

"1 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. 2 "But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. 3 "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 "When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 "A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers." 6 This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them. 7 So Jesus said to them again, "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 hear them. 9 "I am the door; if anyone enters through 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." John 10:1-10, NAS95.

One of the things that occurs throughout this narrative is the difference between Christ and the Pharisees. All through the Gospels this distinction is made and not only of the difference between Jesus and the Pharisees but also of all the religious hypocrites and those who engaged in the theater of piety, a term I first used in our study of the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus, in John 10:1-6, using the imagery of a very full sheep pen, illustrated the differences between Himself and the Pharisees.

The first difference between Christ and the Pharisees was that Christ came through the door of the sheep pen and the Pharisees did not (John 10:1-2).

Because Jesus came through the door of the sheep pen, He was a true shepherd. And because the Pharisees did not come through the door, they were thieves and robbers.

The second major difference between Christ and the Pharisees was that though Christ's sheep would follow His voice, they would not follow the voice of the Pharisees (John 10:3-5).

When Jesus said that the sheep "hear His voice," he meant that the sheep would listen to the voice of their shepherd and would come to Him when called (John 10:3).

Since the shepherd is pictured as calling his sheep by name, the call should not be

understood as a generic call but rather as a very individual call.

Of course the shepherd in John 10:1-6 is Christ. And the sheep that He is calling to Himself are individual Jews within the nation of Israel who from eternity past belong to Him.

The ultimate reason why people today respond to the gospel is because they hear the voice of their Christ calling them.

Christ wants to take us on a journey that will ultimately lead us to the heavenly dwelling place that he has prepared for us (John 14:1-2).

This thought leads us back to our study of John 10. We have already considered the context with the first six verses of this chapter, seeing "Christ, The True Shepherd." In these six verses Jesus illustrated two differences that existed between Himself and the Pharisees.

Though these verses do not specifically state that Christ is the true shepherd and has the right to enter through the door of the sheep pen, and though these verses do not specifically state the Pharisees as thieves and robbers did not have the right to enter through the door of the sheep pen, it certainly was inferred in these two verses.

So how was it inferred? It was inferred by all the interactions recorded for us in John 9 between the former blind man and Christ, and also all the interactions recorded for us in John 9 between the former blind man and the Pharisees. Christ like a true shepherd had expressed a genuine and heartfelt care for the former blind man while the Pharisees like thieves and robbers using intimidation had abused the former blind man. These interactions recorded for us in John 9 formed the backdrop for the teaching that we are now considering in John 10.

So, though it is not specifically stated in John 10:1-2 that Christ, as the true shepherd was the one who was pictured as entering through the door of the sheep pen, or that the Pharisees like thieves and robbers were the ones not pictured as entering through the door of the sheep pen, it was certainly inferred based on what we

The first difference that we saw illustrated for us between Christ and the Pharisees in John 10 was that Christ came through the door of the sheep pen and Pharisees did not. So what was the second difference?

The second difference that we saw illustrated for us between Christ and the Pharisees, was that though Christ's sheep would follow His voice they would not follow the voice of the Pharisees (John 10:3-5).

Again, though these verses do not specifically state that Christ's sheep would follow His voice but not the voice of the Pharisees, it certainly is inferred in these three verses.

How was it inferred in these three verses? It was inferred once again by the events recorded for us in John 9. Clearly Jesus, in John 10:3-5 was attempting to capture for His Jewish audience, the reason why the former blind man had responded to His voice the true shepherd rather than to the voice of the Pharisees who were the thieves and robbers. And why was that? The former blind man responded to Christ's voice or message and not to the voice or message of the Pharisees because he was one of Christ's sheep. In other words, He was one of those sheep that the Father had given His Son long before the blind man ever came to Christ based on John 6.

Unfortunately the people who were listening to Jesus could not understand any of the inferences that Jesus had just spelled out for them in these first five verses of John 10. The Apostle John made this clear to us in John 10:6 when he told us "but they did not understand."

Jesus therefore, found it necessary to expand on what He had just said about the differences between Himself and the Pharisees, this brings us to John 10:7-10 and the words of Christ "I am the door".

