

# The Good Shepherd Opens the Way Through the Wall of Our Sin

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**John 10:1-10** Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same 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 doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> "And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> "Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." <sup>6</sup> Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them. <sup>7</sup> Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. <sup>8</sup> "All who *ever* came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. <sup>9</sup> "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

I had a first as a father this week. My daughter Kaylee and I were playing IN the parking lot. She loves to play a very slow version of tag. I walk away and she pushes her wheelchair to come get me. We have been playing it for a couple years without any problems. This last Tuesday, however, I was standing over on the east side of the parking lot. She came to get me. I turned and was walking back to the west side. When I turned around, she wasn't coming after me she was headed straight for the road. I did what every father probably finds themselves doing at some point in their lives, running as fast as I could yelling, "Kaylee stop." I knew she would not listen. I knew that she would not turn around, but I kept yelling while I ran and hoping she would listen.

Jesus is our good shepherd who calls us by name. Do we listen when he calls? How often is our Good Shepherd calling our name and yet we continue blithely going our own way, ignoring his voice. Jesus is calling your name because he is deeply worried about the fact that you headed right for the road.

There is a reason why when the Father spoke out of the cloud on the Mount of Transfiguration, he had one thing to say to Peter, James and John. "Hear him." Jesus is the good shepherd who runs after you calling your name when you are headed for the road, "Listen to Him."

We so often want to argue with God. We want to tell him why in this case it is ok to run out into the road. Jesus is calling us by name, but we aren't listening.

## **Verse 7 "I am the door . . ."**

Jesus is the door. When we think of a door, we think primarily of the piece of wood or metal that sits on hinges and swings back and forth. But not so in the Greek, in the Greek the word primarily refers to the hole in the wall. Maybe in the English it would be better to say the doorway. Jesus is not the piece of wood that swings shut and blocks your way. Jesus is the way, the opening through which you are able to enter.

We are locked out of heaven because of our sin, which is like a big impenetrable wall keeping us from God. Jesus comes and blows a hole in that wall, now the way is open. If we go through that doorway we can go in and out and have life. But if anyone refuses to enter, how can he afterwards blame God?

Jesus is the open way. Our sins keep us from God, but Jesus by his death opened the way to heaven.

### **Verse 8 – All who came before were thieves and robbers**

Jesus was not the first man to wander around the Judean countryside claiming to be the Messiah. There were many before the time of Jesus, during the time of Jesus, and many since the time of Jesus. The Bible even mentions a couple such as Theudas and Judas of Galilee. Since Jesus' time more have come like Mohammed and Joseph Smith and more recently men like David Koresh and others.

What makes Jesus different? Is Jesus different?

Jesus himself tells the main difference us "they came to steal and destroy" but Jesus came that "they may have life."

The difference between Jesus and the false Messiahs is night and day. He came to serve. They came to be served. He came to give. They came to build up riches for themselves. He came to die for us. They came that others might die for them.

This is true of David Koresh, Joseph Smith, Mohammed and all the false Messiahs of Jesus own time. They all follow the same pattern. They gathered people to themselves. They made themselves king of the group. They heaped up riches unto themselves. They took up arms against governments and those who opposed them.

Josephus was a Jewish historian. He was not a Christian but a Jew who was born four years after the death of Christ. He often writes against the many false messiahs because he blamed them for the destruction of Jerusalem. Of Jesus he says that he was a good and righteous man, who may have been the Messiah. The point being that even one who did not believe nevertheless saw that Jesus was clearly fundamentally different than all the false Messiah.

Therefore, whereas all of these others brought only death, Jesus gives life. He proved it by rising from the Dead.

Jesus is different. He comes to give us life. He gives us life not because we deserve it but because he died for our sins.

**V 4,5 and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> "Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."**

In Africa one of the questions they asked me most often was how to know who is a correct pastor and who is not. How can we know who teaches the truth and who does not? There are more false messiahs in Africa than there are true pastors in America. I once saw a documentary on Aljazeera about this "pastor" in Africa who claimed to do miracles. They went to his compound and found women chained up there. These false prophets, false messiahs are everywhere for the simple reason that nobody knows what the truth is. The only answer to the question is to read and study the word. When you study the Word, you will know the voice of the shepherd and when you learn to know the voice of the shepherd you will know to follow his voice.

The problem with our society is that people listen to everything except the word and assume that it is the voice of the shepherd. They listen to society that says you can't ever say anything bad about anyone else's life choices. They listen to their own desires that say I want this or that. They read an article online and they think if it's printed it must be true.

The one thing they don't do is walk with Jesus as did the Emmaus disciples. The true sheep know the voice of the shepherd they know it because day after day they walk with their shepherd in his word. They study that word and, in that word, they hear the voice of the shepherd.

Jesus is the true shepherd. He calls us by name, sometimes because we are about to run out into a busy street. He is the door, the open way through the wall of our sin to God. He gives us eternal life.