

Harris Creek Baptist Church
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Series: I Am
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I Am the Gate

John 10: 1-10

“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. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 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. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.”

Well, my wife and I, we’re about to celebrate five years of marriage (audience cheers). There we go! We love marriage in here—that’s awesome. Thank you. And we’re celebrating in what I’ve learned is a very controversial thing to do. Because what we’re going to do to celebrate five years of marriage is we’re going to go on a vacation to New York City. Now when I’ve told people that, I’ve learned that it’s controversial because you get two options. You either tell someone and they say, “Oh I love New York City, I could go every single year!” Or people say, “I hate New York City, I never ever want to go again.” I’ve heard it’s expensive, it’s crowded. This week someone told me that there’s a rat problem there. I’m a little nervous.

In fact, when I told someone else, they reminded me of the story of something that happened to them about ten years ago. They went to New York City to watch Baylor play at Madison Square

Garden, which is the Knick's Basketball Arena, it's like the best basketball arena in the nation. We were playing NIT, something Baylor did a long, long time ago. That is in the distant past, we don't do that anymore. But they wanted to go watch them there and even though it was just the NIT, the tickets were still expensive. And his job—he was traveling with about ten other people, his family, and some of his friends—was to be the one who got the tickets. He was going to pay for them and then everyone else was going to pay him back. And he went online and checked out StubHub and whatever else, and the tickets were all really expensive. So, he's like, "Man, I'm not going to buy them online. What I'm going to do—I'm smart, I'm wise, I'm crafty—is I'm going to buy them there," because right outside the stadium there's scalpers who will give you potentially a better deal on tickets, especially right before the game. They just need to make some cash; you can get a better deal if you just talk to one of the scalpers. So, this is what he decided to do. He's in the middle of New York City, and he's wheeling and dealing and finally he finds ten tickets, they're all together, and they're a pretty good deal, but keep in mind it's still New York City so still expensive. So, he buys them, his friends and family get together, he out all the tickets and then they go to the gate. He's leading the way, he's so excited. Scan the ticket—ERR. Uh Oh. Next person comes up—ERR. Next person comes up—ERR. He's like, "Hey, what's the problem?" The lady is like, "Oh, it's simple, you bought fake tickets." And he's like, "No, no no no I didn't. I bought them right over there from him. He told me that these tickets are real. In fact, they look just like the real thing!" The lady is like, "I don't care what he told you. They're not real tickets and I can't let you in because you bought a false ticket." I mean can you imagine the pit in his stomach as he realized that he just paid for ten fake tickets. And he had to go out and buy ten brand new tickets simply because he believed the lie. He was scammed.

And I just start with that this morning to tell some of you. You have been scammed. You've been fooled. You've been lied to. And if you believe a lie, it will have dire consequences for you, because some of you have been told, "If you want to find happiness, just find it in a relationship—that's your ticket to happiness." Friend, that will never get you in the door to happiness. Some of you have been told, "you just need more stuff. You just need more money, and once you get more money—that's your ticket to contentment." That ticket will never get you into contentment. Or some of you have been told, "If you want to get to God, all you need to do is a bunch of good works—just be a really good person. That's your ticket to God." Good works are never going to get you to God. You've been fooled, you've been scammed. And if you believe the lie it will be incredibly costly to you. Because you'll get to the gate of whatever it is you're trying to get to, be it joy, peace, contentment, comfort, safety, salvation, and you're not going to be let in because you believed in a fake ticket. It doesn't matter how much you paid for it; it doesn't matter how pure your motives were—if you believed a lie, you're not getting in.

So today, what we're going to do is we're going to continue on in our sermon series called I AM, as we're looking at the seven, I AM statements of Jesus in the book of John. And this is highly consequential sermon series for Harris Creek and for your life, because there are a lot of opinions about who Jesus was. A lot of people have a lot of opinions about who Jesus was. But it doesn't really matter what people say about who he was. What matters is who do you say He was, and who He is? And if you're a Christian here today, you've staked your life on Jesus. Like, everything in your life comes down to Jesus. And if that's you, you better know who He said he

was. So, what we're doing is we're just letting Jesus speak for himself. This sermon series is really Jesus according to Jesus. And we've learned that he said that he is the light of the world. He is the bread of life, and today we're going to look at him saying, "I am the gate." Or "I am the door." So, what does that mean?

