

Sunday Sermon

3/24/24

Series: I AM

Passage: John 10:1-10

Title: I AM the Door

Good morning, Church! I'm so glad you are here this morning. If you are visiting or exploring questions about faith, I want to let you know that you are welcome. The message of Jesus is a message of hope and life. You have a God in heaven who loves you, who knows you, and who wants a relationship with you.

We are a few weeks into our series "I AM." If you are exploring your faith this morning this is a great series for you. This is a series concerning the identity of Jesus Christ. I AM is a reference to God's name. And Jesus uses the phrase "I AM" throughout his ministry as claim of his divinity. That he was more than simply a good moral teacher, but God himself, made incarnate, who had come to the world with a message of hope and salvation through him.

Two weeks ago, we looked at Jesus' first I AM statement. In John 6 he says, **"I AM the Bread of Life, whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."** In our lives we desperately search for satisfaction and fulfillment. But no matter what we have or what we strive for we are never able to fully satisfy the deepest desires of our heart because that desire is a desire for life. And in that Jesus encounters us saying, "I love you. Your search for life is a search for me. Only I can bring satisfaction to your heart."

Last week, Preston led us to John 8, where Jesus said, **"I AM the Light of the World. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but have the light of life."** In a world that is desperately dark apart from God, the light of God is attractive as it shines in the darkness. Why? Because in it is life. And in that we hear Jesus' invitation, "Come follow me."

This week we come to our third I AM of Jesus in John 10. So let's read it together this morning, John 10:1-10. [Read and pray]

I saw a post by someone on social media this week that said this: "Hello. I am an atheist. I have not been myself recently and my friends have even taken notice. Everyone says that finding God will help me, but how do I find him?" A great question. How do I find God? Just for kicks I started reading the responses. And what stuck out was the vast plurality of thought when it came to one's "truth" about finding God. Here are some of the responses:

- 1) Sit still for a long, long time. Listen. Wait. Repeat.
- 2) Put your trust in the bible.
- 3) Obey the church.
- 4) You can't find God.

- 5) Look for a community of people looking to improve their lives and are praying for themselves. Faith is coming to me. See where that leads you.
- 6) Don't just seek God in one place. You have a blank slate. You will find a philosophy or a religion that resonates with you.

Question: um what? I have six answers here that, not only can't all of them be true, but they contradict one another. If I sit still for a long time will I find God? Or can't I find God? Is finding God a matter of obeying the church? Or can I find God in a hindu temple? Which is it? They can't both be true.

Beloved, hear my heart this morning because you are loved. We live in a world and in a culture which tells us that truth is relative and that we can make up our own paths to get to God, but Jesus says, "That's not true. ***I AM the Door.***" If you are listening this morning wondering, how to I get to God? It's not about being good enough, or doing the right things, or going to church enough, or reading the bible enough, or being in community enough, or finding your own path, or sitting in the corner and humming. It's about Jesus.

I love what Preston said last week, **Jesus is not a signpost that points you toward salvation, he is salvation. He is the Door through which we enter to get to the Father. The question is:** What will you do with God's Son?

Now to put this in context we need to understand the context of John 10. Often throughout scripture, especially in the OT, the metaphor of shepherding is used as a picture of the relationship of God's people (the sheep) with their spiritual head (the shepherd). Many times, the Shepherd is God himself. We see this dynamic in the Psalms. Psalm 23:1 says, "***The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.***" And Psalm 79:13, "***But we are your people, the sheep of your pasture.***"

And in Isaiah 40:11, "***He [God] will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.***"

But sometimes the term shepherd was also ascribed to religious leaders. That is actually why I'm called a pastor. Did you know that Pastor is just the latin word for "shepherd." Pastors are supposed to be shepherds, specifically undershepherds of THE Shepherd. And as undershepherds, our main responsibilities are to lead, and to care for, and to protect the flock of God.

One cool picture of this is that it was not uncommon for shepherds in the Near-East to sleep in the doorway of their own sheep pens – keeping bad guys out and the sheep in – to protect their sheep. It's the idea that "If you want to get to them you have to come through me." The problem was that the religious leaders weren't doing their job. They had become blinded to God's truth. John 9 is all about Jesus proving that he is the Light of the World by opening the eyes of a man born blind. Only when this man presented himself to the religious leaders, they couldn't accept it because they were focused, not of the heart of God, but on religious conformity.

