

# I Am the Door

*I Am*

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**Bible Text:** John 10:1-18

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Jesus makes many great “I am” statements in the book of John and this evening we want to look at this statement, “I am the door”<sup>1</sup> and that is in conjunction with next week’s “I am the good shepherd.”<sup>2</sup>

And I am so excited about this as we just got done with the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm and we saw the great imagery of how sheep respond to the shepherd and how the shepherd protects and this really extends the metaphor for us.

Now what is happening in John chapter 10? Jesus is calling people to himself through sheep imagery. Now, for example, in verse three he talks about the sheep here his voice. He calls his own sheep. He leads them out. And then in verse four he putteth forth his own sheep and goeth out before them. The sheep follow him for they know his voice. He is calling sheep. He is calling people to eternal life.

This is a gospel presentation by using a metaphor of a door and then of a shepherd. And we have been saying for some time now that eternal life is not just about duration. It is also about quality. We think of it in terms of quantity. You know, where will you live forever? And we think about how long that is when in reality verse 10 is what Jesus has in mind.

“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”<sup>3</sup>

In other words, it is not just about quantity. It is about quality of life. That is what eternal life is.

As we approach the “I am the door,”<sup>4</sup> this gospel presentation, Jesus is going to answer three questions for us. Number one of who can come or who is most likely to come. Number two, why should we come. And, number three, how can we come. Who can come, why should they come and how can they come.

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<sup>1</sup> John 10:7, 9.

<sup>2</sup> John 10:11,14.

<sup>3</sup> John 10:10.

<sup>4</sup> John 10:7, 9.

First of all, let's answer the question: Who can come? And by that I mean: Who is right to come? Who is the kind of person that is most likely to enter into eternal life through Jesus Christ? What circumstances are going on in their life?

I want you to know the context of John chapter nine. Turn back if you would. All of this hinges off a healing of a blind man. In verse one of John nine there is a man who is blind from his mother's womb, from his birth, the Bible tells us. And, you know, the disciples believing more in karma than grace they say, you know, "Who is the big sinner? Was it his parents or was it he?"

And Jesus in verse three says, "'Neither has sinned.'"<sup>5</sup>

"This man is blind so that I can do something special in his life."

And you know the story. Jesus, verse six and seven, spits on the ground, makes clay or mud out of the dirt and puts it in the man's eyes and says, "Go wash in the pool." And he walks to the local pool and he cleans his eyes out. And we find out in verse seven he washed and he came seeing.

Now I want you to notice what... by the way let me just make a footnote here. This man is blind from birth. Now that might not mean anything to us, but, you know, this is not one of those Bible centered crusade deals, you know, when someone you have never seen gets on stage and they get healed and you sit there and say, "Am I supposed to be excited or was, you know, is that guy on staff with them? You know? I mean, is this a genuine...?"

This man was blind from birth. Everybody in the community knew this man. Everybody knew him since he was a young man. He was a beggar and they heard him beg for years. This was a genuine miracle.

And he comes back and the community is stumped.

I want you to notice that he gets a negative reaction from the three most important social groups in his life. First of all, his community in verse eight, for example.

They see the man is blind.

"Isn't this the one that sat and begged?"

And then others said, "Boy, he is like him, but I am not sure if he is."

"Who opened your eyes?" the community asks.

And he talks about Jesus.

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<sup>5</sup> John 9:3.

The community is really giving him a lot of pressure at this point. And as if that is not enough, the Pharisees start in. For example, verse 15. The Pharisees ask him how he received his sight. And you read on in the stories and the Pharisees give him a lot of pressure about Jesus touching his life.

The third group, if it is not bad enough that his community is doing it and that his religious leaders are doing it, look who gets involved in verse 20. His parents.

“His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not.”<sup>6</sup> And verse 22 tells us that they said this because they were afraid of the Pharisees.

