

# John 10:7-10

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, amen and good morning. Please take your copy of God's Word and join me in John chapter 10. Well served. Before I do, let me pray for God's blessing on our time.

Father God, we thank you this morning for your inspired, infallible, authoritative, sufficient Word. We pray, Father, this day you will help us by your Spirit to trust it, that you will empower the preaching of your Word and the hearing of your Word, our understanding and application of it.

Certainly our very best of attempts are feeble, apart from your intervention. So we ask that you would help us as we take up your Word together this day. And I pray this in Christ's name. Amen. All right, John chapter 10, beginning in verse 1. Jesus says, Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

[ 1 : 46 ] When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.

This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So Jesus again said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

All who came before me are thieves and robbers. But the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who has a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

[ 2 : 54 ] He flees because he has a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me. Just as the Father knows me and I know the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep.

And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason, the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.

No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.

Oh, in the case that you were just joining us in our study of John's Gospel, or that you, like me, easily forget details, I will remind you where we find ourselves in this narrative of Jesus' life.

In chapter 9, Jesus heals a man who was born blind. This causes confusion and commotion. So the man is brought before the Pharisees and put through a series of examinations.

[ 4 : 06 ] At the conclusion of his interrogation, the man says, and this is chapter 9, verse 33 and following, the man says, Jesus said, I believe, I believe, and he worshipped him.

Jesus said, For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind. Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things and said to him, Are we also blind?

Jesus said to them, If you were blind, you would have no guilt. But now that you say we see, your guilt remains. So Jesus, having healed a blind man of his physical disability and then, and more importantly, of his spiritual disability, uses the sight language to expose the prideful Pharisees.

He speaks here with great irony. It is the men who think they see who are truly the blind ones. And it is into this context that Jesus goes on in chapter 10.

He is speaking to the Pharisees, blind men who have thrown out of the synagogue a seeing man, and he switches from sight language to hearing language and a rich shepherding metaphor. [6:01] This all is meant to be an indictment of these men. Our text last week concluded with verse 6.

I'll just read that again. This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. Verse 7 begins, So Jesus again said to them. And this transition demands just a bit of our attention this morning. Some have suggested that verses 1 through 5 are a parable, and that the remainder of the chapter is the explanation of those verses.

Jesus certainly goes on as a response to their confusion, but if we try to read all of chapter 10 back into verses 1 through 5, we will have to force a lot of connections that I don't believe Jesus or John meant to communicate.

So we're going to be careful as we proceed through, and you may see me not do some things you'd like for me to do, because I don't think that's what they intended for us to do. Rather, we should read the chapter as an unfolding metaphor.

[7:18] The very best, in my opinion, Greek scholarship on this chapter suggests that this is the most faithful way for us to proceed. So Jesus presses on.

Jesus again said to them by using a different metaphor related to what he has just said. It's not a total departure to what he's just been speaking about, but now he's communicating something additional.

First, he has the shepherd leading his sheep out from amongst the other sheep in the sheepfold. Now, he is the door to the sheepfold.

Now, whatever you may think of Jesus this morning, whether you understand him to be the Christ or not, when he makes such statements as this, he demands your attention.

He's saying something incredibly stark. Do what you will with these declarations, but don't just tune out.

[8:28] Behold Jesus. Deal with him honestly, and I earnestly hope, accept him on his terms. Now, to help us do that this morning, I have a simple outline.

It's three points. I've tried to make it four. I hate always being a three-point preacher. It seems like I most often am, but it just didn't work. So, three points this morning.

Number one, Jesus, the only door of salvation. Number two, Jesus, the expositor of false saviors.

Number three, Jesus, the way of eternal security and abundant life.

Number one, Jesus, the only door of salvation. We see this in verse seven. pick up a little bit of verse nine. So, Jesus again said to them, truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

And then verse nine, he says, I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved. In verse seven, Jesus makes the third of his seven I am statements that John records.

