

John 10:1-10 "I Am the Door"

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Date: 24 March 2024

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[0 : 00] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.

Amen. Thank you, Nina and Newt. Those have got to be up there in my top ten most beautiful hymn lyrics.

My sinful self, my only shame, my glory, all the cross. Two wonders I confess, the wonders of redeeming love and my unworthiness.

I hope those words ring in your ears. I do hope that you'll celebrate the glory of the cross, the empty tomb, how Jesus covers our sinful shame and he gives us life.

Especially celebrate that with us this week with our special services. But we celebrate that Savior all the time, don't we? We don't wait for Easter to celebrate the cross or the empty tomb.

[1 : 10] I need to see him afresh today. Anybody else need to see Jesus? Just need right where you are, in the hard places, in the uncertainties, in the struggles.

And Jesus is going to meet us again. So we're going to open his word to John's gospel where we are encountering Jesus. And recently, what we've seen Jesus doing is healing a blind man and then seeking him out again to give him spiritual sight.

While the Pharisees, the religious experts, are exposed as blind guides. Chapter 10 of John actually continues Jesus' conversation with some of these Pharisees and others are listening in.

Let's read the first 10 verses of John chapter 10. 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.

But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

[2 : 29] When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.

This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So Jesus again said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. Thus far, God's holy, inerrant, infallible word.

Let's ask for his help. Father, we do ask for you to speak to us this morning by your spirit. Jesus, might we hear your voice and know you and follow you and worship you, delight in you.

[3 : 47] Do that work in our hearts, we ask in your name. Amen. Amen. Jesus gives us here a wonderful picture of our relationship with God.

Sheep in a sheepfold and a shepherd. And then he uses multiple metaphors through the rest of the chapter to teach us about our relationship.

Probably the most familiar of those being that Jesus is the good shepherd. What a deeply personal image for our relationship with him.

Hearing his voice, recognizing who he is, following where he leads, trusting his provision. There's so many good things in there, but we're going to save most of them for next week.

It's going to be Easter. It's going to be great. But first, as he explains the picture that he has given here, we get the third of his I am statements in John.

[4 : 51] Jesus says, I am the door. Or the gate, sometimes you've heard it translated. The picture Jesus is using here would have been much more familiar to his original audience than it probably is to you.

So I want to give you a little bit of a picture of what they might have had in mind. These sheepfolds would have been all over the place near where Jesus is talking to them.

Probably six foot tall stone walls with a single door where the shepherd would stand to keep the sheep in. Or perhaps even at night lie down in front of the door to sleep so that no sheep escape overnight.

Often sheep were owned by multiple families in the same village and they would get together and share a sheepfold so that one shepherd could watch over all of them. So Jesus is giving us a picture like this of a sheepfold of God's family, right?

That's what he's talking about. He will speak of himself as the shepherd. But in these verses, his point is first that he is the door, the way into relationship with God and with his people.

[6:10] It is really important to Jesus here to answer the question, how do I get in with God? Maybe you've wondered that.

How do I get in with God? Notice from the first verse, Jesus is talking about the possibility of other ways in.

Climbing in. Pretty dangerous perhaps. That would be done only by thieves and robbers. People out to harm the sheep.

So the contrast here in this passage is most pointedly the unfaithful shepherds like the Pharisees Jesus is just speaking to who don't enter through Jesus at all, do they?

They're chasing him off. They don't point others to Jesus either. The contrast with them and the faithful shepherds, which eventually includes Jesus himself.

[7:10] But initially here it means those who enter through Jesus and who point people to the true door, to him. See, if Jesus is the true door, he wants us to know the dangers of trying to climb in another way.

The thieves and robbers come to steal and kill and destroy. Verse 10. That's serious language. That's a serious danger. When they get in among God's people, it causes harm to the sheep because they continue to miss Jesus.

Often, even when they do interact with people, their ministry is focused on themselves. It's all about them. Maybe such false shepherds say you get in with God by being born into the family.

