

I mentioned last week, that in vv1-5, we have a parable or allegory, that contains in short form, every other truth elaborated on in vv7-18—in other words, since His hearers failed to understand the parable, our Savior then teaches them the same truths in a straightforward and plain manner...

J.C. Ryle—"Seeing His hearers not able to understand Him, He proceeds to explain His meaning more fully. This is an example for all teachers of religion. Without frequent repetition and simplification spiritual lessons can never be taught..."

Thus, in determining who are the thieves and robbers, door, shepherd, and sheep (in the parable)—we mustn't look any further than vv7-18, where we find—the thieves and robbers are 1st century Jewish leaders, the door is Christ, the shepherd is Christ (the good shepherd), and the sheep are the elect (taken from the Jews and Gentiles)...

Thus, there is a sense in which our Savior Himself unpacks the parable in a particular order—in vv7-10 He expands upon the thieves and robbers, and Himself as the door, then in vv11-15 He expands upon Himself as the Good Shepherd, and then in vv16-18 He expands upon the sheep (as comprised of both Jews and Gentiles)...

- I. Christ is the Door for Shepherds—vv7-8
- II. Christ is the Door for the Sheep—vv9-10

I. The Door for Shepherds—vv7-8

1. As I've said, beginning with v7, our Savior explains the parable in vv1-5, that the Jews failed to understand...
2. The first thing He does is identify the door He referenced back in v1—"he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber..."
3. V7—"Most assuredly, I say to you, I AM the door of the sheep"—He is the door that leads into His sheepfold...
4. Now—if you remember last week, I mentioned that the sheepfold of v1, refers to the physical nation of Israel...
5. Within this nation, there were elect and non-elect Jews, for Christ stood at the door and called His sheep out...
6. This He did through His prophets and apostles—men that were called and set apart to speak in the name of God...
7. But—notice in v7, our Savior no longer speaks of the door of the sheepfold, but instead—"the door of the sheep..."
8. That is—our Savior switches the imagery from the common sheepfold of v1, to a small fold of the individual shepherd...
9. If you remember last week, I mentioned in v1, our Savior spoke of a common sheepfold that several shepherds shared...
10. At night, when attacks by wolves and thieves were most likely, shepherds brought their flocks into town and put them in a shared fold until morning...
11. This shared (common) sheepfold was guarded by doorkeeper, who would only open up for known shepherds...
12. The shepherd would stand before mixed group of sheep, and call his sheep out by name, from the other sheep...
13. But—here in vv7-9 our Savior is refer to a small fold that shepherds had outside of town, intended only for their sheep...
14. Thus, the sheepfold of v1 was national Israel (out of which He called his elect), the fold of vv7-9 is the church...

15. Richard Philips—"Unlike the large town sheepfold that He mentioned earlier, which symbolized Judaism, from which Jesus drew out His sheep, this sheepfold stands for His own flock—the church. The way in is through His body, which He offered for our sins on the cross. Jesus is the door of the sheep, and those who enter are safe for eternity..."
16. [1] False shepherds are thieves and robbers, v8—"All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers"—they fail to enter through the door...
17. By "all" our Savior refers to the majority of Jewish leaders in the OT, but He especially refers to NT Pharisees...
18. They were the ones who immediately "came before Him"—and they were largely 1st century thieves and robbers...
19. They were thieves and robbers because, they like Satan (their spiritual father)—came to steal, kill, and destroy...
20. Jn.10:10—"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..."
21. If Christ comes to give eternal life, then by "steal, kill, and destroy" must men, Satan and his false teachers, keep people from this life...
22. That is—they do what they can, ultimately, to blind and hinder poor sinners from seeing and believing the truth...
23. This of course in do way elevates sinners from responsibility, as sinners by nature willingly believe the lie...
24. Matt.23:13—"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in..."
25. [2] Sheep do not hear false shepherds, v8—"but the sheep did not hear them"—that is—Christ's true elect sheep...
26. This in no way denies, that even the elect, before they are converted, often follow and listen to false teachers...
27. But brethren—there comes a time, when the good Shepherd will open their ears to hear His beloved voice...
28. Matt.15:14—"Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch..."
29. Thus—by inference, we learn two things about true shepherds—[a] they enter by the door, [b] the sheep hear their voice...
30. [a] They enter by the door—that is, true under-shepherds have believed in Christ, as hell-deserving sinners...
31. Perhaps another way of putting this would be—before any man becomes a shepherd, he's first of all—a sheep...
32. How is a man to exhort others to enter a door he's very entered—how can he help sheep, unless he's also one...
33. Oh my dear brethren—how can a man preach those truths to others, that he's never experienced for himself...
34. Robert Murray McCheyne—"All who are faithful shepherds enter in by this door. As poor, lost sinners, they come in through the blood and righteousness of Christ. Ah! none can speak of sin, but those who have been taught by the Spirit to feel the load. None can speak of Christ's beauty, but those who know and love him. None can speak of forgiveness, but those who have tasted it..."
35. [b] The sheep hear their voice—that is, the smell of Christ's voice is upon them, and the sheep hear their voice...
36. Another way of saying this would be—Christ Himself speaks to His sheep, through shepherds given to the sheep...
37. Oh brethren, surely there are fewer texts in the whole Bible, that better describe the privilege of pastors than this...
38. As they've entered the door for themselves, Christ has equipped them to speak to His sheep in His own stead...
39. 2Cor.5:20—"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God..."

