

# The Door of the Sheep

*Gospel of John*

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All right, David is coming to read for us.

John 10:1-10.

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.

Many men claim to be shepherds but Christ is the true and only shepherd. None can hear and understand Christ's calling except by the Spirit. Be with Ken today as he preaches your word. Amen.

Christ, "The Door of the Sheep." I can't think of a better subject for which to preach than that that we have here in our text, and certainly if we are a sheep and the Lord has given us ears to hear, imagine the picture of a sheep's ears perking up at the voice of the shepherd. Certainly that is who Christ is for his sheep, and so it begins here in verse 7, I wanted David to read back from verse 1 where we saw the introduction last time, but here specifically in verse 7, as I mentioned last week, this door of the sheep when Christ says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep," this door is to be

distinguished from the one that we saw last time in verse 1 which is the door of the sheepfold. You remember I explained to you that how in these villages different shepherds would come and they would all put their own sheep in the same sheepfold and then there was a porter that guarded the door, the porter was actually the door that would lay at night across the doorway so that any animal or any thief that ever tried to come that way would have to deal with the porter. But that was the door of the sheepfold and as we saw last time, that sheepfold in reality represented Judaism, it represented Israel, and it represented all that the law dealt with as far as the nation of Israel was concerned. But the picture we saw last time in contrast to what we're going to see here, is that when the Lord Jesus Christ came, because you may ask, he talks about those that come in some other way that are thieves and robbers and certainly there were many who were even in Christ's day going about and had sheep or people in subjection under them, that nonetheless the Lord Jesus Christ himself needed to go through that door because we saw that in verse 2, "he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep."

So hopefully that clears up in your mind some confusion because you say, "Well, I thought he's the door?" Not here. This door represents Judaism. It represents the law. And Christ could not come in some other way than through this door. He was a Jew. He was of the seed of David and he grew up in this Judaism, if you will, as a Jew with the purpose of coming to call out his sheep. But in contrast to all of the false pastors of Israel and that's how they're referred to there in Ezekiel 34, they were pastors, they were shepherds and yet their intent was not to direct the attention of their hearers to the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, when Christ came, the scriptures say, he came unto his own and his own received him not.

But nonetheless, he entered in. He came into this world of Judaism. He was born in the land of Israel that had been promised to Abraham. Born in Bethlehem and that's how he entered in. He didn't identify with the religious leaders of the day, he was always outside the camp as far as that goes, but the picture we're seeing here is that Christ entered in, he didn't come to set aside the law but to fulfill it. And so in every way in his life, that's what he came to do, to establish that righteousness that Israel of old had completely denied. But when we come over here now to verse 7, when it says, "I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep," here specifically he's talking about entering into Judaism and what? Calling out of Judaism.

When he first came, it was unto Israel, and so it was necessary that he enter in to call out those of Israel that had been given him of the Father. That's why Paul said, "They are not all Israel that are of Israel." Just like in the sheepfold, they weren't all elect. These different pastors or religious leaders when they had their little congregations and they brought all of theirs into this one little sheepfold, this is representative of the Pharisees who had a strong grip on the people and taught them according to their ways, and yet their desire was not to point them to the Lord Jesus Christ.

So the door of the sheep here is Christ himself in verse 7, and he didn't come to restore Judaism. You see, that's why the Pharisees got all upset with him. They thought, well, if he's the Christ, then he's going to restore Judaism because they were under the

domination of the Romans at that time and their thinking was, if it's truly the Messiah, then he's going to come and overthrow the Romans and now Judaism will be prominent again. But that's not why Christ came. Notice as we read here earlier when it says, "To him the porter openeth," I believe the porter is the Spirit of God whose purpose in this world had that end which was to draw sinners unto the Lord Jesus Christ. So when the porter openeth, the Spirit wasn't attempting to get all of those in this sheepfold to Christ. No, when the porter openeth, and how does he open? He opens their ears because it says "the sheep hear his voice."

I had someone this week ask me, "What is that like when you talk about hearing the voice of Christ? Is it audible?" Well, any that have heard his voice know that if you've heard his voice it's been through this word, this written word. He's opened up your ears to this word and the voice that you heard, as it describes there in verse 3, is Christ calling out his own sheep by name and leading them out, leading them out of tradition, leading them out of religion, leading them out of customs of men and drawing them unto himself. But it's not everybody. You see, this gospel that I declare unto you that's written here plainly in this word, not all men will receive. It's not in our nature to receive it and therefore the only way that we could ever hear the voice of Christ is the Spirit of God himself opening up our hearts to hear it. Not an audible voice but everywhere you look you begin to see him more and more as that shepherd. Just like we sang that hymn, "O thou, in whose presence my soul takes delight." If you listen to those words, it was the desire to be with that shepherd where he pastures his sheep. I daresay that's truly the desire of any for whom the Lord has come into this world.

