



Sunday, June 7, 2026

John 10:1-10

Last week, as we walked through the outer layers of John chapter 9, we talked about the idea and concept of God's glory being available in every single situation and circumstance that we find ourselves in. That His glory is not dependent upon our situation or circumstances, but is powerful enough to be seen in the midst of them. And even though God's glory was clearly on display as Jesus healed the blind man miraculously, His glory was no less evident in Paul's thorn in the flesh where God chose not to remove the thorn, but instead provided Paul with endurance, sustaining grace, and the strength to keep walking forward.

Now, that doesn't mean that we stop praying for God's supernatural and miraculous healing. Absolutely not. In fact in the book of James, we are instructed to have the pastors anoint with oil and pray for healing - which is exactly how we ended last week's service. That is our response to the need that is presented before us. God's response is to do what only He can do. And we can trust Him whether He responds with miraculous healing or miraculous perseverance.

I'll use myself as an example here. Some of you know my journey with mental health and anxiety. I've struggled with that for the better part of 20 years now. And not a month goes by where I don't pray and ask God to heal me from this affliction. But, if I look back to where I was 20 years ago into where I am today, I can see the hand of God in my life maturing me, strengthening me and giving me tools to be able to walk this road. I've said it before and I'll say it again:

I may not be where I want to be, but thank God I'm not where I used to be.

Would I rather stand here and tell you that God completely removed anxiety from my life twenty years ago? Absolutely. But that's not my story. My story is that God has faithfully walked with me, strengthened me, matured me, and sustained me every step of the way. And that's all for His glory too.

And so, today as we move forward in the book of John, we find ourselves at the beginning of chapter 10 where Jesus talks about sheep and shepherds, gates and entry points, but ultimately this message has nothing to do with animals or fences, but everything to do with salvation and His role as Saviour.

And so when we come to one of the most famous verses, John 10:10, where Jesus says, 'I have come so that they may have life and life more abundantly,' there's a tension there that we have to wrestle with. Especially coming off the heels of chapter 9, where we talked about the necessity of pressure strengthening our faith and relationship in Jesus. What does Jesus mean by life and life more abundantly? And how do we reconcile this abundant life that we are called to live with themes like walking the straight and narrow road, holiness and consecration, or the reality that only a faith that is tested is a faith that will grow?

Years ago, there was a quote floating around that said something along the lines of, 'If there was no promise of Heaven, would you still follow Jesus for the life that He offers in the here and in the now?' Now, I understand that's not really a fair question. There are far too many variables involved, and it is certainly not a question that is grounded in truth.

But I think the question is trying to get at something important. Are you simply getting through this life so that you can make it to heaven? Are you just surviving until one day you get to thrive? Or is it actually possible to thrive here as well?

I think that this is the question that underlies everything that Jesus is about to say here in Chapter 10 - so let's jump in and take it from there.

If you have your Bibles with you this morning, I'd like to invite you to turn with me to John chapter 10 where we will be reading from verse 1-10. If you are able to stand, I'd also like to invite you to stand for the reading of the word of God:

John 10:1-10

' "Truly I tell you, anyone who doesn't enter the sheep pen by the gate but climbs in some other way is a thief and a robber. 2 The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought all his own outside, he goes ahead of them. The sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 They will never follow a stranger; instead they will run away from him, because they don't know the voice of strangers." 6 Jesus gave them this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them.

7 Jesus said again, “Truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep didn’t listen to them. 9 I am the gate. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. 10 A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.’

What’s one of the first things that you think about after reading this passage? For me, it was the concept of shepherding that Jesus is using here to describe salvation. And the more I read this passage, the more I find myself being drawn into the most famous illustration of shepherding in the Bible - Psalm 23 - where David - centuries earlier - introduces this psalm by stating that the Lord is my Shepherd. He then follows that up by describing what life looks like when we as sheep allow the Good Shepherd to lead us and guide us. And the whole entire psalm can be summed up by simply saying that if we allow the Lord to lead us and guide us then it doesn’t mean that we will always live by the still waters or green pastures but that WHEN we go through things like the valley of the shadow of death or even have to face our enemies, He will be with us and His rod and staff will be there to guide us and protect us.

So even before we’ve stepped into the heart of this passage, the audience of the day would have immediately been drawn into the imagery of Psalm 23 too - a psalm that reminded them that the Lord is good and He protects, and He walks us through every single stage of life - the high points and the low points - the good, the bad and the ugly...lol

So it’s clear to see that by identifying Himself with the language of Psalm 23, Jesus is taking the Shepherd that David spoke of as Lord and showing the people there that He is that same Shepherd - now come in the flesh - as the Messiah - the Lord that David spoke about - to save the world from sin and death.

