

We've been tracking through the "**I am**" **statements** of Jesus found in the book of **John**.

Today's focus is when Jesus declares,

I am the Gate!

And were going to **examine** what this actually **meant** and therefore what it can **mean for us** today.

This statement had its roots deep in the **Old Testament**.

TABERNACLE

As the Israelite people journeyed through the desert after escaping the clutches of the **Egyptians**, they were instructed by God to set up a meeting place in which they understood God to dwell.

Each of the **12 tribes** were then positioned around the Tabernacle, and were required to camp in that same spot when it was time to camp.

Now the entrance to the Tabernacle, was always to face **north!**

And the tribe that were always required to camp on the centre north face of the Tabernacle, was the tribe of **Judah**.

Meaning that anyone who wanted to enter into the tabernacle had to pass through the tribe of **Judah**, which acted as a **gate**.

And it just so happens, that **Jesus descended** from the tribe of Judah...

So with that in mind, let's hear

Doug Mayes, Cheryl Bailey, Arthur Hartwig
read to us from John chapter 10

1 "Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. **2** The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. **3** The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. **4** When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. **5** But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice."

- **6** Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.
7 Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. **8** All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. **9** I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.^[a] They will come in and go out, and find pasture. **10** The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

SHOW CLIP FROM CASTLE

- Gate’s aren’t always good news, as that clip from the Castle shows us!

Gated communities.

Before coming here I’d only ever known of Hollywood having gated communities.!

To keep the riff raff out!

But they have two functions, keep us safe...

And keep those who may threaten our safety out!

Funny story of **Tim** at the gate and it being the wrong house.

Knocking, ringing the door bell

Tim Idstein, Einstein???

It’s ok...

Call Tim...

Big white wall...

Not the gray wall!

We’re surrounded by gates!

And the gates are designed to **keep us safe** but also **isolated!**

- **Car** doors – no more walking places with people and getting healthy
The Air Up there.
“we’ll give you a pump and pipes to save you time walking down to the well.”
“If you did that where would we meet?”

So Jesus is speaking about something very familiar to people...
Shepherding...

Now next week Melissa is going to talk all about shepherding,
and I was **tempted to pinch** all of her cool material
and the rich metaphors,
but that would just end up confusing you and me
and not doing Melissa any favours...

Because this passage is **so rich** with imagery, and as you would
have worked out,
the metaphor of shepherd
actually brackets the metaphor of gate.

So today we're just going to concentrate on the gate,
but to do that I need to explain a little bit about shepherding.



At night sheep were kept in a pen.
These pens sat in the fields of the hills.
And a shepherd would lead his sheep through the pastures to
these bases, pens, where they could spend the night.

Now these pens were usually **built against cliff faces**, or at the
end of **valleys**.
And they were fenced in by **waste high** walls,
that were topped off with **thorny branches**.

They were built in such a way that all sides would be enclosed with
the exception of a **small opening** in one of the walls,
which the **sheep** could **get in and out of**...
This opening was called the **gate**!

Now if the pen was **near the home** of the shepherd,
 then a **guard** would be hired to protect the sheep,
 and he would sleep across the entrance of the gate.

If the shepherd was **far from home**,
 then he would sleep across the entrance of the pen.

Or on occasions the shepherd would block the gate with **thorn bushes**.
 And camp near by.

The gate however was that entrance...
 What we might call the **gate posts**, or **gateway**.

- So the purpose of the gate was to offer security, safety and salvation from threats and dangers that surrounded the flock, and allow for nourishment and nurture that came from being let out through the gate to find food and sustenance.

It was the **gate that enabled** these things to happen.

So there is the **cultural background**
 to **understanding** what gate Jesus was actually talking about.

Because he was trying to capture something greater...

- 6 Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.**

That phrase *figure of speech*,
 has these strong overtones of **parable**...
 So Jesus is wanting to paint a picture that those listening,
 could **enter into**.

And the result is that the Pharisees,
 couldn't get it...

They **couldn't wrap their minds** around this picture Jesus was painting...

