

“The Door to Abundant Life”

September 7, 2014

Text: John 10:7-10

Jesus took for Himself a number of different metaphors as names to help His followers understand who He was=>

E.g. the bread of life, the light of the world, the cornerstone, the true vine, & the good shepherd, to mention a few.

But even the most beautiful figures of speech are insufficient to adequately describe His goodness & moral loveliness.

Even if we could speak with the tongues of men/angels, it would be inadequate to portray His glory.

The writers of Scripture, though inspired by H.S., were constrained by the limitations of human language, from fully conveying Jesus’ majesty/magnificence.

But in today’s text, Christ will twice refer to Himself simply as=> *“the door.”*

This is a very plain/simple/commonplace metaphor.

And yet it communicates the essential truth that Jesus Himself can become for us a passageway, by which we enter into eternal life, the abundance of life, & ultimately the Father’s presence/glory in heaven.

Jesus chose a commonplace metaphor to describe Himself on this occasion, because His goal was not to win applause, but to win the hearts/souls of common men/woman, and to bring them into eternal life.

We pass through doors continually every day.

So Jesus seems to have chosen this commonplace analogy for Himself on this occasion, which could serve as a constant reminder to countless future generations that He is the door to life.

He would have every door through which we pass, plead w/ us to enter into eternal life—through Him, the Door to life/salvation.

In today's text, Christ will state 3 truths about Himself as a door, that strongly contrast Him w/ false religious leaders=>

- * "I Am the Door"
- * A Door Not to Harm, but to Blessing
- * A Door Not to Death, but to Abundant Life.

*** Truth #1—I Am the Door**

[John 10:7] (John)=> "*So [the Pharisees hadn't understood what Jesus said about the door before, so now He repeated it, & further explained Himself] Jesus said to them again, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, I [emphasized] am the door of the sheep.'*"

Not only is Jesus a door into the safety of the sheepfold, He is the only door—the only way—to become saved.

Christ will say in Jn 14:6=> "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.*"

Jesus is the way—the only way—by which God's people (His sheep), can come into the safety of His fold, and go out to the rich pastures of His blessings.

Through Him alone, sinners are able to approach God in all His unapproachable holiness, and to gain for themselves the salvation from sin which He offers.

Peter says in Acts 4:12, “*There is salvation in no one else; for there is **no other name** under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be **saved.***”

Jesus alone is the true Source of knowledge about God and His salvation, & He is the only means of attaining eternal spiritual security, through forgiveness of our sin.

Christ is the 1/only Mediator who can reconcile man to God.

We were born in enmity against the Lord, & our daily sins just continually alienate us further from Him.

God’s holiness keeps us (in our sin) at arm’s length from Him (in His holiness), and our guilt makes us afraid of Him, just like our forefather Adam, who hid from God after he first sinned.

But Jesus, by sacrificing His own life for our sin, has opened a way for us to come to God & find forgiveness and acceptance.

I Pet 3=> “*Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God*” (3:18).

Jesus’ death opened up the Holy of Holies to us, so that we might come near to God & experience His love.

In verse 1 of this chapter, Jesus had told the Pharisees about the sheepfold door (which was Himself), and that those

who always tried to gain entrance into the fold in some way other than Himself, were thieves/robbers.

The thieves/robbers Jesus was talking about were the Pharisees themselves, but they didn't understand that, being unable to even imagine such a thing.

You might have thought Jesus would have felt relieved that they didn't get it, & therefore didn't get mad at Him, due to their own lack of understanding.

But Jesus wanted them to understand, because until they came to grips w/ the fact that, in God's eyes, they were spiritual thieves/robbers, they'd never repent.

Until they repented & sought forgiveness, the wrath of God would abide on them.

Christ had no desire to irritate them, but a strong desire to help them turn from their sinful ways, & believe in Him, for the salvation of their own souls;

Such an earnest desire, in fact, that He again used that phrase by which He called attention to particularly solemn/important truths, "*Truly, truly, I say to you.*"

And once again, He would call them thieves/robbers as He did in verse 8, using the same language of analogy as before.