"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 hear them. (9) "I am the door; if anyone

enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. (10) The thief comes only to steal, and kill and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.”

The differences between Christ and the Pharisees are so distinct, it is one of the reasons why Jesus would say unless righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees you cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

So what were the differences between Christ and the Pharisees that He chose to expand on in John 10:7-10?

The first difference between Christ and the Pharisees was that He was the door of the sheep and the Pharisees were not (John 10:7-8). We will see this difference highlighted for us in John 10:7-8.

Let us begin by reading John 10:7, “Jesus therefore said to them again, “Truly, truly I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.” How important was it to Jesus that these Jews who were listening to Him know that He was the door of the sheep? Very important! This is why He prefaced His remark about the difference between Himself and the Pharisees with the words, “truly, truly I say to you ...” Certainly Christ did not want them to miss the point that He and no other was the door of the sheep.

So how would the Jewish listeners have understood what Jesus was saying about Himself when He told them that He was “the door of the sheep?” Was there a cultural context, a cultural connect for those hearing these words.

G. Campbell Morgan a 19th century preacher, gives us some insight into this question when he recorded a conversation he had with a man named Sir George Adam Smith, the most famous Old Testament scholar of His day. And this is what he recorded of that conversation:

“He (Sir George Adam Smith) was one day traveling with a guide, and came across a shepherd and his sheep. He fell into conversation with him. The man showed him the fold into which the sheep were led at night. It consisted of four walls, with one way in.

Sir George said to him, "That is where they go at night?" "Yes," said the shepherd, "and when they are in there, they are perfectly safe." // "But there is no door," said Sir George. "I am the door," said the shepherd. //

He was not a Christian man, he was not speaking in the language of the New Testament. He was speaking from the Arab shepherd's standpoint. Sir George looked at him and said, "What do you mean by the door?" Then the shepherd said. "When the light has gone, and all the sheep are inside, I lie in the open space, and no sheep ever goes out but across my body, and no wolf comes in unless he crosses my body; I am the door."

So what do we learn from this story that might help us to understand how the Jewish people would have understood Christ's reference to Himself as the door of the sheep?

In the time of Christ, when the shepherd of a particular flock of sheep placed Himself in the entrance of His sheep pen, he in a sense became the living door.

This is most likely how those listening to Christ would have understood what He was saying. So what does this make Christ, since He is in fact picturing Himself in John 10:7 as the living door?

Since Christ pictured Himself as the living door at the entrance of the sheep pen in John 10:7, He was communicating to those listening to Him that He was the shepherd of the sheep.

If Christ was the door of the sheep, or in other words the shepherd of His sheep, then who was not the door of the sheep, or in other words who was not the shepherd of the sheep?

Next, Jesus describes the non-Shepherds.

John 10:8 "All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them."

Who is not the door of the sheep, or in other words the shepherd of the sheep?

Jesus tells us that all who came before Him are not the door of the sheep.

But whom exactly is Christ referring to when He says this? When Christ refers to “all who came before” Him, He is certainly not speaking of righteous men who had come before Him such as Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah and others. Rather, He is talking about unrighteous men who had come before Him. Not just any unrighteous men, but those men who acting like thieves and robbers who sought through stealth and/or intimidation to steal away those who truly belonged to the shepherd, or in other words those who truly belonged to Christ..

So, who in light of the context might that be? When Jesus said, “all who came before Me are thieves and robbers,” He was referring to the Pharisees who not only sought to steal His sheep, but who in fact did precede Him in time.

Fortunately, even though the Pharisees may have attempted to steal Christ’s sheep such as the former blind man in John 9, obviously they were not successful? Why? What does John 10:8 tell us? “All who came before Me (or in other words the Pharisees) are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.” Why did Christ’s sheep not hear the voice of the Pharisees? Christ’s sheep did not hear the voice of the Pharisees because the Pharisees were not the door of the sheep, or in other words Christ’s sheep knew that the Pharisees were not their shepherd.

