

Who Is This Man?

I AM THE GATE

Intro:

- Shepherding was a regular part of life throughout the Bible. (Abraham, Moses, David-most popular)
- There are many Scriptures that portray God as a Shepherd and us as His sheep.
- *Ps 23: The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want; Ps. 78: He led out His people like sheep and guided them in the wilderness like a flock; Ps. 100: We are His people, the sheep of His pasture.*
- Why did God pick Sheep?? They are not the brightest or strongest, some of the least impressive animals that God made. They can't take care of themselves, or defend themselves, a Lamb isn't the greatest mascot for a team. The Georgia Lambs?!?
- Yet God chose these creatures to communicate something about who we are and what we need.
- **FUN!** Show a picture of me holding a lamb in Israel.

Sheep Facts:

- Very social and like being together. Isolation can cause them to get depressed. They get lethargic and sad when they are separated.
- They can recognize other sheep's faces for years except after sheering (one bad haircut can ruin a good relationship)
- They can distinguish between a smile and a frown of the shepherd. They respond much better to smiling.
- They tend to wander off and leave the shepherd without even realizing what they've done. They get distracted eating and lose sight of the one who knows where to lead them.

Maybe we are more like Sheep than we realize.

John 10:1-10 (NIV)

10 "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. 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.

“I am the Gate.”

- A gate gives entrance/access. It makes it possible to get from one side to the other side.
- It also keeps people out. (Ex. Truist Park only allows you through the gate if you have a ticket.)

Gate Purpose: To provide access for people to go from the outside to the inside while keeping unwanted visitors out.

- In the times of Jesus, shepherds would corral their sheep at night into fenced-in pens made of stacked stone, wood, or thorny bushes. This would keep them from wandering off and safe from predators.
- The pens would have a single opening called a “gate” where the shepherd would sleep at night. He kept the sheep from getting out and predators from getting in.

What does it mean for Jesus to be the gate and what is the significance for us today?

- The religious leaders are mad at Jesus because He healed a blind man on the Sabbath. They considered this work, and you weren’t allowed to do any work on the Sabbath.
- It’s crazy how religious people got mad at anyone, even Jesus, for not keeping their rules.
- They believed that keeping rules and regulations would get people to God, but Jesus is saying that He is the way to God. Each of us must enter through Him.

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

- **Gate of Salvation.**

- “Saved” here means “rescued from sins.”
- The Bible teaches us that we have all sinned and fallen short of God’s glory. We all need to be rescued from our sins because the penalty of sin is spiritual death.
- Jesus is the gate to salvation and eternal life. He is the entrance to life and spending eternity with God. Salvation is only found through this gate.

The gate is a person, not a religion.

- It’s not following a bunch of rules like the Pharisees were trying to tell everyone. It’s only through a personal relationship with Jesus that you and I find salvation.

- The sheep pen only has one single entrance and Jesus is saying that He is that single entrance.
- This is not popular in our politically correct, all-inclusive culture but it's truth.

2 Alternative Gates (Good intentions)

1. **Religion** (legalism, good works, the elect)
2. **Tradition- (All inclusive**, materialisms, “political/economic empire over Kingdom”, substance dependency, relative truth, disrespect God's institutions of marriage and the Church, killing the unborn, evolution, self-help, gender confusion, education system)

Mark 7:8 (NIRV)

⁸ You have let go of God's commands. And you are holding on to teachings that people have made up.”

- Message Bible: **“Ditching God's command and taking up the latest fads.”**
- *Mark 7:13 You make the word of God that you pass down useless by putting your own teachings in its place.*
- GOOD NEWS!! 1 Peter 1:18: Jesus redeems us from our father's traditions
- Confusion should not be the earmark of Christians, Clarity should be.

Acts 4:12 (NIV)

¹² Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

- Common misunderstanding: all roads lead to God, that He goes by a bunch of different names, if you are a good person, and you are sincere in your faith then you'll find salvation.
- That's sincerely wrong. It's nowhere in the Bible and Jesus doesn't ever say anything remotely close to that. Jesus says the opposite.

1 Timothy 2:5 (NIV)

For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus,

- While this is exclusive, it's also very inclusive. Jesus said that ANYONE can enter. Everyone can find forgiveness, wholeness, and a relationship with God.

Romans 10:13 (NIV)

“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

- Everyone! No one is excluded because of something they have done or something they didn't do. You are not excluded from God's grace.

- Nothing you can do will cause God to stop loving you and there’s nothing you can do to get Him to love you more. He just does, because of who He is.
- “Will be saved” not “might be saved” You can be confident today that your salvation is sure, and you can know beyond a shadow of a doubt where you will spend eternity but you, personally must step through this gate. The Gate of Salvation is a personal decision. Today can be your day!

- **Gate of Security**

- Jesus is our safety. The gate keeps predators out. The shepherd would lay down in the opening.
- All through the Bible we read that God is our protector, our shield, our defense, our refuge.

