

I Am the Gate

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Date: 03 October 2021

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[0 : 00] Well, as we come to the Lord's table this morning, we're going to go back and reflect on a few of the words that Jesus said that we skipped over in the past couple of weeks. We're working through the Gospel of John, which is the story of Jesus according to John.

And we've been considering the words of Jesus from John chapter 10. And John tells us there about what happened when Jesus had a bit of a discussion, a conversation with the Pharisees after healing the man who had been born blind.

Jesus has been speaking to the Pharisees using the metaphor of sheep and shepherding. And in a veiled sort of way, Jesus has likened the Pharisees to thieves and robbers.

He's referred to them as strangers. He said that the sheep, the people of God, do not belong to them. Instead, they belong to the true shepherd.

And Jesus has claimed and said, I am that shepherd, the true shepherd. And not just the true shepherd, but the good shepherd.

[1 : 11] The one who, unlike the Pharisees and the religious leaders, actually cares for his sheep deeply. Not for what they can give to him, but he desires to give to them and to bless them.

In this particular analogy of shepherd and sheep that Jesus has been using, he's used every aspect of the illustration to make a point.

He uses the pen, the sheep, the shepherd, the thieves and robbers, the hired hand, and the wolf. But so far we've skipped one.

The gate of the sheep pen. Jesus even uses the gate to make a point, to speak the truth of God. So let's listen again this morning to what Jesus said about that in John chapter 10, verse 7.

John chapter 10, verse 7. Therefore, Jesus said again, very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep.

[2 : 19] Skip down to verse 9. He says it again. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved.

They will come in and go out and find pasture. Some of you in your, maybe a little older Bible translations may have the word door instead of gate.

The original word used there is somewhat flexible. It can be used for door as like the door of a house, or more generally for entrance, like the entrance into a tomb or a cave.

Or in this case, like for a gateway or entrance into a sheep pen or a fold. It's the thing that the sheep must go through in order to get into the pen, and the thing that they go through to get out again.

Now I want you to imagine for a moment that you are a sheep. What have you got to defend yourself? Absolutely nothing, right?

[3 : 32] As far as creatures go, sheep are pretty helpless. Pretty much all that they can do is run away. They're pretty skittish. They're easily scared. Very nervous kinds of creatures, and with good reason.

They've got nothing to defend themselves with. So if you're a sheep, do you want to be in the sheep fold or out of it? Well, it depends.

Is there a storm brewing? Is it getting dark? Is the wind starting to blow in your face? Is there a danger or a threat? Maybe a pack of wolves howling nearby.

If there is, I'd rather be in the fold. But if it's quiet and calm, and the sun is shining, and I've just woken up from a night's sleep, and I'm starting to feel hungry, no predators in sight, I'd rather be out.

Go find some breakfast in the fields. Jesus manages to capture both of these realities in what he said. Let's start with the first.

[4 : 38] First, in the sheep fold is where you want to be when there's danger for protection. Jesus says, I am the gate for the sheep.

Whoever enters through me will be saved. Let's translate that metaphor. If you want to get out of the danger you are in, says Jesus, you need to come to me.

Not just to me, but through me. It's through me that you get out of the danger and into the safety of the sheep pen. Now probably some of the Pharisees listening to Jesus say this are thinking, what? Whoever enters through me will be saved? Saved from what? Jesus hasn't said anything about any real danger. What do you mean?

Jesus actually hasn't even talked about the wolf yet that we heard about a couple weeks ago. He's going to say that in a couple verses. But what danger? What do we need to be saved from? Well, Jesus actually has very recently mentioned a kind of danger.

[5 : 53] If we go back just a few verses to the last verse of chapter 9. This is the last thing Jesus said to the Pharisees before he launched into this analogy with the sheep.

He said to them, if you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin. But now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.

Your guilt remains. Let those words sink in a little bit. What is Jesus saying to them? He's saying to them, even though you think you are righteous, you Pharisees, you are not.

You have guilt. You are guilty before God. In God's books, your name is not listed under the innocent column.

It's listed under the guilty column. The deserving of punishment column. And this is not a new message. Or just a message for the Pharisees.

[6 : 59] In fact, Jesus has been saying this very kind of thing over and over again. To the Pharisees and to all the people. We could look back to chapter 8.

I won't put the words up on the screen. But Jesus had a few things to say there that were very similar. He told the people, I am going away. And you will look for me.

And you will die in your sin. He said, if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins.

He also said, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. And a slave has no permanent place in the family. But if the son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

These are all things Jesus said back in John chapter 8. And they all kind of point in the same direction. He's saying to the Pharisees and to the people, Yes, you are in real danger.

[7 : 59] Because of your sins. Because of your guilt. The things that you have done. And the day of judgment is coming.

But, says Jesus, I am the gate. I am the way for you, for anyone, to get out of that danger that you're in.

And get into safety. Into God's safety. Whoever enters through me, he says, will be saved. Protected.

So come to me. And the truth is, this is not just a danger for the Pharisees, or a danger for the people of Jesus' day.