[9:47] First, he says, I am the bread of life in chapter six. Then, I am the light of the world in chapters eight and nine. And now, I am the door of the sheep or gate of the sheep.

Your translation may prefer. These statements are extraordinarily significant because the I am phrase declares Jesus' deity in relation to God's name as revealed to Moses in Exodus chapter three.

Don't miss it. His hearers totally understood what he was doing. We might read right past it. But that is exactly what he is doing. He is declaring that he is God.

And then, he's adding some quality of his deity to the statement. He tells us, I am the door of the sheep.

The sheep hold up a place where a group of families would bring their flocks in at night for protection. This is most regularly the case. A wealthy man would not have needed to partner together to accomplish this.

[10:58] But most regularly, little flocks were brought together into a safe place, a common courtyard or a fenced-in area, pen, etc. Last week, we thought together about the man who would be hired to watch over them throughout the night, the gatekeeper that the shepherd comes to to gain admittance to the sheep.

The gatekeeper only lets the shepherd in to take his sheep out. The sheep hold would have had one way in and that same way would have served as the way out.

The common construction of these structures. Everybody hearing Jesus speak knows exactly what he means. As Jesus, metaphorically, now presents himself as that way in and that way out. Notice that he does not say, I know where the door is, nor does he say, I can show you the door. He says, I am the door.

In our previous metaphor, I spoke about the sheep being led out to good pasture and brought back into safety at night by the shepherd. This imagery would have been vivid for Jesus' listeners, both because of their daily experience in an agrarian economy and because their familiarity with their Bibles.

[12:24] More importantly, this is what Jesus is doing. Remember, these are religious leaders that Jesus is directly confronting and they would have been familiar with a text like Psalm 23.

So last week, that's what we read in our scripture reading. We did it again this morning. We're going to do it again next week. I intend to do it all the way through chapter 10 unless our elders tell me no. So you'll be made aware if that's what happens, if they tell me no, which they do from time to time. First three verses, Psalm 23, The Lord is my shepherd.

I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

That's what He's laying before them in the opening verses of chapter 10, but they don't understand Him, we saw in verse 6. So now He presents Himself as the only way to good pasture and safe rest with another metaphor drawn from the Old Testament.

[13:36] Jesus is just preaching the Word to these men. Psalm 118, I think you'll appreciate going there with me and I'll give you just a quick second if you'd like to join me in verse 19.

Psalm 118, verse 19 and following, we read, Open to me the gates of righteousness that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord.

This is the gate of the Lord. The righteous shall enter through it. I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

Now, if we stop right there, you might go, how in the world does that connect to anything that Jesus is saying here? So let me show you by continuing to read. I hope this causes connections to fire off in your brain.

Verse 22 says, The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing. It is marvelous in our eyes.

[14:40] This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. I think those verses are likely very familiar to you. Verses 22 through 24, they're applied to Jesus.

Matthew 21, verse 42, 2 Peter 2, and verse 7. So Psalm 118 is presenting this rejected stone by these builders as the gate or door to enter into the presence of God.

these men should have gotten this. Jesus is the gate of Psalm 118. There is no alternative entrance, no side gate, no secret passage.

You can't come tumbling over the wall and be considered part of the flock. One door, one means of access. Jesus says that He is the access.

Every blessing of God comes through Him. Every promise of God comes through Him. 2 Corinthians chapter 1 and verse 20, Paul says, for all the promises of God find their yes in Jesus Christ.

[16:03] We take up the word in any measure and read any of God's promises and discard Jesus as the Christ. None of them are sure. If we believe that Jesus is the Christ, then all of them are sure.

They find their yes in Him. Every hope of eternal life comes through Jesus. Every sinner who enters God's kingdom enters through Him.

No other way. God this is a God God takes a bit of time to think about.

Our culture hates exclusivity, hates absolute truth claims. The world wants us to think that all roads lead to God, that every religion is equally valid.

the world says that sincerity is enough. And so people make for themselves all sorts of paths to God and all sorts of gods.

