

### # 3 SERIES "I AM"

## I AM THE DOOR

Scripture: John 10

Liturgy: 290:1-5 – 435:9 (after the law) – 263:1-3 – 422:1, 4 – 80:1, 3, 4

Congregation, those of you who travel regularly on an airplane know that before take-off, there is a safety demonstration.

The leading flight attendant first calls everyone to attention.

You are asked to switch off your device, put down your book and listen, even if you travel often.

Step by step, they show how a seatbelt works, how to put on an oxygen mask, where to locate lighted exit signs, floor lights and a life-vest.

At the end, they hold up the safety card which again spells out all those details.

But most seasoned travelers do not pay much attention.

Either they're already asleep or they're busy reading or listening to their headphones—and so the whole message goes past them.

Until suddenly, the airplane begins to shake or makes a sharp drop.

Then gasps or shrieks can be heard followed by an eerie silence.

Instinctively, all reach out to tighten the seatbelt.

If oxygen masks pop out, the panic feelings really grip everyone.

Then passengers look around where the nearest exit doors are.

How many of us seasoned church-goers are like those seasoned air-travelers?

How often has Jesus spoken to us about our danger?

How often did He preach about where to find safety and salvation from sin and condemnation?

How often has He pleaded with us to pay attention about matters of eternal significance?

Many of us pay no attention. Either we sleep or are drowsy or completely distracted.

Why is this happening?

It is because we have a false sense of security. We are unaware of the great soul dangers.

We believe there is time enough. Like most travelers, we think that the flight will be fine.

How all this changes instantly when the knock of death disturbs our rest!

Then suddenly thoughts of eternity grip us.

How shall we face God?

Am I ready? Is there a way to meet Him?

There is indeed a way. One way! One Door.

Let us give our attention to the study of this Door.

Before looking at our text, we are to consider the setting.

The Lord Jesus speaks in this passage twice about a door.

In verse 2 He speaks about the door *through which shepherds* go to the sheep.

In verse 1 He refers to thieves and robbers climbing over the wall to shepherd the sheep.

What does He mean with these two different shepherds?

Jesus contrasts Himself with the spiritual leaders of Israel.

In the previous chapter we can read about Jesus' dealings with the man born blind.

But you can also read about how the Jewish leaders shepherded this man.

They chased him away instead of rejoicing in his healing.

By those actions it became clear that they were no *real shepherds*.

They did not enter through the door of God's calling but climbed into this task themselves.

But it is clear in verse 6 that the disciples did not catch on.

So in verses 7-10, the Lord Jesus abruptly changes the subject.

He again speaks about the door.

But in this case, He points to Himself as the *Door through which **the sheep** go*.

It is another one of the I AM statements in which Jesus preached Himself as Jehovah God.

Let us hear the Lord's words in verses 7-10:

*"Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.*

*All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.*

*I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*

*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy:*

*I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

In these verses, Jesus declares Himself to be **the Door**.

As we consider this simple but effective picture of Jesus as Jehovah, let us focus on three thoughts:

- I. The Function of the Door
- II. The Characteristics of the Door
- III. The Use of the Door

First, let us consider the function of the Door.

Children, you know what a door is, don't you?

An open door gives you access to another room or, if the door is closed, you have to remain outside.

Adam and Eve learned on the first day of their creation about doors.

God placed before them two doors.

Each was marked. The one was marked *Eternal Life* and the other *Eternal Death*.

It was clear to them what they were to choose and it was not difficult for them to make the right choice.

For, as Solomon said, "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright" (Ecclesiastes 7:29).

Tragically, our first parents chose to step through the door *Eternal Death*.

The result was utterly devastating.

Paul summed this up in Romans 5:12, "*Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*"

This tragic fact is the truth about us all as fallen sinners.

Perhaps you feel like arguing or objecting to this.

Maybe you think it is not fair that we should bear the consequences of Adam's wicked rebellion.

But though you can wear out yourself in arguing, denying, and objecting, it remains the truth.

We as mankind have locked ourselves out of Eternal Life by our choice to step through the door Eternal Death.

We live banished from God, outside of Paradise, in a world under a curse.

Pray you learn to accept this truth.

Do not try somehow to ease yourself with blaming God or Adam.

None of that will change the reality that we mankind have chosen to enter the door Eternal Death.

