

“The Door Is Calling” – Pr Jim Sprengle Easter 4 – April 26, 2026

- I. **John 10:9-10** – ⁹I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.
- I. **When some people think of heaven**, they envision Peter and pearly gates.
 - a. Many jokes start out with someone dying and going to heaven and Peter either stops them or lets them into heaven.
 - i. Unfortunately, humor can sometimes turn into the only knowledge some people know about the Bible, and they really believe that Peter is the one who vets people before they enter.
 - ii. As these stories get told from generation to generation, the average person only sees heaven as a bunch of soft, pillowy clouds... and some old bald guy standing at a welcome desk... reviewing your life's deeds – both good and bad... and if you did good things, the gates will be opened for you to enter.
 - iii. No, Saint Peter is not the gate keeper after you die and go to heaven... as Jesus clears that up for us in our Gospel reading today.
 - b. I'm not an expert in ancient middle eastern sheep herding, but many of the techniques used to raise sheep are still practiced today.
 - i. A shepherd spends a lot of time with the sheep flock, and the sheep know him and his voice.
 - ii. Many flocks were brought in from the field into a type of pen so the shepherd could keep them safe from predators at night... except shepherds would often bring several flocks together into one pen.
 1. In the morning, the shepherd would call his sheep and they would follow him, but the others would stay behind because they did not know his voice.
 - iii. Now, the first portion of our reading has to do with the Jesus being the Good Shepherd, and His sheep listen to Him.
 - c. In verses 7-10, Jesus takes a different approach because it says they didn't understand what He was trying to tell them.
 - i. So, Jesus begins with a similar concept of shepherds and sheep, but this time He explains that He is the gate or the door by which the sheep have the freedom to go in and out to have safety and find pasture.
 - ii. Remember, Jesus is talking to the Pharisees who had just rejected the man who was born blind and told him not to come back to the temple... so Jesus is calling out their gatekeeping on the one hand, and on the other hand that they mislead and steal people away from Him.

iii. Finally, He makes the claim, “I am the door” or the gate... more than the Shepherd who leads... He is the way by which we are saved... only Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, as we read a couple of chapters later in John 14:6.

1. By the way, when Jesus makes statements with “I am” – He intentionally points to the name of God in the burning bush of Exodus 3 – as God tells Moses His name is “I AM” – the underlying message to the Pharisees and others here is that Jesus is claiming to be divine... which is why they wanted to kill Him.

d. The door, or the gate, for us is Jesus Christ and His work on the cross.

i. It’s not Saint Peter’s voice we hear calling us through the gate of salvation... it is the voice of our Good Shepherd Jesus... and He calls us through Himself on the cross.

ii. Not only do we go through Jesus... but through Jesus on the cross.

iii. In fact, the real Peter wrote that, “[Christ] Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree... By His wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” (1 Pet 2:24-25)

II. **Jesus calls us to follow Him through the cross.**

a. It’s more than just going to the cross... we go through the cross and are joined to His death... and to His resurrection and new life.

b. Just think, Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5) – just as Jesus says today, “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved...” (v. 9)

i. Yes, He absolutely died for us, but His death becomes our death, and His resurrection becomes our resurrection when we are baptized into them... not only do we receive a new spirit as we come to life now, but one day we will physically rise in glory just like Jesus on Easter morning.

c. Yet even in the blessings we have in Christ, our lives still reflect the process of going through the cross... as much as Easter is our greatest blessing of the year, what has happened since?

i. Many of you have faced trials, deaths, illnesses, and tribulation... and Easter was only three weeks ago?

ii. These trials and struggles all come because of sin... the consequences of sin that Adam and Eve opened another type of door for... the door to eternal separation and death.

iii. The blessing for all of us who believe in Jesus as our Lord and Savior is that the ultimate consequence of sin has no power over us... because our Good Shepherd leads us through sin to the other side.

- iv. In a very intimate way, Jesus knows the struggles of a broken world, and He is bringing His victory on the cross into our struggles... more and more He shows us that He is the only gate or door for us.

III. **Yet, people don't like hearing there's only one door.**

- a. People think they should be able to pick whatever door they want, right?
 - i. They say we're all on a spiritual journey, and your truth is your truth, but my truth is my truth... as long as I'm true to myself (you know, the silly stuff people say to justify their views).
 - ii. Or, I'm a pretty good person, so that should be enough to get Saint Peter to open up the door for me.
 - iii. Or maybe, nobody knows the right way to heaven, but it cannot be as exclusive as Jesus alone – God is more loving than that.
- b. I'm sorry but the Bible is our guide for faith and life, and it clearly says that Jesus is the only way, the only truth, and the only life... and no one comes to the Father except through Him alone.
 - i. All other doors are false.
 - ii. All other voices that call you are false.
- c. Many of us are tempted by the voices that call us to false doors... and they become familiar when we listen to them over and over again.
 - i. The voices that say it's really for our good and our family that we work so much and aren't really there for them... or the voices that say our kids need a well-rounded life and their favorite sport is worth the sacrifice of missing church... or the voices that say if we're not happy, then our partner must be the problem and it's okay to end our marriage because we deserve to be happy.
 - ii. There are voices clamoring for attention in the world that are doing their best to drown out the voice of our Shepherd.
- d. The unfortunate truth is that we have not ignored these voices or walked away from them, we've listened and gone toward them.
 - i. We think green pastures are found on the other side of them, but they are all a mirage... a trap to steal us away from our Shepherd and good that He offers.
 - ii. And this is the point in time where we know that only God can call us home... and we repent... we turn away from those strange voices that lead us astray and we turn back home to Jesus our Good Shepherd.
 - iii. We go through the door of the cross again... and our sins are forgiven... we are restored to life in His name...
- e. There is only one door: Jesus on the cross.
 - i. We are constantly being called by Him, and the blessing comes when all those other voices are silenced by His Word of truth and life.
 - ii. There is no other way, but He wants us to enter through the cross and be connected to Him forevermore.

- iii. Remember, you enter through water and Spirit, the baptismal waters that give you new life and a connection to His death and to His resurrection. (John 3:5; Romans 6:3-5)
- iv. Through your faith and by God's grace, the Door is always open... and the Door is always calling. Amen