

## **“I AM The Door”**

John 10:1-10

7.10.22

Do you have a Top 5 favorite chapters of the Bible list? Are there some chapters that have become your favorites? When I think of my top 5, one of them is John 10. It is wonderful chapter that speaks to how Jesus is far superior to any other religious leader. It is also speaks to the Lord’s intimacy, love and purpose that He has for us.

On Father’s Day Pastor Scott had the privilege of preaching from the second part of chapter 10. He spoke on Jesus’ claim, “I am the Good Shepherd.”

Prior to Jesus claiming to be the Good Shepherd, He gave the people present an earlier, “I AM” statement that we will look at this morning. May this section of scripture challenge and encourage you as well. Maybe, it might replace one of your top 5 greatest chapters in the Bible.

Please turn with me to John 10:1–10 (ESV). Page 896 in the Red Bible. “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup> But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” <sup>6</sup> This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. <sup>7</sup> So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup> I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”

In the first six verses, Jesus used a word picture to teach the crowd around Him. The word picture includes sheep, shepherds, sheepfold, gatekeepers. The listeners didn't understand the word picture so Jesus explains it more clearly in verses 7-10.

Before we break down what Jesus said let's understand the context of why He chose to talk about sheep, shepherds, etc.

Spiritual leaders throughout Old Testament scripture were called shepherds. The people they were to lead were called sheep.

In Israelite history, there were some good shepherds like David who lovingly led the people to love God. But there were far more terrible shepherds than good. Ezekiel 34:2-6 (NLT), "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds, the leaders of Israel. Give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: What sorrow awaits you shepherds who feed yourselves instead of your flocks. Shouldn't shepherds feed their sheep? <sup>3</sup> You drink the milk, wear the wool, and butcher the best animals, but you let your flocks starve. <sup>4</sup> You have not taken care of the weak. You have not tended the sick or bound up the injured. You have not gone looking for those who have wandered away and are lost. Instead, you have ruled them with harshness and cruelty. <sup>5</sup> So my sheep have been scattered without a shepherd, and they are easy prey for any wild animal. <sup>6</sup> They have wandered through all the mountains and all the hills, across the face of the earth, yet no one has gone to search for them."

Jesus is confronting them in chapter 10. But that confrontation began in chapter 9 after Jesus healed a man born blind. No one had ever heard of a person gaining their sight that had been born blind. It was a miracle that created quite a buzz. It went viral. Soon this man was brought before the Pharisees to explain how he was healed. He explained but they didn't want to believe what he said.

Instead of rejoicing with the man's miraculous sight, the Pharisees are interrogating him a second time. Understandably, he gets frustrated and sarcastic. "I have told you

already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" <sup>28</sup> And they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. <sup>29</sup> We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." <sup>30</sup> The man answered, "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. <sup>31</sup> We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. <sup>32</sup> Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. <sup>33</sup> If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

What a wonderful testimony about Jesus. This man was teaching the truth to the Pharisees. But they didn't like it. Verse 34, "They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out."

Jesus came and found the man and led Him to faith. Afterwards, some Pharisees came around Jesus. And in their hearing Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." <sup>40</sup> Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?" <sup>41</sup> Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains."

From God's perspective these religious leaders were spiritually blind and their guilt remained because they didn't believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord. That is the backdrop to Jesus telling the story we are going to review.

The Pharisees had acquired religious power and yet they were using it for wrong. A lost sheep who had just received sight was treated harshly and barred from taking part in the Jewish religious community. That didn't sit well with Jesus.

In chapter 10, Jesus is going to differentiate the bad shepherds, the bad religious leaders from a true or good shepherd or leader. The first differentiation is:

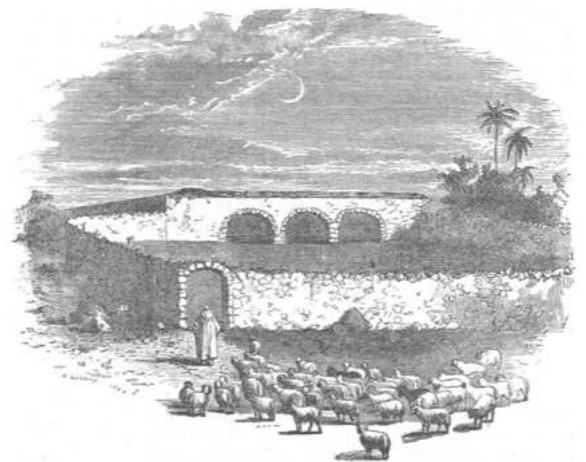
**A true shepherd cares for his flock.**

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup> But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” John 10:1-5

Jesus utilizes the well known occupation of shepherding to differentiate a true or good leader from a bad one. A shepherd was responsible for a flock of sheep. During the day, the shepherd would lead the sheep to green grass and water. At night, the shepherd would lead his sheep to a sheepfold.

A sheepfold was an enclosure often made of rocks piled high. There was only one entrance in and out of the sheepfold.