The point in John 10:1-5 is if we belong to Christ as one of His sheep, we will ultimately respond to the voice of our shepherd, and will not only come to Him, but will follow Him as we hear Him speaking to us through His word. That is irresistible grace.

Will there be any other voice that will ultimately trump the voice of Christ? Absolutely not! Oh there might be times when we might wander off for a short time, but we can be assured that if we truly are one of Christ’s sheep that He will not let us get away. Why? He will not let us get away because He is our shepherd, and He will continue to call us to Himself through His Word, and we will follow Him.

This leads us to the second difference between Christ and the Pharisees highlighted

for us in John 10:7-10. We see this second difference in John 10:9-10.

“I am the door of the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. (10) The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life and life abundant.”

The second difference between Christ and the Pharisees is that Christ came to give His sheep good things and the Pharisees did not (John 10:9-10).

Looking at verse 9 “I am the door; If anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture”, notice how Jesus begins the verse.

“I am the door” Does this sound familiar? It should. He emphasized this truth earlier in John 10:7 when He prefaced it with the words, “Truly, truly I say to you that I am the door of the sheep.” And now He is emphasizing for us the same truth in John 10:9 through repetition.

Why did Christ emphasize this truth? He emphasized this truth because only those who enter through Him and Him alone will be able to experience all that He is prepared to give them. And what is Christ prepared to give to them if they by faith enter through Him?

Those who enter through Christ by faith will be saved (John 10:9). Isn't this what the verse says, “I am the door; If anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved.” What does this mean?

The term “saved” is explained in John 10:10 when He tells His listeners that He came so that those who enter through Him “may have life,” or in other words “may have eternal life.”

What does this mean practically for those who enter through Him? It means that they will immediately be set free from the penalty of sin and therefore in the sight of God will be immediately set free from the guilt and the shame of that sin. It means that they will in Christ have every resource necessary to successfully battle the world, the

flesh and the devil, or in other words they will for the very first time in their lives have the resources to be not only the person that they may have always wanted to be, but more importantly the person that God would want them to be. And of course it means that they will one day be set free from the very presence of sin itself when they enter into the gates of glory.

Now let me ask you this question. Is this better than anything that this world has to offer us? Absolutely! There is no way that any sane, rational individual could say otherwise.

But this is not all that Christ is prepared to give to those who enter through Him. Let us continue to read John 10:9, "I am the door; If anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture." What does this mean?

The phrase, "shall go in and out and find pasture" is also explained in John 10:10 when He tells His listeners that He came not only that they might have life, but that they might have it abundantly.

What does this mean practically for those who choose to enter through Him? Having life abundantly means that those who enter through Him should have the expectation in any and every circumstance of life of being perfectly satisfied, or in other words at peace.

Why? They will be perfectly satisfied because Christ as He leads them will provide for them. Can the Lord actually do this? Absolutely!

David wrote in Psalm 23 "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. (2) He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quite waters, He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His names sake. (4) Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me.

(5) Thou does prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; Thou hast anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. (6) Surely goodness and loving kindness will follow me all the days of my life. And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."



Would you say that David was experiencing the kind of peace or satisfaction that Christ promises to anyone who enters through Him? I believe that the answer would have to be yes.

Now let me ask you this question, can anyone or anything else in this world provide us this kind of peace? Absolutely not!

Certainly the Pharisees couldn't? Why? They couldn't because they were thieves and not the true shepherd. Let me read for you John 10:10, "The thief comes only to steal, and kill and destroy; I came that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

Do you want to have life and life abundantly in a way the world can never provide it? Then what do you need to do? You need to come to Christ, the living door and that He might be able to lead you victoriously through the tests and trials of this life and ultimately through the gates of glory.

Next week we will look at I am the Great Shepherd.

Verse 11: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." Verses 14-15: "I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep." Those whom the Father chose for himself he also gave to the Son, and those whom he gave to the Son the Son also called, and for those he called he also laid down his life, and to those for whom he died he gave eternal life, and it can never be taken away.

The picture we have in John 10 is of a great shepherd who sovereignly saves his sheep. The Father gives them to him. He dies for them. He calls them by name. He gives them eternal life. And he keeps them forever.