Remember they've said that recently? Children of Abraham, we have the right associations, Jesus. We're in. Or perhaps it's religious ritual.

[8:18] You know, go through the right ceremonies. Make sure you're baptized. Check the right outward boxes so you look the part of clean sheep. That's how you get in with God.

He's looking for somebody. He looks like he might want them in his family, they might say. I bet many of us have heard that you can climb into relationship with God through your morality, your performance.

That's what makes you a Christian, right? You've heard that. It's how you talk. It's how you vote. It's how you teach your kids, how you spend your money, how you keep the rules, how you love your neighbor.

A lot of that sounds good, doesn't it? But Jesus says, if it is pointing you anywhere but him, watch out!

Danger! Not just not as good, dangerous! See, if Jesus is the door, then it's not Muhammad or Buddha.

[9:18] But equally, you probably knew he meant that. Equally, he's saying, it's not you or me or anything we do.

And that includes walking an aisle or praying a prayer or being a pretty good person, being nice to other people. It's really important for us to hear this because so many people have lists for us of how we get in with God, don't they?

And if those lists don't point us to Jesus alone, we might find ourselves trying to climb in the wrong way. And further, Jesus is especially warning us here that if we listen to people who urge us to rely on anyone or anything other than him, we will find that we lose our lives, not that we save them.

What voices do you listen to? Sometimes you can even come to church and leave thinking that you need to carry a lot of things with you to come to God.

Boy, I just walked to church and I leave thinking there's more things I've got to do or not do. It's all the things I'm supposed to avoid. It's all the ways I need to be better than others. It's all the people that I need to love.

[10:33] And you load up your arms with all of these things and then try to walk in through the door. And what you should have in mind, the picture I want you to have is of that special piece of furniture that was, it seems like the house was built around it and you're trying to pick it up and no matter what angle you carry it at, it is not going through that doorway.

It's staying in that house. You can leave, but the furniture's not coming. You can't carry that furniture and walk through the door. You're gonna have to put it down. Coming into the sheepfold of God requires us to lay down our pride, whatever it might be in, nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling.

My sinful self, my only shame, my glory, all the cross. If you try to get in another way, you will wreck yourself trying to climb in.

You will. But if you humble yourself to crawl, to crawl through the door, through Jesus, you can crawl safely in.

Verse nine, I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved. Listen, did you hear it? Anyone.

[11:54] If anyone enters by me, it is the beautiful inclusivity of Jesus. His broad welcome that matches up with the clear exclusivity.

Yes, for sure. He is the door. He is the only way. But anyone can come through him. No matter your record. No matter your pedigree, your appearance, your associations.

None of it matters. It matters which door you're coming through. Through him. He is the only way into God. And if you come through him, you will be saved.

That is the safety of coming through Jesus. Friend, listen. He has done all that you need. All of that performing you feel like you need to do. All the things you think you need to gather up to come to God.

Think of Jesus' beautiful, obedient, passionate, zealous, perfect life. He's done it for you. All of those, all of those failures, the debt you've accrued because you didn't, you didn't avoid all the things you were supposed to.

[13:03] Jesus has done it and then has paid for your debt on the cross once and for all as he suffered the agonizing death you deserved. And then, it didn't stop there, did it?

Because Easter's coming and Jesus rises from the dead to give you new life, the life that you long for. Jesus has secured for you forever. And he says, no one can snatch you out of my hand.

Did you know that's why he came? That's why he lived so that today he could say, no one can snatch you out of my hand. He's holding you tight. Not because of what you've done, not because you've got enough stuff in your arms, but because he has done that for you, amen?

And he loves you and he holds you and he brings you in to God's family. That's our hope. Whatever you think might get you in with God. Whoever is directing you another way to make sure you're in, put it down.

Come weak and wounded, anxious, tired, crawl to Jesus and live. That's, that's what happens.