The purpose of the sheepfold was to keep the sheep safe from predators and corralled so that none wandered off during the night. In Jesus’ parable, this sheepfold had a gatekeeper who was responsible for the safety of the sheep during the night.



In larger cities, sheepfolds could house many flocks overnight while the shepherds got some well needed rest.

In the morning, the shepherds would come to the gatekeeper. The gatekeeper would recognize them and open the gate. How could the shepherds separate their sheep from another’s flock?

The shepherds didn't need any visual colors or markings to tell their sheep from someone else's. The shepherds had a tried and true method to bring only their sheep out of the sheepfold. The shepherd would talk to his sheep. Good shepherds would know and call each sheep by name. Or he would whistle or play a small flute a particular song that only his flock would know and they would come out of the pen to its owner. The sheep would recognize their master's call and come to him making **ewe** turns out of the sheepfold. :)

Gary Burge writes, "During the Palestinian uprising in the late 1980s the Israel army decided to punish a village near Bethlehem for not paying its taxes. The officer in command rounded up all of the village animals and placed them in a large barbed-wire pen. Later in the week he was approached by a woman who begged him to release her flock, arguing that since her husband was dead the animals were her only source of livelihood. He pointed to the pen containing hundreds of animals and humorously quipped that it was impossible because he could not find her animals. She asked that if she could in fact separate them herself, would he be willing to let her take them? He agreed. A soldier opened the gate and the woman's son produced a small reed flute. He played a simple tune again and again--and soon sheep heads began popping up across the pen. The young boy continued his music and walked home, followed by his flock of twenty-five sheep."

The shepherd would lead his sheep from the front not push them from behind. Pushing from behind causes stressed sheep. Leading from the front creates peaceful sheep.

The thieves and robbers that Jesus mentioned in this word picture were the Pharisees. They didn't lead the flock of God well. They pushed and pressured the people. They took God's laws and created their own laws around God's laws doubling the difficulty to keep them. The people were stressed out carrying heavy spiritual burdens that the religious leaders would not lessen.

That is not how God shepherds His people. Listen to His method. Isaiah 40:10–11 (NLT), “Yes, the Sovereign Lord is coming in power. He will rule with a powerful arm. See, he brings his reward with him as he comes. <sup>11</sup> He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in his arms, holding them close to his heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young.”

Can you picture this verse in your mind’s eye? A lamb is tired and weak. Jesus picks up the lamb and lovingly carries it next to His heart. The Lord recognizes the condition of the moms who recently delivered young lambs and leads at a pace that they can handle.

How does Jesus respond to people who are overwhelmed by heavy burdens? “Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.” Matthew 11:28–30 (NLT)

Dane Ortlund in his excellent book titled, *Gentle and Lowly*, writes, “Gentle and lowly.” This, according to his own testimony, is Christ’s very heart. This is who he is. Tender. Open. Welcoming. Accommodating. Understanding. Willing. If we are asked to say only one thing about who Jesus is, we would be honoring Jesus’s own teaching if our answer is, gentle and lowly...He doesn’t simply meet us at our place of need; he lives in our place of need. He never tires of sweeping us into his tender embrace. It is his very heart.”

Who loves you like that? Only Jesus. Instead of thinking about how you don’t measure up, stop and think about how much Jesus loves you and how is wanting to relate to you. He has already paid your sins on the cross. He doesn’t want you to wallow in them. He wants you to meditate on His unconditional love for you. Thinking about His love for you will change your life for the good.

Sheep follow their loving shepherd. They don't follow strangers. Verse 5, "A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." That sheep run from strangers is absolutely true. As a teenager driving in Oregon, I would see flocks of sheep near the side of the road. Sometimes, I would stick my head out the window and yell at the sheep. Inevitably, one sheep would raise its heads quickly and turn and run away from the road. Once that one sheep took off the rest of the flock followed. Pretty soon the whole flock is at the far end of the pasture. **I didn't realize back then that this was a biblical concept and that one day I would use my dumb antics as a sermon illustration. :)**

The man who was born blind heard Jesus' voice, believed in Him and became one of the sheep of His fold. The Pharisees too heard Jesus but they rejected the Good Shepherd's voice.

The listeners, including the Pharisees didn't understand the word picture Jesus was making with the story so He explained

Look at verse 7, "So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup> I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture."

In these three verses Jesus twice says that

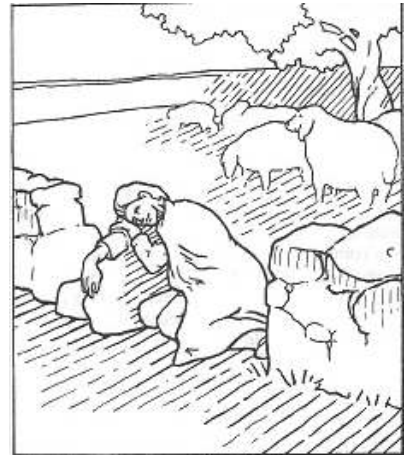
**I AM The door of the sheep.**

Earlier, we talked about a sheepfold in a city where a gatekeeper was hired to protect the sheep. Here Jesus seems to be talking about a sheepfold out in the countryside. A sheepfold in the countryside was more basic. And it didn't have a hired gatekeeper.

