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John 10:1-10

Jesus is the Door

"I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate/door, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. **2**The man who enters by the gate/door is the shepherd of his sheep. **3**The watchman opens the gate/door for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. **4**When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. **5**But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." **6**Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them. **7**Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate/door for the sheep. **8**All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. **9**I am the gate/door; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. **10**The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

In our reading for today, Jesus calls himself the door. Is this good news or bad?

Most people think Jesus is a closed door. They think that Jesus closes the door to heaven. They might even quote John 14:6, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me." They say you better trust in Jesus or else you will be condemned.

There are a few problems with this. First, it is not a very winsome way of speaking. Could you imagine proposing to your wife this way? This is not the language of love. "Marry me or your life will be terrible." Second, Jesus does not condemn the world. The world is already condemned. Jesus does not close the door on humanity. Humanity has closed the door on God. Jesus comes to open a door that otherwise is shut. Without Jesus there is no door (no one comes to the father). With Jesus, there is a door.

Let me illustrate this point in the following way. In high school, I spent the night at a friend's house. His room was the darkest room I had ever been in. In the middle of the night, I needed to use the restroom but because the room was so dark I could not find the door. Afraid that I would have an accident, I called for my friend to wake up and open the door. He did and I was saved.

The point is that the door was already there. The problem was that I did not know where it was. I needed someone to open it. That is what Jesus does. He opens eternity to us. He breaks into our dark world and floods it with marvelous light so that we would have a way out. Jesus is the door.

Blocking the door

There is a tragic thing that happens with this door, namely, people get in the way and hinder others from coming to faith.

Religious leaders make terrible doors. In our passage, we learn it is the religious leaders who get in the way. In the previous chapter, the religious leaders kicked the man, healed by Jesus, out of the synagogue. These are the ones who are supposed to get it. These are the ones who are supposed to point to Jesus. Instead, they block the way. No wonder Jesus calls these religious leaders “thieves” and “robbers.”

Religious leaders make terrible doors because they are sinners thrust into a position where they are considered experts. Never trust an expert. If you remember it was amateurs who built the ark, whereas experts built the Titanic. Or, if you give power to a sinner, he will be a powerful sinner.

This should not surprise you. This is not new. Religious leaders have always done a poor job caring for the sheep. Ezekiel 34 tells us:

The word of the LORD came to me: **2** "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock?' **3** You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. **4** You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. **5** So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. **6** My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them. **7** " 'Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD : **8** As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, because my flock lacks a shepherd and so has been plundered and has become food for all the wild animals, and because my shepherds did not search for my flock but cared for themselves rather than for my flock, **9** therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the LORD : **10** This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them. **11** " 'For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. **12** As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. **13** I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. **14** I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. **15** I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD. **16** I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice (Ezekiel 34:1-16).

Religious leaders make terrible doors.

Sheep make terrible doors as well. Before we pick on pastors too much, look at yourself. You are not a very good door either. How many times have you failed to share the gospel with a neighbor? How many times have you been over critical with a neighbor?

Stephen Brown tells a story about how he went to get his car washed. As he was driving through the car wash an attendant started yelling at him. Brown who is never shy, rolled down his window and yelled back. Brown soon realized that the attendant was not yelling at him. Instead, he was simply telling Brown to move to the right in order to properly go through the car wash. Brown said he wanted to apologize but he was a little embarrassed. When he got home he remembered that he had a bumper stick on his car that read, "Smile God loves you." He immediately took it off. He says, "If he was to ever have another bumper sticker on his car it would read, 'Sorry, I belong to Jesus and he loves me anyway.'"

Like religious leaders, we too make terrible doors.

Jesus is the door

Praise God Jesus is the door. He is a wonderful door. John explains what kind of door Jesus really is.

Jesus is a security door for the sheep. Verses 11-13 tell us, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. **12**The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. **13**The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep." As the good shepherd, Jesus sleeps at the entrance of the pen. If danger comes, it must go through Jesus. Why does he do this? Because the sheep are valuable to him. He loves the sheep. Any parent can understand this. If harm came to your child, you would do everything in your power to protect your child. Your child is too valuable to you. You care too much for them.

Jesus is an entrance door. If other sheep come to the pen, Jesus is always open for them. Verse 9 tells us: "Anyone who enters by me will be saved" (10:9a). I love the word "anyone." Anyone means anyone. Jesus did not say only the good looking. Jesus did not say only the wise or moral. Anyone means anyone. Jesus lets anyone in. The reason is because the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Hebrews 10:19-23 tells us:

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, **20**by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, **21**and since we have a great priest over the house of God, **22**let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. **23**Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Jesus is an open door. The sheep are allowed to go out from the sheep pen. This is true freedom. They are allowed to go out into the pasture and graze because the shepherd is with them. His rod and staff comfort them. The shepherd does this because he wants them to have life abundantly (10:10). In fact, his whole ministry is about life. "In him was **life**, and the **life** was the light of all people" (1:4). "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal **life**" (3:16). "I came that they may have **life**, and have it abundantly" (10:10). "But

these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have **life** in his name” (20:31).

What kind of door is Jesus? A wonderful door! Praise God, Jesus is the door. And praise God, we are not.

**In Jesus' Name,
Amen!**