“I am the Door”

(The Parable of the Sheepfold)
John 10:1-10
2-16-2025



Introduction:

I. The Illustration of the Sheepfold (v.1-6)

A. The Sheep enter only one door (v.1-3)

B. The Sheep heed only one voice (v.4-6)

II. The Interpretation of the Sheepfold Parable (v.7-8)

A. Jesus is the only door the sheep enter (v.7)

B. Jesus is the only voice the sheep heed (v.8)

III. The Invitation to enter the sheepfold (v.9-10)

A. He is the exclusive entryway (v.9a)
(He is a door that is exclusive)

B. He is an open entryway (v.9b)
(He is a door that is open)

C. He is a safe entryway (v.9c-10a)
(He is a door that leads to safety)

D. He is a satisfying entryway (v.10b)
(He is a door that leads to satisfaction)

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Introduction:

Chapter 10 is a continuation of Jesus’ words to the Pharisees in chapter 9.

In chapter 9, the Lord warned the Pharisees about their spiritual blindness and now in chapter 10, He warns them about their seeking entrance into Heaven through the wrong door.

v. 1
“Verily, verily” – truly, truly – a statement of certainty and seriousness. This sermon of Jesus is absolutely true; its warning and admonition are to be taken seriously.

The issue of which door leads to life is not open to diverse opinions. There is truly one way into Heaven and eternal life.

The emphasis of this chapter involves the exclusivity of Christ. He is the only Shepherd, the only door into Heaven, and the only Voice His sheep hear. The word **“one”** is emphasized in verse 16.

The **“sheepfold”** is a parabolic reference to salvation and eternal life. All of God’s sheep will one day be collected and gathered into His one sheepfold.

The reason why Jesus uses the “sheep” motif as an illustration of His relationship to His children is because there are many similarities between sheep and people.

--Sheep, like people, are dumb and will wander (if left to themselves)

Isaiah 53:6
All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

--Sheep, like people, are dirty and need the cleansing that comes from the shepherd

--Sheep, like people, are dependent (and require the shepherd to led, feed, and stay with them)

Psalm 23:1-3
A Psalm of David.
The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. [2] He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. [3] He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

--Sheep, like people, are vulnerable and need the shepherd to protect them

Psalm 23:4
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

(Sheep, like people, if abandoned would be lost, ravaged and devoured by wolves, and die)

I. The Illustration of the Sheepfold (v.1-6)

A. The Sheep enter only one door (v.1-3)

v. 1
In ancient Palestine, a sheepfold would normally be a cave or cavern cut out of rock (I have visited several in Bethlehem, Israel).

The sheepfold would have only one door, one way in and only one way out. A sheep stealer would seek out another way to gain entrance, perhaps by climbing up and removing loose rocks to provide an opening, since the shepherd and/or porter (doorkeeper) would stay at the door and often sleep at the door so as to prevent intruders from getting in and to prevent sheep from sneaking out.

"Not by the door" – Only bandits or burglars seek another entrance into a house than by the door.

The normal and proper means of entrance into any facility is through the door.

"Climbed up" – to climb either over a wall surrounding a sheepfold or on top of the roof of the sheepfold.

"A thief and a robber" – a thief sneaks and steals, while a robber aggressively and violently and with force steals.

Judas was a sneaky thief (Jn. 12:6); Barabbas was a violent robber (Jn. 18:40).

Those who seek entrance some other way do so because they want the benefits of what lies in the sheepfold, yet do not want to deal with the shepherd and enter the right way so as to get what is inside.

Thieves want one thing, and that is to steal. Sheep stealers want one thing, and that is to steal sheep.

The point of verse 1 is not that the thieves want to enjoy the sheepfold; they want to seize the sheep.

While it is true that many seek to enter Heaven through other means than by Christ, that is not the intended meaning of verse 1.

v. 2
In contrast to the thieves and robbers of verse 1, a true shepherd enters through the proper entrance.

Christ, being the Shepherd in view here, has Heaven open for Him since He owns Heaven, as a shepherd would own his sheepfold and sheep.

v. 3
To the true shepherd, the porter (doorkeeper) opens because he knows him; and to the true shepherd, the sheep respond by recognizing his voice.

"He calleth his own sheep by name" – Although to you and me, the sheep would all look pretty much the same, the shepherd knows each one individually and even has a special name for each one.

"Eastern shepherds commonly give names to their sheep descriptive of some trait or characteristic of the animal" (Rienecker, p. 242).

It is encouraging to know that our "good shepherd" Jesus Christ (v. 11) also knows each one of us, His sheep, and has a special name for each

Rev. 2:17
To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

Isaiah 56:5
Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.

B. The Sheep heed only <u>one voice</u> (v.4-6)

v. 4
A shepherd would let the sheep out of the sheepfold for grazing, drinking, and exercising. He would not drive them out to be all by themselves, but would lead them out and accompany them by providing leadership for them to follow. In like manner, our "good shepherd" (Jesus) does not drive His sheep away from His presence, but He leads them, and always accompanies them. His sheep are never abandoned.

