

The Door
John 10:1-10
Rev. Brian Bill
February 20-21, 2016

A mixed metaphor combines images that don't always make sense. Here are some of my favorites:

- Running around like a chicken chasing its tail.
- Stick your neck out on a limb.
- We'll burn that bridge when we come to it.
- That's about as funny as a screen door on a submarine

While these metaphorical mix-ups won't make an English teacher happy, they can be very effective because they stick in our minds. We shouldn't feel too badly if we struggle to comprehend our passage today because John 10:6 says, ***“This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.”*** Part of the challenge is that the word **“door”** is used four times with several different meanings in John 10:1-10. Follow along as I read:

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. ² But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶ This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷ So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to 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 comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

Doors are some of the most common things in the world, present in some form in all societies and cultures. Here are a few from Dublin taken by Patty Steele and a couple from the Dominican Republic taken by our daughter Emily. Don't

you love how Jesus takes what is common in order to teach us profound truth about His worth and His work?

We've already seen that He takes ordinary bread and declares Himself to be the extraordinary Bread of Life. Last week we learned that the qualities of light reflect the kind of Savior He is when He said in John 8:12, ***"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."***

BTW, there was a cool shoutout on Facebook this week from a guest who came to one of our services last weekend: *"...I journeyed to the distant land of Rock Island, braving snow and impatient drivers to attend Edgewood Baptist Church...the coolest thing was coming out of the service and seeing the members of the congregation cleaning off other people's cars."*

Let's make a few observations.

1. This "I AM" phrase is both personal and powerful. Like He does with the other Messiah Metaphors, Jesus states strongly: *"I, even I, and only I, am the door."* His listeners would have immediately thought of Exodus 3:14: ***"I AM WHO I AM."*** This is a staggering statement of His sovereign supremacy.

When Jesus declares Himself to be the door, passages like Psalm 78:23 come to mind: ***"Yet he commanded the skies above and opened the doors of heaven."*** They would have also thought of Genesis 28:17, when Jacob had a dream of a stairway to heaven: ***"How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."***

2. Jesus is contrasting himself with the phony Pharisees. In particular, He is referencing the events of chapter 9 in which He gave sight to a man who was born blind. Because of an unfortunate chapter break, it's easy to think that chapter 10 is a different conversation. The Pharisees ostracized this new believer and according to 9:34, ***"they cast him out."*** Because of this, Jesus subsequently accuses them of being thieves and robbers in 10:1.

3. The setting is a normal day for sheep and a shepherd. In verses 1-5, it's morning and the shepherd is forming his flock. In verses 7-10, the time moves to midday and the shepherd is feeding his flock. Shepherding was not only an important role in that society; the metaphor itself was employed time and again in the Scriptures to show God's loving heart toward His lambs. Psalm 100:3:

“Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.”

Let’s think for a moment about what a door does. Go ahead and shout out what a door is designed to do.

- To provide an *entrance*.
- To provide an *exit* (BTW, we have two doors on either side of the platform that are fire exits. We also have fire exit doors in each of our children’s classrooms so if there is ever an emergency parents do not need to go down and get their kids. Our teachers have been trained to take your children outside to safety).
- To provide a noise and weather *barrier*
- To provide *safety and security* (BTW, we’re installing a door in the hallway downstairs as extra protection for our children’s area).

We also use “door” as a figure of speech when we talk about God opening a door for us. I’m praying that the upcoming Iron Sharpens Iron Conference on April 16 will open a door for EBC men to gather in groups so we can grow. We’re also praying for God to open a door as we seek His man as our Youth and Young Adults Pastor. The deacons and pastoral team met with our Search Consultant Thursday night. There have been over 5,400 online views of our position summary, 78 men have applied and we’ve narrowed it down to six candidates. We’re now studying their resumes and listening to their messages and will be pursuing the top ones. Please continue praying for this process.

With all that as background, let’s unpack verses 9-10: ***“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.”***

Jesus the Door meets three of our most important needs:

- Salvation
- Safety
- Satisfaction

1 - Door of Salvation (9a)

Look at the front half of verse 9: ***“I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved...”*** The first thing we discover is that the door is a person (“***I am***”) and the way in is personal (“***if anyone***”). Jesus declares that He is the door and that the only entrance is “***by me.***”

An Arab shepherd showed off his sheep enclosure to a tourist and said confidently, “*When the sheep go in there they are perfectly safe.*” To which the tourist asked, “*Why doesn’t your pen have a door on it?*” The shepherd responded, “*I am the door. After my sheep are in the pen, I lay my body across the opening. No sheep will step over me and no wolf can get in without getting past me first.*”

Perhaps that’s why Jesus can mix metaphors so easily. He’s the shepherd who goes through the door and He’s the door Himself. The shepherd lays down His life for the sheep because His body is the very door that provides the entrance for salvation.

Let’s break this down a bit further.

