

## I AM: I Am The Door<sup>i</sup> John 10:1-10

### INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, Trinity! It is so good to see you today. My name is Chris Wigley, I'm one of the pastors here at Trinity. If you are a first-time guest, we are just thrilled to have you with us today. We'd love the opportunity to get to know you a little bit. You can provide information to us by texting the keyword, TBCMP, which stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mount Pleasant, to the number 94-000. When you send that keyword, a link will be sent back to you and that will take you to a form that is less than a minute to fill out. When you click "submit," it notifies me, and I always look forward to following up with our guests each week.

If text messaging isn't your thing, please swing by our information center located in the fellowship area, right out these doors in the lobby. We have a gift there for you just as a way of saying thank you for being our guest today. Again, we are thrilled you have chosen to worship with us today.

### SERIES OVERVIEW:

We are in the middle of a teaching series where we are studying the "I AM" statements of Jesus in the Gospel of John. Each of these statements are significant teaching points that reveal who Jesus is and what He came to accomplish. We've examined that Jesus is the bread of life; that He is the source of true and fulfilling life. Last week we learned that Jesus is the light of the world and that His followers no longer pursue darkness and that we are to be the light to the world. Today we turn to the third "I Am" statement. Jesus says, "I am the door." So, I want to invite you to grab your bibles and turn with me to the gospel of John, chapter 10. We are going to look at verses 1 through 10 this morning.

### **OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Doors<sup>ii</sup>**

Have you ever considered the types and numbers of doors that we walk through on a daily basis? Doors at home, in our cars, at our workplace, and at the store. Doors are everywhere. And they come in all shapes and sizes and are made in all kinds of materials. There are wood doors, iron doors, and metal doors and gates. There are even doggie doors! We recently put one in our house for Jax to go out and come back in on his own.

And while we rarely take into account the times we walk through doors, we certainly realize how important they are. We lock and unlock doors. We lock them to keep intruders out and we unlock them to let friends in. But in addition to locks, we have alarms to ensure our safety and security.

How many of you get in the car with your family, pull out of the driveway, headed to wherever you are going and ask, "Did you lock the door behind you?" Yeah. Well, I think I did. Are you sure? I don't know. I can't remember. You're not sure?! No. So, what do you do? You turn around, go back and make sure the door is locked.

Doors, gates, and alarms are important. They serve a purpose for our safety and protection. They are for our sheltering. They offer peace of mind. In a world that presents many different dangers and would be intruders, doors are very important. We need them for our safety and security. They are designed to keep the harmful out and to let the good in.

Well, Jesus says, "I Am the door." Some translations read, "I Am the gate." It's the same word. And just as we realize the importance of doors in our day and time, Jesus is using this statement to draw us into a deeper understand of who He is and what He provides.

So, today, we are going to look at this statement in two ways. We are going to examine the illustration and then look at the application. That will serve as our outline this morning. Illustration and application.

### MESSAGE:

Let's begin by looking at the...

#### **1) Illustration.**

Jesus is using an illustration of a door, or a gate, to a society that understands what He is talking about. But for those of us in the western world, we struggle to fully understand this illustration.

Let's read our passage and then talk through the scene Jesus paints as we seek to grasp what He is saying. John, chapter 10, verses 1 through 6. *<sup>1</sup>"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. <sup>2</sup>But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup>To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep*

*hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. <sup>5</sup>A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”<sup>6</sup>This **figure of speech** [or this illustration] *Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.**

Jesus makes this “I Am” statement, He will go on to say that He is the door, but He makes this statement with a sheep and sheep pen analogy. Now, I know some of you work with sheep and goats, and God bless you. That’s not my calling. But even those that work with those animals today do so in a very different way than eastern shepherds did at the time of Jesus using this analogy. There are several things at play here.

First, the Bible often correlates God’s people to sheep. If you are a believer in Jesus, the Bible calls us His sheep. Psalm 100, verse 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.* So, when Jesus is talking about sheep, He is talking about those that follow Him.

Secondly, when Jesus makes this statement, “I am the door,” it is during the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah.<sup>iii</sup> Now, I’m sure you’ve heard that term before. But Hanukkah was celebrating a very specific event.