And it’s this picture of salvation that Jesus is painting here that is so profound. In verse 1-6 Jesus paints a picture of sheep gathered safely inside a sheepfold. When the shepherd arrives, He doesn’t force the sheep to follow Him. He simply calls them. The sheep recognize His voice because they have learned to trust Him. And because they trust Him, they willingly follow Him out into the pasture where they can be fed and cared for.

The thief also wants the sheep, but the thief will not lead the sheep to safety - to life and life more abundantly - instead, the thief comes to steal, kill and destroy. But notice it’s the voice of the Shepherd that draws the sheep to safety. And it’s the voice of the enemy that tries to pull the sheep

away. But because the sheep recognized the voice of the Shepherd, they will not follow the voice of the thief.

And so even in the opening verses, we see the element of voice and words to be crucial here. And what have we learned from John so far? That the real and true power of Jesus is in His words. In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God. His words created life in the very beginning and still have the power to speak life into every situation and circumstance today.

This is why so much focus is placed on the sheep recognizing His voice and following His voice. There are many, many different voices in the world all vying for your attention, but it is the voice of God that we need to tune our ears to and follow - because when we hear His words and follow His voice, He is the one that leads us to the pasture - or in Jesus' specific words - to life and life more abundantly, which is what the pasture represents.

We live in a day and age, where the language of 'sheep-following' is used as a negative connotation. The assumption is made that sheep follow blindly and are dumb as a result. That is simply not the case. Sheep have learned the element of trust and because they trust the Shepherd, they will go where he goes - often without hesitation. In essence, they have given up their control, because they trust the control of the Shepherd in their lives more.

Which, if you're paying attention is exactly why this imagery is so profound, especially after the story in John 9 about the blind man learning to follow Jesus. If you remember from last week, in that story, it was all about the blind man learning to let go of his control in order to follow Jesus. By gaining his sight, he was no longer able to beg for alms anymore and had to completely trust and follow Jesus to show him how to live.

So the blind man lost control of his life and trusted Jesus to lead him. The sheep learn the voice of the Shepherd and through His loving relationship with them, they trust Him and willingly give up their control to follow Him.

Don't you see, it's all about control?? You and I may think we have control over our own lives, but that's ultimately not going to get us anywhere. In this imagery, the gate is the entry point into the green pastures - or the abundant life as Jesus refers to it as. His desire is not for you to enjoy life in the pastures, but the only way into that life is to follow the Good Shepherd through that gate. But then we read in verse 8 that Jesus now says that not only is He the Good Shepherd but He's also

the gate.

And this is where some of the confusion for those listening there that day would have potentially come from. In one breath Jesus says that He is the Good Shepherd - and then in the next He says He is the Gate. Which is it? He can't be both.....right...??

Well, if you think that's hard to understand, let me add another element to the equation here. Because if you remember our study in the book of Revelation a few years back, according to Revelation 3, not only is Jesus the door, but He is also the only One who holds the key to that door.

So if you put it all together, Jesus is the Shepherd, the gate, and the key, which sounds utterly impossible.

How can someone be the Shepherd leading the sheep, the Gate they walk through, and the Key that opens that gate all at the same time?

Because Jesus is the only way!

As the Shepherd, He is the only voice that leads to truth.

As the Gate/Door, He is the only entrance into life.

And as the Key, He alone possesses the authority to open that entrance.

Good works won't do it, peaceful meditations won't do it, praying day in and day out won't do it, Allah can't open it, Buddha can't come close and humanity certainly doesn't stand a chance. Jesus is the only way to salvation. He is the key, the door and He is the only One who can open it!

Which now helps to bring great clarity to Jesus' words in John 14 where He says,

John 14:6

'I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through Me.'

He is the voice that speaks truth

The Gate that provides the Way

And the Key that grants access to Life and life more abundantly.

But here is where some of us can miss what Jesus is saying. Because there tend to be two schools

of thought on what this idea of abundant life really is. One school says that because Jesus is using salvation language here, that abundant life refers to Heaven - something we experience only after we die. The other idea is that not only does it refer to Heaven, but upon salvation that abundant life starts now and as a Christian, you should live a life without suffering, pain, sorrow, or stress.