And Jesus for sure had a problem with this, but that actually wasn't the main issue. Jesus' problem was not so much that they were blinded to God's truth which was sitting right in front of them, every person alive struggles with that. Rather he took issue that, in their blindness, they claimed to be able to see. **(verse)**

That was the issue. Religious leaders claiming to see but they could not see. Claiming to know but they did not know. Claiming to have a heart near to God while their heart was far from him. That was what Jesus took issue with.

That's the context of John 10. Jesus is teaching that there are legitimate shepherds who are leading others in truth, and there are others who are not there for the good of the sheep but instead are pretenders. They are thieves and robbers who steal people away from God to their harm.

Some of you who have been here at the church a while might remember that a little over 10 years ago my house was robbed one evening while Becky and I were here at the church at youth group. When they broke into my house, they didn't enter my house through the door. They took a ladder from my garage and climbed in through a window. Why? Because they were illegitimate. They had no business being there.

And when a thief breaks into your home, they aren't there for good. Like Jesus says, **"the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy."** By the time they left, my home was in shambles. Even my dogs were traumatized by the experience. I still remember years later, after we had sold that house and moved to our current one, I came home late one night after Becky had gone to bed. All the lights were off, and when I had unlocked the door and come in, my dog was peering at my shadowy figure from around the corner growling. Because it was late, I didn't want to make any sound, so I knelt down and tried snapping my fingers to get her to come to me. She wouldn't do it. It was not until she heard my voice that she recognized me and then the tail started wagging and she was willing to come greet me.

Jesus says, **"My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."** - John 10:27 - Do you get it?

Question: Is the voice of God strange to you? Do you know it? Know what he sounds like? Are you his? Do you follow him?

Those listening to Jesus didn't get it. So he tells them plainly, **"I AM the Door of the sheep."** He says, You want to find God? You want to be known by him? Filled by him. Find the life you long for? I AM. Those that came before me, those who claim to have ears to hear and claim to have revelation from God but who lead the sheep away from his Truth and Word, all the messianic pretenders - the things in this world, the people in this world, and many religions of this world - that promise salvation and life, they're thieves. Robbers. It's not truth. They won't get you to God. **"I AM the Door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."**

Today is Palm Sunday. Earlier we read the Palm Sunday narrative where people were saying of Jesus, “Hosanna!” which literally means, “We pray, save us!” Jesus is saying, “I am the Gate. I can save you and give you life.” That is a Messianic claim. People were waiting for God’s Messiah, but it was the true sheep who were listening for the voice of the Shepherd.

Now look at this: Psalm 118 is a Messianic psalm and in it the Psalmist prays, **“Open to me the gates of righteousness.”** The Psalmist is talking about God’s salvation, finding God. And in that God says, **“This is the gate of the Lord through which the righteous may enter...The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”** The stone is the gate. Who is this talking about? Who is the stone? It’s Jesus, who on Good Friday would become the **“living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious.”** – 1 Pt. 2:4. That’s what Good Friday is about. Jesus is the door of salvation through which we enter and get to the Father.

That’s good news. God has provided a way to salvation, to life, for humanity through Jesus Christ the Son.

But listen to me: Here’s where our error is, when we look at salvation and say, “I don’t like that. It’s exclusive. I don’t want that way. I want another way, or I want there to be multiple ways. Multiple doors.”

Beloved, listen to me this morning, because you are loved. The point is that there is a door. Without Jesus, there is no door. There is no bridge to God. In our sin, humanity is without hope and without God. We are separated from him, separated from life. There’s an endless chasm between us. But because we are loved by him, God in Christ built a bridge and came to us. He took care of sin so that our relationship with him could be restored.

Beloved, he’s the door. Go through it. He’s the bridge. Cross it.

Do I need to fully understand everything in order to cross the bridge to enter through the door? No. Just like we don’t need to understand everything in order to drive a car. And we don’t need to understand everything in order to use a computer.

We just need to know the truth, that not all roads lead to God, that there are Messianic and religious and ideological imposters who claim a path to life. But they are just that, imposters. Jesus is the door. God’s bridge to our salvation.

In closing this morning. I think it might be helpful to address this issue of exclusivity. Because it is one of our culture’s main points of contention with the gospel. But truth is by nature exclusive. And in that, I would argue that when it comes to truth, we like exclusivity.

