

Behold I Stand at the Door

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[0 : 0 0] Revelation chapter 3 and verse 20, behold, I stand at the door and knock.

When I was a boy, we didn't really ask each other, how are you? Rather, we said, and I still say, what's the crack? Crack is taken from the Gaelic language. I'm not speaking about other kinds of crack, you understand.

And it loosely means, what's going on with you right now? What's happening with you? What's happening in the community? What news have you got for me? Given the fact that how are you has become a vacuous question, almost always eliciting the response, fine.

I far prefer the greeting, what's the crack? Never mind me though, what's the crack with you right now? Is your life good, middling, or awful? That's the right question to ask on this first Sunday of this new decade.

What's the crack with you? Because there is almost certainly more happening in our lives than we know. In Revelation 3 verse 20, the risen Jesus says to the church in Laodicea, modern southwestern Turkey, Look, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me.

[1 : 3 7] You see, for the church in that place, Jesus was very much on the outside. Oh, they couldn't be faulted for their ceremonies and their religious worship.

They played the good Christian. But Jesus was only ever on the outside. I wonder whether Jesus is on the outside of your life today.

Does he feature at all in the decisions you make? The way you think? Or the way you view the world? I'm not asking whether you're religious, or whether you're good at playing the Christian, but whether Jesus is on the outside, or on the inside.

When I ask the question, what's the crack? The answer can never be, I'm fine, because I'm not asking how you are on the outside. I'm asking what life's like for you on the inside, in your heart, and in your mind, and in your soul.

Because one of two things is ultimately true for every one of us here. Jesus is either on the outside, or on the inside. Well, from this verse here in Revelation 3.20, I want to invite you to hear the risen Jesus knocking on the door of your heart, and I want you to let him in.

[3 : 0 3] And I want to do so by asking four questions. First, what is Jesus doing on the outside of your life? Second, why is Jesus still on the outside of your life?

Third, do you know why Jesus wants to come inside your life? And lastly, how can you let Jesus inside your life?

Let me tell you from my own experience, and from the experience of billions of other Christians, the crack's good when Jesus moves from being outside of your life, to being inside.

First of all then, what is Jesus doing on the outside of your life? What is he doing on the outside of your life? Well, for the sake of argument, let's just bypass an objection you might have.

Namely, you don't believe Jesus is real anyway. Let's just assume, we're going to put that objection to the side for a while. We can talk about that objection some other time, but let's just assume, for the sake of argument this morning, Jesus is real, he is alive, as all Christians believe, and he is doing today, what he says he is, in this verse.

[4 : 17] So what exactly is Jesus doing today, on the outside, of your life? Well, according to our verse, he's standing at the door of your heart, and he's knocking.

He's always been standing there, from the very beginning of your life, but what he's doing right now, is that he's knocking. Just like you might knock on the door of my house, so Jesus is knocking on the door, of our hearts.

He's knocking, and he's knocking again. But not only is he knocking, he's also calling. How else is it, that the person inside, can hear his voice?

And he's calling, let me in. I want to eat with you, and for you to eat with me. I mean, isn't this an amazing act, of gracious humility?

That the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords, the Christ of Heaven, who rules the armies of glory, should stand at the door of our hearts, and knock, and call to us, let me in.

[5 : 36] I want to eat with you, and for you to eat with me. But in what ways is he knocking, and in what senses is he calling to us?

Surely we don't have the oral sensation, of his knock inside us, and try as hard as we might, unless we are delusional. We can't hear his physical voice.

No, his voice is far subtler, and far more forceful, than merely what we may sense. He is knocking on the door of our hearts, and speaking to us, in at least three ways, very briefly.

First of all, he is speaking to us, through his word. Through his word. Though the Bible, might be a book, made of paper, or you might even have it this morning, on your smartphone.

Be sure that Jesus is knocking, on the door of your heart, even as you're reading that Bible, or you're hearing it being preached. And so, we hear a Jesus, who will soon die on the cross, on account of our sins.

[6 : 44] And he invites us with these words. He says, come to me, all you who are weary, and burdened, and I will give you rest. And we're hearing his voice, in our hearts saying, let me in, that I may give you, rest.

Or again, we hear Jesus, speaking through the prophet Isaiah, saying to us, come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters, you who have no money, come, buy and eat, come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without cost.

And we hear his voice, in our minds saying, let me in. You're thirsty, and I've got water, for you to drink. You're hungry, and I've got food, for you to eat. Or perhaps, it's nothing quite so direct.

Perhaps, it's just that we've been reading the Bible, for ourselves, and we've been sitting under the preaching, of his word, and we're becoming more and more aware, of how uniquely glorious, and loving Jesus is.

