise when it comes to opposition to His will. I would venture to say that if God has opened a door of service to us we should expect a counterattack, or at least resistance to God's advance. Let me share some thoughts about what to expect when doors of ministry are cracked open.

I. OPPORTUNITY FOR SERVICE BRINGS OPPOSITION FROM SATAN. Satan is a deceiver and he is serious in his opposition. In the scriptures we read that he departed from Jesus until an opportune time. An opportune time can be a time when we are distracted by the opportunity and are vulnerable to attacks. Be assured that Satan is not pleased with God's advancing kingdom. His purpose is to kill, steal and destroy and he knows that often the best he can do is to hinder the advance for a season.

II. OPPORTUNITY BRINGS OPPONENTS. The opponents may look similar to us. Satan often pits well-meaning Christians against one another. Infighting can slow down the progress and even stop it altogether. Opponents rarely look like devils with pitchforks. Sometimes the opponent is only recognized after the opposition is in place.

III. THE WIDER THE DOOR, THE GREATER THE WAR. The wider the door, the greater the access. When God's people start streaming through a larger opening, the enemy may get desperate. With a wider opening, his attack must be significant enough to deter future entrance. Never forget, the battle can get hot...but...

IV. THE BATTLE IS THE LORD'S. We do well to remember this war is planned and prosecuted in God's throne room. God already knew the enemy's heart and presence and had ordained that Satan would be defeated. God declared war on Satan. Not the other way around. Expect God to open doors. When opportunity knocks, expect opposition. Move out...move in...and watch the door. Be especially vigilant of the doors of the heart and mind. Once the adversary is in, only the Lord can get him out. One Lord for many adversaries...He is more than enough to secure victory in my life and yours...He is the Door...

Blessings to you,
Pastor Sam