The shepherd's relationship to his sheep:

--He <u>owns</u> them (Jesus owns us)
--He <u>leads</u> them (Jesus leads us)
--He <u>speaks</u> to them (Jesus speaks to us via His Word)

The sheep's relationship to their shepherd:

--They <u>follow</u> him (we follow Jesus – v. 27)
--They <u>know</u> him (We know Jesus and recognize when it is He speaking to us)

The sheep "love and trust their shepherd" (Robertson, p. 174).

v. 5
Illus: The time the sheep at the Kidron Valley wandered over to me but quickly returned tot he shepherd when he spoke.

v. 6
"Parable" = lit. Allegory or self-explanatory story picturing Jesus Christ as the one door and one voice that the sheep respond to.

Parables had the effect of keeping the truth hidden from those who didn't want to see it and had the effect of fastening truth to the minds of those who were open to it.

What was concealed to some people is revealed to others.

II. The Interpretation of the Sheepfold Parable (v.7-8)

A. Jesus is the only door the sheep enter (v.7)

So as to make the parable unmistakably clear, Jesus gives us the meaning in verses 7 ff.

What is a door? A door is simply an entryway to go into some place. Jesus is saying, "I am the entryway into Heaven. I am the way to eternal life, peace, joy, fulfillment and safety.

Jesus is clearly speaking figuratively (as in Mk. 14:22). "He is not a physical 'door,' but he is the only way of entrance into the kingdom of God (14:6)" (Robertson, p. 176).

B. Jesus is the only voice the sheep heed (v.8)

"All that ever came before Me" – Many false teachers came before Christ, claiming either to be the Messiah or an authoritative Rabbi.

But God's true sheep had the discernment not to follow them.

Note: prior to Christ's second coming, many false Christ's and false prophets will also appear

Matthew 24:23-24
Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. [24] For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

"There had been numerous such imposters already (Josephus, Ant. XVIII, i., 6; War I, viii, 1), and Jesus will predict many more (Mt. 24:23f)" (Robertson, p. 176).

God's true sheep will not run after the foreign voices that call to them from the world of false religion, false philosophy, and false doctrine.

What is true of sheep is also true of true saints.

A true child of God will never defect to a cult, cult leaders, pagan religion, or devilish lifestyle. Those who defect or apostatize reveal by their departure that they were never really true sheep of Jesus Christ.

1 John 2:19
They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

A true child of God can clearly distinguish between truth and error, between the Gospel of God and the lies of Satan. This discernment is due to our relationship to the shepherd and/or relationship to His Holy Spirit.

III. The Invitation to enter the sheepfold (v.9-10)

A. He is the exclusive entryway (v.9a)

(He is a door that is exclusive)

There is something about opening door that is very interesting. The existence of a door pulls on our curiosity to open it.

Many of us have visited a house that has many doors. The fact that many existed made it somewhat difficult to know which one to try. The word offers many doorways, roads, etc. But they don't all lead to the same place. Only one door is the correct door, and your eternity hinges on the door you choose. Jesus is the door you must choose to have eternal life.

Jesus did not say: "I am a door." As if He was just one among many which would lead to salvation. But rather He states, **"I am the door,"** i.e. the one and only.

This is similar to the statement He makes in John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth, the life..."

Those who try to get in some other way are thieves and robbers (v. 1, 8).

(The Virgin Mary is not the door; religion is not the door; a patron saint is not the door; but Jesus is the only door).

Acts 4:12
Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

"One can call this narrow intolerance, if he will, but it is the narrowness of truth" (Robertson, p. 177).

B. He is an open entryway (v.9b)

(He is a door that is open)

"By Me if any man shall enter" - He is a door that is enter-able; He is not locked, frozen shut, or barred closed.

The key is <u>faith</u>! He is open, but you must <u>enter</u> by faith. It is not enough to intellectually acknowledge Him as the correct door; you must enter by faith!

He is open to all ("**any man"**) regardless of race, color, nationality, education, and wealth, etc.

C. He is a <u>safe</u> entryway (v.9c-10a)
(He is a door that leads to safety)

"Shall be saved" –

"Shall" = future tense; saved from God's wrath and judgment; saved from the condemnation of the world; saved from sin and its eternal consequences

"<u>Be</u> saved" – passive voice – it is God who does the saving

"Saved" = delivered, rescued.

Just as the <u>singular</u> door of <u>Noah's Ark</u> had to be entered for deliverance from the global deluge, so this singular door of Jesus Christ must be entered for deliverance from the judgment to come.

D. He is a <u>satisfying</u> entryway (v.10b)
(He is a door that leads to satisfaction)

'Go in and out" – <u>In</u> from the world into salvation and eternal life, <u>out</u> onto Heaven's sore with all of its bliss and joy and refreshment (all needs supplied).

"Pasture" – speaks of refreshment and satisfaction.

Ps. 23:2 – "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures"

"The thief" – Satan and his co-workers. His goal is to <u>steal</u> false sheep, <u>kill</u> false sheep, and <u>ruin</u> (destroy) false sheep.

Note: He cannot permanently seize and destroy Christ's sheep.

Christ came that His sheep might have:

1) Life (eternal life both now and forever)

2) Abundant life (joyful, fulfilled, spiritually rich and satisfying life)

Jesus gives both quantitative life (it lasts forever) and qualitative life (it is very good and satisfying)

"Abundantly" = to have a surplus; more than enough; a life that is filled and overflowing with all that gives joy, meaning, and sustenance to life.

The Christian life is not a life of dull boredom, but or rich joy, purpose, and fulfillment.

"Jesus not only gave His life for us (v. 11), but He gives His life to us right now!" (Wiersbe, p. 330).