1. A single entrance. A sheepfold only had one entry point. Just as Noah was instructed to make only one door into the ark, so too, there is just one way to be saved from certain destruction. While this is not very popular in our politically correct culture, all roads do *not* lead to heaven. We don’t all worship the same God. Sincerity doesn’t get you there. Good works aren’t good enough. Jesus is the only way. Acts 4:12: ***“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”***

2. Anyone can enter. Salvation is available for all: ***“if anyone enters by me.”*** It’s not limited to one group of people but is intended for the whole world. It doesn’t matter what you’ve done or how you’ve been living. I like the title of Moody Radio’s “Share Hope” new campaign. As one of our “Go Team” partners, they are providing hope to the hopeless and hurting. Jesus is the door of deliverance and yet people continue to look for other ways to get there. The only way in is by relationship, not ritual or religious activity because Christianity is Christ Himself. Romans 10:13: ***“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”***

3. Discipleship is demanding. While the way is open, it’s certainly not easy to follow Jesus as stated in Mark 8:34: ***“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”***

4. A response is necessary. While the door is open 24/7, an individual must *“enter”* in order to be saved. One must believe *and* receive. 2 Corinthians 6:2: *“I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.”*

Before leaving this point, notice that Jesus doesn’t say you might be saved or maybe you’ll get in, but rather: *“If anyone enters by me, he will be saved...”*

Q: Have you entered the door of salvation?

2 - Door of Safety (9b)

The first thing we’re given is salvation. Secondly, the sheep know they are safe because the shepherd is protecting them.

According to the last part of verse 9, the sheep *“will go in and out...”* The sheep were safe inside the fold and they were secure out in the pasture because the shepherd was with them. This was a Hebrew phrase for going about one’s business. It’s the idea of every day living. Deuteronomy 28:6: *“You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out.”* Psalm 121:8: *“The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.”*

We see a similar idea in Psalm 23:4-5 *“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies...”*

I like that we get to *“go in and out.”* Almost sounds like the hamburger place called “In ‘N Out,” doesn’t it? We come in to gather, grow and give *in order* to go out! We gather here and we go out there to bring others in here. We can come in and go out with freedom because Jesus wants us to live life with liberty, not shackled down with rules and regulations. Whether we’re in the pen or out in the pastures, we pass through Jesus and receive His grace.

With all that is happening in our world right now, isn’t it good to know that our faith gives us freedom to trust that the Redeemer is our refuge? We can go about our daily routines and be confident about our salvation and about our ultimate safety, even if the Lord were to call us home sooner than we expect.

3 - Door of Satisfaction (9c-10)

There's one more guarantee found in the last phrase of verse 9 and verse 10. It's the promise that we will experience satisfaction: ***"...and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."***

1. Jesus meets the needs of those in his flock. Notice that the sheep go in and go out and ***"find pasture."*** As we learned two weeks ago, the hunger of the human soul can only be satisfied by the Bread of Life. Are you feeding upon Him daily? Did you know that sheep won't settle down until their needs are met?

Listen to the opening words of 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."***

Since the Lord is my shepherd I will not lack anything that is really necessary and good for me. Friend, if Jesus is your shepherd, everything else is secondary. One of the best definitions of contentment I've ever heard is this: *Contentment is not having everything you want. Contentment is wanting everything you have.* If the Lord is your shepherd, you have everything you need.

2. Satan uses sinister ways to wipe people out. We see this in the first part of verse 10: ***"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy..."*** The devil's design is to steal, to kill and to destroy and he never gives up. Notice the progression. First he steals and then he slaughters and finally he annihilates. If you don't know Christ today, you need to know that Satan is coming after you. He wants to keep you from the entrance to salvation. And if you're a believer, his desire is to prevent you from living life to its fullest. He wants to keep you from being saved, to make you feel insecure and to steal your satisfaction.

1 Peter 5:8-9 reminds us that Satan is stalking us: ***"Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."*** James 4:7 gives us our strategy to overcome the devil: ***"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."***

Almost 20 years ago a group calling themselves Heaven's Gate, tried to reach what they believed was an alien spacecraft. 39 members committed mass

suicide so their souls could be taken by this UFO to “*another level of existence above human.*” That was a lie from the pit of Hell!

Satan is behind the taking of all life because he is a thief who steals, kills and destroys. The adversary celebrates suicides, applauds abortions and moves humans to murder each other. I saw this headline in Friday’s Dispatch about a recent crime: “*There’s like a shooting here every other week.*” There are at least three things the thief does in our lives today.

- **He steals our first love.** We used to be on fire for God. Our appetite for His Word was voracious, our witness was strong, and our prayers were intense but now we’re just going through the motions.
- **He kills our joy.** He loves to get us to blame God and others for the bad things that have happened to us. The devil wants us to see life as drudgery.
- **He destroys our purpose.** Some of you have been knocked off track and you’ve stopped serving the Savior.

A couple weeks ago a friend gave me a copy of Jim Cymbala’s book called, *Breakthrough Prayer*. I read a portion at our Deacon Meeting Tuesday night: “*...passionate, desperate prayer is definitely out of vogue today. Maybe that’s the reason why we experience so little divine blessing on both the church as a whole and her individual members. So often we seem content with the status quo rather than reaching out for more of God. Because of this, we seem to have little effect on the world around us.*” We then cried out to God in prayer, asking Him to send revival to us, to our church and to our community. BTW, there’s a group that meets for prayer every Tuesday night in the library and they’d love to have you join them.