We’ve heard in the news all the problems that Boeing is having with their aircraft. We hear stuff like that, and we don’t like it. We want the engineers to build their planes according to exclusive truth. $2 + 2$ must equal 4. Our lives depend on it. The wings must be designed just so. They need to be attached at a precise spot and in a precise way on the side of the

airplane. The engine needs to be built, not close, perfectly. The landing gear need to be built and attached, not poorly, not even good enough. Precisely.

Can you imagine what would happen if the engineer said, “Eh, truth is relative. Let’s move the wings toward the cockpit 30 ft. Would anyone fly in that airplane? What if the engineer’s approach was, “I didn’t like what the math was saying about the landing gear, so I built them my way based on how my design made me feel.” Anyone lining up to get on that plane?

Why? Because truth is exclusive. And we want it for that reason, because we know without it the results can be catastrophic.

Our buildings and skyscrapers. Absolutely amazing feats of engineering. Why are they safe? Because of exclusive truth.

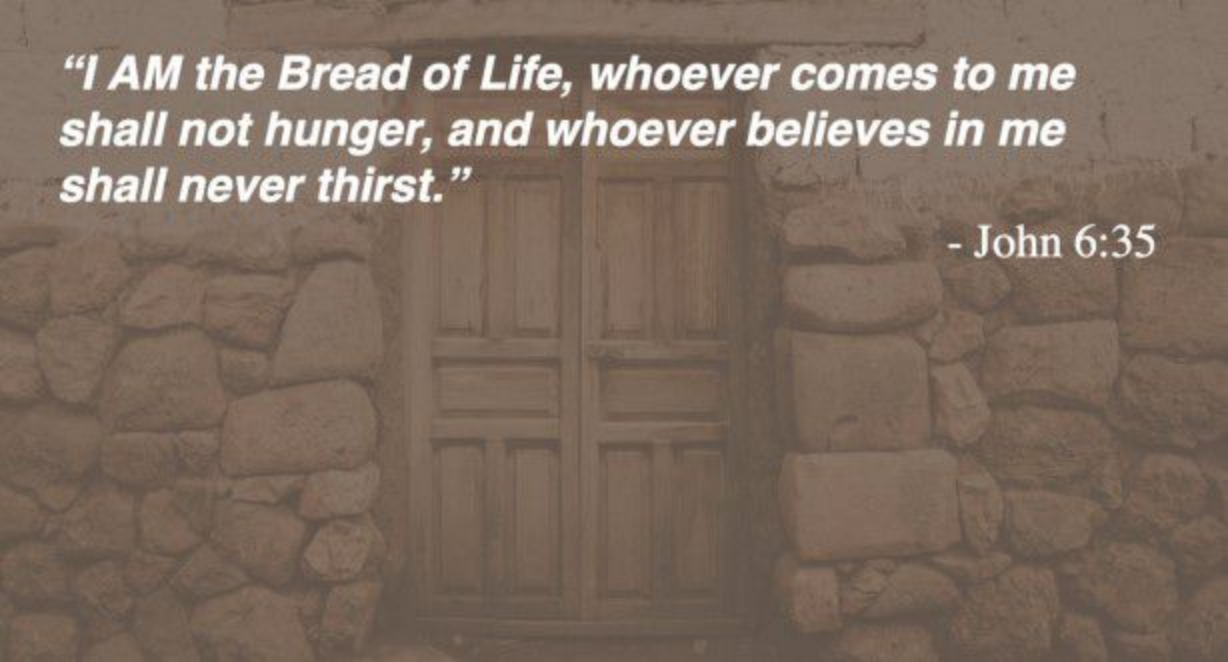
Our bridges spanning over land and water. Why are they safe? Because of exclusive truth. A while back I was talking to one of our church members who works in architecture, and she was commenting on the weight of responsibility of her job because the numbers had to be exactly right. Because to build something upon error leads to devastation.

We know this. Therefore, we like exclusivity. When we sit in a chair, we want to know it will hold us up. When we fly, we want to know that the plane was built correctly. We want our engineers, and architects, our scientists, our medical professionals to be fixated, absolutely intolerant, and narrow-minded concerning issues of truth.

Exclusivity is not the problem. But accepting God’s truth is often harder because we need to accept it by faith. Not blind faith, not dumb faith, Jesus has given us plenty of reasons to believe in him. But it is faith nonetheless. Our passage this morning began with Jesus saying these words, “I tell you the truth.” He says, I am the door. I am the door to salvation. I am the door to full and abundant life.” Beloved, the Shepherd is calling you by name. Do you know his voice?