In 333 B.C., which is the time known as the inter-testamental period because it occurred between the close of the Old Testament and Jesus’ birth. So, in 333 B.C., Alexander the Great had conquered much of the known world.<sup>iv</sup> A part of that was this portion of the world, the Middle East. As a result, the people were under Greek influence.

Now, many of the Jewish priests acquiesced to the leadership and compromised their convictions so much so that they began introducing the worship of Greek gods instead of The Lord God only. The religious leaders also became very corrupt and lead the people away from God. Many of them were selling temple items and pocketing the money. It was a very dark time. They were no longer in the ministry for the people but for profit.

But at that time, there was a man by the name of Judas Maccabeus.<sup>v</sup> He led an Israelite rebellion against the corrupt priests and government and reclaimed

and restored the temple. Hanukkah is the remembrance and celebration of this event. The people would pause and reflect on the corruption and what it took to regain possession of the temple.

Now, it was tradition to read and reflect on the prophet Ezekiel’s writings.<sup>vi</sup> Specifically, chapter 34. Let’s look at what it says. Beginning in verse 1. *<sup>1</sup>The word of the Lord came to me: <sup>2</sup>“Son of man, prophesy against the **shepherds of Israel** [Who are they shepherds of Israel? The religious leaders, the priests]; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord God: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? <sup>3</sup>You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. <sup>4</sup>The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them.* Do you see the corruption?

Skip down to verse 10. *<sup>10</sup>Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my sheep [my people] at their hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep. [In other words, I’m going to remove the corrupt religious leaders.] No longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. **I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may not be food for them.***

So, Jesus in saying that He is the door, and next week we will look at the fact that He is the good shepherd, and saying this intentionally during Hanukkah, Jesus is saying, I am the fulfillment of Ezekiel’s prophecy. All the others are thieves and robbers trying to get into the sheep pen through another means other than the door. Again, this is a claim to be God and to be God’s salvation for all people. So that’s the backdrop to the illustration Jesus uses.

Now, in addition us being the sheep and the celebration of Hanukkah going on is the backdrop by which Middle Eastern shepherds operated. There were two different types of sheep pens that Jesus is making reference to in our passage of study this morning. One was the village sheep pen and the other was the countryside pen.<sup>vii</sup> In the first six verses, Jesus is referencing the village pen. In the remaining verses, He is talking about the countryside pen.

Every single village in the Middle East had a village pen, a communal corral. When a shepherd would come in from the fields at night, they would line up their sheep at the village pen. The shepherd would then inspect each sheep

before letting them in the communal pen. They wanted to make sure there were not any scratches or parasites that would in turn infect the other sheep in the village pen. The shepherd would then let the sheep in one at a time. All shepherds would do that and then the next morning they would come back, gather their sheep, and then take them to the countryside.

Now, there was a gatekeeper that would watch over the sheep throughout the night. That gatekeeper would know the shepherds and would only allow the true shepherds to come in and gather their sheep.

Each shepherd would have a call by which his sheep recognized his voice. So, the next morning, the shepherd would make the call and all the sheep that was his would recognize the call and come to him while the other sheep wouldn't beckon the call. They didn't recognize it. Then the sheep would follow their shepherd to the countryside to graze in lush pastures.

So, Jesus is saying that all other would-be shepherds are not real shepherds. They are trying to mislead the sheep. They are thieves, and as a result, they try to gain entrance through some other means. But the sheep don't recognize their voice.

A true shepherd doesn't have to sneak in. Instead, he uses the door, the gate. The gatekeeper recognizes him as does his sheep. And that's the point. Jesus is both the true shepherd and the gatekeeper, the door by which true shepherds tend His sheep.

Now, we learn in verse 6 that the Pharisees, the people Jesus is addressing in this passage, didn't get the illustration. Verse 6. ***6This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.*** Make no mistake, they understood the concept but didn't understand why Jesus was using it. They were blinded to the truth Jesus is saying. So, he continues the illustration.

Verse 7. ***7So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. 10The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.***

Here Jesus moves from the communal village pen to the countryside pen.<sup>viii</sup> How do we know that? Well, in verse 4, the true shepherd calls the sheep, and they follow him. So, they are on their way to the lush countryside pasture. It is at this point that Jesus says, "I am the door." This has all kinds of powerful connotations.

