

Christ the Door

Message from the DVD Archive

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Bible Text: John 10:6-10
Preached On: Saturday, October 14, 2017

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Look with me in your Bibles, if you will, to John 10. Last time we met around the Lord's table, we began the study in this chapter, and I intend to, Lord willing, continue through this chapter over the next several times of meeting around the Lord's table. We're going to be considering together verses 6 through 10 this time, but I will begin reading in verse 1, just to remind us of the context here. I want to speak with you on "Christ the Door." That's what we see here, Christ the door. Here in John 10 in verse 1,

1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. 6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. 7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. 10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Now here in verse 6, which is my text beginning here today, I see a noted contrast with regard to the first five verses. How so? Well, in the first five verses, we learned a spirit of discernment that the Lord gives to his sheep. You notice all the way down through there, particularly verse 3, "the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth forth before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice." You see, all of this is showing discernment after hearing the call of the Savior.

It is our testimony, sadly, that it was not always the case. This sheepfold that is being described here in verse 1, remember, is not heaven. There are no thieves and robbers that climb into the sheepfold as far as heaven is concerned. And it's not even the church. Why would the Lord call his sheep out of the church? Makes no sense. What it is is organized religion. And remember, I gave you that story of how in Middle Eastern culture, everybody in the same village would come and put all of their livestock in the same sheepfold and in that case, there were thieves and robbers. I can tell you, and I don't need to, but you know it, that in organized religion, there are all kinds of thieves and robbers trying to get in and steal who they can, move somebody from one membership to another, all of this in the name of God and religion.

And yet you say, "Well, what is this door?" There's a clear distinction here between the door of the sheepfold and Christ, the door of the sheep. That's important in understanding this particular portion of scripture. The door to the sheepfold, the porter of that particular door is whoever the gatekeeper is of that religion. And when it says here that Christ comes to the door and the porter openeth, what it's simply saying is it might be Satan himself but none of these have any jurisdiction over the Lord's sheep who born into this world are born in blindness, born in darkness, born lost. So we have here a picture of Christ as the shepherd coming to claim his sheep, calling them out. Christ said, "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

So that sheepfold is what we all were raised in. People talk about mama taking you to church when you were a young kid. We all had that. We were in this big old sheepfold, might be called Christendom, in Christ's day it was Judaism, but it's still the same sheepfold. It's works religion, and the sheep that must be brought out the Lord is not going to leave any one of his sheep under the hand of strangers. And when he does call his sheep, you know, look at the order here in verse 5, "a stranger will they not follow." We followed a stranger at one time. We were subject to thieves and robbers at one time. You go back now knowing what you know of Christ and think back to who you sat under all those years, some pastor, some preacher who didn't exalt Christ, and you scratch your head and wonder how I could have sat there so long. Well, you hadn't heard the voice of Christ.

But having heard his voice, him having called you out, you're not going to follow a stranger. Why? The Lord's Spirit gives you discernment to know his voice, to distinguish these things. And those that are still left in that sheepfold, there still might be sheep in there that he has yet to call out, so let's don't be too hard on people that are still in false religion. We ought to be hard on the system. We ought to be hard on those leaders and those that are subjecting them, but pray and know that any that are the Lord's sheep, he's going to call them out. And there's no porter. Have you ever thought of someone that you thought if that pastor just weren't there, they'd probably come over and sit under the gospel? Well, that's like that porter sitting at the gate. But I'll tell you this, that porter or whatever that circumstance is, is nothing if Christ comes to call out one of his sheep. He's going to open. He's got to let it go and he'll bring forth his sheep.

And so what we see here in verse 6, by way of contrast, we have here illustrated the solemn fact that those who are not his sheep are unable to understand this truth, even when it is plainly presented to them. That's why verse 6 is so vital, "they understood not." You say, "Well, who are 'they'?" Well, go back up into John 9 and verse 40. Look at the context. Context. Context. Context. "And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin," in other words, if you were to acknowledge your blindness, that would be an evidence that sin has been removed, "but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." Unbelief remaineth. "Verily, verily, I say unto you."

