

I Am...
The Door
John 10:1-10

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Text Introduction: We are in the Gospel of John again today. We began this year considering the 7 miracles of Jesus as told my John. Now, we are considering the 7 “I Am” statements of John. Seven times, John records Jesus proclaiming Himself with the introductory formula “I am.” We have considered the statement “I am the bread of life.” We said that just as bread sustains our lives physically, Jesus proclaimed Himself to be the One that sustains us spiritually and eternally. We have considered the statement, “I am the light of the world.” This statement gives us a radical claim (I am the light of the world) which calls us to a radical discipleship (anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness) which guarantees for us a radical promise (but will have the light of life).

Today, we are to examine the third “I am” statement. Be reminded that in each of these statements, Jesus is asserting that He is the Messiah, so, in a sense, all of these statements say the same thing. But, as we are learning, each “I am” statement helps us to see Jesus more clearly. I am praying that this look into “Who Jesus is” will help us to *know Him and make Him known*.

Text: “I assure you: Anyone who doesn’t enter the sheep pen by the door but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a robber. ²The one who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The doorkeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought all his own outside, he goes ahead of them. The sheep follow him because they recognize his voice. ⁵They will never follow a stranger; instead they will run away from him, because they don’t recognize the voice of strangers.”

⁶Jesus gave them this illustration, but they did not understand what He was telling them.

⁷So Jesus said again, “I assure you: I am the door of the sheep. ⁸All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep didn’t listen to them. ⁹I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰A thief comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.

Introduction: A few weeks ago, Linett and I went to Washington D.C. In Washington, the mass transit system is called the Metro—it is an underground train-like system. The way that you ride is by purchasing a pass. There are some options. If you live there, you would probably purchase a card that is subtracted from each time you ride according to how far you ride. You can also purchase a day pass which allows you to ride unlimited for a 24 hour period. Or, you can pay per trip. The fee is pre-paid according to how far you are planning to go. These cards are purchased at a computer kiosk. It sounds simple, but for two people green about big city life, it can become fairly complicated, as we learned. Our first evening there, we wanted to ride to a specific location. We attempted to purchase passes for the trip. Proudly, we bought two passes with the same amount of money on them. However, only one card printed. We told an attendant what happened to which she said, “I’ve never seen that happen.” We showed our receipt, and she gave us a second card to use. I took the card that the attendant gave us; Linett took the card that we had purchased. After our excursion, we proudly swiped our card to exit the

gate. Mine worked; Linett's did not. Message said she was ten cents too short. Thus began our experience with trying to get out of the gate to freedom.

Gates. Doors. We understand them. They let people in and out. People in Jesus' day understood sheep and all things related to shepherding. They understood that there were two kinds of sheep pens. One that was more permanent and larger. The sheep of many shepherds might occupy the same pen, but the sheep knew their shepherd and the shepherd knew their sheep. There was another kind of sheep pen—one that a shepherd might use for more of a temporary time. In both, it was not uncommon (probably even the norm for the door to be an opening. The shepherd or some other person would be the door. So, Jesus is using this basic knowledge to give an illustration.

An Illustration:

If we are going to understand Jesus' use of the illustration we must understand this. The illustration is not an allegory.

Not an allegory, so don't press the details; seek to understand the main point.

The illustration is used to make two main points:

1. Jesus is like the door in a sheep pen.
2. Jesus is like a good shepherd.

Jesus used the same familiar illustration to make two points. Today, we will look at the first point of this illustration. Next time, we consider the second point.

The Application of Jesus as the Door:

There is only one door.

This speaks to the exclusivity of Christianity.

Later, Jesus is going to say, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." One of our core beliefs as Christians is that Jesus is the only way to salvation—that is a relationship with God, that leads to eternal life.

Some suggest that there are many ways to faith-- Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, or any number of other world religions or philosophies. In fact, if we say that we believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation, we even run the risk that many non-believers will call us narrow-minded and prejudiced. Many people in our culture today would easily identify with this heretical statement from an important figure of our day when he said, "I'm rooted in the Christian tradition, but I believe that there are many paths to the same place, and that is a belief that there is a higher power, a belief that we are connected as a people."

That kind of philosophy is not what the Bible says. Furthermore, that kind of philosophy is not compatible with the sacrifice of Jesus dying on a cross for us. In other words, if there are other ways to salvation, why did Jesus have to die? Why the cross? Why the agony? Why the suffering?

Truth is truth. There is an exclusivity to the Gospel. In addition, there is an exactness to the Gospel. Some may not like the fact that Jesus said He is the door, but at least He has not hidden from us the route to relationship with Him.

There are other options that call for our attention.

Just because Jesus is the one door to a relationship with God certainly doesn't mean that there are not many options calling out to us. The picture in Jesus' illustration is thieves and robbers jumping over the walls of the fence instead of going through the door opening.

And these options can be confusing. There are at least these options: wisdom, my good works, and the world.

These other options are often exciting.

But, do the comparison. Destruction and death compared to life abundant in this life and eternal in the life to come.

My prayer is that we will hear the voice of our Savior and block out all of those voices of the world that call out to get our attention.

The door is open and offered.

You will not be forced to enter.

You might have some questions in this passage about God's sovereignty and humanity's free will. It's a complex question to be sure, but don't ever be guilty of sacrificing the one for the other.

"There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done.' All that are in Hell, choose it."—C.S. Lewis in *The Great Divorce*.

Conclusion: Remember my story about the Metro in Washington. The next morning I was going to ride the Metro to the meeting that I was in Washington to attend. Since it was so early in the day, and because the previous evening had taught me that I wasn't exactly sure how to figure out how much money I needed, I bought a day's pass. Turning from the kiosk with punch card in hand, I swiped the card. The gate stayed down and I got a message "Error." I swiped again. Same message. I showed my receipt to the attendant. She said, "I've never seen that before." I could have said, "You should have been working last night." She scribbled some kind of note on my card and told me to just show the card all day to the attendant and they would let me through the gate. With confidence for the rest of the day, I walked up to the attendant and showed my card. No questions. No keeping track of money. No fear of how far I had left to travel. No error messages. And best of all—entry and exit.

That is the way with Jesus as the door. What must we do? Remember the door is open and offered, but you will not be forced to enter.

First, you must admit that you need a Savior. Some are unwilling to acknowledge that they need Jesus. Some are unaware. Some just don't believe at all that there is even a need. I hope that does not identify any of you.

Then, you must believe that Jesus is the door. Believe that this is exclusive. You must believe that He is the only way. You might ask, "But, what if I believe He is one way among many?" If that is so, you have yet to understand the price He paid on the cross.

As you believe, you must confess Him as Lord and commit to follow Him as Lord. Remember the sheep hear His voice and follow.

If you have never confessed Him in that way does this make sense to you? Would you be willing to confess Him this morning?

Tell Him. Make your prayer personal, but say these things to Him.

Lord, I am like a sheep in need of a Shepherd. My sin has caused a separation between you and me. Jesus, I believe that because you died and rose again you are that Shepherd. So today, I turn away from my sin and myself and turn to You as my Savior and believe you are the door to eternal life.