40. This is what shepherds do—they stand before the masses, and Christ uses them to call out His beloved sheep...
41. But Christ doesn't merely use them initially to call them to Himself, but continually to feed and protect them...
42. And so, just as the sheep do not hear the voice of false shepherds, they will hear the voice of Christ's under shepherds...
43. And the fundamental reason is this—Christ gave these shepherds to His people for the purpose of feeding them...
44. Put another way—Christ speaks through His ministers, so that the sheep hear His voice in and through them...

II. The Door for the Sheep—vv9-10

1. Having referenced shepherds, our Savior now widens His focus to include anyone, v9—"I am the door. If anyone enters by My..."
2. [1] Why is Christ likened to a door?—"I AM the door"—that is, He is the only way for sinners to return to God...
3. A "door" by definition gives entrance or access to something—to enter a door is to have access to a new room...
4. A "door" is a means through which we come into a new situation—a means we leave one state and enter a new one...
5. Now—let me state this as plainly as I can—Christ is the DOOR through which sinners come from darkness to light...
6. He's the DOOR through which sinners pass from death to life—from guilty to accepted—from filthy to clean...
7. Jn.14:6—"Jesus said to him, I AM the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me..."
8. Christ is the door because, it's through Him that sinners are reconciled to God—they have access to the Father...
9. Or put another way—Christ is the way back into the garden and the tree of life, which is knowing God in Christ...
10. Gen.3:24—"So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life (Ex.29:42-43).."
11. Here we find the tragic truth, that because of man's sin, access to God has been blocked, man has been banished...
12. The way into fellowship with God has been blocked—the door to God has been closed, man is locked outside...
13. But—remember what God promised back in v15—that He would send the seed of the woman to make a WAY...
14. Or, as we learn from Jn.14:6, He Himself would become that way—He Himself would be the door unto God...
15. Thus—I suggest the imagery of a door is intended to convey three related ideas—single, slender, and simple...
16. [a] Single—that is—Christ is not "a" door, but he is "the" door—there are not many ways or doors to God...
17. There simply is no other way to come to God—God has given one door that returns to Him and that is Christ...
18. Acts 4:12—"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved..."
19. [b] Slender—by this I mean—this particular door is not only singular but narrow—Christ is a narrow gate...
20. Matt.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 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it..."

21. The narrow gate is narrow because—it necessitates that sinners come stripped bare of their own merit and ability...
22. The broad gate is broad because—it allows for people to be religious, and yet retain own works and self-merit...
23. The Pharisees, and many if not most 1st century Jews, chose this way as it is the way of self-righteousness...
24. [c] Simple—that is, a door is rather easily entered—all that is needed is to step your feet through its arches...
25. A.W. Pink—"A 'door' speaks of easy access and is contrasted from the high walls in which it is set. There are no difficult walls which have to be scaled before the anxious sinner can obtain access to God..."
26. [2] What does it mean to enter the door?—simply put, to "enter the door" means, you believe on Jesus Christ...
27. The preposition "by" means "by or through"—sinners enter Christ's fold by believing in Him as their sole Savior...
28. Two things are necessarily known by every person who enters this door—they know there is a danger and safety...
29. [a] They know there is danger—a person leaves one place because he is aware of a serious threat or danger...
30. For example—let's say a person is outside in a snow storm for several hours, shovelling snow in freezing weather...
31. His hands and feet are almost frozen—the wind is like needles and the snow is falling so that visibility is gone...
32. He opens the door of his house for refuge—he enters his house for the express purpose of escaping the storm...
33. [b] They know there is safety—a person enters a specific room or place, because they know there is shelter...
34. For example, think back to our illustration—the man enters the house, because he knows there's safety inside...
35. Gen.6:16—"You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks..."
36. Gen.7:6—"So Noah, with his sins, his wife, and his sons' wives, went into the ark because of he waters of the flood..."
37. Isa.32:1-2—"Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule with justice. A man will be as a hiding place from the wind, and a cover from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land..."
38. [3] What are the results of entering the door?—our Savoir provides three results (which I can summarize with three words)...
39. [a] Salvation—"I AM the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved"—that is, from all of their enemies...
40. Every sheep that enters the door of the sheepfold is behind the reach of wolves as well as thieves and robbers...
41. So too, every sinner that comes to Christ is safe from Satan, false teachers, and more importantly, God's wrath...
42. While Satan and this world are enemies (from which we need salvation), the sinner's greatest enemy is SIN...
43. We need salvation from the PENALTY of sin—that is, we need salvation from the wrath and justice of God...
44. We need salvation from the POWER of sin—that is, we need deliverance from the pollution and bondage of sin...
45. Every single person who enters this door has salvation—salvation from sins condemning and enslaving power...
46. [b] Protection—"and will go in and out"—by "in and out" is meant—continual safety from all of their enemies...