Here we see the amazing patience/grace of our Lord towards those who hated/opposed Him at every turn.

He was/is the door to the sheepfold, & invites anyone/everyone who sincerely seeks cleansing from sin, to come to God through Him.

It doesn't matter how vile/despicable/rebellious we have been in the past.

As long as we are willing to humble ourselves in faith before Him now, He invites us in.

*** Truth #2—I Am the Door, Not to Harm, But to Blessing**

[Verse 8]=> *“All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.”*

The thieves/robbers who came before Jesus did harm people.

Christ pointed that out specifically, in stark contrast to His own conduct.

The question always asked at this point is this: To whom exactly was Jesus referring here, as thieves/robbers, who had come before Him?

* We know that it cannot be the OT prophets whom God had sent.

Jesus would never have called them thieves/robbers.

* Some believe He was alluding to men who had falsely claimed to be the Messiah.

That is possible, as long as they were still alive, because the word “*are*” (not “*were*”) means these people were alive in Jesus' own time.

* Undoubtedly, the hypocritical scribes/Pharisees to whom Jesus was speaking right then were the primary targets of His accusation that they were thieves/robbers.

But no doubt Christ would also have included under this same label, their counterparts, the Sadducees.

These men had “come before” Jesus in the sense that they were already well known on the national scene when He appeared/arrived as the true Messiah.

They were thieves/robbers in that their motives for seeking leadership positions were almost invariably selfish.

In addition, they had stolen-from/brutalized/ravaged God’s people spiritually, as seen in their treatment of the blind man Christ had healed.

In Matt 23, Jesus provided some specifics about their selfish,

unloving behavior, as Matthew wrote=> *“Then Jesus spoke to the crowds & to His disciples, / saying: ‘The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; / therefore all that they tell you, do & observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things & do not do them. / They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger. / But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments. / They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues’”* (23:1-6).

***“The sheep”* Jesus mentioned (His own true followers) were in a real quandary that required spiritual maturity on their part.**

They must have humbly done what these religious leaders told them to do (as Christ had said) but w/o following their hypocritical example, or listening-to/believing their legalistic false doctrines.

* They must have included people like Simeon, that righteous & devout man (Lk 2:25-32) who was in the Temple, looking for the consolation of Israel, when Mary/Joseph brought the infant Jesus there to present Him (as their 1st-born) to the Lord.

Seeing Jesus, he took Him in his arms & praised God.

* Anna too, the 84 y.o. widow who served the Lord night/day in the Temple w/ fasting/prayer, must also have been among the true sheep of God whom the religious thieves/robbers of Judaism could not deceive.

When she first saw the Christ-child, she began giving thanks to God & telling others like herself about Jesus—the Messiah (Lk 2:36-38).

These truly godly Jews, God’s sheep, understood OT Scripture correctly, and were emulating the faith of godly Abraham. So they were not led astray by the false teaching of the scribes/Pharisees/Sadducees.

They found no satisfaction for their souls in the false hopes taught by these pretentious religious leaders who didn't even pretend to care about the poor/afflicted.

Jesus validated His own Messiahship w/ evidence that He did care about such folks, when He pointed out that, *“the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, & the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the **poor** have the gospel preached to them”* (Lk 7:22).

The religious leaders, on the other hand, took no interest in such people, but did them far more harm than good.

The true sheep of God must have noticed that.

By contrast, the true Door into God's fold & His presence (Jesus Christ), did no harm to anyone, but only blessed them.

[Verse 9] (Jesus)=> *“I am the door [the stress is on the word “I”—I & I-alone]; if anyone enters **through Me** [again, this phrase is emphasized], he will be **saved**, & will go in and out & find pasture.”*

There is no other entrance but Jesus Christ into God's fold, & into becoming one of God's sheep.

As a person believes in Jesus & His substitutionary atonement for one's own sins, he is admitted/welcome to the fold.

W/o Jesus, there could be no door into the house of God's mercy.