He's speaking to us, through his word. Second, he is speaking to us, through our consciences. Through our consciences. Conscience is not always, a reliable source, because consciences, can become conditioned, or hardened, toward things, they really shouldn't be.

[8 : 05] And yet, at its most basic level, despite what society, tells us, we know when something is right, and when something is wrong. It's called, common sense. We try to suppress, our consciences, and silence, all the arguments, it makes to us.

We become addicted, to substances. We try to distract ourselves, from the voice of our consciences, but all the time, our consciences, know at us, and tell us, as Shakespeare said, not all is right, in the kingdom of Denmark.

We hear its voice, when all our voices, are silent. It's the voice of Jesus, saying to us, all have sinned, and fallen short, of the glory of God.

We sense its knock, when we feel ashamed, about who we are, and what we've done. We go looking for forgiveness, or even try the placebo, of trying to persuade ourselves, that the problem isn't with us, but with the world around us.

Back in the early 20th century, the beginning of the 20th century, the Daily Telegraph, ran a letters column, asking the question, what is wrong with this world? And there were thousands, of replies, but the most telling, came from, the famous G.K. Chesterton, who wrote, dear sirs, I am, respectfully, G.K. Chesterton.

[9 : 32] Ah, there's a man, who's being honest with himself. There's a man, who's listening to the voice, of his conscience. I am the problem. Thirdly, he is speaking to us, through our experiences.

Life has had ups and downs, for us. There have been good years, and bad years, good days, and bad days. Do you remember, how at Christmas time, the Queen admitted, that she'd had a, bumpy year?

What, what have we learned, from our experiences? If it's not, that we don't have, all the answers, to life's problems. And sometimes, we just can't cope.

We just don't have the strength, to keep on going. It's that knock of Jesus, on our hearts, reminding us, that we were created, to live dependent, upon his daily grace, and help.

It's his voice, calling to us. You can hear me, offering today, my daily grace, let me in, so that it can be yours, for the good times, and the bad.

[10 : 40] We've had experiences, which convince us, we shall not live forever, that we are mortal. Again, it's the knock of Christ, upon our hearts, calling us, to number our days, and learn the heart, of wisdom, that only in him, is there life, and life eternal.

To keep him, from becoming conceited, and over proud, the stoic Roman emperor, Marcus Aurelius, employed a slave, who would walk, alongside him, continually whispering, into his ear, remember sire, thou art, but a man.

There's the knock, on the door, of our hearts, and minds. Remember, thou art, but a man. Weak, frail, and mortal, at that. Make no mistake, the risen Christ, stands at the door, of your heart today, knocking and calling, to you through, his word, through our consciences, and through our experiences.

It may seem, almost fantastically, fictional to us, but that's the reality, of what Jesus, is saying here. This is the crack. Jesus is knocking, at the door, of your heart.

Can you hear him? Will you open up, to him today? The second question, I want to ask, from this text is, why is Jesus still, on the outside, of your life?

[12 : 11] Why is Jesus still, on the outside, of your life? Because the question, remains, if Jesus is knocking, on the door, of our hearts, and if he's calling out, to us, inviting us, to open up, and let him in, because in him, there is all grace, and forgiveness, and life, if the king, of kings, and lord, of lords, winsomely, calls upon us, to open the door, of our hearts, and let him in, we need to ask, ourselves the question, why then, is he still, on the outside, of my life?

Why haven't I, let him in? Well the answer, to this, does not rest, in Jesus, because according, to our text, even today, he is knocking, at the door, of our hearts, and calling out, to us, the answer, rests, in our unwillingness, to let him in, let me offer, four very brief, possible reasons, why we have not, yet let Jesus, into our hearts, in the first instance, could it be, that we are distracted, could it be, we can't hear his voice, because we've got headphones, playing loud music, we can't hear the knock, on the door, of our hearts, because the TV's, turned up too loud, I'm not talking, about these things, I'm talking about, all the different, things in this world, which might drown out, the voice of Jesus, the busyness, the clamor, of social media, the norms, of our society, the problems, of the world, could it be, that an addiction, to the values, of the cosmopolitan, are distracting you, from hearing the voice, of the Christ, in the second instance, could it be, that we're ignoring him,