I AM



A photograph of a rustic stone wall with a wooden door. The wall is made of large, irregular, light-colored stones. The door is made of dark wood with a grid pattern. The text is overlaid on the top left of the image.

“I AM the Bread of Life, whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”

- John 6:35

“I AM the Bread of Life, whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”

- John 6:35

“I AM the Light of the World. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but have the light of life.”

- John 8:12

I AM



How Do I Find God?

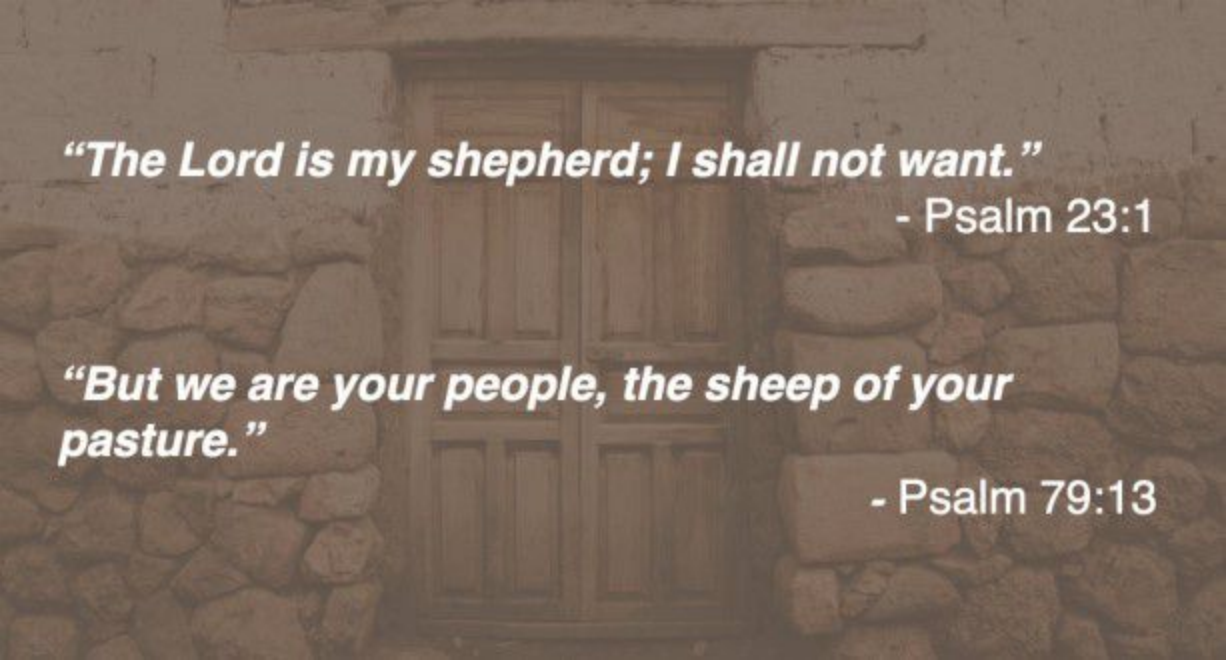
- 1) Sit still for a long, long time. Listen. Wait. Repeat.
- 2) Put your trust in the bible.
- 3) Obey the church.
- 4) You can't find God.
- 5) Look for a community of people looking to improve their lives and are praying for themselves. Faith is coming to me. See where that leads you.
- 6) Don't just seek God in one place. You have a blank slate. You will find a philosophy or a religion that resonates with you.

How Do I Find God?

Jesus:

“I AM the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and go in and out and find pasture.”

