

DEVOTIONAL 5



CHRIST  
CHURCH

# JOHN 10:1-10

<sup>1</sup>“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. <sup>2</sup> But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” <sup>6</sup> This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

<sup>7</sup> So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup> I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

# DAY 1

JOHN 10:7, 9a

<sup>7</sup> So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep ....<sup>9</sup> I am the door

According to scholars the way sheep were cared for in ancient Israel was different from the way they are handled today. In those days, there was one large, central pen, or sheepfold, in a given community, and at the end of the day people brought their small individual flocks and led them into the big sheepfold, all through *one door*. Jesus uses this common image from their life together to teach several truths. Today we focus on the idea that Jesus is the only door into this sheepfold. Or to put it another way, if anyone wants to find the salvation and security of life with God they must enter by the door, i.e. surrendering to Jesus.

This is not a very popular concept in 21st Century America. We live in an “age of enlightenment” when saying that there is only one way to salvation is considered narrow, unnecessarily exclusive, and even offensive. Recently Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, a politician who happens to be an ordained minister, finished the first daily congressional prayer of the new session with these words “And dare I ask, oh Lord, peace even in this chamber now and evermore? We ask it in the name of the monotheistic god, Brahma, and god known by many names by many different faiths.” Unfortunately this direction is seen as enlightened, inclusive, and loving. The problem is that it does not comport with what Jesus is teaching in this passage. Tim Keller, in commenting on this type of inclusivity says the following:

*[What appears to be inclusive] is really covert exclusivism. It is common to hear people say: “No one should insist their view of God is better than all the rest. Every religion is equally valid.” But what you just said could only be true if: First, there is no God at all, or second, God is an impersonal force that doesn’t care what your doctrinal beliefs about him are. So as you speak you are assuming (by faith!) a very particular view of God and you are pushing it as better than the rest! That is at best inconsistent and at worst hypocritical, since you are doing the very thing you are forbidding. To say “all religions are equally valid” is itself a very white, Western view based in the European enlightenment’s idea of knowledge and values. Why should that view be privileged over anyone else’s?*

Today we are invited to rest in the truth that Jesus has shown us the door by which to come home. His willingness to make this exclusive claim, his willingness to go to the cross and open the way to the Father is truly loving! Stay tuned for tomorrow when we will be reminded that for all of its exclusivity, Jesus’s invitation is remarkably inclusive.

## PRAYER

*Lord Jesus what a relief it is to come to you, THE door by which we come home. There is no need to guess what is behind door number, 1,2, or 3 for we know that it is in you, only in you, that we can enter to find salvation and good pasture. Lord, we pray for confidence and courage to winsomely hold forth this truth in the midst of a culture that resists it. As we reflect on the mission endeavors of our church this month, may this door be highlighted, may this door be flung wide, and may many, throughout the world, find their way home. We pray these things in your strong name Jesus. Amen.*

# DAY 2

JOHN 10:9

<sup>9</sup> I am the door. If anyone enters by me ...

Yesterday we saw that Jesus is the *one door* by which we may enter into the sheepfold, i.e. the family of God. There is an exclusivity here that makes 21st Century “enlightened” minds fidget in their seats. America’s increasingly pluralistic culture claims that it has an *all inclusive framework* that makes a home for all religions. Is that true? No! That “inclusivity” only works if every other worldview neuters and dethrones their deity to bow down to the secular narrative. It simply does not work. Jesus, on the other hand, tells a different story that is shockingly, and truly, inclusive. Josh Chatraw, in commenting on the inclusivity of the gospel story, puts it this way:

*From the outset, the gospel was proclaimed as both an exclusive and all-inclusive message in that while Jesus is the only way to salvation, the salvation made possible through Jesus is extended to all people—not just to the elite or to people from a certain culture. One of the features that set apart Christianity from other religions in the ancient world was its “transethnic and translocal” quality, “addressing males and females of all social levels.” In other words, one of Christianity’s unique features in its original ancient context was that while it denied that its God could be worshiped along with other gods, it attracted people from all sorts of regions, ethnicities, and races.*