Instead of blame-shifting, we need to deal with ugly fact that now we are fallen as mankind. Deeply fallen. Not just flawed or weakened, but we have lost our life with God.

Besides, we have become children of the devil, sinful and corrupt, hostile, and fierce.

Instead of being like a crystal jar filled with gold, we have become a dingy barrel filled with filth.

Pride, deceit, selfishness, hypocrisy, evil, ugly thoughts, murder, sexual lust, idolatry, and anger are just the beginning of the list of all that is found in this dirty barrel of our wicked hearts.

If you are Spirit-taught, you learn to accept this reality as your own guilt problem.

Pray specifically that God's Spirit will teach you to submit to this.

It is huge step forward when we learn to accept this reality and submit to God's justice.

For then we will finally begin to pay attention to what Jesus is teaching us in this chapter.

But before we look at what Jesus is teaching about Himself as the Door, let us go back once more to Paradise.

What happened to the other door, the one marked with Eternal life?

Well, the moment we chose the door Eternal Death, God barred the door of Eternal Life.

Mind you, that door is still there. However, it is closed. Barred.

To reinforce that truth, God placed angels with a flaming sword at the entrance of Paradise. The only way that the Door to Eternal Life can be opened is when God's law is honoured and His justice paid.

That is why all hope from our side is forever ended.

We come short every moment of our day in honouring God's law perfectly.

Our best falls short of God's standard of perfect love to Him and our neighbour.

And despite our best efforts, we actually only dig our hole deeper.

For what is not perfect is sin—and sin makes us guilty. Like a debt, our guilt needs to be paid in order to satisfy the demands of God's justice.

God, Who is holy and upholds the truth, cannot drop His demands for justice.

We must pay Him what we owe.

We deserve the wages for the sins we have done. The wages of sin is death.

Oh, how dismal is our case.

All hope is lost.

The prospect of an eternal separation from the Source of Joy is our portion.

We are barred from living with God.

Barred from fellowship with Him and His holy angels.

Barred from true joy and peace.

Barred from the glories of eternal life, forever and ever.

What a despairing reality this is!

Oh, pray God to open your eyes for this dark and despairing truth!

But over against this barred door, hear the words of Jesus, "*Verily, verily,*"

That means, "What I am saying is weighty truth."

*"Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep."*

Here Jesus proclaims Himself again as Jehovah, the I AM.

His entire message of Him being the Door is one of beautiful hope and joy.

Not only is He a Door. He is an *open* door.

For in verse 9 He speaks: "*By Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved.*"

For someone to enter into the door means that this door is not barred!

To understand what Jesus means with this image of the door, let us consider the function of the door.

Jesus functions as a Door in two ways.

He is ***first, God's Door*** to us sinners.

It is ***through the Door Jesus*** that the offended and dishonoured God comes to us sinners.

As a holy and just Judge of heaven and earth He could only come to us demanding justice and payment.

But through the Door of His holy Child Jesus, He can come to us with arms of mercy and grace.

It is impossible for God to come us with some generous offer in which He proposed to simply cancel our debts or ignore our guilt and forget about the wrongs we did.

No, God is a God of holy justice.

His truth and justice cannot allow Him to unbar the door of Eternal Life without satisfaction.

Numbers 23:19 states, *"God is not a man, that he should lie:*

*neither the son of man, that He should repent:*

*hath He said, and shall He not do it?*

*Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?"*

But in Jesus Christ, God's wisdom provided the Door through which He can come to us sinners, with the offers of mercy and grace!

In Jesus Christ, through His life and death, the holy Father is able to embrace us sinners!

In His Son He can welcome us home, into His bosom.

Yet never omit to remember that to make Jesus the Door, He had to close the door on Jesus Himself.

When the Lord Jesus was upon the cross, God the holy Judge forsook Him.

As it were, on the cross the holy Father and eternal Judge, locked Jesus behind the Door marked with *Eternal Death*.

Congregation, what must it have been for the Father to do this to His Son!

What tongue can utter all His praise about Him Who spared not His Son the worst to provide us sinners the best!

Is there any among the sons of the mighty, who can be likened unto Him?

Come, my friends, is He not worthy of your trust, Who stooped so deep in the humiliation of His Son?

Can you remain indifferent to such love? Can you remain unmoved with such offers?

*"I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved."*

Jesus is not only the Door for God to come to us.

He is also the Door for us to come into God's presence and before His holy throne.