[14:10] Take your stand beneath the cross of Jesus right now. You don't need anyone to do it for you. You don't have to wait until you can balance out your record a little bit.

No, you can come straight to Jesus right now. Just, just ask him. You can pray just like this. Jesus, you say you're the door. I am laying everything else down to come through you.

Save me. Bring me into the family of God. I don't deserve it. I have nothing to offer, but you tell me I just need you. that's the good news of Jesus.

You can come to God just like that. It's the glorious message of grace. Amazing grace. Something you could never earn. And many of you have heard it before.

Many of you have come in with God through Jesus and that delights you and you, you light up when I talk about it and you can't forget how beautiful it is to come to Jesus with nothing to offer.

[15:20] And now I want to tell you Jesus has yet one more glorious message for you today. Jesus is telling us that his being the door means that grace, that, that kind of amazing grace is not a one-time thing.

It's, it's not. Imagine, just imagine if the shepherd got all of the sheep in through the door and then disappeared. What would happen?

What would happen if he was gone from that doorway and the sheep? How long do you have, think he'd have to be gone for those sheep to wander off? What do you think would happen to them wandering off on their own?

I bet some would wander sooner than others. But all of them eventually. Thankfully, that's not the picture that Jesus gives us.

Jesus says, I am the door of the sheep. Keep hearing my voice. Keep entering through me. And anyone who does will not only be saved, but what else?

[16:31] Also will go in and will go out and will find pasture. The secret of God's grace is that it keeps drawing you toward Jesus in love, doesn't it?

So many of you know that. It keeps drawing you toward Jesus in love rather than sending you out from Jesus in licentious living. Rather than leaving you on your own, you are not on your own, brothers and sisters.

brothers, what Jesus wants you to know is that he may be the door that you walked through five years ago or 75 years ago, but he is the door for you today.

Today he wants you to know that the same door into relationship with God is Jesus. How do I live with God?

Okay, so that's how to get in. How do I live with God? Y'all, so many Christians today are like the Christians in Galatia that Paul writes to. They heard the good news of grace that you get in with God through Jesus alone and then they figured they better start looking the part or they would get left behind.

[17:49] Teachers were telling them that. You ever felt like that? Get it together where God's going to leave you behind. You ever feel like God's probably ready to drop you?

It's been one too many times. If I skip another Sunday, if I lose my temper again, if I don't love my neighbor better, something bad might happen.

that's what the Pharisees made many feel like, including the blind man whom Jesus had just healed that they ran off and Jesus had to run after again to bring him back, right?

Thieves, robbers, strangers pointing the sheep away from Jesus, leaving them alone in their own strength to fend for themselves. What a disaster!

Never so with Jesus. That's not what he's like. That's not the kind of shepherd he is. Friends, Jesus is not merely the way in once, the way to get in with God and then poof, he's gone. He is the way to live with God.

[19:01] Let's try to see this practically through the three verbs in verse 9. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in, will go out, and will find pasture.

First, going in through Jesus, going into the sheepfold, the company of God's people, relationship with God over and over, deeper and deeper, not looking for another way to life, not looking for a better way back in tonight at the end of the day.

British preacher Charles Spurgeon said it beautifully of this phrase, so I'm going to quote his sermon for a longer stretch than I usually do because it's too pretty to cut out. If you know what this means, he says, go in.

Go in farther. Go in more constantly. Do not stop where you are, but go in until you have a little more. If you love Christ, come nearer to him and nearer and nearer still.

But if you want to get into anything that is divine, you must get it through Christ. Oh, you who open your Bibles and want to understand a text, the way to get into the meaning of the text is through the door, Christ.

[20:16] Oh, you who want to get more holiness, come through the door. The way to holiness is not through Moses, but through Christ. Oh, you who would have closer communion with your heavenly Father, the way to come in is not through your own efforts, but through Christ.

You came to Christ at first to get salvation, you must come to Christ still to get sanctification, to grow, to know him more. Never look for another door, for there is but one.