Now I want you to see that this whole passage is a passage about social trauma. It is about a man being rejected by his community, by his religious leaders, by his family. When Jesus says, “I am the door”<sup>7</sup> and “I am the good shepherd,”<sup>8</sup> the entire context is this social structure that this man has been thrown out of, his community, his parents, the apostate religious leaders he trusted. They have turned their back on this man. John connects these two. And I will show you where.

Look at verse 34 of chapter nine, the last phrase. “And they cast him out.”<sup>9</sup>

And then verse 35. Look at the phrase again. “Jesus heard that they had cast him out.”<sup>10</sup>

Now I want you to look at chapter 10 verse four John... Jesus actually. John records the same word, the same Greek word.

“And when he putteth forth...”<sup>11</sup> That is the same word as in chapter nine. “...he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.”<sup>12</sup>

Do you see what Jesus is saying here? Listen. This is what he is saying. “You put him out, but I took him in. You didn’t want the lost sheep. But I do.”

Jesus is saying this. “You have kicked him out of your pen and I am going to take him into mine. This man is rejected of man, but accepted of God.” That is what Christ is saying.

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<sup>6</sup> John 9:20-21.

<sup>7</sup> John 10:7,9.

<sup>8</sup> John 10:11-14.

<sup>9</sup> John 9:34.

<sup>10</sup> John 9:35.

<sup>11</sup> John 10:4.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

When he says, “I am the door,”<sup>13</sup> he is saying, “I am the door to this kind of person, to the person that has been rejected of man, to the person that doesn’t feel that they have a place in the community. They don’t feel like they have a place in the family. They don’t feel very loved by the religious leaders that they are trusting in.”

Who is the kind of person that is right for salvation? What kind of individual will most likely respond to the gospel? Do you know who it is? One who has been let down by man, someone who has suffered social trauma, someone that feels abandoned by their social structure. Those who are abandoned by man and suffer socially are ripe for the gospel.

I mean look at verse 34 and 35 of chapter nine.

They answered him. They said, “Thou wast altogether...” The Pharisees say, “You were born in sin. Do not try to teach us.” And they throw him out of the community or the social structure.

And Jesus heard that. Look at this.

“Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he [what?] had found him...”<sup>14</sup>

Do you see what is happening here? When does Jesus go to this man? He goes to this man after he has been cast out. After the communities turn their back on him, after the religious leaders and after his parents even turn their back on him. The socially rejected are ripe for the gospel. That is what this is teaching. Those that have been socially traumatized are in a perfect position to come to Christ.

And listen. People who have been abandoned by their family, let down by their friends, violated by people that they trust, they are ripe to come to the gospel.

Amos in the Old Testament serves as a great illustration of this. The Word of God tells us that Amos’ profession, he was a fig bruiser. How would you like that for a title as a job? You know, a fig bruiser.

And there is a kind of fig that does not ripen unless it is traumatized. There is a lot of debate as to exactly how Amos did this. One school of thought says, well, he walked around with a stick and just when the fruit was going to be ripe he hit it and that would help it ripen further. More likely than that he walked around with a little pocket knife and pulled the fig towards him and he kind of cut a little into the fig and that would prepare it to be ripe. It is a kind of fig that only ripens when it is traumatized.

Either way, whatever method he used, the trauma is what helped ripen the fig. And after the process took place all these figs were ready for the harvest. You know, the same is true of us. You know, God allows trauma into our life. He destroys the social structure

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<sup>13</sup> John 10:7, 9.

<sup>14</sup> John 9:35.

at times in order to bring us to the point of harvest. And like the figs, unless you and I are traumatized socially, we will never come to Christ.

Now I believe with all my heart one of the reasons that people come to Christ is because there is a deep sense of loneliness in their life. They have this sense of let down. They are a teenager or a college student. They don't quite fit in or they feel like they don't, a wife or a husband rejected by their spouse, a child who feels neglected by their mother and their father, someone letting you down, friends who just turn their back on you. That social trauma is an open door to the gospel. I mean, God knows this. There is a reason God allowed a relationship in your life to break up. There is a reason he has allowed you to be abandoned.