This is a danger that all people are in. Even today. Every one of us. Romans 3.23 For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God.

[9 : 05] As Paul said to the people of Athens, God now commands all people, everywhere, to repent. For he has set a day, when he will judge the world with justice, by the man he has appointed.

Acts 17.31 That means all of us, every one of us, is in the same danger. The Pharisees were in that day.

All of us have need, to repent of our sins. To come to Jesus. For he is the gate. He is the way into the fold of God.

And the only way, for us to get out of the trouble, that we are in with God, because of our sins. So I want to ask you this morning, have you come into the fold of God?

Have you entered into the protection, that only comes through Jesus? Are you one of Jesus' sheep? This is the most important thing in life.

[10 : 15] Entering through Christ, belonging to Christ, it's the only way, to be saved, from the trouble that we're all in, with God, because of our sins.

It's only through Jesus, and what he has done, at the cross, that we can be saved. And there's more.

Jesus has a little bit more to say. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved. This is all one sentence in the original. And they will come in, and go out, and find pasture.

Now we might have been tempted, if before Jesus said that part, to think that being in the fold, means entering into the kingdom of God, or into heaven.

But that doesn't make a whole lot of sense, when we hear what Jesus says, right after this.

Whoever enters through me, will be saved, and they will come in, and they will go out, and find pasture.

[11 : 20] We don't go out of the kingdom of God, or out of heaven, once we're in. It doesn't even make sense. I think this kind of goes back, to the question I asked earlier.

If you're a sheep, do you want to be in the fold, or out of the fold? In the pen, or out of the pen?

Well, it depends on the situation, doesn't it? And Jesus captures both senses.

If we enter through him, we are saved, from the real danger, that we are in, and we become, one of his sheep. And once we are his, then, we live out the rest of our lives, under his care.

They will go in, and they will go out, and find pasture, means that we will be, well taken care of. And that we will live, the peaceful, and happy life, of, those who are sheep, of the good shepherd.

He will lead us, He will guide us, He will, so to speak, take us out, to feed us, to care for us, to provide for our needs, to see that we have, everything we need in life.

[12 : 30] Do you hear what Jesus is saying? It's not just to save you, from danger, from punishment, that I am here. Yes, I am here for that, but I'm also here, to give you life, the good, well cared for, kind of life, that God wants, for all of his people, for all of his sheep.

As Jesus will say, in the next breath, verse 10, life to the full, life abundant. One of the lies, that the devil wants you, to believe, is that if you come to Jesus, and go through the gate, that you will forfeit, all that is good in life, and you will become like a prisoner, in that sheep pen, locked up, for eternity.

Not so. Those who are saved, through Christ, will go in, and go out, and find pasture, good land, to graze in.

God will take care of you, and you will find, the free, and joyful life, that you most deeply long for, in Christ, and under his care.

Listen, the so-called freedom, of being outside, of the flock of Christ, is no freedom at all. Being outside, of the flock of Christ, is dangerous.

[14 : 00] It's like being on death row. Or as Jesus said, back in chapter 8, it's slavery. Those who sin, are slaves to sin, he said.

But, if the Son, sets you free, you will be free indeed, truly free. The devil has been telling, the same lie, since the Garden of Eden.

That God just wants you, to be his subjects. But that he doesn't really, want you to be happy. Or to have a, an abundant life. A satisfied life.

It's a lie. Jesus doesn't just want us, locked up in his pen for life. He wants us to go in, and go out, and find pasture, to live our lives out, in fullness, under his care.

To lead us. To give us, that full life. He wants that, for every one of his sheep. Including you. This is the good news of Jesus.

[15 : 07] Not just that he came, to save us from punishment. He did do that. And it's a wonderful gift. But also that, he came so that, we might have life. And have it to the full.

That we might be truly, happy, and satisfied. As only God can do, for the human heart. For you and for me. It's for both, salvation, and, life.

That Jesus came. It's for both, that he went to the cross, and suffered, and died. And that's what we want to remember today.

As we come to the Lord's table. We do this every month. We remember that for us to be saved, and to have life, there was a great cost.

Jesus' body, broken. His blood spilled out, for us.

[16 : 09] A horrible death. Horrible suffering. So that we could be saved, and have life, with him, and with the father, forever.

And so we want to take a few minutes, to quietly reflect on that, this morning. We're going to put some music on, in a minute here. And it'll be an opportunity for you, just to quietly pray in your

heart, to reflect on what Jesus, has done for you.
going to the cross, for you, to reflect on your relationship with him. After we've had a few minutes to do that, Rod will come, and he will serve the bread, and the cup.
And if you are trusting in this good news of Jesus, if you have come to him, and gone through him, the gate, and are in the fold of God, then I invite you to partake with us this morning.
This table's for you. If you haven't done that, I would encourage you to abstain. And we'll wait until everyone has been served. And then once we have all been served, we'll give thanks, and eat, and drink together.

[17 : 26] Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[19 : 55] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[22 : 25] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[24 : 55] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.