And that one door will let you into life, love, peace, knowledge, sanctification. Christ is the master key of all the rooms in the palace of mercy. And if you get Christ, you shall go in.

Nothing shall keep you out of the secret chambers. You shall go in in God's name through Christ the door. Isn't that beautiful? every spiritual blessing where?

In Christ, right? Ephesians 1. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge where? In Christ, Colossians 2.

[21:25] Are you daily coming to God through Jesus? Are you? Time with him must be a priority for us. True life is found nowhere else.

Peace, hope, purpose, wisdom, growth, love. Friends, in case you're not familiar, that's why many Christians read the Bible every day.

It's not to compete for points with God. He doesn't have a top 25. But because we know that it will point us to Jesus and that we can't make it without him.

Not one day. We know he will fill us again, bless us again, guide us again. So every day read and then reflect. How should I treasure Jesus?

How does this show me his beauty, my need for him? If you need help with when and how and how to see Jesus, please ask.

[22 : 26] Love to help. Next, going out. we'll go in, we'll go out. Best understood in this picture as leaving the church, going out into the world each day through Jesus.

Isn't that wonderful? I don't know if you think about every day going out into the world that way, but in this picture there is no separate part of your life. the sheep cannot leave the fold without going through the same doorway they came in, right?

They're not getting over the wall. They will go out through Jesus, and this is really important because I just told you why so many Christians spend time talking with Jesus every day, and you need to know Jesus is with you not only in your quiet time.

Did you know that? Jesus cares about you more than your regular devotional life. He is a personal shepherd helping you to live with God everywhere, everywhere, in every situation.

What that means is that the only safe way to make it through a day in this world is with Jesus. The only safe way to make it through a day in this world is with Jesus.

[23 : 51] Do you live like that? I didn't say, did you nod your head when I said it? Do you live like that? How do you practice the presence of God that he is with you at work?

When you want to share of him with your neighbor, when you go to school, Jesus, give me strength, I'm about to slap my co-worker. Jesus, help, I need words to speak about you.

Those are equally legitimate prayers. Jesus, I feel it. I'm treasuring the things of this world. It's happening again.

I see it in what I'm doing right now. Show me again, Jesus, you are the true treasure. Right now, right here, not tomorrow morning when I have another quiet time. Show me now, Jesus, I need your help.

He's with you, giving you all that you need to live in his world on his mission. He gives you forgiveness that enables you to repent, even to that co-worker.

[25 : 00] He gives you eternal security that frees you to risk temporal discomfort in relationships to share his love. He gives you peace that allows you to enter chaos and hurt and busyness around you as a calm presence.

Do you live like that? Are you going out on your own, in your own strength, for your own goals, thinking you'll be just fine? Friends, you won't.

You're a sheep. He's the door. Don't leave home without him, ever. Talk with your grace group about how you can go out every day wherever you go with Jesus.

Where you go, you need to talk about your life. you'll go in and you'll go out and every single time you'll find pasture through Jesus.

Find pasture sounds like Psalm 23, doesn't it? The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. Perfectly provided for at all times.

[26 : 10] The cherished object of divine diligence, green pastures to lie down in, his provision rest, still waters, a restored soul, peace, hope.

You'll have life and in fact have it abundantly, he says. We're going to talk more about that abundant life next week. It is so good and it's Easter and so don't miss that but it's not all the comfort and ease that we could ever hope for.

That's not what abundant life means. No. Jesus is saying that living through him we have true life no matter what discomfort or dis-ease we face.

Pasture is a place of rest, not rush. church. I've sat with several of you in a lot of pain this week. Deep loss and grief, painful injustice, hurt from other people's sin.

[27 : 26] and in every one of those painful situations if you are trying to live with God on your own, come to him on your own, you'll be in those situations merely angry with him and hopeless and bitter because you can't fix him.