Let me ask you. Do you think God is sovereign over all the relationships in your life? Absolutely he is. There is a reason he is allowing this letdown in your life. What looks and feels so cruel in chapter nine is what opens the door in chapter 10. If you don't believe me, listen to Luke four verse 18.

Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."<sup>15</sup>

Isn't that interesting? He says, "I am going to set at liberty the bruised and I am going to set free the brokenhearted."

You know, if Jesus doesn't allow us to be broken hearted from time to time we are never really going to turn to him. It is during those times of loneliness, during times where we feel let down when we feel like we can go to Christ, when he is the only one we can turn to.

This has been illustrated to me in having a child and taking her to the beach. If you have ever seen a little child in the water they are very afraid of the water. At times they are very adventurous. But at times they are very afraid. And there is times when I will have my three year old in my arms and she really is squeezing on to my neck. And if you are a dad that is a great daddy moment, isn't it, amen? You know, all right sometimes I just take her out into the water to get a hug, you know?

But, you know, there is... my wife will come out and she will say, "Oh, let me get one of those hugs now." And she will kind of come next to Reagan and I and I will say, "Ok, Reagan, go to mommy." And she won't go. She is afraid to be in between us. She is afraid that she is going to fall into the water. It just she starts to squeeze me extra tight. And there comes a point when I begin to pull my daughter off my chest and kind of reach her over to her mother where she feels very vulnerable. She feels a bit forsaken and abandoned. And then about half way between us she immediately turns to my wife and all of the sudden she fully commits in that direction and starts to hug on to Tina.

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<sup>15</sup> Luke 4:18.

And this is what God is. He allows people to push away from you at some point so that you feel abandoned, you feel socially weak, you feel forsaken by many and do you know what you do? In a split second all of the sudden you start to fully commit and cling to him. That is why God is allowing people to hurt you. He is not allowing this for its own sake. He is ripening you. He is moving you closer to him.

And so, number one, who is in the best position to come to Christ? Do you know who it is? The brokenhearted.

I want you to notice the second thing. Not only who, but why should we come? Why should we walk through this door? Why come to Jesus?

Look at verse one through six of chapter 10.

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. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter [that is the wather of the door] the porter openeth; and 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 before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.<sup>16</sup>

Here we have the metaphor of calling sheep. Look at verse one.

“He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold...”<sup>17</sup>

That word “sheepfold” is an unusual word. It is an idea of a courtyard of sheep, a courtyard. And this courtyard was often very rough stone or mud brick. And what they would do is they would leave it open. They didn’t put roofs on it. It was kind of like a circle of mud bricks or a circle of rocks. Sometimes they would make it at the open of a cave and you would be able to go into the cave and then come out into the courtyard with the sheep.

Now what we find here in this picture—and the shepherds help us with this one—is the type of courtyard this is would be one found in a large city or a large village. This is not a countryside courtyard. And the reason we know that is because there are many folds in this one pen. There are many flocks in this one pen.

In areas where there aren’t much space, such as a city, shepherds will use one place to put all the sheep. So you may have four, five or six flocks of sheep renting one space, you know. And that is why there is a watcher. It is not a shepherd, verse three. It is the porter. He has been hired by the shepherds to stand in front of the door.

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<sup>16</sup> John 10:1-5.

<sup>17</sup> John 10:1.

And so you have the picture of four or five, maybe six flocks at a time in this one large courtyard and Jesus is one of the shepherds coming in and talking to the sheep.

He goes on in verse one and says the same is a thief or a robber that tries to climb over instead of going through the door.

Thief here is one that would pick pocket. Robber is one that would come through violence and plunder. And the main point is this. If you don't come through the door and you try to climb the wall, you are obviously not there for the welfare of the sheep, but to exploit the sheep.

And Jesus is going to say in just a little bit, "All that came before me, they were thieves and robbers."