So who's he talking to but this religious generation of Pharisees, and no wonder they don't understand. They're blinded by their works, religion. They're blinded by that message of conditionalism and they are part of this organization that allows thieves and robbers to enter in and to continue to rob God of his glory and they don't have a care for the sheep. As long as they can prey on the sheep and get whatever benefit they can from whosoever they are, it doesn't matter to them. And you can see the difference then with those that are the Lord's. The Lord cares for his own.

But the only way anyone is going to have any understanding of these things, you know, people say, "Well, if we could just make the Bible simple enough. If we could just reduce it down to simple terms, more people would believe." No, they wouldn't. In fact, what you're doing is perverting the word. Leave it the way it is. Leave it alone. There's a reason why the Lord spoke in parables. There's a reason why these things require thought. I struggle with that on the messages on the radio. I get into some pretty deep subjects. There was one this morning, if you listened, talking about substitution and imputation to a world out there that could care less. Well, am I going to set that aside and just tell a story? No, I'm going to declare it as simply as I know how, but as truthfully to this word as I know how, and I know this, if there are any of the Lord's sheep that are in this sheepfold of religion, he'll cause them to hear and he'll cause them to come out and be separate.

So that's what we need to look at here, the difference between the door of the sheepfold in verses 1 through 5, and Christ the door. Christ the door. Now who's going to know Christ the door? That's these sheep. That's those that he has been pleased to reveal himself in and they hear his voice and follow him. This is a completely different door. They're brought out through that door of the sheepfold. Truly believe if the Lord is pleased to reveal Christ in the heart or in the soul of one of his sheep, they'll come out. You don't have to beat them out. You don't have to threaten them to come out. He'll draw them out.

On the other hand, let's not write people off because they linger. Even Lot lingered in Sodom and Gomorrah and it took the angel of the Lord to grab him by the hand and to bring him out. I'll guarantee you most of us here, truth be known, we lingered. I did. Even after having some knowledge and understanding that distinguished this word from what I'd been taught all those years, it's hard to give up. You look back at how much money you invested supposedly in your education and training, but as you read the scriptures, the Lord shows you more and more. There's a clear distinction between what's written

here in this word concerning Christ and what men are saying about it. But I'll tell you this, when the Lord brings that home to your heart, you'll go running to Christ. You'll follow him and a stranger you will not follow anymore. That's the way the Lord does his work.

So that's what I want us to consider: how then are the Lord's sheep to be delivered? It's not through the door of Judaism. It's not through the door of organized religion, but through Christ, the door. That's what I want you to see here. This is just as simple as I know how to state it. Christ is the door. The door. Do you see how it's put there? "I am the door of the sheep." That's in contrast to verse 1, those that enter not in by the door of the sheepfold. In other words, men are always trying to create new ways. There is a door that religion sets up, but somebody is going to try to find another way in to be a little more creative in order to get people to follow but with regard to Christ, there is only one door. That other door of the sheepfold is a door of Judaism, it's a door of conditional religion, it's a door of works, but Christ is the door by which his elect will be delivered from all of that, whether it's Judaism or so-called Christendom, or freewill works, religion, whatever you want to call it. Even as the Lord did not come to try to restore Judaism. You see, that's what all the Pharisees are looking for, "If you're the Messiah, let's work on this door. Let's build this sheepfold." And the Lord said, "No, I've come to call out my sheep. I'm leaving that sheepfold to what it is, destruction. You see, I've come to call out a people for my name."

Over in Luke 15, let me see if I can just help you see a little bit about how these are connected. We studied this in our Bible class some time ago, but I'd just like to remind you again. In Luke 15, again, who is Christ addressing here but the Pharisees? It says in verse 2, "And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them." Now we rejoice in this parable, but it was really addressed to these Pharisees; just like here in John 10, it is a parable addressed to these religious Pharisees who were used to having people under their thumb and holding them in bondage and making them pay homage to them and not pointing them to Christ.

And here in verse 4, "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?" You say, "Well, what shepherd would leave the 99?" The idea here is that this is a mixed, just like the sheepfold out here in the wilderness, there are these 99 in religion that consider themselves to be okay but if there's one lost, that's the one the Lord came to seek and to save.

And you see in verse 7, "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." You ask yourself who doesn't need repentance? We all need it. What he's talking about is these self-righteous Pharisees who consider that by their religion and by their works that they don't really need Christ. They don't need him, but there's that one lost sheep, that's the lost sheep here in this parable of John 10 that the Lord comes and calls out, brings to himself.