So you see here that salvation clearly is not in organized religion. That's what that sheepfold represented. The men had built it, they put up the wall, they had prepared a place for their sheep and that's how they looked at it, and that's why they were offended even as the blind man earlier in John 9 we saw. That's why the Pharisees were offended. "Who are you to teach us?" But there's an example of the Lord entering into Judaism because that blind man was laying right there at the temple gate and yet all they could do was throw him some alms every once in a while. They couldn't help him. But when the Lord passed his way, ah, there was a sheep that he was drawing out.

And they tried their best to turn him away when they realized that this is what the Lord was doing, but if you want to know where God is working today, it's not in denominations, it's not in organizations, it's not even in a place like this, four walls, where people come and go. There might be some that enter in here that are not of his sheep and they sit and listen for a while but then left to themselves, they go their own way. No, those who are the Lord's when he calls them out, they're confidence is not in men or traditions but rather in the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and those whose hearts he does so call because notice there in verse 3 it says, "he calleth his own by name." That's those that have been named in the Lamb's book of life from before the foundation of the world. It's God who's determined that are his sheep and he calls them by name and does what? Leads them out. Without the Lord entering in and through the porter now causing these to hear his voice, they would remain like any one of us. I think about the years that I grew

up in a profession. Had the Lord not come my way and entered in and called me by name, I would still be in all that mess and so would you.

That's why the Lord here makes a clear distinction between himself here and all that came before him. He says it there in verse 1, there's a difference between the shepherd entering in, in a legitimate way to call out his sheep. He came, he was made born of a woman, made unto the law, that he might redeem. So he entered in legitimately. He didn't come in over the wall to take out his sheep. He came through that door, but that is in contrast and he says the others that climb some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. Then it's repeated again down here in verse 8, "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them."

You say, "Well, why is he being so tough on all of these others?" When you see the word "all" there, all that came before, it can't be taken in an absolute sense because we know that there were those prophets like Moses, like Joshua, like David, Nehemiah, Ezra, some of those that we're studying in our midweek time of worship, that came before the Lord and were faithful to point sinners to him as the way. But here when he says "all that came before," he's speaking of all those who are identified with this Judaism, and I will tell you that in Christ's day they were his number 1 enemy, and even with the apostles and the disciples afterward, who was it that plotted Christ's death? It was in the synagogues. And who was it that pursued the apostles unto death? It was these of Judaism. If you read through the book of Acts, you see that.

So the word "all" here clearly is referring to all those like the Pharisees and like the scribes that he's addressing here because you remember this is a continuation of chapter 9. Who was his audience in chapter 9? It was those Pharisees that had gathered around this one blind man that he'd healed, and we saw that in verse 40 of John 9, "some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?" Then you get into chapter 10, "Verily, verily, I say unto you." Who is he talking to here but these Pharisees, these that were the keepers of the sheepfold, but that the Lord had entered into what they considered to be their domain and their territory to call out one of his sheep and that's what caused them their angst and their anger.

I'll tell you this, when you read in scripture nothing seems to be so offensive to Christ and to God himself than false teachers of religion. I know today people like to speak about this preacher and that and you ask people, "Well, what do you like about them?" "Oh, I just like his manner. Oh, I love how he tells those stories and he's very personable." All these things that outwardly when people look on them, they think, "They're pretty good men." But not before God.

When we were reading with the men just before worship, Brother Dave, the Lord directed him to have us read in Deuteronomy 13 where it talks about if any man comes into your midst and announces certain signs and wonders and it says "and those things are done," you see, that's what people pursue, signs and wonders. Come see the miracles. Come experience God, all these things, but if they say, "Let us go after other gods," little g-o-d-

s, "don't hear them, don't listen to them because it's the Lord proving you whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind."

So that's why we're not followers of men. I don't care how they may appear to be somewhat all dressed up and making their pronouncements. The Lord has much to say against such that are false teachers, false prophets, and false shepherds. You say, "Well, how do I know?" Well, they're not pointing you to this Christ here in scripture and that's what it says here when it says "a stranger they will not follow." There was a time we did but they will not follow when the Lord is pleased to draw them out. There's no going back because it's the Lord that has drawn us out.

