

March 13, 2024
The Fifth Wednesday in Lent
Pastor Matt Duerr

I AM: The Door

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As we continue with our “I Am” series of sermons, I'd like to just do again, a real quick recap. “I AM,” it's God's personal name, Yahweh, and Jesus applied it to Himself. He said he is the “I AM” or he is everything. He is literally the state of being of the entire universe. We saw that he then said that He is, (I AM the resurrection and the life), and that's a life that has no more curse, no more sin, no more death, no mourning, no crying, and no ... and it is eternal life with Him.

We then saw that He is The Light; the one who overcomes the darkness that comes through death and the darkness of this sinful world. Last week we saw that he said, “I AM the Good Shepherd,” and the Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep, and he lays it down of his own accord. No one takes his life from him because he is the great I AM.

Tonight, we continue where we left off with John, Chapter 10. I am number five, “I AM The door” Jesus says. And to look at this, I'd like to first take it back a little bit in time to some commercials that were on TV for Canon Cameras. They were done by a tennis star named Andre Agassi, and his line was “Image is everything.” Well, you know, when it comes to studying God's word, and it comes to the “I am” statements in particular, I'd have to say, theologically speaking “context is everything.”

When Jesus said these things, what was the context? Where was He? What led to John chapter 10, where he said both “I am the Good Shepherd” and “I am the door?” Of course, what led to it is John chapter 9. What happened in John Chapter 9? There was a man born blind who was brought to Jesus and his disciples asked him. “Who sinned, this man or his parents? Because that's what they were taught at this time, is that if someone was blind, it was because of sin and it was punishment. And it was either because this person sinned or was going to sin, or because

his parents had sinned. But Jesus comes back, and he corrects them right away and he says, "Neither, but that the works of God might be displayed in him." And then Jesus spat on the ground, He made some mud with the dirt. He put it over the guys eyes, over the eyelids and he told him, "go wash in the pool of Siloam." The man went. He washed. And he came up seeing. And he went back to Jerusalem. When he got there, people started questioning and asking, "Isn't this the man born blind?" Some people said 'yes it is, it is that same man.' Others were 'no, no, that's impossible. He just looks like the man born blind.' But then he spoke and said, "I am he. I'm the man." "How could that happen?" Is what they asked him and he told them. 'Jesus of Nazareth. He spat on the ground, He made some mud, put it on my eyes told me to go wash in the pool of Siloam. I did and I came up seeing.'

Now this was not OK by the religious authorities. Jesus didn't have a permit to do this. So, they took the man to the Pharisees, the legal experts. And we read. I quote, "Now It was the Sabbath." And you know what that means? No work on the Sabbath. And so, the Pharisees ask this man the same question. How? They get the same answer. Jesus spat mud on my eyes, said go wash, I see. And their response? We know this man is not from God because he doesn't follow the Sabbath. He did some work here. And yet we read that some among the Pharisees asked. "But how can a sinner do such signs?" Their word signs is important because it's a sign that shows the way or shows that He is from God. Moses was given signs to show to the elders of Israel.

And so, some are a little perplexed by this and they ask the man, "What do you say about Jesus?" And he comes back with. Well, he's obviously a prophet. And so, they go and they ask the parents. And the parents say, this is our son. Yes, he was born blind. But now he's an adult, talk to him. They were a little afraid of the Pharisees.

So, they call the blind man back in, and they say to him, give glory to God. We know that this man (referring to Jesus) is a sinner. The man comes back with, "sinner or not, I know this, I was born blind but now I see." What did he do? And the blind man comes back with Why do you ask? I've already told you. Do you wish to become his disciples now? I

want you to think about how well that would go over for the Pharisees. That one just landed like a rock, and they reviled him. They chastised him. And they say we don't even know where he came from. And the blind man begins to show some serious spiritual insight because he comes back with; 'Well, now that's amazing. This has never happened before. If he's not from God, he couldn't do anything.' I can see they were he was addressing exactly what they said. We don't know where he came from. The blind man's point is he came from God. And the Pharisees, you could just see them going bezerk. You, you born in the sin! This goes back to what the disciples had said, back to their teaching that if you were blind, it was a result of sin and it was a punishment. And so that's where they leaving. You were born in sin and cast him out. How dare he talk back to them?

