



John 10:7-13

“Jesus – The Door to Eternal Life”

- 7 Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.
 8 "All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.
 9 "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.
 10 "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.
 11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.
 12 "But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them.
 13 "The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.

Last week we read in verse 6 that the people listening to Christ did not understand his previous illustration, earlier he had compared himself to a shepherd, the unbelieving religious leaders to thieves and robbers, the church to a sheep fold, and believers to sheep, so here Jesus makes it even clearer. No he adds additional details namely that in addition to being the shepherd of the sheep he is also the door of the sheep. Now how could that be? How could he expect his listeners to understand that he is both Shepherd and a Door?

Well, you'll probably have heard me speak more than once about Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, well his predecessor in the pulpit of Westminster Chapel in London was a man named G. Campbell Morgan, one of the great preachers of the late 19th and early 20th century. Morgan was called upon by D.L. Moody to cross the Atlantic by steamer and teach in the USA no less than 54 times. He was, I suppose the 19th century version of "frequent flyer." Well on one of those trips he found that one of the other passengers was the famous OT scholar and Scottish theologian Sir George Adam Smith, and they had a happy crossing discussing the faith. Morgan recorded a story from Smith who had traveled extensively in Palestine, that illustrates Christ's meaning here:

‘He was one day travelling with a guide, and came across a shepherd and his sheep. He fell into conversation with him. The man showed him the fold, into which the sheep were led at night. It consisted of four walls, with a way in. Sir George said to him “Is that where they go at night?” “Yes” said the shepherd “and when they are in there they are perfectly safe”. “But there’s no door” said Sir George. “I am the door” said the shepherd...When the light has gone and all the sheep are inside, I lie in that open space, and no sheep ever goes out but across my body, and no wolf ever comes in unless he crosses my body; I am the door.’

Jesus has made it clear now that there is one place of true safety for the sheep, the sheepfold and that He is the only door into that sheepfold. He is the one who lets in the sheep and stops them from wandering away, and he is the one who keeps out the wolves. Therefore to gain eternal life, you must enter through Him

Jesus is not saying he is *a door* or *one of many ways into salvation* He says He is *THE WAY*. Now Christ obviously was aware of the exclusivity of his statements. He is specifically excluding not only the false teachers of His time like the Pharisees, but everyone who has claimed to be able to lead men to salvation apart from Faith in Jesus. In John 14:6 Jesus says, "***I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.***" And again and again he warns that the only way into salvation is through the narrow door of faith alone in Him, and that anyone who says differently is in fact teaching falsehoods. In Matthew 7:13-15 for instance he says:

Matthew 7:13 " Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

14 "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

15 " Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

Throughout the gospels you see that constantly Christ is exhorting men to come to Him to enter into salvation through him and also his dire warnings that if we are not inside the safety of the fold, inside with Christ, then we are outside, we are on the other side of the barrier, and we are in mortal danger. First, obviously from mistreatment by all sorts of wolves and robbers, but also in danger of the judgment to come. Because you see the greatest danger, on the outside is not the thieves, it is actually the wrath of a Holy God: As JC Ryle put it "***We are all by nature separate and far off from God. Sin, like a great barrier-wall, rises between us and our Maker. The sense of guilt makes us afraid of Him. The sense of His holiness keeps us at a distance from Him. Born with a heart at enmity with God, we become more and more alienated from Him, by practice, the longer we live. The very first questions in religion that must be answered, are these--"How can I draw near to God? How can I be justified? How can a sinner like me be reconciled to my Maker?" The Lord Jesus Christ has provided an answer to these mighty questions. By His sacrifice for us on the cross, He has opened a way through the great barrier, and provided pardon and peace for sinners.***"

There Ryle is summing up that great truth of Isaiah 53: 5-6 "***But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.***"

Therefore because he alone could reconcile guilty sinners to God, by His atoning sacrifice, then He Alone can be the door and so all who had proclaimed they could bring men home to God before Him were thieves and robbers. And that is what Jesus means when He speaks in this context of all those who came before me, Jesus does not mean the prophets of the OT who like Isaiah spoke of His coming, not Moses who said He was the greater prophet whom the people should hear, not Abraham of whom Christ said in John 8:56 "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." They pointed men to the coming Christ as the way to salvation. Jesus is referring to the legions of Saducees, Pharisees, Herodians, Essenes, men who had styled themselves leaders of the people who said we are your shepherd, we'll lead you home to God, but who had acted towards them in exactly the same fashion of the wicked kings of Judah and Israel. They were ravening wolves, who had not taken care of God's flock or fed them, but had fattened themselves at their expense. They are the thieves and robbers Christ's sheep flee from and will not listen to because Christ himself keeps and protects them from their deceit.