*Today Christianity itself is still proving to be remarkably inclusive and is the most geographically diverse belief system in the world. Its growth in the non-Western world is incredible... Furthermore, while the hubs of other major religions remain in the same places in which those religions were founded, Christianity’s geographical center has quite remarkably migrated throughout its history. This migration further testifies to Christianity’s unique transcultural message. For these reasons, it isn’t hyperbole to describe Christianity as the most culturally, racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse worldview in history.*

Yes, the door of the Christian faith narrowly converges on the person of Jesus. At the same time, it is flung wide open to all who will enter through it. Jesus says in Luke 13:29, “*and people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God.*” Similarly, in the parable of the great banquet in Luke 14, the banquet host orders his servant to, “*Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame... Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.*”

This is true inclusivity. Jesus invites all people to come, with whatever baggage they may carry, to find their place of belonging in his pasture. This invitation is for you, for me, for the near and the far. For the first time, or for the thousandth time, would you enter by Jesus’s door and rest in his pasture today?

## PRAYER

*Father God, lover of my soul, your steadfast love knows no bounds. We confess that the popular messages of our day claim a counterfeit inclusivity in the name of love, that really is but a shadow of your truly inclusive good news. We thank you that this invitation is extended to even us today. May we respond first by entering in with joy and gratitude. And Lord, would our resting in you prompt in us a zeal for all peoples to make their home in your pasture too? Use us to share the gospel near and far. Work through our missionaries serving around the world to gather many people to yourself.*

*We long to see your churches full,  
that all the chosen race  
may, with one voice and heart and soul,  
sing your redeeming grace.  
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

Chatraw, Joshua D. 2020. Telling a Better Story. Zondervan.  
*How Sweet and Awesome is the Place* Trinity Hymnal #469

# DAY 3

JOHN 10:9 & 10b

<sup>9</sup>I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture... <sup>10</sup>I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

Today we see that Christ talks about the door in two ways: entering it and also going in and out of it. This week already we've read about entering the door and how it's about being saved from our sins. We've seen that entering Jesus the door is both exclusive (only Jesus can save) and inclusive (all who come from the north, south, east and west to enter are welcomed). We are saved when we enter Christ the door. Now today let's focus on that second way Christ talks about himself as the door: going in and out of it.

Jesus says we will go in and out of the door and find pasture. What takes place in a pasture? There is peace there. Sheep eat grass, drink water and rest. They are protected from predators and kept from wandering off. So too, we as the sheep will find these things in the pasture. In fact our verses today call that a part of the abundant life.

What is "abundant life?" It's tempting to define it as a life of no troubles, ease, wealth and health, isn't it? But can "having life abundantly" coincide with sorrow, hunger, loneliness and sickness? What is Jesus offering us? II Corinthians 1:5 says *"For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too."* So Paul is saying that the Christian life is characterized by sharing abundantly in both the suffering and the comfort of Christ. Jesus said he came from heaven to earth so that we might have life and have it abundantly. But that's not saying anything about our circumstances.

We will find pasture as we go in and out of the door. There are so many things that happen going in and out of places. Two single people enter a church and they exit as a married couple. Jesus gives them pasture on both sides of that door. During these days of COVID we look at loved ones in a nursing home through a door but can't go in. But Jesus is the door and his presence is on both sides. Consider even how Jesus, in his resurrected body, entered the room his terrified disciples were in after the events of his crucifixion: *"On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you'"* (John 20:19). He made a door to give his disciples peace in a time of terror.

So how do we share the beauty of Jesus as the door with others? There is so much suffering and sin in this world: mental illness, rage, hubris, perpetrators, victims. What does Jesus as the Door mean for the world? First, to be forgiven of our sin, we must enter the door. The way we enter is through repenting of our sin and receiving his forgiveness; in other words, being saved. It took Jesus dying for us for him to be the door to forgiveness for us. So we rejoice in that and share that good news. Then we go in and out of the door and find pasture, and these together are the abundant life. Through all the ups and downs of our circumstances we have life because he's part of it. This is also the good news we rejoice in and share. We cannot equate the abundant life with having lots of nice things and no troubles. That is a false gospel and so many people do not have the option to even hope for a paycheck that covers all the expenses or a healthy body or a brain not darkened with Alzheimer's or mental illness. But he will be with us as we live, going in and out of him as the door: *"Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for 'In him we live and move and have our being'"* (Acts 17:27b-28a). He will lead us to himself in pasture even in our struggles, and he will use us who have entered him as the door to welcome others in as well.

