

The Shepherd And The Door

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[0 : 00] We read in John's Gospel, John chapter 10, and verse 9, I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find a pasture.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I am come that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. And these two great I am statements of Jesus is what I want us to focus on this morning. I am the door and I am the good shepherd. In many ways there is nothing new. These are probably some of the most preached on texts in the Bible.

But as I was just reflecting and thinking about the outreach that was done, and in the prayerful hope that maybe people will come to church, I think it is very important that we stop and think about who Jesus is.

And the greatest way of finding out who Jesus is, is listening to what he says about himself. And that is what he does. He makes various statements about regarding who he actually is.

[1 : 16] And so he says, I am a door and I am the shepherd. Now as we know, the shepherd is one of the great themes in the Bible. Right throughout the Old Testament, Israel were looked upon as a sheep and the Lord the shepherd.

In various references, if that is what we are going to spend our time on, it will be very interesting because there are so many references, even in the Old Testament, about the Lord being the shepherd.

But we know that David's great psalm, best known psalm, of course, is the Lord is my shepherd. And it is a wonderful thing to realize and to know that the Lord truly is our shepherd. If we were to look at a human shepherd or any crofter who works or any man or woman who is shepherding, we will get a tiny little picture of the way that the Lord shepherds us.

Because when you look at the way that so many people who have sheep, of the passion that they have for the sheep, the care that they have, the protection, you will find that even when they are out gathering and they are aware that they are missing one, they will search and they will search and they will search.

[2 : 44] And they are always looking to feed the sheep. So even just at a human level, there is such a commitment. There is a huge commitment. Any person who has sheep knows that there is a huge commitment in keeping sheep and looking after sheep.

But we can learn an awful lot because that is just a tiny glimpse of what the Bible shows us of how our divine shepherd cares for, protects and looks after us.

And way, way back before you or I existed, or before anybody existed, or even before this world existed, God had planned that he would be the shepherd or he would provide the shepherd for his sheep.

And there are many things in the Bible that blow our minds away. Quite simply, when you stop, you know, sometimes you stop and you say, I'm trying to understand this. And you can't. Because it goes beyond.

Our minds are limited. See, God, we're finite. God is infinite. We're bound by time. God inhabits eternity.

[3 : 56] And straight away, we just can't figure it out. We can't sometimes grasp it. But this is where faith comes in because faith believes it.

And faith says, yeah, I don't understand it, but I lay hold on that. I grasp that. That's real. And so, what God has revealed to us in the Word is that from eternity, it was his purpose, his plan, to gather in to what he terms adopt a family.

And that family is so great. We're told in the book of Revelation, when the family is gathered together, nobody can number them. So we're not talking of a few hundred, or a few thousand, or even a few million people.

We're talking of what is just, it's almost a mind-blowing number of people. So that you, if you were to stay, say, I want to start counting all the people, you just couldn't.

That's the idea, that it's such a number. So the father had planned and purposed to adopt, and the son agreed and purposed to be the shepherd of the people, and that he would come into this world, and he would come to be one with them, and die for them, and do for them what they couldn't, but that throughout their life, and indeed throughout eternity, he would shepherd them.

[5 : 25] And the Holy Spirit agreed to come and live in all those people. And you know, it's quite an extraordinary thing if you stop and you reflect and think, well, that is absolutely amazing.

But that is how it is. Now, the wonderful thing about our Heavenly Father and our Divine Shepherd is that he will seek us out.

Jesus made that point, and he said, you know, the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which is lost. That was his great purpose here in this world, coming to seek and to save those that are lost.

And as we said, the amazing thing is that he has equipped his people to do his work here on earth. And again, that's mind-blowing.

He hasn't sent angels from heaven. He hasn't called Gabriel and said to Gabriel, right, I'm going to send you and a whole lot of the great heavenly host into this world, and you are to go and spread the message of what I have done to the human race.

[6 : 36] No. He's given that message to us, and he is asking us to tell others about the great work.

Now, of course, you and I can't save anybody. And if you've ever tried to save anybody, you know the impossibility of it. And you know how frustrating it is.