And then we read that Jesus heard that he had been cast out. He went to this blind man, and he asked the question, do you believe in the Son of God? And that term, Son of man, comes from the book of A reference to the promised Messiah. The blind man comes back to Jesus and says, "Who is He Sir, that I may believe in Him? And that is when Jesus says, "you have seen Him, and it is He who is speaking to you now." And at that time, everything went size man's mind again. Remember, he had not seen Jesus. He was blind, the mud put it on his eyes. He went to the pool of Siloam. He came back seeing, and he was whisked away to the Pharisees and stuff. But I think probably at about this time, you know, blind people, they have very good hearing. He hears that voice. He hears what Jesus says and. And I quote. "I believe" and he worshipped Jesus.

Now here comes the setup. Jesus responds to this by saying, "For judgment I came into this world that those who do not see. Your average Jewish person who was being taught wrong, The Gentile people. That those. See. Macy's. And those who See? The Pharisees, the chief priest, the scribes, the sages, those who claim to have knowledge, those who claim to see the truth of God's Word. Those who see may become blind. And the Pharisees picked it up. Because they immediately asked Jesus and we also mind. And Jesus says back to them because you claim to see and don't, your guilt remains.

That's how Chapter 9 ends, and we go right into Chapter 10. There is no break in time. And so in that context, Jesus now says “truly, truly or amen, amen, yes it is so, yes, it is so, I say to you. He who does not enter the sheep fold by the door, but climbs in another way. Is one, a thief and a robber. Number two, the one who does enter by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. And to him the shepherd, when he comes to the sheep pen, or the sheepfold, the place of security for the sheep at night. To him the gatekeeper. One goes in and comes out to him. The shepherd, the gatekeepers open. And the sheep hear the voice of the shepherd, and they follow the shepherd into the sheep fold. In fact, the shepherd calls them by name and says, ‘Little Ralpie, come on in, follow me.’

And then Jesus says, but those sheep, the one who know the shepherd who know the shepherd's voice, they won't follow a stranger. No, they're going to flee from the stranger because they don't know his voice. And we read, “They, the Pharisees, who had asked them these questions and who he was now speaking to, they did not understand what he was saying to them.” So, we read, “Jesus again said to them, Truly, truly, amen, amen, yes, it is so, yes, it is so, “I AM The door of the sheep.” He is the only way into the sheepfold, into the hand, into the home of the sheep, the shepherd is the only one.

And as a result, this being parable in nature. He is the only way into heaven. He is the door, Jesus the door to heaven. He is the only way to eternal life. Jesus is the door we must pass through to get eternal life. All who came before Him, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the chief priest, the high priest. All of them were false teachers, false shepherds. And to make it very clear, Jesus says. “If anyone enters by me. He will be saved and we'll go in and out, I might add, following the shepherd and find pasture.”

So, bringing it all together, we have an image here. An image of the sheep pen. Which is a place of total safety for the sheep. Because there's a wall around it. And there's only one way in. It's the gate. And there is a Gatekeeper who keeps that gate closed and only allows the Shepherd to come in. And the sheep who are following the Shepherd because He calls them by name.

So, who is the gatekeeper? The one who is there overseeing the sheep hand, the sheepfold who is monitoring the walls and the gate the door. That is God the Father Almighty. Protecting that sheep. And He is the one who opens the door, and He only opens it for his Son, Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd. And Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd comes in and He calls the sheep to follow Him. He is literally the door into that same place, because He is the Shepherd who leads us through Himself to God the Father Almighty. And He's more than just the shepherd. He's the light that has shown on the pathway to heaven. And He is the Life. The Life that we find in the eternal sheepfold, the eternal sheep pen in heaven. He is the life we long for, that life that never ends, the life of no more warning than crying, or sickness or pain or any of that. And He is that because He is the Resurrection that gave life back where only death reigned. And He alone can do that, because he is Yahweh, the great "I AM" who can totally protect us forever. In His name, Amen.