And part of what makes this amusing is the Pharisees were the very people who **Jesus names** in his story

Jesus actually calls them **the thieves and robbers!**

“Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.

What Jesus is saying is...

You keep **treating** the son of God as an **enemy** but **even you** need to enter into God’s presence and provision **through me!**

If you as **Israel’s spiritual and religious leaders**

don’t **recognize** this,

or **embrace** this,

or **follow** and **obey** this,

then it’s like you’re a **thief and a robber...**

In other words

Jesus is saying your breaching the walls and existing in that space as a threat, not as a friend!

And when that happens you will **take something away** from those who are **in the pen** and have **chosen** to be in the pen by going **through the gate.**

6 Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

7 Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep.

Which is the point when Jesus reveals what he’s truly getting at...

I am the gate.

I am the opening that **all people**, including you, have to enter through!

It’s me!

It’s **allegiance** to

and **trust** in

and **commitment** to me

that has to **take place** if anyone wants to be a part of the **nourishment and security** I am **offering!**

- 8 All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them.

“Up to this point” Jesus is saying...

We haven't got it right!

We've been **ranting and raving**, but the words spoken have **not been of benefit** to the people.

Jesus is challenging the impact that they have had on the people...

He's saying...

The people haven't really listened to you.

If they'd have listened, they would have **stopped sinning**.

But that **formula** isn't a **helpful** one.

Because the **answer** is not in a **formula**, but in a **person!**

- Cheese cake story with Dad...
Engineer, verses someone who knows the ingredients, who can feel what needs to happen.

The formula let's us down.

And that is what Jesus was saying...

If you **rely on the formula** to get right with God,

And if you preach that to people...

Then you are **robbing** from them the **opportunity** to have this life God wants them to have!

- 9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture.

If there are two words that capture what Jesus wants us to capture,

they are the words  “Through me”

or for us today  “Through Jesus”

Say that with me...

Through Jesus!

- You see if Jesus is the gate, then everything makes sense when we live our lives through Jesus!

And there are two parts to this...
that this verse highlights...

- They will come in and go out**

In and out, through Jesus!

So the sheep come in
to experience **security**, **safety**, **salvation** from the
horrors of this world!

Some of you today need to enter in to the **security** and **safety** of
God, and you do that **through Jesus!**

You need to **leave the regrets** you have
and the **pain you carry**
and **mistakes you've made,**

You need to turn away from the horrors of this world and **turn
toward God,**
who gave everything that you might be able have the
security he offers.

- The citizens of Feldkirch, Austria, didn't know what to do. Napoleon's massive army was preparing to attack. Soldiers had been spotted on the heights above the little town, which was situated on the Austrian border. A council of citizens was hastily summoned to decide whether they should try to defend themselves or display the white flag of surrender. It happened to be Easter Sunday, and the people had gathered in the local church. The pastor rose and said, "Friends, we have been counting on our own strength, and apparently that has failed. As this is the day of our Lord's resurrection, let us just ring the bells, have our services as usual, and leave the matter in His hands. We know only our weakness, and not the power of God to defend us." The council accepted his plan and the church bells rang. The enemy, hearing the sudden peal, concluded that the Austrian army

had arrived during the night to defend the town. Before the service ended, the enemy broke camp and left.

I love that it was when they **placed their security** in God,
things **shifted** for them.

When they gave up on what they **could achieve**,
And trusted that **God knew better**...

They were protected and offered security from the horrors that were to befall on them!

Some of you need to do that today!

You need to **walk through the gate** into God's security.

You need to **say yes to trusting** in Jesus.

You need to **accept his invitation** of hospitality...

Because your life is not feeling full of the right kind of things...



You see the sheep, They will come in and go out

The sheep come in to find security, safety and salvation...

But the sheep go out to grow and be nourished!

So put yourself in the place of a sheep.

And don't fret I'm not going to make you act it out and bah or anything...

So you're a sheep...

And you're in the pen.

And it's all safe.

You've had a great nights sleep.

You love your other sheep friends.

Have a look round...

Lots of attractive sheep!

And you wake up in the morning...

And you are???

Hungry!