- John 10:9

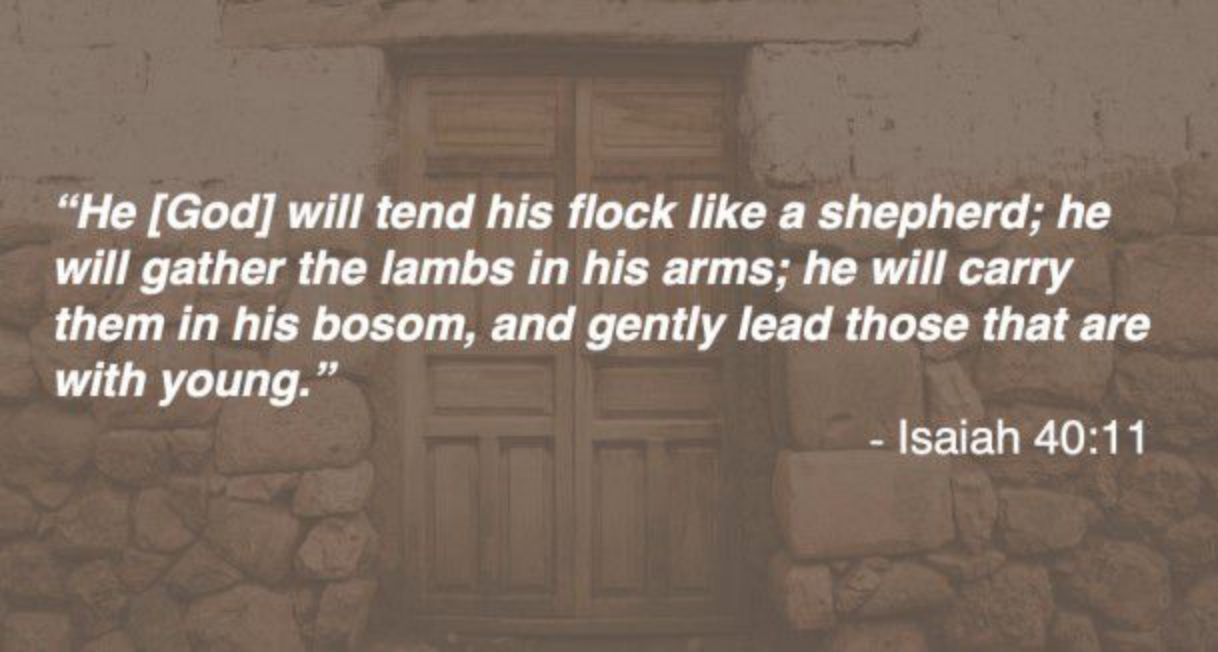
A photograph of a rustic stone wall with a wooden door. The wall is made of irregular, light-colored stones. The door is made of dark wood with a grid pattern. The text is overlaid on the image in white, bold, italicized font.

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”

- Psalm 23:1

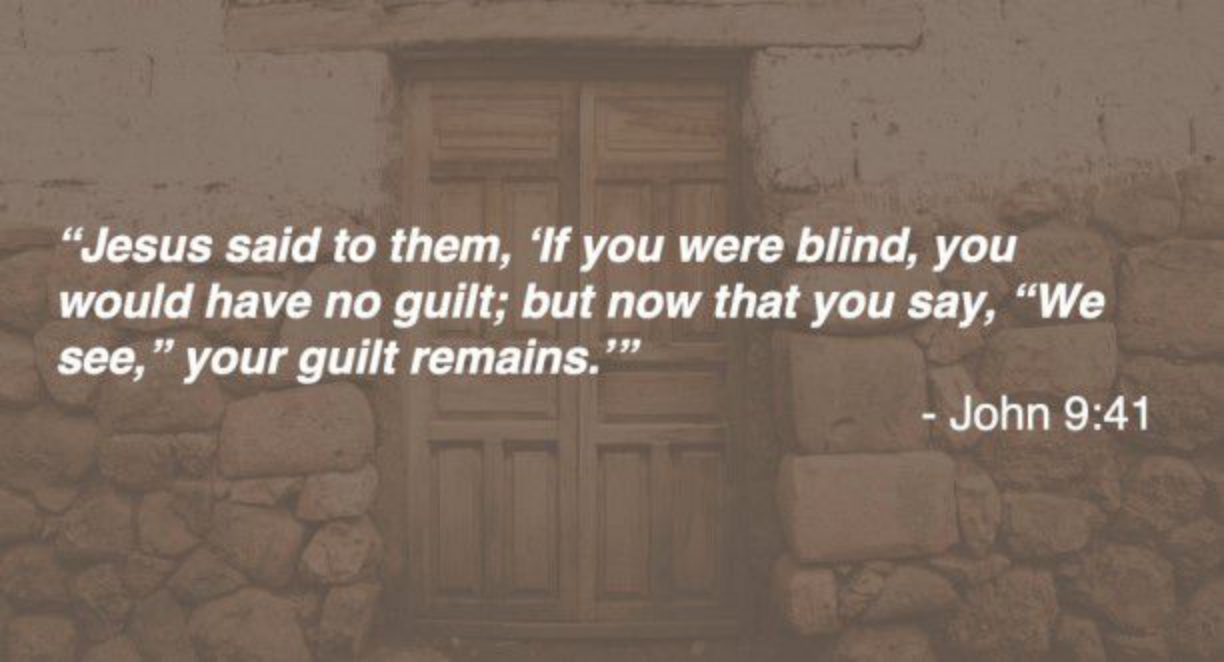
“But we are your people, the sheep of your pasture.”