But the reality is that yes, this is salvation language and abundant life refers to heaven after this life. And yes abundant life refers to the life lived upon receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and saviour right now. But according to everything that we have read and walked through today, especially Psalm 23, abundant life does not necessarily mean a life without suffering, pain, sorrow or stress.

If abundant life meant the absence of problems, then Psalm 23 doesn't make any sense. Jesus doesn't promise that there won't be valleys. He promises that He'll be with us in the valleys. He doesn't promise there won't be enemies. He prepares a table in the presence of our enemies. He doesn't promise we won't walk through dark seasons. He promises that we don't walk through them alone.

It does not mean that you will never experience pain, sorrow, or trials and tribulations. It simply means that you now have a good Shepherd that will help lead you through those difficult seasons because His love for you is so great. And yes, of course there will be wonderful seasons too! Seasons where He will lead us beside the still waters and into the green pastures, but there will also be seasons where we have to walk through the valley of the shadow of death. And there will also be seasons where we have to face our enemies. So God doesn't remove these things from us, and if I'm being completely honest, I don't know any single person that does not have to walk through trials whether they follow Jesus or not. The reality though, is that as Christians, He walks with us. We don't have to walk that road alone.

So, at the end of the day, I think what we've been able to see is that this is not so much a sermon about sheep as much as it is a sermon about control. And the question we're left with is this.

Do you trust Jesus enough to surrender control?

Honestly, ask yourself that question right now, and be honest. What is your response? If it's yes, then great. If it's no, then chances are it's because you're afraid of what would happen if you let go of control.

I started off sharing my story about the struggle I've had with anxiety over the years. One thing I

didn't share, but I will share now is that this is deeply connected to fear. Fear of what could possibly happen in the future. It's the 'what if' questions - questions that aren't even based on truth or reality. And what you need to know is that this is one of the biggest lies and deceptions of the enemy. Convincing us that the future is bad - when Jesus right here says that He is the voice, the gate, and the key to life and life abundant.

And what we have to realize is that ultimately, this is a control issue. The reason we default to the worst case scenario is because we have to be able to control how we would potentially respond if the 'what if' scenario comes true by now creating a situation in our minds where our bodies respond as if it were true. Some of you know exactly what I'm talking about. But if we live like this, how can we experience true life? How can we truly experience everything that God has in store for us if we're continually living in fear that everything is going to fall apart? That's not living! That's bondage. It's the spirit of fear. And it is running rampant in this generation.

For some of you, it's fear over finances, the future, family, work, health, the economy. And for some of you, you have resorted into control and manipulation because the spirit of fear has such a grip over your life.

But listen, here's the good news. That spirit of fear is not from God. In fact, Jesus makes it very clear that He has not given us a spirit of fear. No! In fact, the Bible makes it so clear that:

2 Timothy 1:7

'For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.'

So because it's not from God, and it's not His desire for us, then we don't have to accept it. You don't have to live in fear anymore. Here's one of the things that has really helped me in my journey towards peace. Because let's be honest, peace is something we are all searching for, especially those of us who wrestle with the spirit of fear. Everything starts with love, and the more you love God, as He loves you, then you will begin to trust Him as the sheep trust their Shepherd. And the more you trust Him and His voice in your life, then the more willing you become to surrender control. And when you surrender control to the One who loves you, you're left with peace.

Love leads to trust

Trust leads to surrender

And surrender leads to peace.

And at the end of the day, maybe that's what abundant life really is. Not the absence of valleys. Not the absence of enemies. Not the absence of suffering. But the peace that comes from knowing that the Shepherd is leading you through them all.

So here's how I'm going to invite you to respond this morning. I'd like to ask you to stand as we enter into a closing time of worship. And as we do, if you're here today and you're wrestling with fear and need the supernatural peace of God then I'm going to ask that as we worship, you simply take a step of faith, come to the front and worship Him because something happens when we worship through our fear. It's a way of putting the ownership back on Him saying God I'm powerless to do anything about this, but I'm created to worship you so here I am literally taking a step of faith and offering you the worship that I can give to you. Fear does not have to control us any longer - for He has not given us a spirit of fear but of love, power and a sound mind.

And as we are worshipping, I'm going to have some of the pastoral staff walk around and pray for each and every single person as we anoint your head with oil as the Bible instructs and pray for you.

Closing blessing:

May the Lord Bless you and Keep you
May He cause His face to Shine upon you
May He be gracious towards you
Lifting up His countenance before you
And may He give you peace
In Jesus name, Amen.

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