But the pen is not the place where the nourishment of your sheepness happens!

You get nourishment from the grass that is outside of the pen!

And Jesus is quite aware of this.

And he wants to make sure that his listeners are also quite aware of this...

 And here it is...
 We are most nourished...
 We grow healthy in our faith.
 We get full in our faith...
 When we go outside the pen!

We are most nourished...
 We grow healthy in our faith.
 We get full in our faith...
 When we go outside the pen!

We think that we **come to church** to become healthy followers of Jesus!

But we become healthy followers of Jesus
 When we put to work the things that we learn here!

When we **share the experience** we have with each other, with those who **don't know God**.

When we **shine the light** of Christ into the **darkness of this world**, because we're **lit up here!**

When we learn to read the **Scriptures for ourselves**.

When we commit **ourselves to mission**.

When we **wrestle with** and come to the conclusion of what we should **tithe**.

 We become healthy followers of Jesus, not when we're in Church, but when we're in the world!

But all of this must happen **through Jesus!**
 We go **out into the world** through Jesus!

We go out to **share our faith** and its essential that we do it through Jesus.

We go out to serve those who need help but it's essential this happens in God's strength.

We go out and spend time sitting with God, and reading the Scriptures and journaling, and we do that through and in the presence of Christ.

We come in through the gate to receive the security and salvation of Jesus.

And we go out through the gate to exercise our faith!

Which leads us to the climax of this passage...

 **10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.**

Jesus sets himself up as the center of God's plan,
the gate through which people will not only be able to receive from God and find security in God,
but also experience the fullness of God.

John 10:10

Is my verse!

You know people have a verse...

Examples:

 **Job 13:5 (New International Version)**
If only you would be altogether silent! For you, that would be wisdom.

 **Proverbs 31:6 (New International Version)**
Give beer to those who are perishing, wine to those who are in anguish.

- Proverbs 21:19 (New Living Translation)
It is better to live alone in the desert than with a crabby, complaining wife.

???

A young and nervous bride planning her wedding was increasingly terrified about her upcoming marriage. To calm her nerves, she decided to have a Bible verse which had always brought her comfort (1 **FIRST John 4:18**, "There is no fear in love; for perfect love casts out fear") engraved on her wedding cake. So she called the caterer and all arrangements were made.

About a week before the wedding, she received a call from the catering company. "Is this really the verse you want on your cake?" they asked. Yes, she confirmed, it was the one she wanted, and after a few more questions they said they would decorate the cake as requested.

The wedding day came, and everything was beautiful...until the reception, when the bride walked in to find the cake emblazoned with **John 4:18: "For you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband."**

But John 10:10, has for me, captured the entire Gospel.

- I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Jesus reveals in this,

that he truly is the gate.

It is through following and accepting him that people can enter into an experience of God at work in their lives!

And some of you to receive this fullness of life need to go out through Jesus!

You need to identify that area that you need to grow in and become healthy in.

You need to sit before God and ask him to show you that next move!

But for some of you, you need to come on in through the gate!

Lord Kenneth Clark, internationally known for his television series *Civilization*, lived and died without faith in Jesus Christ. He admitted in his autobiography that while visiting a beautiful church he had what he believed to be an overwhelming religious experience. **"My whole being," Clark wrote, "was irradiated by a kind of heavenly joy far more intense than anything I had known before."**

But the "gloom of grace," as he described it, created a problem. If he allowed himself to be influenced by it, he knew he would have to change, his family might think he had lost his mind, and maybe that intense joy would prove to be an illusion. So he concluded, "I was too deeply embedded in the world to change course."

When we look at what God offers, it can seem too good.

Too unbelievable
Too astonishing...

Because we know we **don't deserve** it,
And could **never do enough** to earn it.

And that is **God's point**...

Just trust him that he wants to give this gift.
That it is **worth turning away** from that worldly course.
That **through Jesus** everything can change and find its meaning.

Now:

I'm going to pray.

And the band is going to come up and conclude the service with a song.

And I'd like you, if you know you need to walk through that gate for the first time... to come down the front because I want to pray with you!