Well, we're going to be in John 10 if you have your bibles this morning opens them up or turn them on to John chapter 10. We're going to be in verses 1 through 10. And what we pick up on this story is that Jesus is speaking to religious leaders at the time, who were called the pharisees. And he's going to be critical of them by telling them an example, by telling them a story. And he's going to say there's a sheep pen, and there's two different ways of viewing these sheep. One group of people are thieves, and they see these sheep as resources to be taken advantage of. The other group of people are shepherds who see these sheep as animals to be nurtured. And this is what he's going to say, John chapter 10, verse 1, Jesus says this, **“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. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 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. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice.”**” You know, **because** of my friend's experience in New York City, if I'm going to an event—we're planning on going to a New York Yankees game. If we go to that game, you know what I'm not going to do? I'm not going to buy a ticket from a scalper. I'm going to go online and buy a real ticket because based on his experiences, I've learned that

people outside these stadium—they're not out for my best interest. Many of them are just thieves and robbers. They're not looking to give me a great ticket, they're looking to take my money. They're not out for my good, they're out for their own good. What Jesus is saying here, he's saying you need to watch out because there are people in leadership, even in places of leadership and influences within the church, and they're not out for your own good. They're in it for themselves. Because even though they claim that they're taking you to God, they're really not—they're really just taking you to themselves because they see the people not as something to be nurtured and cared for, but as something to be used for their own advantage. They're thieves and they're robbers. They're not in it for the good of the sheep. They're in it for their own good. And this is the first thing we can learn from this passage. It's this, point number one.

1. *Beware of thieves.*

Beware of thieves. And you know context is really important for us to understand this passage, because here Jesus is speaking in the middle of the Hanukkah celebration. Hanukkah is still celebrated today, and it was also celebrated in Jesus's time. I bet many of us don't really know what Hanukkah is about. Here's what they celebrate in Hanukkah.

In 333BC, a guy by the name of Alexander the Great conquered much of the world, specifically this portion of the world, the Middle East, for the Greek Empire. So really, everything in that time had been shifted over to Greek influence, and specifically the temple, religious leaders in that time had just buckled under this Greek leadership. And rather than continuing to worship Yahweh in the face of opposition, they just buckled and started to worship the Greek gods. And the religious leaders became corrupt, and they didn't lead the people to God any longer. In fact,

there's documentation of the priest at the time taking these really important items within the temple—sacred items within the temple—and just selling them to the Greeks to get their own money. Because they weren't in it any longer for the good of the sheep or the people, they were in it for their own good.

But there was a family and there was a person by the name of Judas Maccabeus. He led an Israelite rebellion against these people, and they overtook and got the temple back. And this is what they celebrate during Hanukkah, they celebrate the restoration of the temple. And during Hanukkah, one of the most important parts of that celebration is reminiscing on and reflecting on the poor corrupt leadership. They think back and go, "How did we get to this point where the temple was overtaken by people who didn't worship the God of our ancestors? How did this happen? How did these corrupt leaders get in the way?" And as they reflect on that, they read a passage and they would have read this passage in Ezekiel chapter 34 in this time. So, it's at this moment in the middle of Hanukkah, these people, these Pharisees are reading and thinking about meditation on Ezekiel chapter 34. Now, I admit even as one of the pastors here, there are times that the Bible seems dry. There are times that the Bible can seem boring. This is not one of those times. Because it's in the middle of Hanukkah, they're focusing on Ezekiel chapter 34, and this is when Jesus steps up and says what he says in John 10. Well, what does Ezekiel chapter 34 say? This is what it says, this is what they're thinking about, meditating on, in this moment.

Ezekiel 34, **"The word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the**

choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock.” Then skipping ahead to verse 10, “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them.”

Okay so this is drama. This is Hanukkah—this is a big celebration, and this is what the people would be thinking about, this is what the pharisees would be thinking about. Remember back then, years and years ago there was poor leadership. There was leadership that preyed on the sheep, rather than fed the sheep. They were in it for their own good, not the good of the people. This is what they’re thinking about, Ezekiel 34, and it’s in that moment that Jesus steps up in John 10 and says what he says. Later in John 10:8 he says this, **“All who have come before me are thieves and robbers.”** So what Jesus is saying is, “You know the shepherds that were judged in Ezekiel chapter 34? That wasn’t just a long-ago thing, that’s a “right now” thing.” He’s looking at the pharisees and going, “You are the thieves and robbers that I’m talking about. You are the people that are in it for your own good and not the good of my people. You are the ones who are leading my people astray. You are the ones who care more about your influence than my influence.”