In the Lord Jesus God unbarred the Door to eternal life for us guilty sinners so we may come freely.

To understand this well, keep in mind the only way to eternal life is through perfect obedience!

Only when we *perfectly* obey God's holy law, may we come and live in God's eternal presence.

That is how Jesus is now the only Door to God!

Remember how earlier I pictured the two doors God as it were placed before Adam and Eve.

Each door was marked: either with "Eternal Life" or "Eternal Death."

Picture the Door Jesus Christ. He is also marked. On Him is written '*Obedience.*'

Jesus in both His entire life and in His death was perfectly obedient to God His Father.

It is through His obedience to the law, that Jesus became the Door to the Door of Eternal life.

Oh, beloved friends, this is the Gospel, the Good News!

On basis of *His* obedience as the Son of Man, there is now access to God's throne!

We can *now* be reconciled with our offended and holy God **if we come through the door Jesus Christ.**

Oh, do not seek to come into God's presence without using His Door given in Jesus Christ!

Every approach to God through any other door than Jesus' obedience is prohibited.

It is like what the sons of Aaron attempted to do when they tried to enter into the Holy of Holies.

They came with 'strange fire.' They came not by using the fire from the altar of burnt offerings but their own fire.

In other words, they did not come through the Door Jesus but made themselves another door.

Instantly they were killed.

For God cannot allow any sinner in His presence who does not use the Door, the Only Door, He has provided.

*"I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved."*

You will not be rejected if you return to God trusting in Jesus' obedience.

You shall not be condemned. You shall not be driven away.

You shall be saved and *shall go in and out, and find pasture.*

Jesus means with these pastures the indescribable blessings God offers in His Gospel.

In verse 10 He describes these blessings in these words, *"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."*

The Lord Jesus as the Door leads to a life that is even more abundant than Adam and Eve had before the Fall.

For not only will we find the forgiveness of every wrong ever done!

Not only will you be freed from all condemnation and accepted with God on basis of the merits of Jesus.

Not only will your conscience be freed from all fear and dread!

Not only will you be freed from the slavish bondage of sin.

But you will also never, never, never need to fear to be separated from God.

For in Jesus Christ eternal life is secured.

Hear His Words in John 10:28, *"And I give them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."*

Peter taught this also in 1 Peter 1:3-4, *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

*Which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope*

*By the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

*To an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away,*

*Reserved in heaven for you.”*

The inheritance is secured – forever – because it is based on the completed and accepted work of Jesus.

And that means that all who come to God on basis of Jesus’ merits have a life more abundant than what Adam and Eve had before the fall.

Let us lift up our hearts to praise God for this amazing revelation and provision in singing with Psalter 422:1, 4.

*“Then said Jesus unto them again, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.’”*

We will consider in the second place, the characteristics of the Door God has provided in Jesus Christ. These characteristics are five: *it is an easy door; an open door; an extra wide door; and open door and an extra wide door.*

First of all then, it is an *easy* door. This was pictured well in the Old Testament Tabernacle. A tall, white and sturdy fence surrounded the Tabernacle, God’s house in the wilderness. But the door in this fence was an easy door.

It was a curtain. It had no locks and not even a handle.

A child could enter through that curtain.

The easy way through the curtain pictures how inviting God is, how He welcomes anyone, also children, to enter and draw near to Him.

We do not have to buy access to enter.

We do not need to be tall to reach the handle, children!

In other words, to enter this door, we do not need to meet all kinds of conditions.

To come before God, we need to be perfect, holy, righteous, innocent, pure and obedient!

But to come to Jesus and to enter through Jesus as the Door to God, we do not need to meet any such conditions.

He is the Door for sinners, unholy and unfit to stand before God.

You are invited to come to Him, without money, without merit, without quality.

All the fitness He requires is that you are a sinner.

Undoubtedly, none of us will value this easy door without a sense of sin and guilt.

But never think that convictions of sin and burdens of guilt *qualify* you to enter into the Door.

Convictions of your sin and misery, guilt and curse will help you to flee to enter with haste. But these convictions and humbling of heart do not give any more right to enter. The entry is unconditional, free grace.

This door in Jesus Christ is secondly, an *open Door* for every sinner.

Often Jesus proclaimed, "*Whosoever ... believeth in Me!*"

That means whoever or whatever you are, you may come unto Him.

He reassures us that He will in no wise cast any out that come to Him.

