



“The Door” – John 10:1-21
by **Pastor Tim Dodson**
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John 10:1-21 *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2 "But he who enters by the door*

is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 "And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. 5 "Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." 6 Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them. 7 Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 "All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9 "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. 11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 12 "But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13 "The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. 14 "I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. 15 "As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. 16 "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd. 17 "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. 18 "No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father." 19 Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings. 20 And many of them said, "He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?" 21 Others said, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

Again, as we begin this section of scripture, let us remember that the chapter breaks were added by man...not by divine inspiration. There was no ‘commercial break’ between chapters 8 and 9, nor between 9 and 10. Jesus is continuing with the conversation that had begun at the end of chapter 9 while still in the presence of the man who had been healed of a lifetime of blindness, perhaps even a continuance of the dialogue that was happening back in Chapter 8. But for sure, these Pharisees were being “schooled” by Christ and as usual, His correction wasn’t received well! Apparently, what Jesus was to say was not contingent upon ‘how the message was received.’ I take notice of that fact.

These guys had sat through years of church services and had done a lot of stuff for God, so naturally...in their flesh, they felt they were in good standing with God. No one would argue that these boys had religion ‘down pat.’ They *looked* good! They wore their piety and orthodoxy on their shirt sleeve, and walked amongst the ‘mere mortals’ as if they were cut from a different bolt of cloth. So I am sure it was hard for these men to hear this stuff. It was hard for them to entertain that perhaps they were blindly on the wrong road: that God was *not* pleased with them. After all, they had exerted a great deal of labor and effort on behalf of their status! They were committed to their cause and would rabidly defend their beliefs: just as many folks today who are equally lost and uniformly blind. Jesus told them such and He did so bluntly without reservation at the end of chapter 9.

I would suspect that few if any of these men ever responded to what He was saying. I don’t know that for sure, but I make that conjecture based upon my own personal experience with talking to Pharisees. Seldom is such an

individual ‘waved off’ from that overt and imminent danger. It seems that to entertain the incredulous idea that they are not right with God...*well*, that is just too much to wrap their minds around. Too much time had passed, too much water under the bridge. They were ‘old wineskins’ (Luke 5). They were *gone*: lost in the fantasy of religious elitism and special holy standing. Scriptures records very few of these folks who ever pulled up...Nicodemus and Saul (who became the apostle Paul) are a couple.

These fella’s had made up their minds about God: how He works and what it took to be part of the club. And that worked pretty good until Jesus came along. And now, to make matter worse, there was this guy who was blind and at the hands of Jesus could now see. *This man wasn’t ‘in the club!’ He didn’t have the breeding or social status to be noticed by God! This man was throwing a wrench into everything they believed in!* They had to act or their house of cards would crumble and fall. There is something about a so-changed individual...living and breathing and *seeing* right in front of you that takes the wind out of your sails!

Jesus spoke to these men in simplistic terms. It seemed He went out of His way to be clear and not to speak ‘over the heads’ of those who were listening. The picture that He drew for them was unambiguous. His point was that many folks had come onto the scene over the years who claimed to be sent by God, but the fruit of their lives and ministries said otherwise. Their actions were designed to ultimately gain prominence, position and power over people, and they sought labels and titles that exerted that authority, one that was never simply “servant.” Philippians 2:7 tells us that Jesus “*emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant...*”

The ‘sheepfold’ in the story is that special place of care in the life of the believer. The realm of safety and blessing that a true believer...a true lamb of God, lives out his or her life in Christ. Throughout the ages there have been innumerable attempts to find one’s way into that “sweet spot” in some other way than actually *being* a sheep. It is the created nature of man to desire that realm and that circumstance, but our flesh battles the surrender that is required. So man has busied themselves trying to find another way in...another way to gain that fortune without the personal cost expenditure. They all have been the inventions of men...claiming all the benefits and qualities of the real thing, but are still just cheap imports...knock-offs of the name brand. They can include church attendance, a plethora of good works, or a religious morality. They can go so far as to offer other ‘doors’...exalted religious leaders, bodily exercises or diet, special clothing and vaulted acts. Read this book, or bow this many times, or attend this seminar or that class: all ultimately designed to gain entrance into that special sheepfold of divine favor. And yet still we find that “*narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few that find it.*” (Matthew 7:14)

Jesus said that *His* sheep follow Him because they know His voice. They know His voice, because they are *His sheep*. Those that offer another door as well as those who follow them in an attempt to gain access to the sheep fold are, according to Christ, *thieves and robbers*. Certainly over the years there are been many of these who have come here amongst us with the desire to glean the fortuity and benefits of being in this community but held back their love and commitment...no willingness to actually surrender their life to Christ or to others and thus *be* an actual sheep. They of course never last.

They are soon enamored by some other ‘shiny object’ and drift away, or they attempt to grab all they can and then move on to the next place once they cannot go any further or gain any other position or possession. But the end is always the same...they leave us “*proving they were never part of us.*” (1 Jn 2:19) Not because WE shut the door, but because the gatekeeper does. Men can be fooled, but God the gatekeeper never is. Titus 3:5 says

that “*he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit.*”

Jesus, you see, has a unique attribute and practice that defines Him as the ‘great shepherd’, and that is that He doesn’t push, He *leads*. He sacrificed *first*, He surrendered His life *first*. He humbled Himself, gave of Himself, and loved God firstly in all things. And the sheep...the *real* sheep, follow Him in all matters. We *hear His voice* and we **follow**. The fact is that many folks can sit week after week in church and just don’t get it. They struggle to keep up with the sheep and blend into the fold, but they are always disoriented and half lost because they aren’t following the shepherd, *they are following the other sheep!* They can’t actually follow the Shepherd because they don’t hear His voice because they don’t know it. They don’t recognize His voice over the plethora of other voices in this world calling *and even shouting* directions: a bedlam of worldly noise and chaos.