Verse 10 gives us an additional idea, that of not just life, but “abundant life.” What does that evoke for you? For the worldling, it might stir up visions of a wealth of material possessions. An endless Corona ad, where all you need to be happy is an endless supply of Limes. That indeed is what the Devil wants people to equate with “life” wealth, fame, stuff. All of the things that stocked the stalls of Vanity Fair to distract people from seeking real life, eternal life. Just the question: “Do Hollywood stars have the abundant life or even the happy and well-adjusted life?” should lead us to see it’s not material.

There is a contentment that Christ brings to His Sheep that the world knows nothing of. In Christ one can be grindingly poor and yet well content, happy. I’ve met Christians who the world would say have no reason to be happy because they are physically poor, in ill health but they have riches beyond compare, and they know that there is waiting for them, *an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven*. So though they are poor they are rich, and they have life abundantly here and hereafter and how did they earn it? They didn’t, this abundant life is theirs because of the work Christ speaks of in verse 11:

In verse 11 the work of Jesus as the Good Shepherd is what distinctively sets him apart from an ordinary shepherd, he tells them explicitly that he has come to give His life for the sheep while no Palestinian shepherd would intentionally do so, because for an ordinary shepherd to give his life for the sheep was disaster, it would leave them without a leader, without protection, and at the mercy of their enemies. But Jesus is not merely a shepherd he is THE GOOD SHEPHERD and while he lays down his life, He ALONE has the power to take it up again. 17 ***“Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.*** He has died for the sheep, to reconcile to God, but He is raised again, and He remains the everliving shepherd of the sheep who has declared in Matthew 28:20 ***“lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”***

Godwilling, we will talk about this more next week, but notice whom Jesus the Shepherd says He will lay down His life for in verse 11. It is the Sheep, His sheep. That is who He is going to make atonement for. Now this is important, because is everyone Christ’s Sheep? No. In fact in verse 26 Jesus is going to say bluntly, *“But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.”* In Matthew 25 the final judgment is not between Sheep and Sheep, its between Sheep and Goats. Jesus didn’t die for the sins of the goats, which is why they will be judged for them and pay for them in an eternity in Hell.

In verses 12-13 Jesus tells you why he is willing to make that sacrifice, it is not because he has been hired to do so. The hireling is not the owner of the sheep, he just tends them for a wage. He has no interest in putting his life on the line for them. The hireling is like a shop clerk, its his job, he works for a wage, he is not the owner of the store. When thieves come he hands over the cash, because it is not his. Similarly the hireling shepherd is not going to try to pry the lamb out of the jaws of the hungry wolf. But Christ is the Good Shepherd and the Sheep are His, He is their Master and He loves them, He Cares for them so much that He will

Dealing with the Exclusivity of the Gospel

How dare you say that Jesus is *the way*, and *the shepherd*, and *the door*, we are ok with you saying he is

“There is an appearance of humility in the protestation that the truth is much greater than any one of us can grasp, but if this is used to invalidate all claims to discern the truth it is in fact an arrogant claim to a kind of knowledge which is superior to all others” – Leslie Newbiggen

Either Christ’s claim is true, or he cannot be *a way*

What is the actual situation: Revised Titanic Analogy – Now you all know that the great loss of life on the Titanic occurred because there weren’t enough lifeboats, but let us create an analogy that better reflects the real situation of the world.

This beautiful ship has hit the iceberg of sin, and is sinking. In this case there are enough lifeboats, and there is one man who is warning men of the danger they are in and saying there is only one way to be saved from drowning in the icy waters, that is to enter the lifeboat of Christ. Some hear and believe what he says and they do that. Others...

- Meditating, The ship doesn’t exist
- Then there are those Gambling and living it up, Don’t leave the ship, what’s the point, have fun while you can.
- Then there is a group giving emergency swimming lessons on the fantail, America is just a hundred miles or more away, you can make it
- Then there is the fix the ship group
- Then there is the build the rocketship that will take us off
- Then there is a man who says that what we need is a better attitude and we’d be happier on the ship, we’d have our best ship now
- Finally there is a group at the bow clustered around a man who says an angel told him the ship wont sink but that a divine act will save it, etc...

Now those groups can call the lifeboat group narrowminded, but when the ship sinks the only Safe place is in the Life boat. The others will all drown.

Men like to pretend that this whole notion of coming to faith in Christ is too difficult. But Christ does not say he is a wall you have to clamber over he says he is a door. You use doors all the time. You will go through that door after we are done here today. If there is an impediment it is not Christ, it is you. If you will not go through the door to eternal life that is Christ, it is because you are not willing. You can come up with all sorts of excuses to justify your decision, but in the end that is the reason.

Now admittedly the only thing that will change you and make you willing is the work of God in your heart. But the Lord doesn’t say figure out if you are elect, He says Repent and Believe, that is your responsibility.

Do not go through that door, until you are sure you have gone through The Door