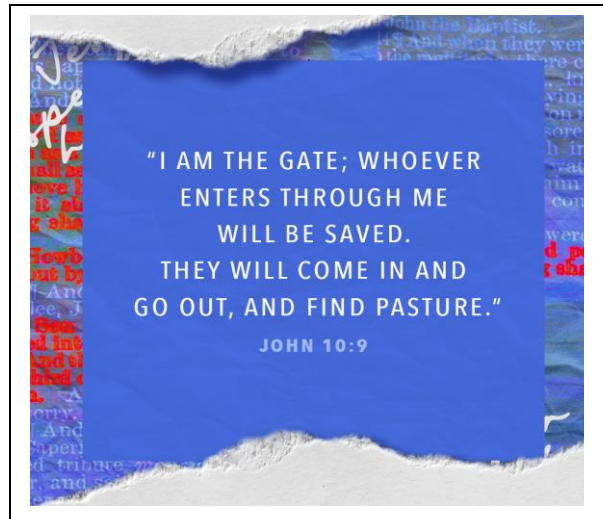


SUNDAY 20th AUGUST 2023

I AM THE GATE

Scripture: John 10: 1-16

The metaphor of Jesus as the gate or door is deeply symbolic. Doors serve as entry points, gateways that lead us from one place to another. In this context, Jesus is the door that leads us from a life of sin and separation from God to a life of grace, forgiveness, and eternal communion with our Heavenly Father. This is the promise that comes with accepting His invitation.



1. The Gate of SALVATION – whoever enters through me will be saved

The sheep pen was a place of safety. It had only one door; there was one way for the sheep to get in and one way for the sheep to get out. It was through this exclusive opening, this exclusive door and Jesus says that He is **THE gate**. He did not say He was a gate, one of many ways of salvation. He claims to be the only door by which the sheep may make their way into the fold. If the sheep don't enter through that door, they stay outside for the evening! Jesus is the One Door by which we must enter—or remain outside the Kingdom of God. Religion cannot save us. It does not work. Jesus is the only Way!

Saying that Jesus is the only way of salvation is highly unpopular today. It is downright intolerant. It is the worst thing that one can be in our politically correct culture of the day. No one wants to be a hypocrite.

However, sincerity alone is not much of a virtue, for one can be sincere in their belief and be sincerely wrong! The people who bought tickets on the Titanic were no doubt sincerely convinced that the ship was unsinkable. Sincerity alone did not save them from death. Sincerity must be grounded in truth. It is not what we do but what Jesus has done for us.

2. The Gate of SECURITY – he will come in and go out

For abundant life there must not only be the assurance of salvation but also the trust in ongoing safety. I may be safe right now, but what if something happens tomorrow? True life requires a measure of security. There are many today who live in constant fear. What about nuclear war and the thinning of the ozone layer? What about climate change? What if I get a new disease or cancer? The key here is safety. True living means that we must have a measure of safety in which to live. In Christ we have perfect safety and no reason to fear. Jesus is our gate. He is our protector.

In the days of Jesus sheep would be often kept at night in pens that were made of stone or thorny bushes. The enclosure would have a narrow opening. Once the sheep were inside the shepherd would lie

across the opening. This meant that anything that tried to enter the pen or anything that tried to leave the pen had to go past him.

David knew about God as his protector.

Psalm 46: God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea

Full life also requires freedom. We come in and go. To go in but not out means prison. To go out but not in means banishment. Both are necessary for true living. Without Christ we are chained to our sinful nature and death and have no hope of parole. Through Christ we have been set free. The chains that bound us have been broken.

3. The Gate of SUFFICIENCY – and find pasture

David paints a beautiful picture in Psalm 23. He says that God makes us lie down in green pastures and that He restores our soul. Philip Keller wrote a book titled A Shepherd Looks at Psalm Twenty-Three. He says for sheep to lie down 4 things are required and the same goes for us.

First, we must be full. Jesus is the Bread of Life. He feeds the deepest hunger in our souls. **He is Jehovah Jireh, the God who meets our needs.**

Secondly, we must be unafraid. We won't settle if we are fearful. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life. We know that in Him we do not need to be afraid. **He is Jehovah Nissi, the Lord our banner.**

Thirdly, we must be content. We must be comfortable to lie down and rest. Jesus is the Way the Truth and the Life. Even in our doubts we can trust Him. **He is Jehovah Rapha, the Lord our healer.**

Finally, if there is no harmony between us, there will be friction. Like sheep we could be butting each other in petty disagreements. Jesus is the Vine. If we remain in Him, we will bear much fruit. **He is Jehovah Shalom, the Lord our peace.**

It's all about Jesus. There is only one way to salvation. There is only one way to find fulfilment and contentment and peace. Yes, that is a very exclusive statement, but it is also the truth.

So many people today have bought the lie that there are many paths to God, that all religions are basically the same. That we all worship the same God just in different ways. Again, salvation is not found in what we have done for God, but in what God has done for us.

This truth stands in sharp contrast to a world and culture that wants to believe there are infinite roads to eternal salvation. We like to think that we just need to be good enough, we just need to give enough and show up to enough volunteer events. But that's not it.

Until God reveals Himself to us, we all grope around in the darkness vainly searching for some semblance of truth. Jesus came to reveal to us once and for all what God was like and provide a way back to Him. Without Jesus there is only darkness.

In week one we hear Jesus say, “*I AM the bread of life,*” and last week He said, “*I AM the light of the world.*” These are not just statements about Christ’s nature but also how His life impacts us as we follow Him.

In John 10:9 Jesus proclaims, “Yes, I am the gate; those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures.”

The invitation of Jesus is an open invitation, not restricted by race, social status, or past sins. It is a call to all who are willing to listen, to believe, and to step through the door that leads to salvation. An invitation to a new way of life, a life that is marked by faith, love, and service.

Jesus says, “*If anyone enters by me, he will be saved.*” This statement implies that salvation is not possible without faith in Jesus Christ. In the words of Christian theologian, Augustine of Hippo, “Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe.”

Faith is believing in the unseen, in the promises of God, even when our circumstances suggest otherwise. Jesus IS the Way, the truth, and the Life, He is the pathway through which eternal salvation is possible. This is an open invitation to everyone, and a testament to God's infinite grace and mercy that He would offer such a gift freely to all who believe in His Son.

Have you made the conscious decision to enter through the door that is Jesus? This means accepting Him as our Lord and Saviour, repenting of our sins, and living a life that reflects His teachings. This means staying fixed on Jesus, through every distraction and season of life. Keeping you mind and heart focused on Him.

He is the door to salvation. He's not just one of many doors, He's THE door... The only way to eternal life and He's invited us to step through, by faith, and into green pastures.

In His own words Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." - Matthew 11:28-30