You know, sometimes we wonder why did Jesus get crucified? He’s like, a really nice guy who went around healing a bunch of people. Which is true. He was nice, and he healed people. But he also spoke specifically and clearly against the religious leaders of that day. In this moment, he’s speaking publicly against them. So, it’s no wonder that the religious leaders would try to crucify

him because they were incredibly upset and embarrassed by him. But here's why Jesus is so upset with them, they were in leadership over the people of God, and what they did was they desired to have the people of God by Holy and set apart and to do a bunch of good works for God. So, the pharisees looked at the Scriptures, and they saw all the rules and regulations and commands that God had placed on his people. They saw all those commands, and then they added to them. This is the problem. They added to those commands that were outside of Scripture, that were outside of God's command. And when they did that what happened was, they gained influence and power and authority. Because by doing that *they* became the gatekeepers into the kingdom of heaven. Because at that point, the only you could get to God was if you first got through the pharisees. In order to be approved by God you first had to be approved by them. And what happened was they pushed many people away *from* God because they said they didn't do enough good works *for* God.

This was incredibly offensive to God because this isn't how this whole thing works. I know many of you have believed that lie as well—that the only way to get to God is by being a good person. If you serve enough people, if you give enough of your money, if you're nice enough to the people around you—that's how you're going to get into heaven. Your mortality ain't getting you in. It's only by the name of Jesus that you can enter in. This is why Jesus was so upset with the people in authority. They were using their influence, not to bless the sheep, but to burden the sheep. They didn't point the people to God, but rather to themselves.

And really there's two applications for this section of Scripture. The first is for a specific group of people. It's the people who have influence over the church. This is for pastors, leaders, elders,

anyone who has a position of leadership over the church. This is something I've had to wrestle with this week myself. And my takeaway to this passage is this: if you're in leadership within the church, you better be in it for two reasons. You better be in it to exalt Jesus, and to serve the sheep. You better be in it to exalt Jesus and serve the sheep. You know I think I started there; I just pray I finish there. Because so many people don't because we're broken and sinful and messed up, and it's easy to be led astray and have it go backwards on you. Because while we're supposed to exalt Jesus and serve the sheep, it's so easy to begin to exalt yourself and use the sheep.

How many times have we seen that happen? And when that happens, that leader is in great danger. Because God will oppose them and he will remove and replace them, because he will not stand for thieves and robbers being over his people. He needs a shepherd over his people. And thankfully, I know I'm bias, but I think the leadership here at Harris Creek is in a place where we want to exalt Jesus and serve the sheep. But part of your job can be to pray that we stay there and hold us accountable when we don't.

Now the second application is for everyone else, if you're not necessarily in a leadership position within the church, here's your application: make sure you know who you're following. Not just the pastors here at Harris Creek, but the books you're reading, the podcasts you're listening to, the spiritual leaders you're following on social media. Make sure you know what they're teaching, and make sure that it's Biblical. Because many times, even though they have a position of authority, they will not be teaching Biblical truths, but rather catchy sayings. And here's why, it's really easy why. Here's why, it's a whole lot easier to monetize catchy things than Biblical

truths. It is. So just because someone is a “pastor,” just because someone is in a position of authority doesn’t mean they’re teaching you the Bible, doesn’t mean they’re teaching you what Jesus says. We need to know what Jesus says so we can hold the teachings of the people we’re under, the influence—so that we can hold them together and know that it’s actually true and not just something that’s catchy. Elsewhere Jesus says that they are wolves in sheep’s clothing. They’re not out for your good, but for their own good. That’s the first thing we need to know in this passage. It’s point number one, beware of thieves.

Okay let’s keep reading, verse 6, it says this, **“Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them. Therefore, Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture.”** So twice he says, “I am the gate,” or if you’re reading in the ESV it says, “I am the door.” Well, what does that mean? Well, here’s a picture of a sheep pen or a sheep fold back Jesus’s time (Image of sheep pen). This is in the middle east, and this is what they would look like. There’s this rock formation that’s circular that serves as a wall, and then there’s this opening. But if you notice here with this specific sheep pen—which is true of all sheep pens at the time—there’s no gate. There’s no door. Which is problematic because we like to think that the countryside is just super peaceful, and there’s streams of living water and there’s green grass everywhere. But it wasn’t that peaceful, and it wasn’t that safe. There were threats everywhere. There were mountain lions, foxes, coyotes, hyenas, there were a lot of things that desired to take out the sheep. So, this is why, at night, once the shepherd had gathered up the sheep and got them in the sheep pen, he wouldn’t just lock up

the gate and leave. The shepherd himself would lay down as the gate for the sheep. The shepherd himself would serve as the protection for the sheep. It was as if to say, “If you’re going to go after my sheep, you’re going to have to get at me first.” And he would lay down there to take out whatever was trying to take out the sheep. Which is the second thing we can learn from this passage, it’s this. Jesus is our protection.