There could have been for us no going in to God, nor would God come out to us, were it not for our Mediator and Savior, Jesus—through whom we draw near to God.

Nor is there any other door—Jesus is *the* door.

Not self-made righteousness, not self-sufficiency, not religious rites/ceremonies, not the will of man, or of his flesh.

Nor is there any other man who can save, not even us ourselves.

“There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Also notice that it is Jesus Himself, who is the door.

Not the doctrine of Jesus; not His example that we must imitate;

Not His commands we must obey, nor baptism in His name.

Jesus Himself is the door, which we can only enter by forming a personal relationship w/ Him.

Look to Jesus Himself if you would be saved, and ask Him personally to save you, simply because He has offered to accredit you w/ the merit of His own death to atone for your sin.

Ask-Him, & trust-Him, to do so, & to forgive your sins.

Finally, notice how perfectly suited this Door is to our need.

On one side of the door is Jesus’ humanity, so that we can freely/gladly come to Him, as one of our own race/kind.

On the other side of the door we find Jesus’ perfect deity=>

* The fullness of the Godhead in bodily form

(Col 2:9);

* Emmanuel=> “*God with us*” (Mt 1:23).

And over that Door, Jesus’ own blood has been sprinkled,
as our Passover, assuring us of acceptance w/ God
Himself.

If anyone is to be saved, he must come through God’s one
Door=> Jesus Christ, the God-man.

That Door is open, just waiting for you to enter in, if you
haven’t already done so.

Q: Who may enter thru this door that is Jesus? “*Anyone*”!

Not just special/smart/talented/noble people—even “nobodies”.

Not just Jewish people—even those w/ no religious
pedigree.

Not just good/religious/serious-minded people.

“*Anyone*” !

That what Jesus said=> “*If anyone enters....*”

**Now Jesus includes here a wonderful list of the blessings a
person receives when he enters God’s fold thru Christ.**

There’s a whole gift bag of blessings awaiting him, just inside the
Door=>

1st, he will be “*saved*”=> from sin, from the condemnation of
God’s holy Law, from death, hell, & the wrath of God.

Not only does salvation mean that he will escape from
these horrors, but it also includes the positive
opposites of each one of them=>

- * Instead of being a slave of sin, he will become happily enslaved to righteousness (Rom 6:18).
- * Instead of condemnation, he will receive justification, having been forgiven of his sins and declared righteous (not just innocent) by God Himself.
- * Instead of death, he will receive eternal life.
- * Instead of dreading hell, he will anticipate heaven.
- * Instead of languishing under the wrath of God, he will receive the love of God, as God's own adopted child.

2nd, he will “*go in and out*” freely, reveling in his newfound spiritual freedom.

Does that mean he will abuse his freedom, w/ his sin?

No, he'll say w/ Paul=> “*All things are lawful for me [I am free!], but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything*”
(1 Cor 6:12).

Having suffered sin's terrible slavery in the past, he has no interest in submitting to that cruel master ever again.

He constantly asks his shepherd to lead him not into temptation, but to deliver him from evil, & then goes out into the world, trusting Christ to answer his prayer.

He goes in/out of the fold freely, knowing his Shepherd goes before him at all times, in order to protect him.

His Lord will work all things together for his good, so he has no need to fear harm/danger.

3rd, he will “*find pasture,*” and he will be able to say w/ David=>

“*He makes me lie down in green pastures*” (Psa 23:2).

This is a picture of reveling not only in God’s ample provision, but resting as he does so, in the company of his beloved Shepherd.

Ezek 34:15 (the Lord)=> “*I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest, ’ declares the Lord GOD.*”

For us as believers, this translates into our enjoying a rich, savory diet of God’s Word, satisfying our souls.

Whatever the believer’s heart needs, to fill it, sustain it, comfort it, & make it grow to strength, maturity, & perfection, he will find in God’s Word, & in his relationship w/ Jesus Christ.

