

WHO IS JESUS?

THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP!

“Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep... I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture”

John 10: 7, 9

Home missionary, Pastor Audred Spruiensma

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Jesus, the Son of God, used the allegory of a door. Doors enable us to enter and exit our houses. Doors are also able to keep thieves or unwanted guests out. Jesus said, “I am the door.” Do you know this door into the household of God? Do you know the safety and peace of his house?

The occasion for Jesus’ instruction was the religious leaders’ treatment of the man who had been born blind (John 9). Because he confessed faith in Jesus Christ, he was banned or cast out of the temple. These leaders were showing their hatred for Jesus and anyone who believed on him.

In John 10:2 Jesus speaks of the door of the sheepfold. The scene that Jesus pictures was a familiar one to the Jews. A sheepfold was an enclosure with high walls in which the sheep of several shepherds were kept at night. The care of the sheep was entrusted to a porter or doorkeeper. During the day, the shepherd would take his sheep out into green pastures. At night, they were put into the sheepfold. It would protect them from wolves or predators, and from thieves and robbers.

FALSE TEACHERS AND THEIR FALSE WAY

Can you envision thieves and robbers? They do not use the door. They try to get to the precious sheep another way. The word “thief” has the idea of stealth, being sneaky, and devious. The other word “robber” has the idea of those who use violence. Jesus combines these two thoughts, for he says in John 10:10 that they come “to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.”

To whom is Jesus referring? He is speaking to the religious leaders. It was their job to lead the people of God to Jesus Christ. But what had they done? They had “agreed already that if any man did confess that Jesus was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue” (John 9:24-34). Jesus, by means of an allegory compares the vicious conduct of the false teachers with the labor of faithful teachers on behalf of God’s precious people, called sheep. The

religious leaders pretended to be shepherds. Jesus demonstrated that he knew who they really were. And he wanted his sheep also to know.

In the life of a shepherd and his sheep, there were always such sheep-stealers to deal with. These people had no love for the sheep; they did not care for them. They only came to harm and kill the sheep. For this reason these thieves did not enter the sheepfold through the door. They climbed in some other way. These thieves did not want the sheep to use the door either.

The religious leaders did not believe in Jesus as the door. They did not want to enter the kingdom through Jesus. They did not teach the people to enter the kingdom only through Jesus. They had another way into the church and kingdom of God: the way of their own works, self-righteousness, and human merit. But there is no entrance into the kingdom through our works. There is no salvation in our own deeds or righteousness.

Those false teachers are always present. They do not point to Jesus as the only way to be saved. With false teachings about salvation, these leaders try to climb up into the church. It might be the teaching that we are saved by works of the law. It might be the false teaching of “free will”. Esteemed might be a nominal church membership or the doing a lot of social work. These false teachers are thieves and robbers because they reject the only door into the sheepfold: Jesus! There is no entrance into the sheepfold through these false teachers and their doctrines. There is no salvation in the denial of Jesus or the denial of salvation by grace alone!

JESUS IS THE DOOR

In contrast to these false shepherds is Jesus Christ. He is the door of the sheep. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who enters the sheepfold by the door. He loves the sheep and seeks their good. Jesus is himself the door that opens into the sheepfold of the church. He is the door that opens to salvation

and life. Only when we enter through him are we saved. Jesus is the only way of salvation. Jesus is the only door. And he is the door of the sheep, not the goats.

Why is this? Why is he the only way of salvation? He is the only door because he is God in our flesh. That he is God is revealed in the "I AM" statement. It is God alone who serves as the only access to salvation. We ourselves, our works, and our will cannot be the door. We of ourselves are dead in sin and only continue to increase our debt. The name Jesus means "Jehovah saves".

He is the only door because he alone is God in our flesh. He is God become man to save us people. He is God come down to bring God and us together by his death on the cross. He took away our sins and brought God perfect obedience. In this way only is there salvation. He saves his sheep by causing them to enter into the only door of the sheepfold.

Jesus is our salvation! Jesus says in verse 9, "By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." Jesus is the door that saves! He alone causes sinners to enter into the gate of the sheepfold and find salvation. Sheep are wayward animals that need a good shepherd to lead and care for them. Sinners do not by nature belong to the sheepfold. They enter the door because they by nature are outside of salvation and the kingdom of God. They are without safety and security. They are exposed to every kind of spiritual danger.

That Jesus is the door means that he sees that his people are brought to salvation. He feeds them and leads them to streams of living water. What a complete Savior Jesus is! Do you know him? Do you know your need of Jesus to bring you into the kingdom and salvation?

WHAT IS OUR CALLING

The door-keeper (true and faithful teachers and preachers) open the door to Jesus our good

shepherd. He calls his sheep by name. The sheep hear his voice and the sheep follow Jesus. This is true of our initial salvation. But it is also an ongoing activity. We read in John 10:9 "he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

How do Jesus' sheep hear his voice? They hear Jesus' voice in the preaching of the gospel. Continuously Jesus calls to his sheep and leads them. A door leads both in and out. The door of the sheepfold was opened at night to let the sheep into the fold for safety, rest and security. But in the morning, the door was opened, and the sheep were let out for feeding in the pasture.

So Jesus opens the door to bring his sheep into the fold of the church. But he also opens the door to feed us, not outside the church, but in the church and through the means of grace. We receive the rich food of his Word so that we are nourished, made strong and grow in our faith.

Jesus says, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." The false shepherds come to the fold to hurt and kill. In contrast, Jesus suffered and died to obtain life for his sheep. His sheep have that life abundantly! It is life with God. It is friendship with the living God. Jesus' sheep have that life now already. It becomes richer every day. It becomes complete when Jesus brings us into heaven.

Jesus is the door of his sheep. In John 10:9 we have a responsibility. It is to enter in. This is another way of saying that we must believe in Jesus. That is how sinners enter the sheepfold. Called for is the conscious activity of faith. We believe on Jesus, and find and take to ourselves Christ as our food and nourishment. We are saved!

We, by faith, go in and out to find pasture. We live in and out of Jesus. We seek him and find food for our souls. Are you entering by the door? Are you feeding on Jesus Christ through his Word preached? Entering by Jesus the door, we are

saved. The opposite is also true. If you try to get in the sheepfold another way, you will perish. Jesus is the only door, a wonderful door of the sheep.