Now, look. Just consider the Greenville zoo. Let's say you are there with a friend or, you know, a child and you are looking in the exhibit. And you are standing next to the door where they go in and feed the lion or they go in and feed the elephant. And you look all the way on the other side of the exhibit and somebody is climbing the fence, right? I mean, it is just obvious they are not there to care for the animals. They are a sneak. They are not sneaking in, you know, to give them a handful of food or something. And outside of, you know, a PETA rescue mission, it is obvious that they are there to exploit the sheep, right?

Jesus says the same thing. He says, "When you see someone trying to climb over the wall they are obviously there for the wrong reason."

Now look at verse three and four. Here is what I want you to see.

To him the porter openeth; and 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 before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.<sup>18</sup>

Verse four and five is a reference on how the shepherd would call the sheep out of the pen after being mingled with other flocks. The door keeper, the gate keeper opens the gate. The shepherd walks in. He gives a certain call and do you know what happens? All of his sheep start coming to him. At first they are all mingled in with the other flock and then they immediately come after their shepherd.

If you want a good picture of this, picture a school trip where there is many classes. You have five, six, seven classes of kids all the same age and they are all on the playground together. And then one of the teachers—Mrs. Fisher has probably done this a million times—step out on the playground and you say, "All in Miss Fisher's class come here."

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<sup>18</sup> John 10:3-4.

And out of that large sea of children, hopefully comes everybody in her class, hopefully, right, Miss Fisher?

And that is the picture here. The shepherd walks in where there is many sheep, mingled one another. And he gives a whistle, a shout or a call and all of his sheep come out of the larger community.

H V Morgan, an old commentator was traveling near Bethlehem and he described this scene. He said, “Two shepherds had spent the night with their flocks in a cave and the sheep were all mixed together and the time had come for the shepherds to come in different directions.

One of the shepherds stood some distance and began to call the sheep. First one, then the other, then four or five animals ran towards him until he had counted his entire flock.

And then verse four says after he calls his sheep, look at what happens. The sheep followed him. Isn't that great?

You know, here in the West we are used to sheep being driven where you have a dog that kind of, the picture of a sheep dog. You know, in the East they don't have dogs drive the sheep. The sheep are taught to follow the shepherd. That is what Jesus is referring to.

Now look what Jesus says in verse five. He says, “A stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.”<sup>19</sup>

It is kind of interesting and though I have never seen it, it is written extensively about that travelers in Palestine have often documented this that when a man stands up and tries to imitate one of the shepherds he can even dress the same way. He can even try to imitate the tone in the voice, but immediately the sheep know the voice of the shepherd and not only do they refuse to follow the false shepherd, do you know what they do? It sends them scattering in the other direction.

And that is what Christ says here.

Now let me give you three reasons why you should follow Jesus just based on what we read there. Number one, you should follow Jesus because with this shepherd you can be the real you. You can be who you really are before the shepherd. The sheep, the Bible tells us, they know the shepherd and the shepherd knows them.

Verse 14, for example, “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep.”<sup>20</sup>

Verse 27. “I know them.”

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<sup>19</sup> John 10:5.

<sup>20</sup> John 10:14.

Do you know what that means? You don't have to hide before this shepherd. You can be the real you. You can be true to yourself before this shepherd.

You know, the truth is and if you stop and think about it the truth is you and I are very dishonest day to day. I mean, how often do you have to hide your motives? How often do you have to hide what you are doing or at least what you are thinking? You conceal from others what you really are, pretend to be one way when that is not really you.

You know, I have had people say to me, "Well, I never do that."

You are not only hiding from everyone else, you are hiding from yourself. None of us feel the complete liberty to be what we really are.

Here is the beauty of Jesus. He knows you. He knows his sheep inside and out. He knows the hair, the number of hairs on the head of each one of us.

I know for some of us that is not really impressive because we are going bald, you know, but he knows the thoughts. He knows the intents of our hearts.