Nothing seems good. That's the reality of where many of us will go this week. But if Jesus is the door in your relationship with God, if he is there with you in those moments, the one who stays with you, the one who makes sure that no matter what happens, you're going to find pasture, then you can grieve the loss of someone young or old.

You can even yell it God and have hope in the God who gave up his only son for you. If Jesus is actively with you, you can be confident that the wrong you've experienced will one day be made right and that it's not without purpose right now because he's here at work with you.

If you are finding pasture through Jesus, you can call sin, sin. You can forgive without limit and you can love others because someone loves and is caring for you.

Is your life too full for that? You're always searching, you're frantically busy, slow down. You can because he's got it and he's got you.

[29 : 15] Pasture is a place of rest, not rush because Jesus is there. Do you see why we can't go a day without Jesus?

Without contemplating his glory and his grace, without depending on him for life, for life eternal, for life abundant, for life today we need him.

The story is told of a wealthy old widower and his only son who got together and began to collect an amazing art portfolio. Rembrandts, Van Gogh's, Monet's, they had a collection anyone would envy but the joy of the father really was that he shared this activity with the son that he loved.

One day, however, the son went off to war and never returned home. Months after the father learned of his son's death, a soldier knocked on his door and gave him a package, was a portrait of the father's son painted just a few days before he died.

It wasn't beautifully painted, but the father hung it over his fireplace as the centerpiece of his collection. When the man died, art collectors from around the world came to an auction for this fantastic, famous collection.

[30 : 50] Here they are gathered and as the room fills, the auctioneer says, we're going to begin with the portrait of the son. Will anyone give \$100 for the portrait of the son?

And he hears nothing. He said, how about \$50? Anyone? Come on, \$50 for the portrait of the son.

And finally, one of their neighbors says, you know, I knew them. He really loved his son.

I'll give you \$50 for it. Now, now we can get started. Everyone's getting keyed up for the masterpieces. Here they come, but the auctioneer says, the auction is over.

What? Why? How can that be? This is what we came for. It's very simple, he says. According to the father's will, whoever takes the son gets it all.

Whoever takes the son, gets it all. When you enter into relationship with God the father, through Jesus his son, you don't merely get life one day, someday, although that's wonderful.

[31 : 58] You get life every day with all the glorious riches of the goodness and grace of God himself. It's yours now, today.

and every day. And that's not a secret. It's not meant to be a surprise. Jesus, the son, tells us that he is the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep.

The father tells us if God did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also along with him graciously give us all things, all things in Jesus?

Jesus. So on the night he was betrayed, Jesus took bread and he broke it as I gave it to his disciples.

Just in the same way that I, ministering in his name, give this bread to you, he said, take and eat. This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

[33 : 02] And in the same way, after supper, he took the cup and said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Shed for many for the forgiveness of sins, drink from it, all of you.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. This is the Lord's table. It's another picture of our relationship with him, just like the sheep fold is. You don't get the invite to this table by being Presbyterian, by being moral, by being pretty good. You come to the table and the God who sets it through the door, through his son, and if that is your hope, then you come and you eat with these other sheep who would be hopelessly lost without him. That's all of our story. And who have come in only through Jesus. If that's not your hope, if you don't place your trust in Jesus alone for coming into relationship with God, then I invite you not to come and partake of this table.

Don't take the elements this morning. It pictures that relationship with God is through Jesus alone. And if that's not something that you believe personally, I would warn you not to come and say something that you don't really believe.

[34 : 27] Plus, God warns against it also. God also warns not having relationship with him any other way than Jesus.

So, he has given you Jesus. He has sent his son for you that you might know life, life eternal and life abundant.

He has given you the only door that works, the only door you need. You need to do nothing else. Won't you come in through Jesus?

Let's pray. Father, thank you for giving the son. We come to say we don't need anything else.

You've given us in him all that we need, all we could imagine, the riches of your glory, through his body and blood given for us. Would you now strengthen us through that, that we might live with him even today.

[35 : 28] We ask in his name. Amen. For more information, visit us online at southwood.org.