Oh, friends, be persuaded by His own declarations in His Word.

Even though the Jews were so guilty and filthy, so unworthy, and unfit, so deserving to be cast out,

yet hear Him plead, "*Come NOW, and let us reason together, saith the LORD:*

*though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*"

This door in Jesus is also a *very wide* door.

Did you know that the door in the Tabernacle was 10 metres (30 feet) wide?

Why so wide?

It was wide in order to tell an encouraging message: *no matter how great a sinner you are Jesus Christ is able to save all who come unto God by Him.* (Hebrews 7:25).

As the Lord was sitting with publicans and sinners in Levi's house, He expounded the wideness of Himself as the Door of sinners to God, "*I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*" (Luke 5:32).

Look who have gone through this Door already: *Rahab the harlot;*

*Ruth the once idolatrous Moabite; the Samaritan woman;*

*the exceedingly wicked and disgraced king Manasseh;*

*his great-great-grandfather David, the adulterer and murderer;*

*and one more, the persecutor of Christians, Saul.*

All sought access to the holy and just God through Jesus Christ and were received.

Both law-breakers and law-keepers were welcomed.

Above this Door of Jesus, it is written with golden letters,

*“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance,*

*that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”* (1 Timothy 1:15)

*Even the chief of sinners are welcome here.*

Fourthly, the Door Jesus is also the *only Door*.

Without hesitation, Jesus declared Himself as the Only Savior, the Only Name, the Only Door.

As He hammered on this truth, it became the dividing point among His hearers.

He was hated when He closed all other doors, and particularly the door of man’s religion in doing, in man’s work.

Jesus’ ministry was cutting when He declared that *nothing outside of Him will save us*.

It is no small blessing when the preaching of exclusive Gospel begins to strip you.

You will feel a strong resistance to Jesus’ emphasis on *grace alone!*

And if you sense that resistance, do you know why?

It is because because the Spirit is touching your greatest bosom sin.

Do you know what our greatest bosom sin is?

It is the sin of looking for worthiness in ourself, in our own works or feelings.

It is the sin of basing our hope for acceptance on Jesus **and** ourselves!

No, says the Lord, no!

It is Me ONLY and it is My merit ONLY and it is My obedience ONLY that provides salvation.

When you become willing to enter through the Door Jesus only,

without anything anymore in your hands,

then you have experienced what Psalm 110:3 declares,

*“Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.”*

Let us consider one more characteristic of this door: it is *a most Beautiful Door*.

In the Tabernacle, the door stood out from the bright white fence.

The door was embroidered with coloured strands in some beautiful pattern.

Blue, purple and scarlet on the white background linen made this door very attractive.

Blue pointed to Jesus' heavenly origin.

Purple was the colour that belonged to kings.

Scarlet red pointed to His blood which He sacrificed in love.

The white background declared His holiness.

Putting that altogether upon the Person of the Son of Man, must you not agree with him who wrote,

*"Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into Thy lips: therefore God hath blessed Thee forever."*

He has laid down Himself willingly, joyfully, cheerfully, and fully as His deepest expression of love to His Father and to His people, each of them once an enemy of God and grace.

But now, reconciled and accepted in the Beloved, no more enemies but friends. Secured in His love, never to be banished again.

Oh, who can utter all His praise! What tongue can exalt Him enough?

Will you not come and use this Door through Whom God is speaking to you and through Whom God is inviting you?

Will you not give heed as you live banished outside of God's communion, doomed to die forever?

Is an eternity separated from God really worth the little time on this earth in pursuit of vanity?

And finally, when the door of death will be opened for you,

and you will be summoned to return to God to stand before His judgment seat,

will you then not regret that you did not use this easy, open, only, wide, free, beautiful and this inviting Door?

Oh, how shall you escape when you neglect this great Door in Jesus Christ?

Maybe you ask, How am I to use this Door?

Let us consider that in our final thought: the use of the Door Jesus Christ.

Well, it is obvious that looking at and talking about the door will do us no good if we don't make use of it.

A door only does us good if we enter it.

Jesus Himself emphasized this in verse 9, *"by Me if any man enter in, he shall saved."*

Saved means freed from God's wrath and condemnation.

It means we will be reconciled with God and receive the gift of forgiveness of sins.

Not only will we be saved from the guilt and curse of sin, but also from our sinfulness.

For as we shall see in another sermon, Jesus is not only the door for reconciliation.