Listen to me here, friends. Do you know how much Jesus loves you? He knows the real you and he still calls you sheep. He knows you and he loves you, not the pretend you, but the real you. Nothing is hidden from his sight. Their weaknesses, their failures, their temptations, their sins, the good they have neglected when it was within reach, the evil they have pursued when it lay afar off. All is open before his eyes. He knows them and he still loves them.

Do you know why you should come to Jesus? Because he is the only one in the history of the world that you can be honest before. You can be true to yourself by following Christ. You don't have to pretend to be something else. You could be brutally transparent with who you are because he doesn't love you because of what you are. He loves you in spite of what you are.

The second reason you should follow Jesus is because he will personally call you. He personally calls you.

Look at verse three.

The porter opens and the sheep hear his voice.

Now, you and I wouldn't know this, but the eastern shepherds, they don't just have a generic call for the sheep. They actually have a personal call for the sheep. They deal with them on a name basis. And I love this about Christ. Jesus does not just deal with us as a corporate body. He deals with us as individuals. He knows my name. I am not just a number to this shepherd. I am not just a generic call. I mean look at how he walked by Matthew and said, "Follow me." He looked right at him and said, "Follow me."

Imagine how Zacchaeus felt.

“Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.”<sup>21</sup>

I could picture Zacchaeus, “Me? Me? And you are really talking about me?”

Even as he looked into the grave of a man that was dead for three days and said, “Lazarus, come forth.”<sup>22</sup> He called him by name.

At other times it is finding a lady weeping by the graveside and he just kind of looks down and leans over and puts his hand on her shoulder and says, “Mary.”

You know, I love that about Christ. I have had people say to me, you know, I don’t want to come to Jesus because I am not into organized religion.

Well, first of all, every religion is organized. That is another whole sermon. Second of all, this is not organized... this is a personal relationship. He calls by name.

“I know my sheep and my sheep know me.”

You know, there was a time in my life when I doubted if Jesus was real. I questioned the existence of God. But there was one thing I could not stop explaining in my heart. If Jesus isn’t real why do I keep hearing him call my name? Why do I sense such conviction? I mean when I hear the gospel or the Word of God or even just a gospel hymn, why do I feel like Jesus and I are the only ones in the room at times? How do you explain that?

That is because he calls us by name. He looks at you and he says, “Zacchaeus, make haste.”<sup>23</sup>

He says, “Bruce, Dwayne, Larry, Kurt...”

He calls us by name.

And, by the way, one last thing. Not only does he know us and call us by name, but Jesus alone can lead us out.

Look at verse three. The sheep hear the voice and Christ, he leadeth them out verse three says, leadeth them out. What is he leading them out of here? What is he leading them out of? He is not leading them just out of sin. He is leading them out of something else. He is leading them out of a religion into a relationship.

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<sup>21</sup> Luke 19:5.

<sup>22</sup> John 11:43.

<sup>23</sup> Luke 19:5.

He is talking to very religious people involved in Judaism and he says, “I will take you out of Judaism and I will put you into a relationship with me.”

Do you know why you should follow Jesus? Jesus is the only one that can relieve you out of religion into a relationship. Every religion can lead you out of a religion into another religion. But none of them can lead you out of religion into a relationship.

Every other philosophy says, “Bring your good works and God will... you know, you will impress God.”

Jesus says, “I know my sheep. You don’t have to impress anybody. I will lay down my life for you.”

And so, number one: Who can come? The broken hearted.

Number two: Why should we come? All these reasons say let’s come for the relationship.

The last thought is this. How can I come? How can I come?

Look at verse seven. We are going to shift gears.

Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.<sup>24</sup>

Now notice the picture has shifted. In verses one through six the picture is the shepherd calling the sheep out and verse seven through nine he is not calling his sheep out. He is calling them in. And in verse seven through nine he has shifted from that picture of a city pen to a countryside pen where there is only one flock and there is only one shepherd and that shepherd eventually becomes the door. What the shepherds in the ancient world would do is when the sheep returned back to the pen in the evening after eating all day, he would stand at the doorway and they would pass by him one at a time. He would inspect each sheep on an individual basis. He would look for thorns, scratches, wounds of any kind. He would give them water, anointing oil on them if need be. And after all the sheep had been inspected the shepherd would lay down across the gate, the doorway and that way no intruder could come in or beast without his knowledge. You would have to step over the shepherd in order to harass the sheep.