- Psalm 79:13

A photograph of a rustic stone wall with a wooden door. The wall is made of irregular, light-colored stones. The door is made of dark wood with a panel design. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

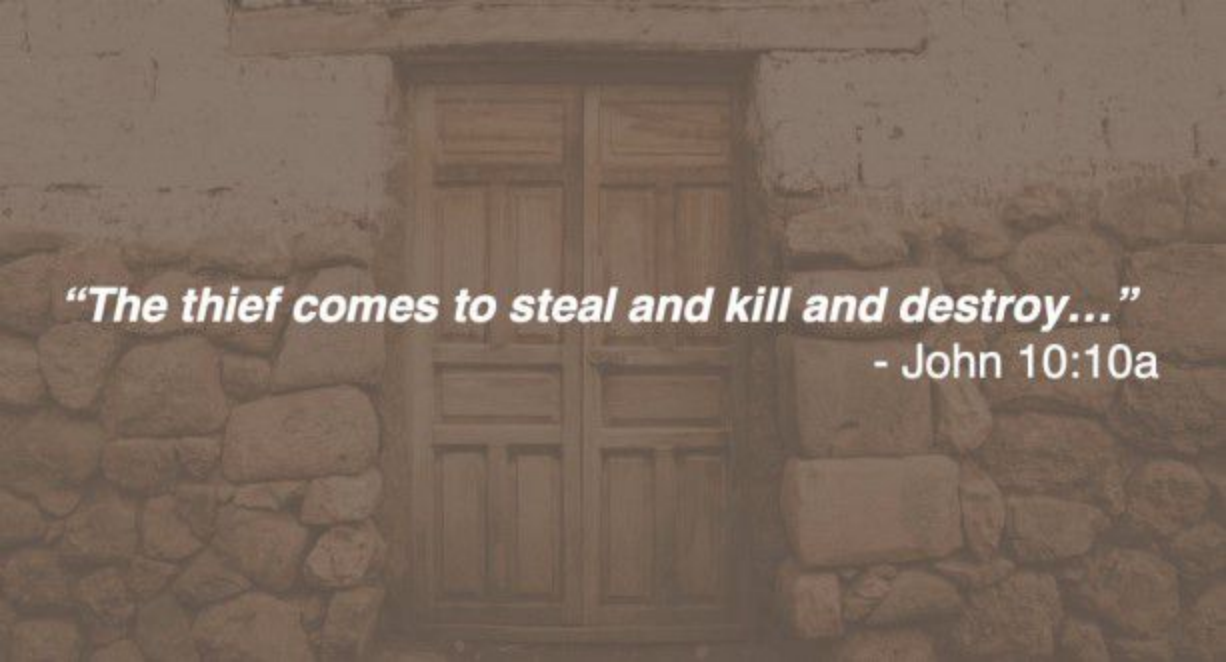
“He [God] will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.”

- Isaiah 40:11

A photograph of a stone wall with a wooden door. The wall is made of large, irregular stones. The door is made of dark wood with a panel design. The text is overlaid on the image in white, bold, italicized font.

“Jesus said to them, ‘If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.’”

- John 9:41

A photograph of a stone wall with a wooden door. The wall is made of rough-hewn, light-colored stones. The door is made of dark wood with a panel design. The image has a dark, semi-transparent overlay.

