

The Way That Was Shut Is Open

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INI - SDG

John 10:1-10 Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. ² "But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ "And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ "Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." ⁶ Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them. ⁷ Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ "All who *ever* came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹ "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

You know you are in a fairy tale when there are locked doors in the house, and you are told not to open them, or you will die.

Audible had a sale on Audiobooks the other day and one of the books we got was "The Complete and Original Norwegian Folktales," by Asbjørnsen and Moe. We are not even a quarter of the way through this book but already we have heard at least three different stories about kids who are told, "Don't under any circumstances open those or you will die." Of course, the kids always open the doors.

In our text Jesus tells us "I am the door. If anyone enter by Me, he will be saved."

Jesus however is not a locked door we are forbidden to open but an open door leading to life.

In the English the word door could be misleading. When we think of a door, we think primarily of a piece of wood or metal that sits on hinges and blocks the way unless it is opened. Not so in the Greek, in the Greek the word primarily refers not to the piece of wood but to the opening. In the English it would be better to say the doorway. Jesus is not a piece of wood that swings shut and blocks your way. Jesus is the way, the opening through which you are able to enter and to go into eternal life.

Because of our sin there is a wall between us and God. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, there is one and only one way through the wall, an opening to eternal life.

As my daughter and many other kids like to sing. "You can't go over it. You can't go under it. You can't go around it. You have to go through it." The only way through the wall of our sin is Jesus. He is the way, the opening, the entrance.

In John chapter nine we have the account of the man who was born blind. This man was healed by Jesus. The pharisees did not want the man telling people that Jesus had healed him. Because the man insisted that Jesus must be a prophet from God, they kicked him out of the synagogue. These were the false shepherds who rather than help people to know God stood in the way. They closed the only path through the wall of our sin and insisted that sinners should try to climb over their sin instead of coming through the promise of the Messiah.

In response to them kicking this man out of the synagogue Jesus finds him and teaches him and us that He is the only way through to heaven.

John 10:9 I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved,

Jesus is the doorway. This is a simple statement and a simple analogy; however, we may not always realize how much Jesus is claiming for himself with such a simple statement. In fact, if the statement were not true it would be a blasphemous for Jesus to say it.

It was God who shut the way and it was God alone who could open the way. When Jesus claims to be the open door, He is claiming the authority and power of God to forgive sins.

Genesis 3:24 So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

Because we sinned the LORD God drove man out of the garden and closed the way to the tree of life with a flaming sword. Before God drove man out of the garden, He promised that one would come who would open the way once again.

Jesus says that through Him not only is the way open but all who wish may come in and out and freely eat of the tree of life. This fruit of the tree of life He gives to us today in a hidden form in the Lord's Supper. In time He will give to us in a visible form when we bodily enter into paradise once again.

Genesis 7:16 [Noah] went in as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in.

It was the Lord not Noah who shut the door of the ark and the Lord who again opened the door.

The Lord commanded Noah to build the ark and the Lord left the door open for a time. This was the door of salvation and any who entered through it would be saved. Any who tried to escape the flood by any other means perished.

The Lord shut the door in judgement on those who would not enter through the one and only door of salvation. He shut out the unbelievers and He shut in those who believed, Noah and the seven others who were with him. When the flood had subsided the Lord opened the door and led Noah out bringing him through judgement out into the new world.

Because of sin judgement came upon the world. Because of the grace of God, a door was open and any who entered were brought through the destruction to a new world. Our sin is no less than the sin of those wicked people and because of our sin judgement is coming. By the grace of God Jesus is an open door which leads through judgement into a new world.

Exodus 29:11 "Then you shall kill the bull before the LORD, by the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

The door into the holy of holies was shut by the command of the Lord. No one could open that door except the high priest once a year, and then only by the blood of a bull. The way to God was closed.

When Jesus died that door was torn open. Not only is the door open but Jesus reminds us in our text we can go in and out whenever we like. Whenever we have need, we can enter the holy of holies to appear before God, to speak to him of our needs, to receive from Him grace and the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus tells the church in Philadelphia:

Revelation 3:7-8 NKJ 7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens": 8 "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

Jesus promises the church in Philadelphia and us as well that He is the door and that He has opened the way for us and that no one can shut the door.

That means we ourselves cannot shut it, no matter how great our sin, no matter how large our pride, no matter how stubborn our hearts. Jesus is with us. The way to God is open, for all who acknowledge their sin and turn to Him for forgiveness. In movies people always say, "It's too late for me." But it is not, the way is open. "Today is the day of salvation."

The day is coming when Jesus himself will close that door, as the day came when he shut the door to Noah's ark, but until then the door is open.

Jesus has opened the door that was shut, the way to the tree of life, the door of the tabernacle which leads to the presence of God. Jesus opened the stone which

was before the tomb to seal the dead into the grave. It is open and those who were dead may now go out into the life of God.

Jesus is the one who has done this. He opened the door which was closed. He is the door by which we go into the presence of God. The door is wide open for anyone who wishes to enter, but you must enter through Jesus.

Whoever does enter through Jesus is a thief and a robber

We might not realize it at first, but it is a little odd that Jesus says they are both a thief and a robber. We might not often distinguish between the two but there is a difference both in Greek and in English.

A thief steals by way of stealth. He climbs through a window at night when you are gone or asleep. He takes your wallet out of your pocket without you noticing. The success of his plan depends on not being seen or noticed.

A robber on the other hand uses force and intimidation. He holds you up at gun point or at knife point. His plan depends on being seen rather than not being seen.

The result is the same, but the methods are completely the opposite. Jesus warns that whoever does not enter through Him is both.

We certainly see this in the account of the man born blind. The pharisees who opposed Jesus were sneaky and cunning. "How can this man be from God. We know that He is a sinner because he did a miracle on the Sabbath."

As Paul warns "**with smooth words and flattering speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple.**"

But they were also intimidating and forceful. When the man born blind insisted that Jesus must be from God because He healed him, they threw him out of the synagogue. We know how later they opposed the Christians with violence, persecuting them and stoning them.

Nothing really has changed. Today also many would deceive us and lead us astray from Christ with cunning and smooth words. Their words and their talk sound good and wise.

It often seems as if they agree with us, as if they are going the same way we are. But in fact, they are not entering through Jesus, they are going in another way.

In Acts 15 we read about some of the Jews who said they believe in Jesus, but they added you must be circumcised. This doesn't seem like a big difference, but Paul and the Apostles opposed it.

Why? Because they were adding something to God's grace and in so doing, they were climbing in through a window and not through Jesus.

With smooth words they attempt to lead us astray from Jesus but when we will not follow them, they also become angry and violent against God's sheep.

Jesus alone is the door. Jesus alone is the way. Whoever will not enter through Him and through Him alone will not enter.

Jesus died for our sins and rose again and that alone is sufficient, and more than sufficient for us to enter heaven.

Jesus is the open door and invites everyone to freely enter through Him. Amen