Out in the country, the shepherd would be the door. He would place himself at the doorway. He would be the door for the sheep- their protection. Any robber or thief or wild animal would have to go through the shepherd to get to the sheep.

Spiritually, how is Jesus to the door of the sheep? What does walking through door do for someone?

In the previous sheepfold mentioned Jesus was not talking about heaven. He was referring to Judaism. Jesus entered that sheepfold as the Good Shepherd and was calling His sheep out of that fold and into another fold where He is the door. That fold is salvation according to verse 9. “if anyone enters by me, he will be saved.” The word “saved” means “delivered safe and sound.”



In verse 8, Jesus said, “All who came before me are thieves and robbers.” Jesus was not condemning prophets or servant of God like Elijah and John the Baptist. Notice in the statement the present tense word “are.” Those who are alive now are thieves and robbers” (not “were”). The present religious leaders or false messiahs were not true shepherds nor did they have the approval of God on their ministry. They did not love the sheep, but instead exploited them and abused them just like the man who was born blind.

How can you tell if a shepherd is of God or not of God? We saw earlier that:

**A shepherd of God loves and cares for the sheep.** The shepherd has their best in mind. He serves them and desires for them to become more like the Good Shepherd.

**A thief or robber uses the sheep for his benefit. He steals from the sheep by scheming or manipulation of even force.**

**A shepherd of God believes the Word of God hasn't changed and honors and preaches and teaches it.** God's voice is in His Word. A consistent way of hearing from the Good Shepherd is to go to His Word.



**A thief or a robber minimizes or negates God's Word. That person is not God's shepherd. Nor is that church God's church.**

Gentle Jesus has this to say to those who want to minimize God's Word and cause others to fall into sin. "But if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to have a large millstone tied around your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea." Matthew 18:6 (NLT)

That is a strong warning for those who look down on God's Word as archaic or out of touch.

**A shepherd of God leads people to Jesus because He the only way to God.** The shepherd wants people to walk through the door that is Jesus for salvation. A shepherd knows that it is only through Jesus that one can be saved. And He is committed to no other name than Jesus.

In two weeks we are going to delve deeper into Jesus being the only door to salvation when we look at Jesus' statement, "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6 (ESV)

**A thief or robber climbs over the wall of the sheepfold because they reject Jesus' authority or divinity. They teach all roads lead to God.**

John describes these kind of people. "And who is a liar? Anyone who says that **Jesus is not the Christ**. Anyone who denies the Father and the Son is an antichrist." 1 John 2:22 (NLT)

In the last verse of this passage, we get to read the motives for the thief and robber vs. the motives of Jesus. Verse 10. "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10

The thief or robber comes to take from you. Jesus comes to give to you. He comes to give you something that you could not find or manufacture on your own. For

**The abundant life is found in Jesus.**

John Piper, “Jesus...means, “I came that they might be saved and go out and come in and find pasture” — protection and plenty, solid safety and deep soul satisfaction.

Abundant life is not about having stuff. It’s about having peace, having joy, having God.”

I bet if you were to ask the man who experienced the miracle of eyesight what was the greatest gift He received from Jesus? Sight or a personal relationship with Jesus? I am confident he would say a personal relationship with Jesus. By faith the man entered into the door of salvation and experienced true acceptance, love and provision and forever life with God.

The Christian is promised an abundant life- satisfying, peaceful, experiencing joy, appreciating God. Are you experiencing that kind of life? If not, why not?

- Maybe you are too busy to connect with Him.
- Maybe you have forgotten what He rescued you from.
- Maybe you are more enamored by the things of this world than Him.
- Maybe you have not taken any risks for Jesus lately.

I am going to leave us with three quick applications to help experience the abundant life that Jesus promises. The key common denominator in all three is **time**. Time needs to be set aside. Time needs to be prioritized. Time set aside and prioritized will turn into the best time spent because it is spent with Jesus.

**Spend meaningful time with your Good Shepherd.** Meaningful doesn’t mean quantity. It means quality. Set aside quality time to connect with Jesus daily through His Word, through worship.

**Listen to His voice and follow Him.**

The more you listen to Jesus the easier it will be to recognize His distinct voice. Talk to Him in prayer and then listen to His voice. His voice is always consistent with God's Word. When you hear from Him, follow what He says for the Good Shepherd has wonderful ministry opportunities for you to do.

**Engage in the discipleship pathway.**

Our vision leads to an abundant life. There are steps to take from being a Christ-follower to a disciple to a disciple-maker. To see God use you to help others enter the door of faith or to help someone grow in Christ is experiencing the abundant life. It is exhilarating. And God wants you to experience it often so follow the steps and watch how your life becomes even more abundant.

Let's pray

o.b.g.