Now, the village pen would have had a very high wall with briars on top to increase security. It would have an actual gate that could be locked. The countryside pen was very different. I brought a picture of a middle eastern countryside sheep pen. **Show Graphic**.<sup>ix</sup> You can see that the wall, made of stacked stone, not very high. And there is an opening there that you can see. That opening is where the shepherd would lead his sheep to enter into the pen.

Now, while in the countryside, the sheep would be exposed to potential threats. Wolves and other animals that would prey upon them. As a result, when in the countryside, the shepherd had to be on the lookout and provide safety and security for the sheep. The way in which the shepherd would do that is by laying down across the opening and the shepherd himself would serve as the door.

What is it that Jesus says? Verse 9. ***9I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.*** Jesus is the door of salvation and the means by which we are not misled.

Now, there was only one door. Only one way by which the sheep entered the sheepfold. And Jesus didn't say that He was one of many doors. He is THE door. No one gets into the enclosure unless he comes through Him.

Not only does this mean that our salvation is secure in Jesus, but that where He leads us is good. Verse 9 says that we will be saved, but we will also go out and find pasture, which verse 10 clears up for us, life and life abundantly.

So, this is the illustration that Jesus used. Now, let's talk through the...

## 2) Application.

There might be many different ways to apply this message to our lives. I want to just make mention of two points of application. First, ...

### A) Know who you are following.

In verse one, Jesus tells us that there are those that would seek to lead us astray. Verse 1 of John 10. *1“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.* And not only does Jesus warn us He tells the intent of these false leaders. Skip down to verse 10. *10The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.* [That’s the intent of the thief and robbers. But Jesus said...] *I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*

Jesus is saying that there is leadership that preyed on the sheep rather than fed the sheep. In other words, would be shepherds were in it for their own profit and not for the good of the people. Remember the setting in which Jesus is making this “I Am” statement. Hanukkah. The celebration of overturning corrupt religious leaders. And Jesus is saying, folks, that’s not just an Ezekiel 34 thing. That’s a right now thing. And Jesus says the same to us today.

Listen, we live in a world where we have access to all kinds of information. But just because the information is available and might even be packaged well doesn’t mean that it is correct and beneficial. And unfortunately, I wish this wasn’t true, but there are “pastors” that take advantage of God’s people.

Can I tell you something? It is this passage, and others, that cause me to tremble in the position in which The Lord has placed me. I am constantly trying to evaluate myself, my heart, against what Jesus is saying here. Any leader of the church, hear me, any leader of the church should serve in that capacity for two reasons and only two reasons. To exalt Jesus and to serve the sheep.<sup>x</sup>

So, know who you are following. The books you’re reading, the podcasts you listen to, the spiritual leaders you lean on. Jesus says He is the door. In other words, Jesus is the measuring stick by which we allow creditable information to come into our lives. Listen, I invite you to double check everything I say. When I preach or give you advise, line it up against the truth of God’s Word, because that is the standard of truth. And if anything I ever say is not in alignment with God’s Word, throw it out and hold onto Jesus.

Just a practical guideline here. Ask yourself, is the spiritual leader I am listening to teaching biblical truths or just catchy sayings? Not that creativity in delivery is wrong, but if the catchy saying isn’t biblical, throw it out. Jesus says that His sheep know His voice. You and I must know Jesus’ voice and not just a preacher’s voice. Know who you are following. Secondly, ...

## B) Choose the right door.

How many of you remember the game show, “Let’s Make a Deal?” For those of you that are missing out on good television, Let’s Make a Deal is a show that affords contestants the opportunity to trade what they have for potentially something that is better. But watch out because there are whammies out there and you could make a bad deal.

Now, at the end of the show, the final contestant can make a choice to hold onto what they have or exchange it for what’s behind one of three doors. One of those doors usually have something amazing like a new car or a vacation or extra prize money. But another door might have an awful “prize.” You have to make a choice as to the door you are going to open.

Well, in much the same way, all of us are in the same position. If Jesus is the door, and He is the true door, then we must realize that there are other doors. While Jesus is the door to abundant life, there are other doors we are presented with in life that lead to destruction.