And I say that to say, for us nothing ought to be more dreaded and more quickly rebuked and opposed and exposed than any preacher, I don't care who it is, how well-known they are, even Paul said, "If any man come preaching unto you another gospel than what we have received, let him be," what? "Anathema." That's a strong term. It means to be damned. And Paul even included himself, "and I or any." Well, that's my prayer and I know a number of you have said that even with regard to myself, praying that the Lord keep me. That's my prayer. If I've been enabled to stand and preach this gospel for these number of years and stay on point as far as who Christ is, I give all the glory to God. But if he ever took his hand off of me, you'd hear something else coming out of this pulpit and I hope you would be alarmed. And even after I'm gone, however long the Lord has me here, that it not be. You see so many, they just try to maintain an organization, maintain a congregation, but it may be that the Lord's raised a man up just for one generation and that's it. We don't know. But if the Lord does put anybody else here, let it be one that is going to clearly point you to the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's why in other portions of scripture if you read over in Matthew 23 concerning these that are thieves and robbers, and I wrote down a number of scriptures here. I won't quote them all but I will have you look at these. How plain did the Lord deal with those that were false teachers and false religion? Better to fear God than men. Here in Matthew 23:14 he says, "Woe unto you." So this whole chapter is a chapter of woes. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" Do you know what that word "hypocrites" is? It's the word "actor." When you see in a movie or in a play somebody comes out, he's playing a role and then when it's all done, he takes off his costume, mask or whatever it is, and he goes about being something else. That's what the word "hypocrite" is. People come playing a role, pretending to be the Lord's servant and yet they're not.

He says, "ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation." Why did they make long prayer? Because they wanted to impress others.

In verse 24 of this same chapter, you notice he said, "Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel." Make it a big deal out of small things and missing the very essence of what the gospel is. Well, you can't preach what you don't know, what's never been taught.

Then again in verse 33. These are strong words, aren't they? Hypocrites, blind guides, and then over here in verse 33, "Ye serpents." I know there are some that appalled at this, they say, "Oh, you can't be saying that about a minister." Well, I'll tell you what, that's what they are. This is the Lord declaring it. So when your acquaintances and friends, I know it doesn't make for good conversation around the dinner table, but if they get talking about their preacher, we'd better put the old finger down on it and figure out who are they. Here the Lord said, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

So how unspeakably solemn these words are. We read over them just like here in John 10 and you think all that came before are thieves and robbers, but the Lord is making it very plain. You say, "Well, how are they thieves? How are they robbers?" Well, they rob God of his glory. To declare in any way that salvation is dependent upon man or any contribution of man, by his works or his will or his zeal or whatever it may be, is to rob God of his glory. When you think about throughout our lives that's what we did until it pleased God to reveal Christ in us, and from there forward we fear, I do, I fear in any way taking glory to myself. That's one of the most difficult things even about preaching. How do you exalt Christ and get all of it so that the hearers hear him and not me, not the preacher?

Well, I want to give you here six distinctions. We come back to our text here in John 10 about the door of the sheepfold and we can go down through these pretty quickly in the time that remains. But first of all, the door of the sheep is a person. That's what we're talking about when we talk about salvation. It's the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. When he says here in John 10, "I am the door." That's in distinction now from the door of the sheepfold. He's now drawing attention unto himself as being the door of the sheep. It says there in verse 7, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep." Then again in verse 9, "I am the door."

There are three doors that are mentioned here in this text and each one is distinct. In verse 1, the door was that appointed way for the shepherd into the sheepfold. In other words, when he came, he came under the law so that first door represented Judaism, it represented Israel of old, it represented all that the law foretold. When Christ came to Jerusalem, there was a temple, there were the sacrifices, there was the priesthood, all of these things were types and pictures of the Lord Jesus Christ. But he did not set any of that aside. He came through that door, the door of the sheepfold. That was God's appointed way.

You say, "Well, what's the second door?" Well, the second door is right here in verse 7 when he said, "I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep." But again, the door here of the sheep is the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. You notice here the "I am's." I've gone back and started trying to count how many times just in the book of John Christ had declared, "I am." Even the blind man when Christ came to him and said, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" And he answered, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" Jesus said unto him, "Thou hast both seen him and it is he that talketh with thee." He was

presenting himself to that blind man that he had healed. He said, "I am." That's another way of saying it. "I am."

So here this door in verse 7, though, when he says, "I am the door of the sheep," he's the door as the way out of Judaism. So he entered in, in verse 1, in Judaism, the sheepfold, and now he's the way out. That's what he's declaring here, that he is leading out his elect, his sheep, those that he names by name. Notice that in verse 3, "and leadeth them out." The Lord is not going to leave any of his sheep under false profession, false religion, with a false hope. He leads them out. So he's the door in leading out his sheep and separating them out unto himself, and then as I said, down in verse 9. You say, "Well, what's verse 9?" Notice he said, "I am the door: by me if any man," what? "Enter in." He's not talking about entering back into religion and tradition and Judaism. No, enter into him.