3. Jesus longs for us to live an abundant life. Jesus came to give us more than just freedom and even more than just food. He wants us to experience fullness. Unfortunately, many of us are just limping through life as we stumble along in survival mode.

That reminds me of the story of a hamster and its owner. Each morning Sam would jump on the wheel, stopping only to grab a bite to eat. He was driven by some ingrained belief that his effort was getting him somewhere. Trudge, trudge, trudge. Run, run, run. Nibble, nibble, nibble. He eats a few occasional treats to break the monotony. That’s Sam’s life... and life for Sam’s hamster is almost as monotonous!

For some of us life is a drag because we've never lived it. If the truth were known, some of us are just putting in our time.

Jesus not only came to save, and to give you safety, He also came to satisfy: ***"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."*** The word ***"abundantly"*** means, *"beyond what is necessary," "exceeding," "superabundant" or "excessively superior."* Believer, are you living that kind of life right now? Psalm 23:5: ***"You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows."***

On Tuesday the pastoral team went to Wendy's for lunch. Pastor Tim ordered a bowl of chili and was asked if he wanted some crackers. He said, "sure." They gave him like 12 packages. It was pretty funny seeing the overabundance he was given. It was way more than he needed and way more than he could use. In a similar way, God gives us an overabundance of everything we need so we can live a life that is not just blah or ordinary.

This principle of abundance is clearly outlined throughout Scripture: Psalm 36:8: ***"They feast on the abundance of your house and you give them drink from the river of your delights."*** Ephesians 3:20: ***"Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think..."*** Romans 5:20: ***"Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more."***

Eternal life is forever but it doesn't start once you die. It begins as soon as you are saved! He has chosen you and He has a mission for your life. Are you tuned in to Him or have you allowed Satan to steal some things from you?

Genesis 14:16 tells us that Abraham ***"recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions..."*** It's time to recover your stolen property and get your love, joy and purpose back!

Jesus wants us SAVED, SAFE and SATISFIED. Are you?

Action Steps

There are only two groups of people here today. Those who are saved and those who are not...yet. You've either entered the door of salvation or you're still standing outside that door. Because of that, I want to gear the application of this message to both groups. I looked up a bunch of passages that have the word

“door” in them and narrowed it down to six – three geared to those who are not yet saved and three for those who by God’s grace have been saved but don’t feel safe or satisfied.

Action Steps for the Unsaved

- 1. Admit that sin is crouching at your door.** Genesis 4:7: *“And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.”*
- 2. Enter the narrow door of salvation right now.** Matthew 7:13-14: *“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”*
- 3. Be saved before the door shuts.** Matthew 25:10-13: *“And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”*

Action Steps for the Saved

- 1. Open the door to Christ and restore your relationship with Him.** We often quote Revelation 3:20 in our evangelism efforts but it’s actually directed to Christians and to churches who’ve shut the Savior out: *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”*
- 2. Stop grumbling because the Judge is at the door.** James 5:9: *“Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door.”*
- 3. Live on mission and go through open doors.** God will open doors and we must go through them, knowing it will be difficult, but ultimately satisfying. 1 Corinthians 16:9: *“For a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”*

I want to challenge you to do something right now that could set your life in a whole new direction. I'm going to ask you to get off your seat and walk through this door we have set up if you're ready to make one of these decisions. Pastor Chad is going to play some music and you get up right now and walk through this door. I'll go first.

We're going to end today by singing a song that is new to us. It was first written by Frank Houghton, a missionary with China Inland Mission (now OMF) and is called, "Facing a Task Unfinished." He wrote it in the 1920s as a call for 200 missionaries to go to China. By 1931, over 200 missionaries had responded which led to the greatest growth of Christianity in the history of the world – the number of Christians went from less than a million to around 100 million today!

Keith and Kristyn Getty, modern day hymn writers, repurposed this song to make it easier to sing without changing the words. They also added a new chorus to it. Keith Getty refers to this song as the "greatest hymn on missions ever written." Here's his prayer, and mine: *"Its my prayer that Christians around the world will get more excited about both music and mission, but also about living the mission of God on our own doorsteps and in our own kitchens, as well as around the world."*

They are hoping for over 10,000 churches across the globe to sing this song this weekend, from Argentina to Uzbekistan and from America to Australia. Here's a map of what that looks like.

You should be able to pick it up easily because the tune is, "The Church's One Foundation"

*Facing a task unfinished
That drives us to our knees
A need that, undiminished
Rebukes our slothful ease*

*With none to heed their crying
For life, and love, and light
Unnumbered souls are dying
And pass into the night*

*From cowardice defend us
From lethargy awake!*

*Forth on thine errands send us
To labour for thy sake*

While the metaphors may be mixed up in our passage, the message is clear. It's time to go through the door. As we close today, if you haven't walked through the door, feel free to walk through it after the service to indicate that you've made a decision.