2. Jesus is our protection.

That’s what Jesus is saying when he’s saying, “I’m the gate. I’m the door.” He’s saying, “I’m your protection.” But you know, this wasn’t always the case at the time. Not every shepherd did this, because there would be shepherds who would be out with their sheep, and a hyena would come by, and they’d get nervous for their own safety—which I understand. I mean, have you ever seen Lion King? Those things are messed up! Like, if I saw a hyena, I’d be afraid too. So, what they would do, these shepherds, is they’d find their least important lamb—the lamb that they could just toss aside and move on with their life and it wouldn’t be that big of a deal—they would find the least important lamb, and it would become a sacrificial lamb. They’d toss it to the hyena and the hyena would go all national geographic on that lamb, and then they’d get away. It was a great move for the shepherd, not a great move for the sheep.

What Jesus is saying here is, he’s saying, “That’s not me. That’s not who I am. Because when the enemy comes, I don’t toss you out there to die. When the enemy comes, I stand between you and the enemy, because when sin desires to take you out, when death desired to destroy you, when Satan desired to steal you from my hand, I didn’t take you and throw you out to die. Instead, I stood in between you and your enemy.” And he stood in between them like this (Nate

holds out his arms as if crucified on a cross) on the cross of Jesus Christ. He said, “You can take me out, you’re sure not taking them out!” And he was put to death so that we could live. And if he is your door, if he is your gate, that means you’re protected forever, because he wasn’t going to let the enemy get to you.

You know, it reminds me of a moment this week that I didn’t feel all that safe, because I stayed at a hotel in an area that I hadn’t been in all that before. And there were two things I noticed about this room. In fact, they stood out to me so much that I took a picture of them. And, uh, here’s a picture of my hotel room (Image of hotel room appears). And the first thing that stood out, is—I don’t know if you can tell—there’s no smoke detector there. So, I took this picture because I was planning on sending it to Marriott and just say hey—or if I died, there’s proof that I died because there was no smoke detector. But the other thing that stood out to me was something that I had never seen before, and I wish I had a closer picture, but I don’t, we just have to zoom in. And here’s what it is. It was on the door, right above the locks, you can’t totally read it, but this is what it said, it said, “For your safety, make sure the door is double locked.” Not single locked, double locked. Now I’d never seen that before, so I started to wonder, hmm why is that sign there? And I have a master’s degree so I put this mind of mine to work, and I was like, “Why would they put that sign on that door?” And here’s what I conclude, it’s because they’ve had a problem with people breaking in these doors. And that just really put me at ease, you know? Because I might just die because there’s a fire and I don’t have a smoke alarm. But even if there’s no fire I’m probably still going to die because people are just breaking in left and right in this hotel. I was kind of terrified. So, what I did after seeing that, is I was like, “Okay I’m going to double lock the door.” Because my only hope of safety was that the door works. And

what I really wanted to do is I wanted to lean up against the door all night, just like please hold, please hold, please hold, please hold!

You know what I didn't do? I had no inclination to just prop that door open. I had no inclination to just be like, "Oh, they're overreacting. It's fine." I had never been in that area before. I had to assume that they knew better than I did. See, here's the problem for so many of us, we don't believe we're in danger. You're going throughout your life and you're like, "I'm fine, my life's going great! There's no danger around me, I'm awesome on my own, I'm good on my own. I don't need any help." Meanwhile there are warnings all across Scripture more blatantly obvious than that door. 1 Peter 5:8 says this, **"Be alert and of sober mind; your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."** Some of us read that and assume it's an overreaction. You're like, "Man, my life's okay!" But the problem is when you live in the wild, your independence will kill you because you have an enemy that wants to steal from you, kill you, and destroy everything good in your life. If that's true, what do you need to do? How do you stay safe? James 4:7, **"Submit yourselves then to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."** Allow yourself to be protected by submitting yourself to the leadership of Jesus, because you better lean up against that door like your life depends on it because it does. It better hold for you.

The good news is 1 Peter 5:8 says your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion. I just want to remind you this morning, your enemy that prowls around *like* a lion cannot come against the Lion of Judah. He wins every single time, because point number two, Jesus is our protection.