47. Those who enter through the door, become sheep of the fold, and thus have the liberty of coming in and out at will...
48. Thus—the imagery of "going in and out" refers to the protection sheep have from their loving and caring shepherd...
49. The sheep will continually go in and out of the fold—in all their ways they will be protected by the shepherd...
50. Adam Clark—"The phrase "go in and out," in the style of the Hebrews, points out all the actions of a man's life, and the liberty he has of acting, or not acting..."
51. It simply refers to the regular routine of a sheep—he would go in and out of the fold over and again every day...
52. It speaks of the daily protection Christians receive from their Shepherd who guides them with His rod and staff...
53. William Hendriksen—"He will not only go in and out, that is, experience perfect freedom from all real harm and danger, and this even in the small affairs of every-day living, and feel himself entirely at home in the daily routine of God's people..."
54. [c] Provision—"and find pasture"—that is—the shepherd leads them into green pastures by calm (still) waters...
55. Ps.23:1-2—"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters..."
56. Ezek.34:14-15—"I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down, says the LORD God..."
57. This of course—refers to Christ feeding His sheep with His word—nourishing them with grace and strength...
58. Now—as I've already said, our Savior feeds His sheep through faithful ministers given to the church as a gift...
59. Jer.3:15—"And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding..."
60. True shepherds have hearts "according to Christ's heart"—that is, they have hearts LIKE Christ and FOR Christ...
61. True shepherds feed the sheep "with knowledge and understanding"—that is, knowledge of God and His ways...
62. Remember brethren, this knowledge and understanding includes the whole man—intellect, affections, and will...
63. I am often amazed at the standard, many Christians use, for choosing what church they and their family will attend...
64. I mean—what's most important—surely says someone, Does the church have sufficient programs and day-care...
65. Someone else says—Does the church have a really active young group, and various activities for our children...
66. Someone else says—Does the church have a really nice worship band—I mean the music is most important...
67. But why not chose a church based upon this question—Does the church have pastors who feed the flock of God...
68. This is the privilege and joy of sheep—to come through the door and be saved, go in and out, and find pasture (food)...
69. I have always wondered why so many sheep seem satisfied with pastures filled with mostly dirt and not grass...
70. Thus—I suggest these words combined (salvation, protection, and provision), are what's meant by "abundant life"...
71. V10—"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..."
72. Those who enter through the door will find the Tree of Life—that is, true, spiritual, and eternal life, in Christ...

73. Most of us have heard Christians interpret "abundant life" as—an abundance of physical health and wealth...
74. But—my dear friends, surely that is NOT what our Savior meant—He means LIFE that is true, spiritual, and eternal...
75. It's present life—there is in Christ a fulness of grace, enough to enable every Christian to love and live for God in this world...
76. It's eternal life—every Christian has an inheritance reserved for them in heaven, that can never spoil or fade...
77. Motive 1—God Himself provided the door—that is, it's God Himself who has made a way back to His presence...
78. Remember, no sooner did man sin against God and be removed from His presence, He promised him a Savior...
79. And what is the whole of the OT history, but the prolonged promise that the Seed of the woman was coming...
80. Oh dear young people—God hasn't give a door that leads back to Him, only to hide it, in some obscure place...
81. No—He has revealed this Door in His gospel—which He commands us to preach throughout the entire world...
82. The gospel message isn't merely good news, abstractly considered, but it's good news for particular sinners...
83. For example—what if I were to tell a poor beggar about a house filled with treasure, but there wasn't any door...
84. Or else, what if told a sick man, of a house filled with medicine, and yet again, there wasn't any door to the house...
85. Or, what if I told a hungry beggar, about a house filled with meat, bread and wine, but again, there was no door...
86. What if there were in all these cases, windows in the house, but there was no door, for which beggars to enter...
87. My friends—this is NOT the gospel of our Bible—the gospel of the Bible is not, there's salvation, but NO door...
88. No—God has provided everything you need—and He has provided a door, and He exhorts you to enter through it...
89. Motive 2—God Himself lies behind the door—that is, remember, those who come to Christ, come to the Father...
90. Those who come to Christ are reconciled to God—they are made right with God—they have abundant life...
91. It's nothing less than the lie of our enemy, that Christ has come into the world to make men miserable and unhappy...
92. No my dear friends, remember, it's the thief that has come to steal, kill, and destroy, Christ came to bring life...
93. Prov.3:17-18—"Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and al her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who retain her..."
94. Motive 3—God Himself will close the door—though the door of the gospel is now open, it will one day close...
95. For some, it will close this very hour, for others this day, week, month or year—but it will eventually close...
96. Today is the day of salvation—today the door is open—"I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved..."