And we are often enticed by doors that promise life, gain, promise, and fulfillment. Many times, we are tempted to trade in what we have to get something better. But in the end, those doors lead to death and destruction. Our tendency is to walk through the door of success, or beauty, or relationships, pride, and the door of materialism. I feel that don’t you? But in the end, those doors only lead us to be enslaved by those very things. I’m not saying success or relationships or things are bad, you see, but the profitable side of those are benefits of walking through the true door. Jesus gives those as blessings. But in that circumstance, the door we walk through is Jesus.

Jesus says that He is the door that leads us out to find pasture. What does that mean? Well, that we would have freedom, and provision, and blessing. Only through the door of Jesus do we find those things.

Know who you are following and choose the right door.

## CONCLUSION:

As we close this morning, I want to point us back to a particular verse in our study this morning. John 10:3. *3To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.* See the personal relationship that is painted here. Shepherds in Jesus’ day would give

nicknames to each of his sheep. Hey there long nose. Come here black ear. Slowpoke, we're over here! It was personal. Jesus says that those that are His sheep, He calls by name.

Scripture tells us that when we come to faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior of our lives, our name is recorded in the Lamb's book of Life. When Jesus calls your name, shows you your need of a Savior, and you respond to Him by faith, your name is forever recorded in the Book of Life. So the question is, has Jesus called your name?

For some of you, He is calling your name right now. You have come to the realization that you are a sinner, a sinner that God loves. And that Jesus died on the cross, in your place, as atonement for your sin. And The Holy Spirit is whispering in a still small voice, calling you to trust Jesus as Lord and Savior. If that's you, you come this morning. Our elders will be here at the front this morning ready to share with you what it means to trust Jesus as Lord.

Others of us in the room are trying to walk through doors other than Jesus. Perhaps you are hurting. Maybe you're even wandering. You need prayer. Perhaps it is a circumstance that has you down, a burden that you are carrying. You come this morning. Our elders would love to pray with and over you.

I'm going to pray. We are going to stand. But let's all respond to the leading of The Lord on our hearts. [PRAY]

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>i</sup> Works consulted in preparation for this message: John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: John 1-11*, Moody Press: Chicago, 2006; Gary M. Burge, *The NIV Application Commentary: John*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2000; Lloyd J. Ogilvie, *The Communicator's Commentary: John*, Word Books: Waco, 1985; Nate Hilgenkamp, "I AM: The Door," sermon preached at Harris Creek Baptist Church, Waco, TX, March 12, 2023, accessed online: <https://www.harriscreek.org/sermons?sapurl=LytmYzAwL2xiL21pLytkcnBya3c1P2VtYmVkPXRydWUmcmVjZW50Um91dGU9YXBwLndiYi1hcHAubGlicmFyeS5saXN0JnJlY2VudFJvdXRlU2x1Zz0lMkZjZjN3amti>; Esteban Shedd, "The 'I AM' Statements of Jesus Course," published by The Gospel Coalition; accessed online: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/the-i-am-statements-of-jesus/#course-introduction>; Michael Youssef, "There is an I in I Am: The Door," sermon preached at The Apostle's Church, April 2, 2014, accessed online: <https://www.ltw.org/watch/teaching/series/there-is-an-i-in-the-i-am/part-3>; Rob Daniels, "I AM: The Door," sermon preached at The Village Church, February 21, 2016, accessed online: <https://www.thevillagechurch.net/resources/sermons/the-door-flower-mound?mode=listen>; Skip Heitzig, "The Good Shepherd (and a bunch of happy sheep!)," sermon preached at Calvary Albuquerque, July 25, 2010, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/#/series/85/sermon/1205>.
- <sup>ii</sup> Illustration adapted from Dr. Michael Youssef.
- <sup>iii</sup> Gary M. Burge, *The NIV Application Commentary: John*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2000, page 287.
- <sup>iv</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>v</sup> Ibid, 288.
- <sup>vi</sup> Nate Hilgenkamp.
- <sup>vii</sup> Skip Heitzig.
- <sup>viii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>ix</sup> Graphic found online: <https://www.harvestworld.com/the-security-of-the-door/>.
- <sup>x</sup> Phrasing taken from Nate Hilgenkamp.