Psalm 91

Psalm 23:1 and 4 (NKJV)

23 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want...⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

- David is referring to a physical place just outside of Jerusalem, heading down to Jericho. There’s a steep, winding path not even a full road.
- There are rocks and huge cliffs on each side and due to the high cliffs, the sun rarely shines on parts of this valley. Shepherds would often move their flocks through this valley and thieves and bandits would move in on them.
- David is reflecting on all the times that he had to march right through the valley of the shadow of death, fearful and frightened, not knowing if he would be attacked right around the bend. “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. I will not fear, For YOU ARE WITH ME!
- Maybe you are traveling in a valley right now and feel weighed down. I encourage you today to keep walking. (David said, “I walk THROUGH...”)

Your valley is not your finale.

- Shadow implies there must be some light. Choose to focus on the light instead of the shadow. Jesus, light up my world. You are the gate of security!
- This shepherd in the gate would be up and down all night guarding the entrance. Your Good Shepherd is up through the night watching over you, so you don’t have to be.
- You don’t have to toss and turn or pace the pen worried. He can handle that situation better than you can. His job is security. Your job is resting.
- Matthew 6 “Worry will not add a single day to your life...look at the birds and flowers.”
- There’s a supernatural peace that we can experience when we enter through this gate.

• Gate of Satisfaction

- Lots of people like the Rolling Stones...can't get no satisfaction, always looking for greener pastures.
- Wander off, leaving everything God has for them. Most people fit the category of discontentment.
- Jesus, in this passage, is telling them, "If you are looking for more to life than I'm it!"

Vs. 10 (NLT)

The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

- This is the kind of life that Jesus wants to give us. He is the Gate to rich and satisfying life!
- He's got the "everything you need" kind of life but you must go through the gate to experience it.
- Ps. 23: The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. My soul will not know wanting because He makes me lie down in green pastures, leads me beside still waters, and restores my soul.
- When I think of green pastures, I think of the lush hills of Scotland, the Alps, or my yard (: but Israel is desert. Shepherds would have to work hard to get their herds to grass. David is painting a picture for us: When the Lord is your Shepherd, you will be satisfied. You won't live in scarcity, lack, or fear. You will live in abundance and security. You shall not want!
- When you come through this gate, you will experience a deep satisfaction in your soul. More and better life than you've ever dreamed possible.

Story: *Amy and I went to Seager's on our 1st anniversary. Tiny dishes and giant prices. We left hungry. Then me, Amy, Tony, and Sheryll went to Pappasito's Cantina. We all four ordered the same dish and they had to bring an extra table to fit the food.*

- Some of us have settled and are left wanting more. It might look pretty on the outside, but cost is high, and it leaves us empty.
- Jesus is standing right in front of us saying, "I am the more...I am the gate of your satisfaction."

A.W. Tozer

The man who has God for his treasure has all things in One. Many ordinary treasures may be denied him, or if he is allowed to have them, the enjoyment of them will be so tempered that they will never be necessary to his happiness. Or if he must see them go, one after one, he will scarcely feel a sense of loss, for having the Source of all things he has in One all satisfaction, all

pleasure, all delight. Whatever he may lose he has actually lost nothing, for he now has it all in One, and he has it purely, legitimately, and forever.

Vs. 9b *They will come in and go out, and find pasture.*

- Jesus doesn't want to restrict us or pen us up. Or keep us from enjoying life.
- He says we'll come in and go out...He wants to free us!
- This life He offers is huge, not small.

2 Corinthians 6:11-13 (The Message)

¹¹⁻¹³ Dear, dear Corinthians, I can't tell you how much I long for you to enter this wide-open, spacious life. We didn't fence you in. The smallness you feel comes from within you. Your lives aren't small, but you're living them in a small way. I'm speaking as plainly as I can and with great affection. Open up your lives. Live openly and expansively!

- It's not God's will for you to live a small life. There will sometimes be people or situations that make you feel small but not God. He's the creator of BIG life!
- Too many people see following Jesus as a life of limitation. To bind you up and keep you from getting the most out of life.
- This is a lie from the enemy because if we see God's ways as heavy or burdensome, then we will go our own way, ending up somewhere we never meant to be.

1 John 5:3 (NIV)

In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,

- His ways will not weigh you down but the world's will.
- Don't you want that kind of life?? Time to stop running from the Shepherd. You may have settled for a pen that isn't where you belong.

Response:

John 10:4b (NIV)

...and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.

- Even though all sheep look the same to us, shepherds can tell them apart. He can call them specifically by name and they follow.

Ex. *Years ago, there was a trial held in Australia, where a man claimed that a neighboring farmer had stolen one of his sheep. The judge didn't know how to determine who the sheep belonged to, so he had both farmers go out into the hall. They took turns calling the sheep. When the sheep heard the owner's voice, he went running out of the courtroom to find him. Case closed!*

- Your Shepherd knows your name and He's calling you today. No matter where you are in your walk with God, He wants us to come closer to Him...to salvation, security, and to the deep satisfaction that only Jesus can give.