Didn't Christ say that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. That's who this is. He leaves the 99 just. I'm thankful the Lord didn't leave me to myself because I was of that same mind. I was of that same nature until the Lord caused me to hear his voice. I was pretty self-satisfied. I had the world by the tail. I was moving up the ladder in a denomination that had all kinds of prospects, but I'm thankful the Lord didn't leave me there. I'd rather be that one lost sheep that the Lord came and took on his shoulders, left the 99 others and brought me home to himself. I'm thankful. I don't worry whether there's anybody else that believes this or not. I know what God has done in this heart and I look to him and that's where we look, we look to him.

You know, in the old Testament, there's a beautiful picture of what Christ came to do found there in Exodus 33. I wish we had the time just to study this whole chapter, but I'll just try to summarize it for you because it is a pretty lengthy chapter and I would encourage you to go back and read this. But here in Exodus 33, Israel was in a state of unbelief and rebellion against God and here's Moses as a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, the shepherd of Israel. It says that he took this tabernacle, look in verse 7, "and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation." I like that. There's Israel and then there's Israel. See there's that unbelieving mass, there's that sheepfold of religion, and I would say even sovereign grace religion, there's that sheepfold and yet there is the tabernacle of the congregation. There's a difference. There's a difference.

But notice it was set up without the camp and it says there in verse 7, "And it came to pass, that every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp." There's a coming out. There's a coming out. Those who truly sought the Lord had to leave the camp, had to leave the sheepfold. I don't care whether it's a camp of Arminianism. I don't care whether it's a camp of Calvinism. I don't care if it's the Baptist camp, the Presbyterian camp, the Pentecostal camp. Everybody's got a camp but the Lord's people are going to be brought out when they hear his voice to the shepherd on the outside.

Do you see that in verse 9? "And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses." Where was the blessing but in the mediator and that's who these came out to.

So here in John 10, I see Christ as being that anti-type of Moses coming and setting up his camp, his tabernacle. "The Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us." But it wasn't in religion. It wasn't in Judaism. It wasn't in works, worship, will worship. He was his own tabernacle. God dwelt with him and those, it was outside of Christendom. Most people you talk to today want to know what organization you're with. They just cannot believe that you worship as an autonomous body of believers that is not attached to some sort of religious organization. Thank God we don't. Thank God that this is a body that he has called out and established for his name, and those of his sheep were caused to hear his voice must and will go forth outside the camp to him, identifying with his person and his work for them exclusively.

If you look over in Hebrews 13, again, all of these verses, I pray the Lord will bring them home to your heart and soul. Some of you are like Linus with his security blanket. You've still got to have that thing. You've still got to have some connection with organized religion. You've still got to think of yourself somehow as a Baptist, what kind of Baptist are we. It doesn't matter. When you go in the hospital and they want to put some sort of name down there, just tell them you're the Lord's. Put that down there. Why do you need a denomination? Why do you need something to identify you with the religion of this world? That's the last thing I want to put down there so some chaplain can come by and hold my hand and say a little prayer with me. I'd rather he not. I'd rather he not. The voice of strangers we will not hear. I don't even want his voice opened to say any kind of prayer or unction or blessing or whatever. Don't feel like you need to do it when you're with religious friends. When they ask you to say the blessing, they're not talking about the same thing as you are. Go ahead and take a stand. Make a difference. Say, "Let's eat. Let's eat."

There's a distinction and I know this may sound harsh, but it's coming out and being separate. It's what the Lord teaches us right here in Hebrews 13 and verse 12 through 15, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood." Where did he suffer? Outside the gate.

"Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp." Is there any reason why this particular language is being used? Absolutely. It goes all the way back there to Exodus 33 to distinguish his sheep from the religious mixture, the leavened congregation come out and be separate and bearing his reproach. You will bear his reproach. People aren't going to understand it. They're going to think you're hard-nosed, hard-headed. "Oh, you think you're the only one that's saved?" These are the kinds of things that people are going to throw at you, but trying to explain it to them isn't going to help. Just like with Christ here in John 10, it says they understood not. Would you expect them to understand? I wouldn't. I wouldn't until the Spirit of God teaches them. But no amount of explaining, just leave it alone. Just take your stand. Leave it alone.

"For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." That's the only thing that matters, giving thanks to his name.