You can talk to people, you can argue with people, you can plead with people, you can try and make everything as open to them as you can, and that's good. But you can't actually save them.

That's the Lord's work. Our duty is to tell. Our duty is to pray for people. But it's the Lord's prerogative is to do the actual saving.

He is the one who brings us to himself. And when you've been brought to him, you know that it was him who brought you. It wasn't somebody else. You know, deep down, that it was his work in your heart and in your life.

[7 : 39] And so, Jesus is the good shepherd. And as he gathers in his people, as he gathers in, he takes every person that comes in to Jesus, comes in by the door.

So that these two statements that Jesus makes are linked powerfully together. I am the door and I am the shepherd. And as we say, this searching out is relentless.

I'm sure there are times sometimes when a shepherd will go out looking for the flock to gather them in. And they might miss one or two.

They might say, well, I was sure that there was this number, but I'm kind of one or two sure. And then they go out and they say, you know, I'm beat. I cannot find. They've got their dogs. They cannot find.

And maybe, maybe a sheep has died. Maybe it's fallen off a cliff somewhere. Maybe it's sunk in a bog. Maybe it's, it got sick lying under some bush. Sheep was missed.

[8 : 44] So when the gathering is over, they realize they're down. And they say, well, I'm beat because we've searched everywhere. Sometimes sheep wander away. Sometimes they wander miles away.

Sometimes sheep, there's some sheep that are jumpers, that they're able to jump a fence or they find a hole through a fence and they're gone on their way into other districts or other communities. And no amount of searching in that particular hillside will ever find that particular sheep.

But it's never so with a divine shepherd. He never gives up. He will never, he gives that beautiful picture of the shepherd who had a hundred sheep and one was missing.

And what does he do? Well, he's got 99 there and you'd say to yourself, well, you've got a hundred sheep. 99 is quite a good number. But no, he's not prepared to just keep the 99 and forget about the one that's missing.

It tells us that he will leave the 99 obviously in a safe place and he will go off until he finds that one sheep that is missing. And that's a wonderful thing that our heavenly shepherd is doing, continues

to do and will continue to do.

[10:02] He will shepherd until he has brought each and every one in. Now, it's a wonderful thing to realize that the good shepherd is offering himself to you and to me.

And he's doing this out of love. And can I say to you today, if you've never known the love of the shepherd, would you ask him today, even here, even now, and say, Lord, help me to know your love.

Help me to, help me to understand what it is to be a Christian. Maybe today you're in a kind of a muddle, spiritually.

You're just not too sure about things. There's an interest that didn't used to be there. But you're just, you're not there yet and you're just not sure. Ask the Lord to take you right in.

This is one of the things that the shepherd does. He wants, he wants you, far more than you want, he wants you to know his love, to know his protection, to know his security, to know that you belong to him.

[11:11] And you know, that's one of the greatest things in this world, to have a sense of belonging. That's what so many people are missing in this world. They have no sense of identity. They have no sense of ownership.

They don't know, they don't know who they are. They don't know who they belong to. Well, that's one of the beautiful things that Jesus gives us is a sense of belonging, a sense of identity, a sense of ownership.

And you can't put a price on that. It brings a peace into your heart. It can take away so much of the restlessness that is there. That's part of the reason why so many people are restless.

They're missing things. They know that life is, it doesn't matter what they've got and what they've achieved and what they've done, there's still a restlessness there. And they don't know how to fill it. And you see, the problem is that if we try and fill the spiritual vacuum in our life with things or whatever, then it's not going to work because we're spiritual beings and we need, we need the divine shepherd in our soul.

And so Jesus is in the business of searching and that's what he's doing. And I'm sure if a lot of you were to give your testimony, you will tell of how the Lord worked for you in different places and touched your heart in different places and sometimes the striving of that, you know, one of the things the Lord often does with people, he makes them miserable.