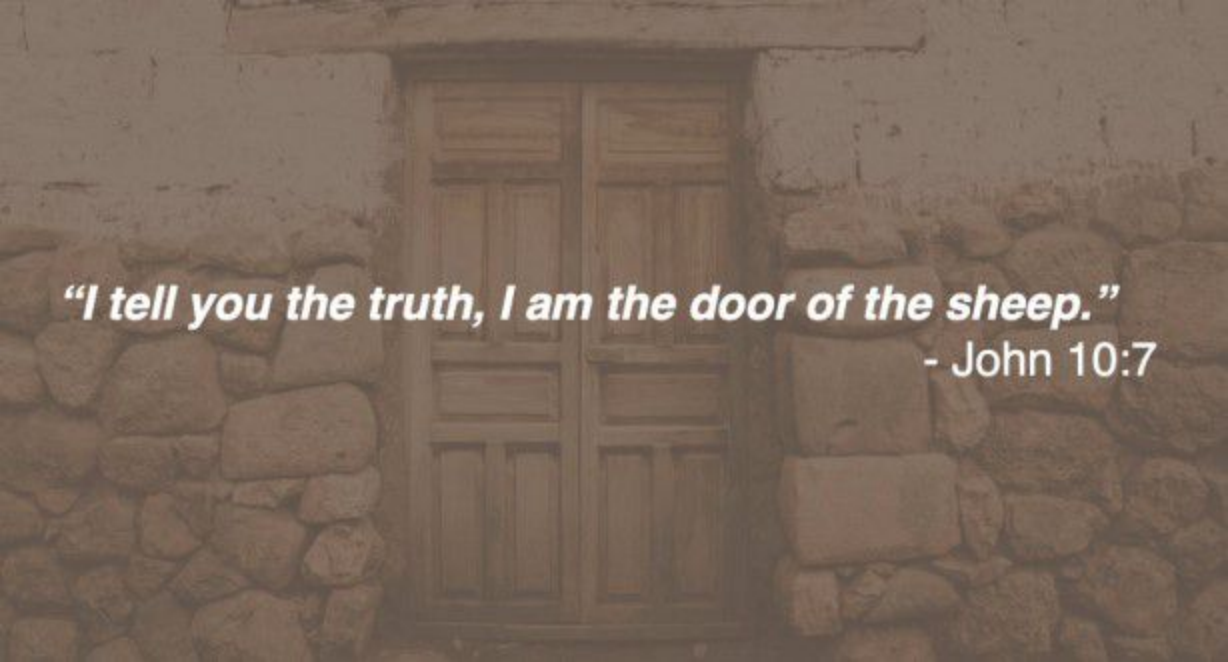
“The thief comes to steal and kill and destroy...”

- John 10:10a

A photograph of a rustic stone wall with a wooden door. The wall is made of irregular, light-colored stones. The door is made of dark wood with a grid pattern. The text is overlaid on the image.

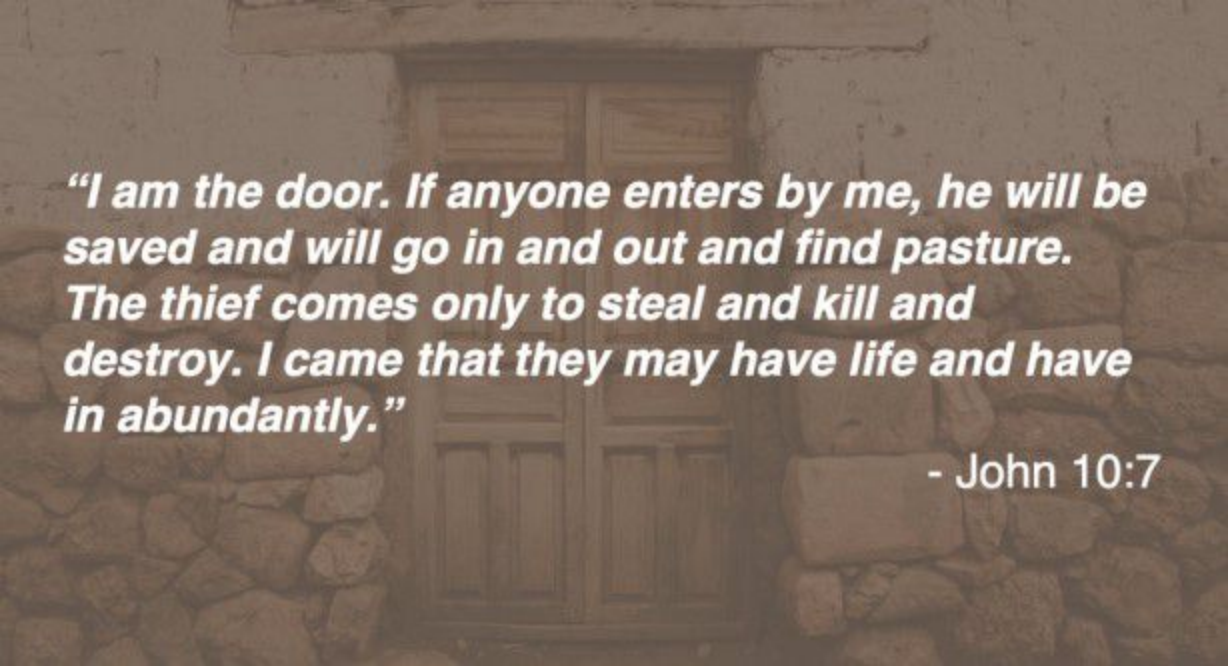
***“My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them,
and they follow me.”***