Jesus is on the outside, because, we like it that way, it's true, we can hear his voice, through his word, and sometimes, that voice really grabs us, but for reasons, known only to ourselves, we choose to ignore him, we look out the window, and we even see him, knocking at our door, but we pretend, we can't see it, we hear his voice, calling to us, through the letterbox, but we pretend, we can't hear it at all, we ignore the voice, of conscience, the voice of his word, the voice of experience, we ignore them, in the third instance, could it be, that we're afraid of Jesus, that we're afraid of him, sometimes, confession time here, when we see, the Jehovah witnesses, doing their tour, of our neighborhood, I say to the family, don't answer the door, because I'm terrified, that we're going to be caught there, all day, just talking to the brainwashed, could it be, that we're afraid of Jesus, and that's why, we're not opening up to him, could it be, that we think of the Jesus, who is knocking at the door, of our hearts today, as dark and sinister, as someone, whose intentions toward us, are entirely evil, or at least, will cramp our style, so we keep Jesus, on the outside, because we think, the crack's going to be bad, if he should ever be, on the inside, or lastly, in the fourth instance, could it be, that Jesus is still, on the outside of our lives, because, we're tired of opening the door, to others, we're tired of opening the door, to others, perhaps we've tried, many different ways, of finding peace, in this world, we tried to find it, using religion, didn't work, we tried, to find it, pursuing carnal pleasure, that didn't work either, we tried to find it, by pursuing status, and position, in this world, that's not worked either, the great American,

Howard Hughes, was once asked the question, how much money, is enough for you, to which he answered, just a little bit more, we've opened the door, of our hearts, to other systems, or other religions, or other ways of thinking, but nothing, has ever worked, there has only been, disappointment, in the end, what's to say, that Jesus will be, any different, so from now on, nothing is getting inside, this heart of mine, nothing is changing, my mind, what's the crack today, between you and Jesus, are you letting him in, or keeping him out, he's calling to us, let me in, so that I may do you good, and he's knocking, on the door, of our hearts, could it be, that we're too distracted, to hear him, or that for whatever reason, we're ignoring him, that we're afraid, of what impact, he might have, in our lives, or that we're tired, of opening the door, to others, and deeply cynical, that believing in Jesus, shall be any different, what's the crack, between you and him, third question, we want to ask this text, do you know, why Jesus wants to come, inside your life, do you know, why Jesus, wants to come, inside your life,

I'm not sure, but the greatest objection, any of us, have to opening, the door of our hearts, to Jesus, and hearing his voice, is that we don't really know, what it means, for him to come in, and eat with him, and, and him with us, we don't know, what he's, offering us, and suspect, that having dinner, by ourselves, is really far preferable, to inviting Jesus, along to the party, although we do not, know even the generalities, of what Jesus, will do in us, and for us, we know that if, we let him into our lives, if he should take up, residence in our minds, and hearts, life's going to be, very different, for us, then on, there's going to be, changes have to be made, there's going to be, lifestyles, which have to be denied, there's going to be, joys, which have to be embraced, there's going to be, the holiness of grace, which must be pursued, we've seen it before, we've seen it, when others, perhaps members, of our family, or just friends, became Christians, they opened the door, and let Jesus into their hearts, they changed, and perhaps, we're apprehensive, about that change, happening to us, so do you know, why Jesus wants to, come into your life today, according to,

[19 : 15] Revelation 3 20, it is, it is, so that I, come in, and eat with you, and you with me, I will come in, eat with him, and he with me, now you will know, you will know, that hospitality, and in particular, sharing a meal together, was an incredibly, important aspect, of first, century, Middle Eastern culture, even as in some parts, of the Middle East, it remains today, it was far more significant, than merely making, your family meal stretched, however many people, were present for dinner, it represented, friendship, and fellowship, oneness, and generosity, acceptance, and unity, for that one evening, that person, invited into your house, and offered hospitality, was part of your family, they were to be protected, like family, do you know why Jesus, wants to come into your life today, it's not to make your life, dull, and grey, but bright, and full of colour, it is for you, to give him everything, that's yours, and for him, to give you everything, that's his, he wants you to tell him, everything about you, even as he's going to tell us, everything about him, it's friendship, it's family, it's generosity, it's oneness, no longer will he be, on the outside calling, for you to let him in, he'll be in, you, and you will know him, even as you are known, by him, he wants in, so that he may forgive, our sin, and make us new, he wants in, so that he may give us, eternal life, and give us hope, in this world, he wants in, so that he may make us, the sons and daughters of God, and give us security, let's go back to, there to the exact words, in verse 20, these are the words,