How then is Christ the door of his sheep? Let me just give you a few thoughts coming back here to our text in John 10. First of all, in verse 8, he is the only door in contrast with all other man-made doors. You notice he says here, "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers." Here's a good example of words in their context, because people like to jump on that word "all" when it says Christ gave his life a ransom for all, and they say, "Well, 'all' means everybody. So he died for everybody." No, the word "all" can be used in a general sense to describe a great number because we know when it says here, "all that ever came before me are thieves and robbers," he wasn't talking about Moses. He wasn't talking about David. He wasn't talking about John the Baptist. But what he's talking about in this context of "all" such as these that he's describing who do not have Christ as their interest, whose ministries do not have as their purpose to exalt the Lord

Jesus Christ, all such are thieves and robbers. You can be as nice as you want to, but the scriptures call it what it is, a thief and a robber, because they're robbing God of his glory.

You see, it's hard for people to name men these days that clearly aren't preaching Christ. "Well, we've got to be careful not to judge," all of this stuff. Call them what they are, thieves and robbers. If you don't want to call them that, or you're afraid to have that come off your tongue, just say, "Well, sometime when you're at home, go read John 10 and verse 8." Let the word state it then. But state it, they're thieves and robbers.

"But the sheep did not hear them." There's your answer when people say, "We're having such and such a meeting down the road here. Why don't you come and join us?" Well, the sheep did not hear them. That's not a voice we listen to. Those are thieves and robbers. A stranger's voice they will not follow. You're just declaring what the Lord has taught you. You don't have to jump in and out and try to compromise and say, "Well, I'm going to go over here and maybe by my going there, they'll come here." Who said that that's the way the Lord works? He just simply says, "All that came before me are thieves and robbers." He's talking about preachers and leaders who are blind leaders of the blind.

And if you look over in Matthew 15, our Lord stated pretty plainly in verse 14, "Let them alone." Don't try to persuade them otherwise. I don't get together in pastors' prayer breakfasts and fellowships in this city. I receive plenty of invitations, but once I realize that, what's it going to do? You think I'm going to go in there and change what they are by nature? "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Both shall fall into the ditch.

Why such a harsh denunciation? Well, look over here in Luke 11 in verse 52. Again, scripture is speaking for itself. Why is this such a serious matter? Well, here it is. Luke 11:52, "Woe unto you, lawyers!" The lawyers here are the doctors of the law, the ones that see themselves as being able to dot every i and cross every t. "For ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves." What does that say about them? They're lost. "and them that were entering in ye hindered." And they would continue to hinder until or unless the Spirit of God reveals Christ in the soul of some of their followers.

So you can see Christ is the only true door in contrast with all other man-made doors. Their message is a hindrance to sinners coming to Christ but here's the glorious and precious truth: it's no obstacle to the Lord. How I was hindered for years, but I was only hindered in that men weren't pointing me to Christ, but when it pleased God to reveal Christ in me, I came forth. And I know that's your testimony too if the Lord has so called you.

What is men's authority? Why do men have their sheepfolds? Isn't it to keep people in? They follow after you. They keep reports. They'll dog you. They'll check on you. They say it's because they care for you but in reality, they want the control. They want the authority. Their door is to shut men up to themselves, to their authority, to their rules, to their obligations. But Christ's, Christ the door, is to open to his sheep the freedom, the liberty, and the rest that he has accomplished on their behalf.

And what a rest it is. What a rest it is. When Christ said, "If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed," what does he mean by that? Well, he's removed the condemnation in his death. He's put to the account of his sheep a righteousness that I don't have to try to measure up to. It's been put to my account. God looks upon me in his Son and he sees nothing but righteousness because of that word. That's rest. That's peace. That's joy. That's strength.

All right, how is Christ the door of the sheep. Secondly, back here in John 10 in verse 9, and I know I've already alluded to this, but I'll just reiterate it: he is the exclusive door. Notice he says, "I am the door." The entering in to this door, Christ, is not even by the sheep's initiative. Some people say, "Well, if you'll just get lined up right, kind of get aimed toward that door and try to enter in." That's not what we read here.

Notice in verse 9, "I am the door," and what's the next two words you read? "By me. By me, if any man enter in." That's the only way you are going to enter in, is by Christ. It says "by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." Isn't that the same thing that Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," John 14:6, "no man comes unto the Father but by me." By my authority. By my power. By my righteousness. By my death. It's all by him.