Let's keep reading, we're going to read verse 9 and then we're going to read verse 10. **"I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full."** So, there's a stark comparison here in this passage. And that verse, John 10:10 is one of my favorite passages in all of Scripture, "the thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy, but I have come that they may have life and have it to the full." What I realize is that the last part of that translation, it's not best. If you read the ESV it might say that you might have an abundant life. Which is better, because that last phrase where it says, "Have it to the full," it really means that you might have a surplus of life. So, it's not a full life, it's an overflowing life. It's a "you might have so much life that you don't know how to contain it." You can't possibly contain it. Your life is going to be so good, so abundant that it's not "full," it's overflowing.

Now on the other hand, if you don't follow me, if you follow the enemy, you've just got to know this. He's going to steal from you, he's going to kill you, and he's going to destroy everything good in your life. And if that's true you better know who you're following. This is the third thing that we can learn for this passage and it's this: Jesus is the only way to an abundant life.

3. Jesus is the only way to an abundant life.

He's the only way to an abundant life. And just for clarity's sake, in this passage Jesus isn't just saying he's the only gate to eternal life, there's an I Am statement coming the next few weeks where Jesus specially says, "I am the way to eternal life." This passage isn't just speaking about eternal, but life here and now. Because that phrase in verse 9, where it says they will come in and

go out. It's a really common Old Testament expression, just for every day, ordinary, routine days of our lives, the activity of our life. In fact, here's one example—I could read a bunch of them—here's Psalm 121, **“The Lord will keep you from all harm, he will watch over your life, the Lord will watch over your coming and going, both now and forevermore.”** You see that, it says now and forevermore. Not just eternity, but also about here, now. Because you see, while the enemy wants to steal eternity from you, he also wants to steal this life from you. Conversely, while Jesus wants to give you an eternal life later, he wants to give you an abundant life now. This is what he's saying, and if that's true, you better know who you're following. Because if you're following the wrong person, it's going to have dire consequences for you.

The best modern example that I can think of is something that was called the fire festival. And you've maybe seen a documentary on it, there's a few out there, and it became really notorious because the fire festival was presented as the music festival of all music festivals. Like, this was going to be absolutely legendary. They said that they had rented out their own island in the Caribbean, and it was just going to be this unbelievable experience for you. They're advertising, they had really good-looking people on yachts and jet skis and were saying, “If you come to this music festival, this is what you're going to look like, this is what you're going to get to do.” They even promoted your own cabana on the island. You'd have your own private cabana on the beach, and then they also said this about the food. It was going to be the best food you could possibly imagine. They said this, that the food would be “uniquely authentic island cuisine. Local seafood, Caribbean style sushi, and even a pig roast.” So, people bought it. I mean, they bought plane tickets from all over the world, took a boat to get there, spent thousands of dollars on tickets to this music festival because they could not wait to eat this amazing food, and when

they got there, this is what was served. Two pieces of bread and two pieces of cheese with some lettuce and tomatoes. And then they were told that they were going to get their own private cabana on the beach, so they go to their living arrangements, and this is what it was. Those are FEMA disaster tents. This is what they were greeted with. And more than that—there was no concert. There was no festival. The whole thing was a fraud. It was false. It was a lie, because the producers of it didn't want to give them anything. They just wanted to take from them! In one hand they said, "Here! Here! Here! Take it, take it, take it!" But in reality, there was nothing for them. They promised the world and left them with nothing, because they were thieves and robbers just looking to steal from these people.

You know the thing about that example is there's just been one picture that's come to mind as I've been thinking about who the enemy is and what Satan wants to do in your life, and it's that of a bull fighter, a matador. I think this is what Satan looks like, I think this is what Satan will do in your life. He says, "Hey, if you will just free yourself from all these sexual rules within the church, all those regulations that are weighing you down, if you just pursue whatever your sexual desires tell you to do, you're going to find happiness." So, then you pursue what your sexual urges tell you to do, and then once you get there, he's ripped out happiness from you. Or he'll tell you, "If you just get more stuff, if you just have more money in your bank account, you're going to be more content. You'll finally be at peace." So, you work, work, work, work and try to get more money, more money, and then you do, and then once you get there, he's ripped out contentment for you. Or he'll tell you, "Man the problem with your life is that you're not in it with all the influential people. If you just get in it with the right crowds and be friends with the right people, that's when you really feel content in your life." So, you work really hard to be

known by the right people, you get an important job, drive a better car, and now you're in it with the cool people, with the influential people. And once you get there, he's ripped out contentment from you. Because here's what he cannot do. He cannot give you joy. He cannot give you peace. He cannot give you satisfaction. He cannot give you salvation. All he knows is to steal those things from you.