So he's the door that leads out but he's also the door, this door here is the door of salvation whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free. This is the Lord when he calls out his sheep out of tradition and religion, he leads them in. This is like a door that swings both ways. It swings in and out, and he's that door that only the Lord can cause us to enter in and in that way he is the door of salvation even as he says there in verse 9, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." I love that word. The word "be saved," you never find in scripture, "got saved." Be is a passive term, isn't it, to be something? That means you didn't have anything to do with it. You were acted upon and therefore you were saved. Well, that's what the Lord Jesus Christ does and who he is for his sheep. He is their salvation.

So door speaks of a way into salvation that is contrasted from high walls, difficult walls which not only the false preachers like to try to climb over, because when you think about what they're promoting to their hearers and saying to them, "Well, you've got to do this or this," and they themselves are saying, "I'm striving," but they're trying to get over a wall, not enter in through the door. Here the door as Christ presents it has not difficult walls. I love to think about that. When the Lord calls out to sinners, there's no gymnastics that he's making you go through, tough walls to go over, obstacles whereby you've got to do certain things in order to have any kind of assurance of salvation. Thank God it's not that way.

Again, I come back to the door of the sheep being the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. What does that mean? The door is his presence and I'll tell you, if you've ever been taught of Christ, there's nothing you cherish more than his presence. All he has to do sometimes is take away his presence seemingly, hide his face, and I'll tell you, you'll be arriving on the ground in torment wondering where he is and how you can find him. He doesn't play cat-and-mouse with us but there's times if we get presumptuous enough who we are and who he is and think we've got all, all he has to do is turn you loose for a little bit.

He's the door in contrast to the high walls and you think of the door here, it's in contrast to some long, dreary, circuitous passage where you've got to go through this phase and that phase and this phase and that phase, and talk about the steps of the cross and you've got people walking. I saw some the other day as I was heading north out of town, a group

of people that had the sheriff's wagon behind them, lights flashing, and I saw people walking and I couldn't figure out exactly what was going on but they're walking down LA3 just south of Benton, and the folk up front, what were they carrying? A big, old, wooden cross. And I got to thinking what time of year is it, why are they doing that? That's usually something you see around Easter season but here they were walking down the highway carrying a cross. They're on a walk and I thought, you talk about bondage, you talk about people that are following a way and yet have never known Christ. If they knew Christ, they wouldn't be doing that. I guarantee you that.

No, you think of the door, the entering in of the person of Christ. He's the way and he's the one that draws out his sheep and he's the one by his presence. Notice here the definitive article in my text in verse 7, "I am," not a good of the sheep, but "I am the door of the sheep." So that leads me to my second distinction here with the door and that is that this door is singular. It's solitary and it is exclusive, just like the tabernacle of old. There was one door to enter in. That was representative of the Lord Jesus Christ and that entering in was into the presence of God there in the Holy of Holiest, but not without sacrifice.

So here when it says that he leads them out, in essence, he's declaring that this is the only way out, just like it was declared there in the book of Acts by the apostles, "Neither is there salvation in any other," Acts 4:12, "for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be," there it is again, "be saved." Search the scriptures up and down, you never read about "getting saved." It's like it's out there, now you get it. There's no other name whereby we must be saved. If it's passive, that means you did nothing about it and it's the Lord that's doing it. Who is the active one even here in John 10? It's the Lord coming, calling out, and leading out.

It says there, "when he putteth forth his own sheep," in verse 4. His own sheep. That's the only ones he came to save. "He goeth before them." Notice even there, he doesn't drive them with a whip. No. "He goeth before them, and the sheep follow him," why? "For they know his voice." Oh, that God would give us that distinction to hear his voice. There again, one voice, one Savior, one Redeemer, one justification, one sanctification, in this one, the Lord Jesus Christ.

So the door is singular but, thirdly, just like the door, it's designed to give entrance. I know I hear people say, "Well, you'd better make sure that you knock." I don't read anything about anybody knocking here to enter in. Christ says simply he is the door of the sheep, and in verse 9, "by me if any man enter in." If. That's a strong "if." It's not for everybody. No way of reading that as any man who enters in, he'll be saved. Why? Because it's the Lord that's doing the drawing. The salvation that Christ came to accomplish, the purpose of it is to make entrance for sinners who otherwise could not enter in, and they're the ones that the Lord calls to enter in. That's how I've entered in. I have to give him all the glory.