*** Truth #3—I Am the Door, Not to Death, But Abundant Life**

[Verse 10]—“*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.*”

Again Jesus presents the absolute contrast between religious thieves & their motives, & Himself & His own purposes.

He begins w/ the thieves, which in our text, are the Pharisees.

But today they might also include any worldly leaders who promote a humanistic philosophy of heaven here on earth=> the utopian mindset.

* For Hitler, that was to be the “3rd Reich.”

* For Lenin, it was a proletarian revolution that overthrew the bourgeoisie, and led to a communist state.

* For militant muslims, it’s a world-wide muslim caliphate.

These are all humanistic saviors who, just as Jesus said, recklessly “*steal*” personal property, “*kill*”/trample human life, & “*destroy*” everything of value that doesn’t line up with their own thinking/philosophy.

On a religious level, religious thieves promise man his best life now here on earth, but kill/destroy souls in the process.

They contradict Paul words=> “*Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth*” (Col 3:2).

And like the Pharisees of old, they too do it all for selfish motives, stealing from people their souls’ only real hope—salvation thru genuine/saving faith in Jesus.

Now Jesus presents Himself, in contrast to the religious thieves.

He came, not to steal anything from anyone, nor to kill anyone, but, instead, to be killed, as the sacrifice for sin, the lamb of God whose blood would be shed to atone for the sins of others.

That way, everyone who would trust/believe in Him, could have eternal life, rather than eternal death (second death).

He came to provide a life of justification purchased by His blood, & of sanctification/glorification thru the H.S.

He came to save from eternal death the world of lost men—the opposite of stealing/killing/destroying them.

Jesus is the only door through which man can discover/receive soul-saving knowledge of God, eternal life, spiritual nourishment for his soul, & eternal security for himself.

Moreover, Jesus said He came that His sheep might have life even more abundantly.

Various scholars propose various theories about what that means.

* Some point to OT Jewish saints who were saved by their faith before Christ's coming, as they followed the example of Abraham.

Their faith was based on Gen 15:6, which said of

Abraham=> *"He believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness."*

Then when Jesus came, they believed in Jesus Himself, and progressed from eternal life, to abundant eternal life.

I believe Jesus' words can support such a thought.

* Other scholars argue that, by "life more abundant," Jesus meant an overflowing abundance of God's grace, resulting in a super-abundance of peace/joy.

I think Jesus' words prob. include this idea too.

They quote Scriptures like=>

* Jer 33:6=> *"I will reveal to them an abundance of peace and truth."*

* Jn 1:16=> *"For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace."*

In the context of sheep/shepherds, “*abundant life*” suggests fat/secure/contented sheep who are totally flourishing in the care of their faithful/loving shepherd.

It is an unimaginably good life that will culminate in heaven that allows believers to say even now w/ confidence=> “*My cup overflows. / Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever*” (Psa 23:5b-6).

But Charles Spurgeon pointed out that such abundant Christn life is also possible in a sense, right here/now on earth, even though many Christians forfeit that opportunity.

* He observed that there are Christians who don’t have it, because they are like sheep who don’t take advantage of the rich pasture God has provided in His Word.

They are alive spiritually, but they are also famished, close to starving spiritually, and are therefore as weak as invalids.

They don’t feed on the feast of God’s promises, or enjoy the rich harvest of grace that Christ has stored up for us.

They live in constant fear of their death, which is scarcely living, not living abundantly.

* Other Christians are alive in Christ because they have believed in Him, but they continually languish under a burden of

guilt, because they compromise w/ the world, and the Holy Spirit is continually convicting them of their sin.

That kind of Christian life too cannot be considered

“abundant,” but is, in fact, an invitation to divine discipline.

They are like the tax collector in Lk 18:13, beating their breast in guilt, unwilling to look up to heaven.

But the difference is that in their case, instead of truly repenting-of/confessing their sins to Jesus as the tax collector did, asking Him to cleanse their hearts, they just keep beating themselves, hoping He’ll at least give them credit for being miserable over their sin.

They will never experience the joy/freedom/peace of an abundant Christian life, as long as they continue to live lives of compromise, not truly repenting of their sins, or enjoying communion w/ their Savior.