[12:43] Now that sounds terrible and that doesn't mean that all of a sudden you're just going to say, right, I'm going to start making you miserable. What the Lord does is he shines his light of his spirit into your heart and all of a sudden or not maybe all of a sudden but the things in life, the pleasures or whatever you had in life, it no longer satisfies and not only does it not just satisfy, you say, you know, I want out of this.

This is not what I want. I'm not getting what I used to get in here. And so into all the pubs and the clubs and into all the different places in this world, often the Lord is affecting and touching and convicting people into prisons, into places and correction centers, into all areas and avenues of this land.

The good shepherd is at work touching, drawing. But the place above all where he works is where he has promised his presence to be and that is like where we gather together today.

He has promised to be present and when he is present he is always calling us. He is calling us to himself. He is inviting us to come and to taste and to see.

And so he says I am the door. This is a way in. And people may say well why do you need a door? Well the very simple reason is because our sin disqualifies us from entering into the fold.

[14:12] You see we've gone wrong with God. That's a basic problem. When we go to the fall the Bible is the only book in the whole world that explains where we are today.

The world situation. And it all began when God made a perfect world and Adam and Eve rebelled in that world. And Adam we're told ran from God.

He used to walk with God and he loved walking with God. God walked with Adam in the cool of the day beautiful in the garden. That's how they were at the beginning.

But then after they disobeyed it changed. And it tells us that when God when Adam heard the Lord he ran away. And that's what's happened ever since people are on the run from God.

They don't want him. They want to put him out of their lives. Keep away. That's why the majority of people don't go to church because they don't want God. I just want to be left alone.

[15 : 15] It's my life. I don't want you. Well that's exactly how that's where it all began at the very beginning. It all went wrong there. And of course that's what Jesus has done.

He's come into this world as a representative to bring us back to God. And so we need Jesus. And it is only by coming to Jesus and receiving Jesus that we enter into the kingdom.

We enter into the fold. It is where he becomes the good shepherd. Now that door speaks not only of entry but also security. In my naivety I used to think that every door was secure.

And I have since discovered that a lot of doors are anything but. Our Normans are firemen and one of the specialities that they have is kicking down doors.

They're always kicking doors. It's funny he's got kind of an interest in doors which I never had. But on a few occasions he said to me see that door.

[16 : 25] I could take that door in two seconds. I said you're joking. Even if it's locked. Yeah. He said if I owned that house I would change that's the first thing I would do is change the door.

Because anybody could get in that door. And I didn't realize that that a lot of doors are not secure. So at one point you say to yourself well the door is fine for getting in.

But it's not fine for keeping us safe. And that's the beauty of this door is that not only do you get in but once you're in that door it is you're secure forever.

You will never go back out. You cannot go out. You can't be lost. And that's the greatest security that there is. Now of course people will say well how do you know that?

Well who's the truest person in this world? Whose statements are altogether true? It is Jesus. He said I am the truth elsewhere. And see what he says in verse 9 I am the door.

[17 : 32] If anyone enters by me he will be saved or she will be saved. They will be saved. That's it. cannot be lost.

So this is the word of the living and through God who says will be. And if you've entered in you are safer than anything in this whole wide world.

And that's part of the wonder of it. There's no ifs and buts. There's no catches. This is how it is. Now when it says here some people say well does it not actually say go in and out.

I am the door. If anyone enters by me he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. Well you say to yourself does that not mean that you can go back out the door?

No. That is when we come to that in and out and find pasture that's exactly what it's talking about. You enter into the fold. You're in with the shepherd but he will then lead you in and out amongst the pasture land.

[18 : 47] He will be your guide. In the very same way you look at sheep. One of the things about sheep is they're always being moved. You'll never find sheep the whole year round in the same place.

They're always being shifted here, there, everywhere. And in a sense that's what it's like for the Christian. that the Lord is taking us, he's leading us and sometimes like with sheep they can be hand fed in the winter, they're out on the hill in the summer.

And sometimes that's the way the Lord works with us as well. Sometimes he leads us out into the hill and leaves us out there although he's always watching over us. But other times he hand feeds us.

Sometimes it's so intimate, sometimes it's so personal, sometimes we're so aware of his presence, other times we feel so far away.