In that day, there were often several flocks in the same area, at the same time. But the sheep knew the voice of *their* shepherd and naturally moved out of the masses and followed the one shepherd who was theirs. Jesus is saying that, both then and today, His sheep do the same. Do you grasp this picture? For this is one of those defining scenarios for all of us that believe ourselves to be His. *Do you hear His voice? Do you follow Him?*

Jesus goes on in the story to define Himself not only as a prophet and teacher...not just the embodiment of the shepherd-leader, but as divine, as the actual door into that sheepfold. Again, the analogy plays out for us. Because many *are* attempting to follow, but are quite unwilling to go through the door to get there. For it is not merely a matter of *doing* and *following* but the passing through the one and only door. It is not a matter of looking the part and mingling with the other sheep. Adhering to the ‘herd’ instinct will not get you into that sheepfold. Because even if you think you are a sheep, verse 14 says that **HE** knows *His sheep*. And they come through that “narrow door” **one at a time**.

Others will stand in *their* doors and call. But Matthew 23:4-7 says those shepherds “...*crush people with impossible religious demands and never lift a finger to ease the burden. Everything they do is for show. On their arms they wear extra wide prayer boxes with Scripture verses inside, and they wear robes with extra long tassels. And they love to sit at the head table at banquets and in the seats of honor in the synagogues. They love to receive respectful greetings as they walk in the marketplaces, and to be called ‘Rabbi.’*” Our shepherd loves the sheep and gives His life for them. He is not a hireling. He’s in for duration. Verse 9 says that we must enter *through* Him. Not by His words alone, or by religious ‘group-think.’ This seemingly small and often overlooked element in our faith, can cost us eternity. The scriptures are clear: *You must be born again*.

That language may seem normal to us, but to a very large segment of the greater “church” (*and I use that term loosely and broadly*) it can cause brisling and knee jerks. Using that term...*the term that Jesus Himself used*, can garner you a label of ‘cult’ and ‘extreme.’ Language like “*you aren’t one of those **born again** Christians, are you?*” Why? Is there any other kind? Certainly Satan hates that term. He doesn’t mind it too much if you hang out with sheep and do sheep stuff, but to use that one singular door...well, that is where he attempts to ‘draw the line.’

Again herein, we read of both the absolute aspect of entrance by and through Jesus, while still pointing out the area of human responsibility. I have to *enter* through that door. Jesus will not make me, but He will *lead* me to that place. But I have to move from the realm of the lost arena and enter through Him into the sheepfold. We have to enter via Christ alone and then follow Him. THAT is the definition of a Christ sheep. Acts 4:12 says

“There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name (and no other door) under heaven by which we must be saved.”

False shepherds will use whatever is necessary to get you to follow them. They will lie, cheat, steal, spread gossip and rumor, and lull you into apathy. They will chip away slowly over long periods to draw you into places and positions that will over time steal your heart and passions. They will attempt to get you to compromise and pridefully ‘run with scissors.’ They will get you to just listen to them “a little bit” and put you places and in situations that are not only dangerous to you...*even if you don’t readily see it*, but situations that tell others by our actions that such practices are perfectly fine and safe.

And those voices will never stop calling you for your entire lifetime. You will never be safe away from the close protection of the true shepherd. Because the fact is, “they ARE out to get you!” They will never wear a sign that says “false shepherd.” They are often smooth and inviting and offer great ‘fields of green lush grass’ to entice you to just move away from the shepherd a little bit. Many are not overtly nefarious, but misguided and wrongly motivated. Often it is motivated by having lots of people in the pews and a big church building! And with that, we have made full circle back to the Pharisees! They are in it all for self-gratification and because they are therefore just ‘hirelings,’ they will move on when they fail to get what they want.

The ‘good shepherd’ is one because He “lays down His life for His sheep.” It’s not about HIM but about the “Doorkeeper.” It’s about the Father. And that same scenario plays into the description of any “under-shepherd,” and it would greatly behoove me to remember that fact! Such is a daunting call.

Jesus said that He would “lay down His life” for HIS sheep. They would not *take* it, He would *give* it. We can often lose track of that fact in the language of “*they crucified Jesus.*” Oh yes...they did the actual work, but Jesus *died on purpose* so His sheep might live. Jesus could have “slipped away” once again from the garden that night if He had wanted to. He did so many times before when His earthly work and message was not yet complete. In Matthew 26 Jesus spoke at His arrest in the garden saying to Peter “...*do you think that I cannot appeal to the Father, and He will at once send me more than 12 legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?*”

So let’s get this straight: Jesus...the door through which we all must pass in order to ever know salvation, to ever know the peace, safety, and blessing of His sheepfold, ***died for us His sheep.*** Passing through ‘that door’ therefore calls us to embrace the same. Not to hear it, or to believe it in our heads. But to actually *pass through that door*...allowing Him to be the “way” into that place of redemption and care. Romans 6:3-4 says “...*have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.*”

Mark 8:35 “*For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it.*” Colossians 3:3 “*For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*”

This is the door that we all must pass in order to be called one of His sheep and to find life in the His sheepfold.

Verse 9 : “*If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.*”