So when we talk about a conditional message, a conditional message says it's by Christ, but here's what you need to do. You see, that's not... "I am the door: by me, if any man." Even if a man enters in, he cannot look back and say, "I did something to enter in." It's all by him. I've told you the story before about that flea that rode across the bridge on the elephant's back and when they got to the other side, the flea boasted and said, "Didn't we shake the bridge?" I mean, that's crazy.

"By me if any man enter in." There's none of the Lord's sheep that can look back and say, "Well, at least I had a part of my will that had something to do with it." You haven't entered in because any that have, have one thing to say, "It was by him and him alone." By him and him alone. He's the exclusive door.

You know, in the ark, there was only one door, wasn't there, by which God caused Noah and his family to enter in. One door. In the tabernacle, there was one door by which in their representative, the Lord's people entered in. And that's what Christ is saying, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in." Shouldn't this move our hearts to cry, "The Lord Jesus caused me to enter in"? A door is not merely to be admired or looked upon, but entered into.

"By me if any man enter in." This door also is not one that God is requiring you to knock at. I've heard that illustration. "Well, keep knocking. Maybe he'll open." By me if any man enter in. It's by Christ that any enter in.

You know, in John 10 and the rest of this chapter here, we're going to be seeing that. Look in verse 16, "other sheep I have, which are not of this fold. I hope they come." Is that what your Bible says? That's not what mine says.

"Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold." It's talking about that Judaism fold, the Jewish fold. But what does he say? "Them also I must bring." He's going to do the bringing. He's going to come to that, whatever that fold is that they're in, he's going to come and that porter is going to have to turn them loose and they'll follow Christ because he is the door.

Isn't that the way it was? We were in Luke 15. If you look back there in Luke 15:5 and 6, this is such a powerful statement that I hope the Lord lays it to your heart. In Luke 15:5 and 6 about that lost sheep notice it says, "And when he hath found it." The Savior was never lost so it's not you seeking him. You're the lost one.

"And when he hath found it," what does he do, "he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing." He picks it up. He brings it. "And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for my sheep has found me which was lost." Is that what it says? That's the way people read it. "Oh, good for you. You finally decided for Jesus." You see, that's just a works religion. No, "Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost." The Lord's going to have every one of them because he is that door.

Well, one other thing I'll leave with you here in verse 9, you notice it says, "he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." Here the word "saved" is used in the sense of being delivered in your mind and heart and conscience from all of that guilt and all of that hatred toward God, unbelief. When the Lord is pleased to find you and deliver you and cause you to enter in, you shall be saved. He's delivered you.

And it says here, "shall go in and out and find pasture." What does that express but freedom? Perfect freedom. How vastly different from the years of life under the law, the law of Moses or men's rules and regulations. Some of you've talked to me about former pastors that you've sat under and I can talk to you about a hundred myself. It was all about rules and conditions and there's no freedom, no freedom, no peace. Ceremonies, all of these civil keeping of laws and rules to somehow keep you separate from the world. And yet here the Lord says, "you shall go in and out and find pasture." Go in and out. That's a freedom. That's a freedom. I don't have to put restraints on the Lord's sheep. I don't have to try to have a visitation program where I'm going to come around and do a checkup on each of you once a year, make sure I get around. If you're the Lord's and you're following him, I don't have to check what you've got in your drawers, I don't have to check what you've got in your refrigerator. I don't have to worry about what you're watching on TV and all of these things. The Lord gives discernment. He gives discernment.

But here's the thing it says, "and find pasture." What does pasture represent but peace and rest? Isn't this our Lord's gracious promise of provision for the nourishment of his sheep? He's the shepherd. What does this remind you of? Psalm 23, "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He leadeth me beside," what? "Still waters. He restoreth my soul." Sheep need still waters. You'll never find a sheep drinking out of rough waters. He's got to have still water. Doesn't the Lord know how to care for his own? He'll bring us to that rest that is in the gospel. Christ is the still water and we need the pastures not only for

nourishment but for rest. You drive down the road and see the sheep lying out there in that green pasture just resting. They don't have to be eating. They're just resting. Soft, undergirding. That's what pastures are.