He is also the Shepherd of the sheep, and He will lead His people.

*"By Me, if any man enter, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture."*

The 'going in and out' and 'finding pasture' are all descriptive of the rich blessings and benefits God bestows for Jesus' sake upon His sheep.

These images describe what Paul wrote in Romans 5:1, *"Therefore being justified by faith,*

*we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* Or in Romans 8:1: *"There is*

*therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" in other words, who are led by the Holy Spirit.*

Yet all these blessings are only experienced if we *enter through the Door.*

What does it mean to enter this door?

To enter the door is exactly the same as to eat the Bread and to follow the Light.

We enter the Door when the Spirit enables you to believe or entrust yourself to Jesus Christ.

You enter, my friend, when you look away from everything in or by ourselves, and rely alone on Jesus Christ as we return to God as sinners.

You enter, when in your heart you speak like Paul,

*"Lord, all that I thought I had or was I now count against me.*

*It was not only without value, but it was more guilt.*

*As I come to Thee now, all I desire is to be found or be accepted in Jesus Christ.*

I have no obedience of myself but have seen and heard that in Jesus Thou provided obedience for poor, needy and guilty sinners.”

We enter, friends, when we stand next to the publican, seeking for mercy on basis of Jesus Christ!

The Scriptures in Romans 10:11-13 assure that:

*“Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed [or rejected].*

*For there is no difference between the Jew [or the churchd] and the Greeks [the unchurchd]:*

*for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him.*

*For whosoever – no matter what he has been or still is – shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*

We enter when we answer Jesus like the healed man in John 9.

Jesus sought him as the real Shepherd as the man wandered in the streets of Jerusalem, rejected and cast out of the temple for confessing the name of Jesus, though he did not yet know Him!.

He was no more allowed to enter the door of the temple because the leaders had excommunicated him.

As Jesus stood before him, so He stands before us now and ask us, *“Does thou believe on the Son of God?”*

Humbly but openly, he admitted that he did not know Who the Son of God was. In John 9:36 we read, *“He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?”*

After Jesus said unto him, *“Thou hast both seen him, and it is He that talketh with Thee,”* he said and he confessed with his all his heart, in simplicity of faith, *“Lord, I believe.”*

In saying those words very words, he entered through the Door Jesus Christ.

The pressing question I must put before you today: *Will you make use of the Door God has provided?*

Or to say it with Jesus’ own words, *“Dost thou believe on the Son of God?”*

There ought to be no fear that the Door is not open for you.

You ought not to reason that you are too great a sinner for using this Door.

Away with the thought that you are not worthy to make use of this Door!

Such thinking is so offensive to the sovereign grace of God.

He did not make this Door for the good and righteous.

No, He made this Door for sinners. For sinners only.

Will you make use this the Door provided?

Perhaps fears grip you: what if He rejects me as so many have rejected me?

I have always heard that I am not good enough.

When I suffered or went through my hardship, I was told I deserved it because I am a bad person.

And after all the shame I have experienced, I am so fearful to be rejected again.

My friend, do not ever measure Jesus by people who hurt you or shamed you.

He is not like the Pharisees who shamed and rejected the blind man who confessed Jesus.

No, the Lord Jesus is the True Shepherd for His heart is full of unconditional love.

He will not turn you away when you seek Him, even though you feel so desolate and defiled.

Will you make use of this open and wide Door?

Perhaps you struggle, "Oh, how can I believe?"

I do not dare to doubt anymore that the door is open.

But how do I enter? How do I believe?"

My friend, believing is trusting.

It is what you already do daily.

Are you trusting in your father or mother? Do you trust them to be faithful and caring?

Have you not placed your trust in your spouse? Don't you believe your spouse upon his or her word?

Have you not entrusted to him or her yourself with all what you are?

If you must answer, "Yes, I do," then you know what trusting or believing is.

To trust is an act of our hearts whereby we commit ourselves to another.

And if the 'another' is man or anything of man, they are unable to reconcile us to God.

But if the 'another' is Jesus Christ, then and only then will we be saved.

Come then, and answer Jesus today, "Yes, Lord, I believe; help Thou my unbelief."

Bow your knees today at His feet and confess again, "Though to my grief I often fail, Lord, enable me daily, by Thy Spirit, to come to Thee through the only Door Thou has opened for me as a sinner."

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may go in and out, find pasture, and abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Amen.