[17:12] Everyone worships something or someone and the tide of our day mostly rises to the worship of self, a bend toward self-identity and self-authority.

my friends, this is not the door. It's a wide path that leads to destruction. The way is narrow that leads to eternal life, meaning it's defined.

There's a way to God. Jesus says there's one door and it's him. He is the entrance to God.

The modern mind calls that narrow. Jesus called it truth. He just makes the claim. So you have to deal with him and you have to deal with him on his terms.

He's going to say later in John's gospel, chapter 14 and verse 6, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

[18:21] Peter will preach in Acts chapter 4 and verse 12, there is salvation in no one else. Paul will write in 1 Timothy chapter 2 and verse 5, there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

The testimony of scripture is unmistakable. There's one savior, one mediator, one redeemer, one door, and that door is Christ.

And perhaps someone will say, why must there be only one way? The answer is because there's only one savior, only one who fulfilled God's law, only one sinless substitute, only one who bore divine wrath, only one who conquered death, only one who rose from the grave.

the New City Catechism question this week, it's found in your bulletin, meant for the children really, but adults, we would do well to know these questions and answers.

Question and answer 21, why must the redeemer be truly human? And the answer is that in human nature he might on our behalf perfectly obey the whole law and suffer the punishment for human sin.

[19:42] If there were another door, there would need to be another savior, another cross, another resurrection. Our problem with God, our failure to keep his commands and the death that is due our failure is only solved by faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

We need double imputation. We need Jesus' righteousness, his perfect law giving, given to us, that we would fulfill God's commands in him and we need the penalty due our sin taken away by Christ, our sinfulness given to him, he suffered and died for.

This is the only way to be brought back into the presence of God. If this presents to you as an unfair, just consider that what would be truly fair would be the destruction of all mankind, immediate and final.

There is only one way, but there is a way, praise be to God. This should motivate faith in Jesus and it should motivate evangelism to the very ends of the earth.

Our God is not unfair, our God is merciful. He has given a message in the personal work of Jesus Christ that we might believe it and we might share it with others that they might believe it as well.

[21:20] One door standing open come and enter all who may. Jesus is the only door of salvation. Secondly, Jesus is the expositor of false saviors.

We see this in verse 8 and I'll take up a little bit of verse 10. Verse 8 says all who came before me are thieves and robbers but the sheep did not listen to them.

Why did they not listen to them? Because the sheep belong to the shepherd. They know his voice and they follow him. And then verse 10 says the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

The language in these verses certainly carries forward from Jesus' previous metaphor. To whom is Jesus referring to? We should immediately exclude some who came before him.

He says all who came before me but some who came before him. Like Moses or Isaiah or Jeremiah or John the Baptist comes to my mind. Elsewhere are commended by them for their faithfulness.

[22:32] So not them. So who? Who is it that he's talking about? Those all who came before him? Last week I suggested that he is drawing on imagery employed in Ezekiel chapter 34 to speak of leaders who should have been caring for the sheep but instead cared for their own gain.

Like spiritual leaders who were exploiting God's people and not serving them. So those men to be sure. Perhaps he is suggesting those who had made messianic claims before him.

If you know your history, others had come and said they were the Christ and led insurrections and were put down by the Romans who showed themselves not to be the Christ.

So perhaps them, they, of course, were seeking their own advantage. But all of this language is aimed at the Pharisees he is presently addressing.

Those he is speaking to here most certainly are included in this number. In Matthew chapter 23, the list of woes to the Pharisees, there are seven of them.

[ 23 : 43 ] And the first one says this beginning in verse 13, but woe to you scribes and Pharisees hypocrites for you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces for you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in.

