

THE GATE FOR THE SHEEP**John 10:1-10****(Read John 10:1-10)**

INTRO: Do you ever think about doors? Probably not. You're probably like me and just walk through them, never giving them a thought. Sometimes you need to give them a lot more thought than you do, like when you're a man and the door you are walking through is clearly marked "Women".

And have you ever watched the game show that offers Door #1, Door #2, or Door #3? Yep – it's Let's Make A Deal. It premiered on TV in 1963 with Monty Hall as the host and apparently is still on quite a number of hosts later. I never watched it much and I certainly don't watch it now, but, from what I remember, the idea is to guess that what is behind the door you choose is better than what is behind the other two. From what I remember back a hundred years ago when I watched it, you might choose Door #2, and before you find out what is behind it, what is behind the *other* two doors is revealed. For instance behind Door #1 is a brand new 1965 Mustang. And you groan because the Mustang was what everyone was talking about and everyone wanted. And then Door #3 opens and it's an all-expenses paid trip to Disneyland in sunny California, and you wince because you've seen something about it on the *Wonderful World of Disney* on Sunday night and it would be great to go there. And then, you hold your breath as Door #2 opens and it's a . . . HAMILTON BEACH TOASTER OVEN! And the audience goes wild and you don't. It would be great to know what that door had behind it ahead of time, wouldn't it?

And then there are those doors that come out of the second floor of a house and go nowhere. What's with that? Sometimes you can tell that they were, at one time, a fire escape, or simply a second floor entrance. Other times, you don't know, but figure there's got to be a good reason. One thing is certain, they had better make sure no one tries to use that door or they'll get a big and unpleasant surprise.

By what I read from John 10 as I began this talk, you know probably know why I'm making a big deal about doors. In the I AM statement we're looking at today as I continue this study – Jesus refers to himself twice as a gate. Well, actually, he calls himself a gate as he gives us a word picture of sheep in a middle-eastern sheep pen that has only one point of entrance. He is saying that he is that point of entrance, more accurately, he is the very gate itself.

As I pointed out earlier this passage is part of a large teaching Jesus is doing using the imagery of what would have been very familiar to most of his hearers. They would have been able to picture what he was talking about when he referred to sheep and sheep corrals and shepherds in an effort of make his point. Today we will accentuate one part of that teaching – THE GATE FOR THE SHEEP, and next week we'll look at the other part, which is the Good Shepherd.

What is so important about this Gate is . . .

There is only one of them

- There's only one way in. Jesus – the door or gate is the way by which the sheep enter the fold. A very common and very wrong misconception is that all roads lead to heaven or that all religions are equally valid and true. The other day a friend of mine who is a church goer posted this on Facebook. Let me read it to you in case you can't see. **(Read it)** Don't get sucked in with this stuff. Jesus taught about love – that's true. Buddha did not. He taught about emptying yourself to the point of nothingness. Mohammad's was not a prophet of love. Let me also say he was not a prophet of hate either. But love was not his message or the message of Islam. In a tiny nutshell Islam is about their interpretation of moral character and the oneness of God. Only Christianity is about an intimate relationship with the only true and living God with Jesus as the only way to that relationship.
- Jesus is the only way to life and to freedom. Jesus told Nicodemus *"Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."* John 3:3. And one can only be born again through Jesus – in fact he put it this way, *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* John 14:6. We're not being obnoxious or closed minded – it's right here – not in black and white, but in red letters – straight from Jesus – there is only one way. And he is the door to that only way.
- Satan tries to convince us otherwise and that is one of the issues Jesus is dealing with here. That's why he begins with *Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.* John 10:1. The previous passage is a rather long account of

how Jesus healed a blind man and he was taken to task for it. He then confronts them for their sin. And it makes for a good segue into a warning that false leaders will try to get us to take the wrong door. And he lays it right on the line that the Pharisees and not bad shepherds but instead thieves and they have come to . . . *steal and kill and destroy* John 10:10a. Be warned. If they come in over the walls or in some other sneaky way they are up to no good.

- Jesus is the gate for the sheep – plain and simply you must enter by the correct door. In fact, there’s only one door. That was how the sheep folds or corrals of Jesus’s day were. They only had one way in. Jesus is saying, “I’m the door and you need to take the door.
- Let me say it again then, Church, It is only through Jesus that people find God. In God is freedom. In God is safety. In God is peace. In God is Hope. In God is life. That’s what he means when Jesus says, *I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.* John 10:10b. All those things, freedom, safety, peace, hope, and what constitute abundant life. In other words, Jesus is the gateway to life and anything else is falsehood, empty and leads to death.
- Forget about Door #1, Door #2, or Door #3, take the Jesus gate. As you do, you’ll realize it’s an . . .

In and out proposition

- The second time he refers to himself as the gate in our text is in verse 9, *I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture.* This brings a point I think should be made here that we are not only to go in through the gate, but we are called out to a mission as well.
- First, referring back to how the curtain that separated us from the Holy of Holies in the temple was torn when Jesus died on the Cross, the writer of Hebrews tells us, *Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,* Hebrews 10:19-20. The gate for the sheep Jesus refers to in John 10:7 is actually a new and living way to God. Jesus died on the Cross and made a way where there was no way. He opened the door. In fact Paul tells us *For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.* Ephesians 2:18. The gate for the sheep gives us access to God.
- In Christ, especially as we gather as the sheep in his corral, we have fellowship, nurture, and worship. But we don’t stay grazing blissfully way, we need to go out for service and sharing. We get to be gates in our own right with Jesus as our example and with his Commission in mind.
- It’s in and out. In for new life and out with the message of that new life. There are lost sheep out there. Let’s introduce them to the Good Shepherd. But that message is next week. Let’s wrap it up here.

Conclusion: Remember, no matter how much it gets crammed down our throats from every which direction, there is only one way to God. That way is through Jesus Christ himself. And knowing that, let’s share that message with the lost. He’s the gate of the sheep Amen.