In fact, the great shepherd's psalm that David wrote, it touches these different experiences, does it not? There's a period there, it's the green pastures, it's a still water, beautiful scene, if you were an artist, can you imagine painting that?

[19 : 58] There's the lying down by the still waters and the green pastures, not wanting, I shall not want, and the paths of righteousness. It's all so lovely.

But then the psalm moves from that into different scenes. Then there's the death's dark veil, there's the rod, different pictures.

And even when the cup is overflowing, it is still in the presence of enemies. And so the Christian life is not all just about the green pastures, although that's a huge part of it, and the still waters.

But it's also the enemies, and the rod, and the death's dark veil. All these things are part and partial of the Christian life, the Christian experience.

But all the time the Lord is shepherding, and he has his rod and his staff. Sometimes the rod is there to discipline. Sometimes you have to poke them, and other times you can have the staff, the

crook, you're able to catch the horn, or catch around the neck, and draw to yourself.

[21 : 11] So all the different things that would be applied, even naturally speaking, you see the spirit you will take on them as well.

But the shepherd, the shepherd is always, always present. And again coming back to that verse where it says, I am the door, and I love this, if anyone enters by me.

Now it couldn't be wider than that. It doesn't say if any people who are brought up in the church enter by me, they shall be saved. It doesn't mean to say if any people are born in the Middle East, or born near Jerusalem, or born where I was in Bethlehem, or then they shall be saved.

To anyone. It couldn't be wider. So that doesn't exclude, you can't look at yourself and say, well I'm excluded. That's the beauty of the gospel.

The door is so wide open in its invitation. It's like at the very end in the book of Revelation where it's talking about the spirit and the bride, say come and whoever will, let them come and drink.

[22 : 24] whoever, whosoever, well it's the same kind of terminology here, anyone, anyone is free to do so. And, but then we've also got to remember that our door also speaks to us of separation because our door will show whether you are in or whether you are out.

And you can't be in and out at the same time and so it is in the Christian life. Now, the wonderful thing is that like for today, we're still on mercy's ground, so a door of opportunity is still open.

But one day that door is going to close. Jesus just now says, and the door, because this is the day of gospel opportunity. But we're also shown in the Bible that there are times doors close.

There's an example in the Old Testament at the time of the flood. for 120 years, Noah preached. He was a preacher of righteousness. He was telling people what God was going to do, the judgment God was going to bring.

Nobody listened to him. Nobody believed him. He and his family were on his own. Then there came the time when God had told Noah to enter into the ark.

[23 : 44] And it tells us that God shut the door. It wasn't Noah who shut the door. It was God who shut him in. And nobody could open that door once God had shut it.

And when the flood came, Noah was helpless too. He couldn't help anybody. And that was it. Jesus again highlights very solemnly in the parable of the ten bridesmaids.

Remember how five were wise, five were foolish, there was a wedding. Five had oil, five didn't. And they all slumbered, they all fell asleep. And then the bridegroom came.

They said, here's the bridegroom. So everybody was going to go into the wedding. And the five who were wise, they trimmed their lamps, and they went in with the bridegroom.

But the five were foolish, who had no oil. They had to go and they were always searching to try and find some. And then Jesus tells them, the door was shut.

[24 : 47] when the wise went in, the door was shut. And then when the others came, they were knocking on the door, but Jesus said to them, no, the door is shut.

In other words, the door will never again open. That's it. And there cannot be anything worse than to be stuck outside forever. And that's why Jesus says there's an urgency.

Yes, the door is wide, the invitation is great, but there's an urgency in it as well. And so Jesus is saying, enter in through this door.

And so you might say to yourself, well, that's wonderful that Jesus is a good shepherd and that he has given us this door. But how do I know that he will continue to shepherd?

How do I know that he will continue to care for me? How do I know that you know that when I look at my life and all the things wrong in it and such like, maybe he'll just say one day, you know, I'm giving up.

[25 : 53] I'm not going to shepherd him, I'm not going to shepherd her anymore. Well, Jesus tells us the kind of shepherd that he is. I am the good shepherd, he said. What did he do? Who lay down his life for the sheep.