But oh, what a perfect entrance it is. The Lord didn't come, as I said, to put people through hoops and loops in order to be able to have assurance of salvation. That's why he



said there in Matthew 11, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden and," what? "I will give you rest." Doesn't that word sound good, "rest"? That's what a door is, it's designed for entering in and those do enter in who hear his voice. Now there are warnings in scripture, "Today if you hear his voice, harden not your heart." Some people think, well, as long as they're alive, that door is open and I can enter in at any time. No. No one ever told you that. It's only as the Lord directs a sinner to enter in, but I'll tell you, there are many that still may be walking this earth, they think, "Well, as long as I'm still alive, there's still a chance," is the way they put it. Salvation isn't by chance.

"Today if ye hear his voice, harden not your heart." It may be that the Lord has already hardened your heart. I hear a number that somehow want me to try to give them some assurance based on their profession or something they've gone through to somehow tell them they're a child of God. That's not me. I can't do that. It may be that the Lord has hardened their heart and that day of judgment has already come for many. That's why Christ said there in John 3, "This is judgment, that Christ has come into the world, that men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil." It's not up to you to decide when you're going to enter in or not and that alone should alarm us if we're still on the outside.

But this door is designed to give entrance but the only way is through Christ, the door, exclusively. That's why he said there in John 14:6 that, "I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life. He that cometh to the Father must come by me." He didn't come to show the way, he is the way. He doesn't come to give life, he is the life. He didn't come to teach truth, he is the truth.

So that's how any of his sheep have entrance, it's through him. Fourthly, this door is specific to certain sinners, not to all. I know when people read that any man, "if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture," well, it's not up to man to enter in. It's not within our power to enter in. Christ himself said that in John 6 when we studied it, "No man can come unto me except the Father draw him." So for him to be the door, that means he's the one, and notice here the word that most people miss when they read this in verse 9, "I am the door," what does he say? "By me if any man enter in." That's the only way you're going to enter in, by him. It's by his grace. It's according to God's purpose, otherwise being dead in trespasses and sins, none can enter in.

That's the fourth distinction, the fifth: the door must be opened by none other than him who is the door. When Paul was writing to the Philippians, he said, "For you it is given on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him but to suffer for his name's sake." That's Philippians 1:21. There you see, it's given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on him. How is any going to believe apart from Christ giving that faith? So even as Christ said in John 6:44, "none can come to the Father except the Father draw him," and it's going to be through him. The door must be opened by none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then the last point I'll bring out here in this text is the liberty. This door is one of freedom and liberty. You see, this is what preachers that preach up man and his works and will, they don't want, they don't want you to have any freedom, they don't want you being shut up to Christ. They've always got to try to put you back in bondage. But here when he says "shall go in and out, and find pasture," in and out is a freedom, isn't it, because the Lord directs the pasture. What better than the green pastures of his gospel that Christ has given us? He's torn down the middle wall of partition. He's reconciled his people to God. What freedom to be able to enter in, go in and out knowing that he is our shepherd and the fine pasture, what is that pasture but what we're reading here in his word, all things pertaining to the Lord Jesus Christ.

So just to sum it up here as we close. First, he says, "I'm the door." So it means that Christ is the only way to God. Second, "by me if any man enter in." That means Christ is the one who imparts that life to enter it, that authority and power to enter in. None but Christ. Third, when he says there, "if any man enter in," who is he thinking about here? Not just the Jews but as he, himself, said, "And other sheep I have who are not of this fold." That's Jew and Gentile. That's the sense of that word "any man." Whatever the race, whatever the state, if any man enter in, Christ is that Savior both of Jew and Gentile alike. Fourth, "if any man enter in," it's Christ who gives that faith to enter in otherwise none could. Fifth, it says, "he shall be saved." Oh, don't you love that word, he shall be saved? That means Christ is the deliverer. That's what it means to be saved, you're saved from the power of sin, the curse of sin, from the penalty of sin, and praise God, someday from the very presence of it. "He shall be saved." Where is my hope? My hope is built on nothing else than Jesus' blood and righteousness. Sixth, when it says, "he shall go in and out." Christ is the great emancipator from all bondage. We're not to be brought again into bondage of men's works or religion, do's and don'ts, duties. I've had people say that to me, "Well, how do you know if you just turn people loose after that preaching Christ to them, how do you know how they're going to live?" They're going to live exactly as the shepherd is leading them. That I do know. He'll not lose one. Then the last point I bring out is that part where it says "and find pasture." That's what we're about right now, the green pastures of his word, hearing of him, just the sweet aroma of Christ. Oh, that he would continue to so lead us.

All right, I hope that's helpful and that the Lord will bless.