Jesus spoke himself, him with me, and me with him, Jesus wants us, to give him all that's ours, our weakness, our guilt, fear, loneliness, and doubt, and in return, he'll give us all that's his, his forgiveness, strength, courage, fellowship, and assurance, he'll fill us, with love, both for himself, and for other people, we're afraid, perhaps, that by letting Jesus, into our lives, lives can be, very different, nothing like, the way it is for us, right now, we don't really want to have to, give up those, questionable, lifestyles, or those, respectable doubts, we say we possess, or maybe it's just, that we're afraid, of what, others might say to us, or about us, are you afraid, of having your sin forgiven, are you fearful, of your fear being replaced, with courage, are you afraid, of your despair being overwhelmed, by hope,

Jesus wants into our lives, not for, not for what he can get, from us, but for what he can, give to us, people, tend to knock on the doors, of our houses, because they want something, from us, but Jesus knocks on the door, of our hearts, because, he wants to give us, all he is, and all he's done, for us, every aspect, of his saving work, that's why, he wants in, not to make life, sad crack, but so that the crack, will be good for us, he comes not to give us problems, but to take them away, or at least, to give us the strength, we need to cope with them, almost daily, I get, spam emails, from someone, claiming to be the widow, of a wealthy, businessman, from the ivory coast, and she's trying to persuade me, to give her, her bank details, so that she can lodge, 20 million US dollars, in my bank account, you know, we're so used to this kind of spam now, of being offered, fantastic wealth, for nothing, that perhaps today, we're suspicious, of what Jesus, is calling out to us, will he really, take my sins away, at no cost to me, will his grace, really be sufficient, to cope with all, of life's problems, will his presence, go with me, now, and always, even beyond the grave, yes, yes, yes, this is no spam, this is the genuine message, of our Lord, to make us entirely new, even as he lives in our hearts, last question, we want to ask, how can you let Jesus, inside your life, after the service,

I'll be sitting in my office, for 10 minutes, if anyone wants to come, and speak to me, about the things I've said, during the sermon today, but let's, close with this question, how can I let Jesus, inside my life, so I've heard, the knock of Jesus, and I've heard, the voice of Jesus, at the door of my heart, and I've been trying, to deny it to myself, and to others, but I've heard it, and I know he wants in, not to harm me, but to do me good, to forgive my sin, to give me eternal life, to give me hope, and joy, and love, I know it to be true, because I've heard it, through the preaching, of the word, I've heard it, through the voice, of my conscience, and I've heard it, through the voice, of my experience, I've heard Jesus whispering, and now I'm hearing him shout, and for all that I've ignored him before, for all that I've been distracted, from him before, for all that I've been afraid, of him before, and for all that I've been cynical, of what he has to offer before,

I want to open the door, of my heart, I want to let him in, I want what only he, can give me, and we want it, so what's the next step, you know I'm really nervous of this, but I'm ready to open, I'm ready to commit myself, to opening, the door of my heart, and letting Jesus in, as Lord and Savior, is there a process, I need to go through, is there a certain set, of initiatory rights, is there a complex, system of admission, do you need to give, the church your bank details, let me give you the greatest news, from this verse, all it requires, all it requires, is for you to take the next step, toward Jesus, and in the quietness, or the loudness, of your beating heart, to say to him,

[26 : 59] Lord Jesus, I've had you, on the outside of my life, for so long, but now, I want you on the inside, that's it, nothing more, and nothing less, it's so uncomplicated, it's so uncomplicated, that you don't need, a PhD, to complete it, it's so uncomplicated, that even the youngest child, in our church, can do it here, and now, Lord Jesus, I've had you, on the outside of my life, for so long, but now, I want you, on the inside, thing is, if you want my advice, you need to open, that door sooner, rather than later, because who knows, how much longer, you'll keep hearing, that knock at the door, or the voice of Jesus, calling out to you, who knows, what a frightful thing, if heaven, should ever be quiet, let me ask you, one final time, and I'm speaking here, not of anyone else, but entirely directed, toward individuals, when it comes to you, and Jesus, what's the crack, let us pray,

Lord Jesus, we do hear the voice, through our hearts, through the preaching, of the word, through our own experiences, in life, reminding us, that we're mortal, and frail, and we need help, and through the convicting, voice of our consciences, and we confess, that we've been distracted, or we've ignored, that voice, we've been afraid, to hear that knock, at the door, or we've been cynical, because we've been down, too many, blind alleys, already in life, Lord forgive us, for not recognizing, the wonderful things, you want to do, in us, and for us, forgive us, for ever doubting, that the cross, was empty, and fruitless, but rather, even, as your son Jesus, extended his arms, and was nailed, to that cross, he was embracing, a world lost in sin,

Lord we pray, that you would help us, to open the door, of our hearts, to you today, it's not uncomplicated, to fall in love, with the most beautiful person, in the universe, it's, it's almost natural, we ask these things, in Jesus name, Amen.