Could he do more? No. You can't do more than that. To lay down your life for anyone. And that's what Jesus did for every single one.

He lay down his life. And Paul, using that very argument, he says in Romans, you know, sometimes we wonder, is God for us? Well, it says, he who spared not his own son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not also freely give us or graciously give us all things.

So we've got to remember just who this shepherd is. He is utterly committed to you by the proof is that he laid down his life for you.

And the wonderful thing is that he continues to shepherd forever. You know this, once you're in that fold, and you're being shepherded by him, it's not only here in his life.

[27 : 13] His shepherding is forever and ever. Part of his shepherding is to take you home to be with himself. We don't know when that day will be.

And very often we're left confused and bemused when those we love are taken away. And we always or very often think it's before less a person lives.

And it doesn't matter how old a person is, we never want to lose those that we love. But so often people are taken away in what we would say is before their time.

And we say, ah, far, far too young. How? Why? But we've always got to remember that when Jesus has a different view on things, and before he went to lay down his life for us, he had a beautiful prayer.

You read it in John chapter 17. And one of the things he said in that prayer, he says, Father, I long for the time, basically what he's saying is I long for the time when all my sheep, when all my people will be with me where I am, where I'm going into glory, that they will behold my glory.

[28 : 30] So, when our loved ones and Jesus go, this is part of the fulfillment of that prayer. And in glory, Revelation makes it very clear that the shepherding doesn't stop, but that because they are led, they are led forever, they are fed and they are led by the Lamb, who is the eternal shepherd throughout all the ages of eternity.

So, the greatest thing that you can ever, ever do in your life is to enter into that door, enter through that door through Jesus. And remember that this is a gift.

That's, you know, one of the biggest stumbling blocks with regard to becoming a Christian is understanding that salvation is a gift. It's not your efforts, it's not what you do.

Now, it's important you read your Bible because that's a means of grace, that's a means, that's a way of coming to salvation. It's important, vital that you pray and read. But it is asking the Lord and saying, Lord, help me, give me the faith to receive you.

And he will. He will. It's what he's come to do. It's what he delights to do. It's his great work. So you ask him to come into your heart, into your life and shepherd you forevermore.

[30 : 00] Let us pray. Lord, our God, we pray that you will indeed bless each and every one of us, bless us with health and with strength.

We give thanks, Lord, for, as we reflected, on just the greatness of what you have done for us, and the commitment that you have to us. We pray, Lord, that we will be able to give you thanks at all times for this.

Watch over every single one of us. Take us all to our home safely. Have mercy upon us and forgive us our sin. Bless a cup of tea and coffee in the hall afterwards.

In Jesus' name we ask all. Amen. Let us conclude singing in the 23rd Psalm. This is from the Sing Psalms.

Psalm 23. Let's sing the whole Psalm. It's on page 28. The Lord is my shepherd.

[31 : 08] No want shall I know. He makes me lie down where the green pastures grow. He leads me to rest where the calm waters flow. My wandering steps he brings back to his way.

In straight paths of righteousness making me stay. And this he has done his great name to display. Though I walk in death's valley where darkness is near. Because you are with me no evil I'll fear. Your rod and your staff bring me comfort and cheer. And so on Psalm 23. The whole Psalm. The Lord is my shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd.

Lord is my shepherd. He makes me lie down where the green pastures grow.

He leads me to rest where the calm waters flow. My wandering steps he brings back to his way.

[32 : 17] in straight paths of righteousness making me stay. And this he has done his great name to display.

Oh, I walk in death's valley where darkness is near. because he is with me no evil I'll fear.

Your blood and your staff bring me comfort and cheer. fear. And the sight of my enemies are tittle you shred.

The oil of rejoicing you pour on my head. my cup overflows and anguish as he fed.

Oh, surely your covenant and mercy and grace will follow me closely in all of my ways.

[33 : 36] I will dwell in the house of the Lord all I give. May the grace, mercy, and peace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forever more.

Amen.