But if they will confess those sins to Jesus, & walk away from their old sinful habits, they can pray w/

David=> *“Restore to me the joy of Your salvation
And sustain me with a willing spirit”* (Psa 51:12).

Another believer who is physically healthy may not have abundant life because his is mean/despised, so that no one loves him, and no one looks to him w/ respect.

Here again is a Christian lifestyle that could hardly be called “abundant.”

He may live w/o hope of ever gaining respect, or the joy of being truly loved—in emotional/relational/spiritual poverty—even destitution.

Such poor men have life, they just don't have much of a life.

You pity such a person, because love/respect from those around us are absolutely necessary if our lives are to be anything more than mere existence.

Jesus has provided His sheep w/ the fellowship of the saints that we might flourish in their love;
And thus in His love.

When the Lord Jesus strengthens the faith of believers, they discover new horizons of hope/joy, & they enjoy abundant life.

They grow in divine grace, in knowledge, experience, and confidence of their Shepherd's goodness/love for them.

They grow too, in conformity to the image of our Lord.

That's what Jesus wants for us—His sheep—because that is the joy of abundant life, experienced here on earth.

If you need life—real/eternal life—you can get it from Jesus, the door to life.

Believe in Him w/ your whole heart & He'll give it to you.

If you need more life, there's no better time to ask Him for that than now, as we come to His table, in communion w/ Him.

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Text: John 10:7-10

1. Even the most beautiful figures of speech are insufficient to adequately describe Jesus’ goodness and [12 moral] loveliness.

In today’s text Christ will state three truths about Himself as a “door,” that starkly contrast Him with false religious leaders...

*** Truth #1—I Am the Door**

[John 10:7]

2. Not only is Jesus a door into the safety of the sheepfold, He is the only door—the only [8 way]—to become saved.

Jn 14:6; Acts 4:12; I Pet 3:18

3. Our Lord was and is the door to the sheepfold and invites anyone and everyone who sincerely seeks cleansing from sin to come to [8 God] through Him.

*** Truth #2—I Am the Door, Not to Harm, But to Blessing**

[Verse 8]

4. Hypocritical scribes and Pharisees were thieves and robbers in that their motives for seeking leadership positions among the Jews were almost invariably [16 selfish].

Mt 23:1-6; Lk 2:25-32; 36-38; 7:22

5. By contrast, the Door into God’s fold and His presence did no one harm to anyone, but only [16 blessed] them.

[Verse 9]

Acts 4:12

6. Jesus Himself is the door which we can only enter by forming a personal relationship with [8 Him].

Col 2:9; Mt 1:23

7. Who may enter through the door of Jesus? [14 Anyone].

Blessings a person receives when he enters God’s fold through Christ...

8. First, he will be “*saved*” from sin, from the condemnation of God’s holy Law, from death, hell, and the [12 wrath] of God.

Rom 6:18

9. Second, he will “*go in and out*” freely, reveling in [20 spiritual] freedom.

I Cor 6:12

10. Third, he will “*find pasture,*” reveling not only in God’s ample provision, but resting as he does so in the company of his beloved [20 Shepherd].

Psa 23:2; Ezek 34:15

*** Truth #3—I Am the Door, Not to Death, But Abundant Life**
[Verse 10]

11. Jesus came not to steal anything from anyone, nor to kill anyone, but instead to be killed as the sacrifice for sin—the [10 lamb] of God.

Gen 15:6

12. By “life more abundant” Jesus meant an overflowing abundance of God’s grace resulting in a super-abundance of [12 peace] and joy.

Jer 33:6; Jn 1:16; Psa 23:5b-6; Lk 18:13

13. Christians will never experience the joy, freedom, and peace of an abundant Christian life as long as they continue to live lives of compromise, [8 not] truly repenting of their sins.

Psa 51:12

14. Conformity to the image of their Lord: That’s what Jesus wants for us (His sheep) because that is the [8 joy] of abundant life.