The good news is, we know someone who can give you joy, who can give you peace, who can give you safety, and satisfaction, and salvation, and it's the name of Jesus. Because while you have an enemy who promises you the word and hands you nothing, while your enemy writes checks he can't cash, we know of someone who has paid for your life in full. Who has paid for your joy in full, who's paid for your safety in full. And if he's promised that he will provide it, he will fulfill it. In fact, Romans 10:11 says this about Jesus, that, "**Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.**" See, we will never be embarrassed by following him, by trusting in him, because when we get to that gate, that entrance of joy, safety, satisfaction, contentment, salvation, whatever it is, we're not going to be turned away. Because we didn't believe in lieu. We didn't have a false ticket. We didn't believe in a fraud, we trusted in the one who is the gate. The one who actually can allow us in and out. Cause point number three, Jesus is the only way to an abundant life.

So, in summary, the three points today are beware of thieves, point number two Jesus is our protection, and point number three Jesus is the only way to an abundant life. You know, studying this passage this week, I did what I always do when I preach, and I study the Greek and Hebrew. Now, just to be honest I went to seminary I took Greek and Hebrew, I don't remember a lick of

it. But I do remember how to use the internet, which is helpful! There's a website called blueletterbible.org, you can figure it and you can know just about as much as I do. So, I went there and clicked on the word for "door" or "gate" and when you click on that word it shows you where else it's used in Scripture. And there's another place that I found really interesting that it was used in the Gospels. It's used in a story that Jesus told later in Matthew 25, and it's a story about a wedding feast. And it's talking about that there were 10 bridesmaids that were waiting to be picked up for this wedding. They're waiting for the bridegroom, and these ten bridesmaids were just waiting for him to show up. And Scripture says that he didn't come, didn't come, didn't come, and they had to wait and wait and wait. Finally, night fell and at that point they needed their lamps. And Scripture says that five of them were wise, they had brought extra oil for their lamps to stay ready. And then five of them were foolish. And once night fell, they didn't have oil for their lamps, they couldn't light their way. So, what they did is they went out into the city to buy some more oils so that they could be ready for when the bridegroom came. This is what Jesus says next, Matthew 25:10, **“But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord, ’they said, ‘open the door for us!’ But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’ Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.”**

Friends, I want you to hear today the door for joy, the door for hope, the door for satisfaction, the door for safety, the door for salvation is wide open for you. Right now. But one day it won't be. One day the door will be shut, and I want you on the right side of the door. For the rest of your life, you can't say you didn't know. I'm telling you loud and clear right now. One day the door

will be shut, but I'm telling you loud and clear right now the door is flung wide open! And Jesus is saying, "Come on in! I have an abundant life for you now and forevermore. I have joy for you, I have peace for you, I have safety for you, I have satisfaction for you. I've got fulfillment for you. Everything you want is in me, and you have access to it right now." But friend, one day you won't. I just want to say it again, I want you on the right side of the door. I know it's so easy to believe the enemy's lies, that he's got more for you, that he's got better for you. Friend, he just wants to steal from you, kill you, and destroy every good thing in your life. But you have access to the entrance to the one who will provide all of that and more. It's not a lie. It's the truth, you can take it to the bank, because what Jesus says he will accomplish. Won't you come to him now? Let me pray that you would.

God, I know it's so easy to believe the lie of the enemy. He'll tell us that you're keeping us from something, that you're keeping us from something good, that you're keeping us from the life that we've always dreamed of. Father, through the power of your holy spirit would you prevent us from believing those lies. Would we run from the, would we run from the thieves and the robbers of our life who just want to take from us and give nothing to us? And instead, would we pursue the one who has given us everything. You've provided your son Jesus on the cross so that we might have entrance to the gate of salvation. God, thank you that the door is open right now. You've given all of us an opportunity right now to come home to you. We can enter into your presence where there is fulness of joy forever. I just pray if there's anyone who right now is on the wrong side of the gate, on the wrong side of the door, that your Holy Spirit would prompt them to come in and meet Jesus, the one who can provide them an abundant life now and

forevermore, because he is alive and with us and for us. And it's in the powerful name of Jesus that we pray. Amen.