## **PRAYER**

Let's use this verse as our prayer today: *Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen*

(Ephesians 3:20).

# DAY 4

JOHN 10:7, 8 & 10

<sup>7</sup> So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ...<sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.”

Jesus speaks of a reality that I don't like to often contemplate. The truth that there exists “thieves, robbers and strangers” in our lives. In the context of John it's likely that Jesus is referring to the spiritual leaders of Israel who have a history of leading God's people astray, feeding themselves as opposed to caring for the flock (see Ezekiel 34). Yet we know that many others have presented themselves as access (like a door) to truth, power, happiness, and significance long after the misguided leadership of Israel. These people are “thieves and robbers,” whose desires and motivations are not aligned with God's.

- Can you recognize areas of your life where you believed half-truths about God, yourself, or other people?
- It's rather easy to recognize thieves and robbers of the sheepfold (they climb over the fence and ignore the gate), yet today it can be a bit more difficult. Pray that God would give you discernment in the content you read, the people you follow, the “truths” you are willing to believe.

Yet it is not only people who can be thieves and robbers, but anything that turns you away from Jesus. Jesus is the door and the good shepherd, it's his voice that the sheep know and follow. Anything in our lives that distracts us from our primary calling as followers of Jesus acts like a thief and a robber. It could be science, elevated to the height of supremacy, politics that direct our ideologies, sports that take over and dictate our emotions and feelings, prosperity that lulls us into a false sense of security. Anything that takes our focus off of Jesus.

## PRAYER

*Father. Forgive me for I am prone to wander. I am prone to follow other voices, other ways, other means for my comfort, security and identity. Lord, would you please remind me of the voice of my shepherd. Of the one who is the door, the true way in to delight and joy in You! Father may the Spirit guide me away from thieves and robbers, who look to draw my attention away from Jesus. Amen.*



# DAY 5

JOHN 10:7, 9a

<sup>7</sup> So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep ....<sup>9</sup> I am the door.

I was wandering through the church building the other day, examining the construction taking place as our addition goes up. When I came to the lounge, I noticed the huge doorway that had been cut, ready to be framed, as an entrance into the new space. What struck me about this doorway was the difficulty incurred in making it. To become a door, wood and concrete had to be cut up and busted out. Pipes had to be moved. There is still much framing to be done.

In a similar way we should remember that when Jesus says “I am the door” he is mindful that there is work to be done. His body will be broken. His blood poured out. Above all else today we remember that Jesus didn’t just proclaim that there was a door, but he pointed to the fact that HE is the door. Josh Chatraw, in his book *Telling a Better Story* puts it like this,

*At the core of Christianity is a person who was not a political figure asserting coercive authority, or an elite philosopher looking down on the unenlightened, or a spiritual guru affirming others in their misguided quests. Instead, the heart of the story is a person whose love drove him to teach that there are paths, that if chosen, will ruin you. In his love, he warned against the brutality of false gods and false stories and offered himself as the true God and the true way. And his way didn’t lead to shedding any blood—except for his own.*

## PRAYER

*Lord Jesus, thank you that you are the Door to life. You didn’t merely come proclaiming a door, but you became sin for the sake of your people. You laid down your life in order that you might become the Gateway by which we would cross over from death to life. Who are we, Lord, that we should know such grace? We thank you for the marks on your hands and wound in your side that speak to us of the open way. We thank you for the intimate, personal love with which you have loved us. May the reality of this love give us fresh hope, radiant warmth, and sufficient courage to live Doorway illuminating lives. We pray all this in your name. Amen.*