Woe to you scribes and Pharisees hypocrites for you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte and when he becomes a proselyte you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves false shepherding not leading people to God leading them rather astray so Jesus is making a stark contrast here between himself and the false shepherd false shepherds take Christ gives false shepherds consume Christ saves false shepherds destroy Christ restores what an indictment Jesus is making against these Pharisees now the danger for us is no longer first century Judaism but false shepherds do still exist any religious leader who diminishes Christ is a thief and a robber any system that adds human merit to grace is a thief and a robber any church that substitutes moralism for the gospel is leading people astray the prosperity preacher promising earthly riches as the essence of God's blessing is a thief and a robber in most cases quite literally the liberal theologian denying Christ's deity is a thief and a robber the secular voice insisting that fulfillment is found apart from God is also a thief and a robber they come to steal and kill and destroy they do this under the command of their father the father of lies the devil who prowls around looking for someone to devour every false savior makes promises it cannot keep our age seems obsessed with looking for doors that do not exist people seek salvation through politics through wealth through education or personal success through family pleasure self discovery yet every substitute ultimately collapses you hold up Christ to any of these things and he exposes them as false our hearts were made for the worship of God you will worship you were designed to be a worshiper you can worship self you can worship others you can worship stuff we were made to worship

God and only Jesus grants us access to that worship Augustine famously said quote our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee you're missing satisfaction for your heart it's found in God through Christ so Jesus is the only door of salvation Jesus is the expositor of false saviors and thirdly Jesus is the way of eternal security and abundant life this of course plays off of the fact that he's the only door of salvation we see in verse nine and then the last part of verse ten he says I am the door if anyone enters by me he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture verse ten the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy and then in juxtaposition he says I came that they may have life and have it abundantly if we place our faith in Jesus the door if we enter by him note note what it says we the text says he will be saved we come through

Jesus there's a promise here we will be saved Paul states it similarly in Romans chapter ten verse nine if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved and having been saved you will go in and out and find pasture there are phrases in this chapter that just deserve a lifetime of meditation you will go in and out and find pasture to borrow from the previous metaphor the security of the sheep rests not in the sheep fold but in the shepherd this is what makes them safe the phrase go in and out communicates safety and it communicates freedom in the ancient world security was precious

[ 29 : 20 ] I know the men in our church we think about securing our homes we put in measures for that we have lights and doorbell cameras and munitions nearby nothing like they had to think about though wild animals are not breaking into our homes we don't have bands of marauders coming on their camels to raid our camp security was precious this idea of safety in the sheep fold because the shepherd is caring for them was a big big deal it would do well to stop and meditate and think about what it means to truly be safe and not just temporally I mean spiritually to move freely without fear was a great sign of peace good pasture and secure rest is what is offered by faith in Jesus the door of the sheep the sheep will go in and out and they will find pasture sustenance for their souls

Jesus promises that as people are safe under his care not safe from hardship loss suffering persecution but safe from ultimate final destruction safe from condemnation secure he calls the sheep out the sheep know his voice they go through the door they belong to him eternally secure but not only are we safe we are also given abundant life the language here suggests life that is overflowing it's beyond measure with goodness but I've just said that we are not safe from hardship or loss or suffering or persecution so by what standard by what standard is our life abundant to answer that question

I think we will be helped by first hearing Jesus' definition of eternal life John records this in chapter 17 verse 3 this is eternal life significant all of our minds go to time we go to span when we think

about eternal life but this is what Jesus says this is eternal life that they know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent life now and forever more knowing and being known by the God that is eternal life life now and forever knowing and being known by God so abundant life is the daily experience of the promises and power and presence of God himself being his sheep he's being led in and out to the safety of the sheep fold and to good pasture it's abiding with him this is the offer of the good news of Jesus

Christ the only door of salvation who exposes false saviors that by trusting in him we would be eternally secure and have him as our eternal reward in closing I want to read to you a brief quote from D.A.

Carson's commentary on this text he said quote within the metaphorical world life abundantly suggests fat contented flourishing sheep not terrorized brigands which is a word means part of the game not terrorized brigands outside the narrative world it means that the life Jesus' true disciples enjoy is not to be construed as more time to fill catching that not not merely talking about everlasting life not to be construed as more time to fill but life at its scarcely imagined best I like that phrase but life at its scarcely imagined best experience and the promises and power and presence of God himself life to be lived end quote let's pray together