Jesus says, “I am the door. I lay down. I protect my sheep in this way.”

He is also saying, “If anybody wants to make their way into my pen, they are going to have to come through me.”

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<sup>24</sup> John 10:7-9.

The shepherd literally became the door.

Now let's give a couple of thoughts before we go to the Lord's Supper. Let me make one bold statement and it is this about Jesus. Everyone who teaches religion as opposed to grace is in it for the wrong reason, every one.

Do you see what Jesus says in verse eight? He says, "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers, all."

In other words, in the face of the religious leaders Jesus says, "They are not in it for you. They are in it for themselves. They are in it for their own profit."

Now what does he mean when he says "thieves and robbers"? He may mean financially. You know, the Pharisees were covetous. That is what Luke tells us. Perhaps they did this to get power and prestige, to try to have as many people follow them as they could.

You know, Mark 12 says they loved salutations in the marketplace. They loved the chief seats, the upper most rooms at the feast. And so perhaps they are in it for a different reason than money. Perhaps they are in it just to have power.

Either way, a religious leader is not out for you. You are like a trophy to be won to them. That is what Jesus says. And he also says this. He is saying this. There is only one door.

"I am the door. I am not a door. I am the door."

And it is emphatic in the original.

"I alone am the door. All that came before me are thieves and robbers. I am the only way into the kingdom of heaven."

There is only one way to God and it is through Christ. That is what he is saying. And, friends, there is a lot of differences between religion and Christianity. Let me just give you one. You know, in every other philosophy or in every other religion, it makes no real difference who the founder is. It doesn't even matter if there is a founder at all. All other philosophies are essentially a set of beliefs that could exist without their founder. They are a set of beliefs that need to be discovered. Anyone could have discovered them. They are like scientific laws. They have been around forever and someone comes along and discovers them. They can be lost and rediscovered.

In every other religion or philosophy you can have that religion apart from the founder. I mean, you might feel there is something impressive about them, but it is not essential to the philosophy. You can have Islam, for example, without Mohammed. And you could have Mormonism without Joseph Smith. You could have Buddhism even without Buddha. And you could have Secular Humanism without its founders. You could have Communism without Karl Marx. All of these are essentially autonomous from their

respective founders, but with Christianity, you cannot have Christianity without Jesus the founder.

“I am the door.”<sup>25</sup>

Jesus is essential to this philosophy. He is essential to this world view. Jesus is not just claiming to show the way like the other founders. He is saying, “I am the way.” That is the difference. For through him we have access by one Spirit to the Father. He is the door. He is the only door.

And look at verse nine. “I am the door.”<sup>26</sup>

Look at it. This is open to you. “If any many will enter in...”<sup>27</sup>

There is nothing restricting you, not race, education, gender, intelligence, athleticism, nothing restricting you from entering in. If any man wants to enter, let him come.

But do you know what verse nine teaches?

“If any man enter in he shall be saved.”<sup>28</sup>

You have to enter in. You know, it is open to anyone, but you still have to enter in. You could be saying, you can, right now you can say, “Pastor, I agree with everything you said up to this point.”

Do you know what? You can still be on the outside of this pen. You can still be an outsider. You have to enter in.

Have you allowed Jesus to lead you out of religion into a relationship? This evening do you hear him calling? Do you feel like Jesus and you are the only two in the room right now? That is his calling. That is him pouring conviction into your heart for a reason. He wants you to enter in and if you are already in he want you to enjoy this relationship. Do you hear him call?

Pass me not, O gentle Saviour,  
Hear my humble cry;  
While on others Thou art calling,  
Do not pass me by.

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<sup>25</sup> John 10:7, 9.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> John 10:9.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.