

John 10:1-10  
May 7, 2017

**GOSPEL: JOHN 10:1-10**

The holy gospel according to John, the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Jesus uses an image familiar to the people of his day to make a point about spiritual leadership. Good shepherds bring people to life through Jesus, but those who avoid Jesus are dangerous to the flock.*

[Jesus said:] <sup>1</sup>“Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. <sup>2</sup>The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup>The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup>They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” <sup>6</sup>Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

<sup>7</sup>So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup>All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup>I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen.

Our text today is but one section of a larger passage that begins at the beginning of Chapter 9 where Jesus encounters a man born blind. Due to his blindness this man was left to sit at the outskirts of the city and beg for food and

money. This man was destitute and a relative nobody and nothing in societal eyes of his day. This man needed saved – not just from his physical ailment of blindness but perhaps more so he needed saved from isolation and marginalization. And this is exactly what Jesus did. Not only did he restore this man’s physical sight but he returned him the community of the living. He returned him to his rightful place in society. Never again will the he have to sit, beg, and wonder where his next meal will be or who will answer his pleas as he sits begging outside the city. Because of Jesus he will know the safety and security of community.

In our passage, Jesus is attempting to figuratively open the eyes of the religious leaders who still can’t comprehend who he is. Because instead of realizing Jesus is from God. Instead of celebrating, worshipping, and giving praise for the work Jesus has done to restore this man’s sight and thus open up their eyes to the goodness of God and the restoration of this man to community they did quite the opposite. They bickered about Jesus bringing life on the Sabbath. They debated with the healed man about what happened. They refused his testimony because they still saw him as an outsider. As a sinner. And so they drove him out of the synagogue. Their eyes closed. His eyes opened; yet, once

again alone on the streets seeking to have his needs met, life in community, and a safe place to lay his head.

Which is where our passage comes in as Jesus point blank tells these leaders He is the gate. The way to life, to salvation, is through Him alone and not through any other means (i.e. the law). Choose me. Open your eyes. Life come through me. Abundant life which for John means something entirely than we might think of in our culture. It doesn't mean wealth and riches or fame and power. No it means life in and through Jesus. It needs having our most basic needs met. It means being in the presence of Jesus and trusting we are never alone.

These religious leaders have tried to play the part of the gate and refused to let in this formerly blind man. And so Jesus once again Jesus reveals who He is and what God does. This man has a place in the fold. This man hears and knows the voice of the shepherd. This man is restored to community. His needs are met by the Shepherd who will provide safe harbor and green pastures to feed upon.

The Good Shepherd has revealed to us, too, the gate of life; however, we often fail to see it and enter it. We choose gates or doors that lead us down a road of empty hopes and dreams. We cry out to be saved but often we turn to competing voices to hear our cries rather than the voice that knows our name.

Jesus' way is life. Life together with other sheep. Life of loving Jesus and loving our neighbor. Life giving glory and praise to what God has done through Jesus and is continuing to do. Life everlasting but also life here and now.

The church is to be about life in Christ; however, how often is it just the opposite. How often do we find ourselves bickering with one another? Focusing on our own needs being met. Attempting to be the gate keeper and failing to welcome another sheep just because they appear different than us or they don't meet our expectations. We judge them before we ever get to know them and realize they are just another sheep of God's pasture. We wander down a road that leads us to something other than life and in so doing may do the very same thing to others.

I recall sitting with a parishioner who was in hospice care. She shared with me some of her fears and some of the sadness she was dealing with. She also shared with me that in those moments the words of the song the kids sang, "Jesus loves me" played through her mind moving her from a place of fear and anxiety into one of peace, calmness, and hope. It is the promise that He knows her name and He loves her. She found comfort in the promise of eternal life but in that moment salvation meant so much more. Like the blind man, it was immediate and a very present reality. She needed saved from her fears, her loneliness, and

sadness and through the promise of His love for her He did exactly that. He brought her life even in the midst of the very real death that awaited her.

What is that we need to be saved from? The good news in this text and in the entire story of God and God's faithfulness to God's people is that God continues to hear the voice of God's people. God continues to be with us and come to us time and time again offering us life even when we choose the opposite path. God continues bring to us the transformative power of God's grace and love and enable us the ability to see, feel, and hear the good news of the great love and experience the abundance of the life that only the source of all there is can provide!

**Main Point:** Jesus is the Good Shepherd. Jesus alone provides life. We don't find it anywhere else but in Him.