- John 10:27

A photograph of a rustic wooden double door set within a stone wall. The door is made of light-colored wood with a paneled design. The wall is constructed from large, irregular stones. The entire image has a semi-transparent brown overlay.

“I tell you the truth, I am the door of the sheep.”

- John 10:7

A photograph of a rustic stone wall with a wooden door. The door is made of dark wood with a panel design. The wall is constructed from irregular, light-colored stones. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

“I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have in abundantly.”

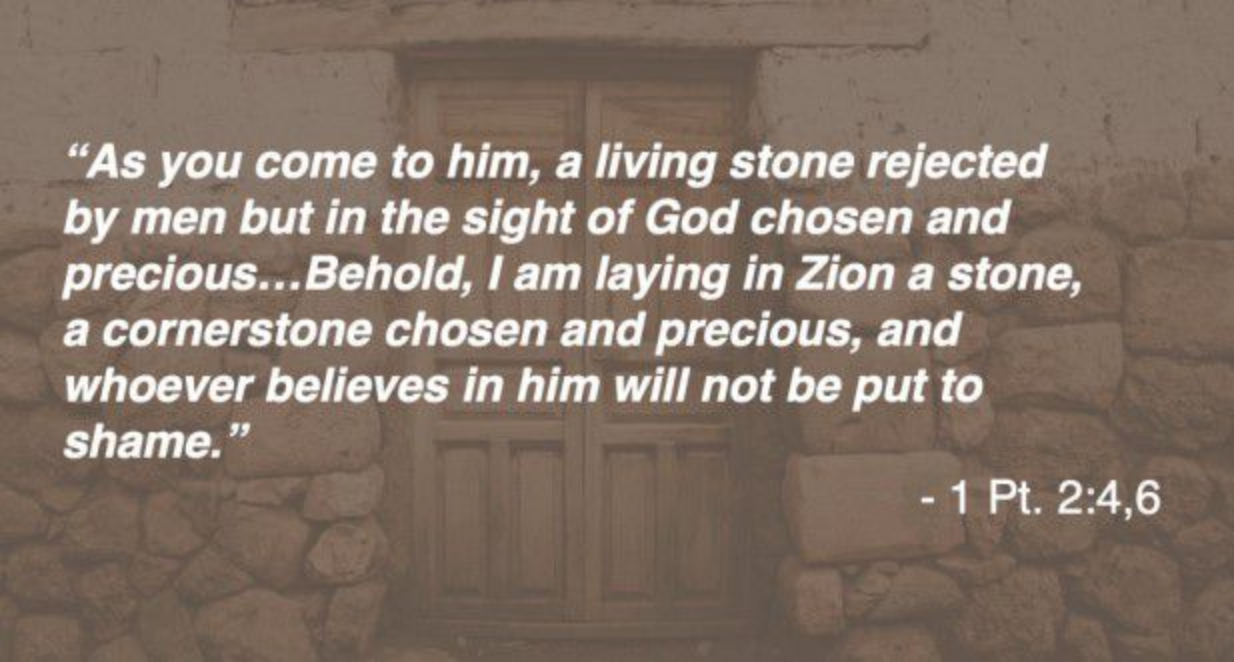
- John 10:7

A photograph of a stone wall with a wooden door. The wall is made of large, irregular stones. The door is made of wood and has a simple design. The text is overlaid on the image.

“Open to me the gates of righteousness...”

“This is the gate of the Lord through which the righteous may enter...The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”

- Ps. 118:19-20,22



“As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious...Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

- 1 Pt. 2:4,6

I AM

