

Place: Lurgan Baptist: 7:8:2016

THINGS THAT ONLY CHRIST COULD SAY

Reading: John 10:1-9

“ I AM THE DOOR,”

Several years ago there was a story carried by various newspapers about a woman from Missouri in the United States who was startled out of a deep sleep one night by some desperate cries of “ *help, help.*” At first she thought that it was her husband who had cried out, but he was sleeping soundly next to her. Then suddenly she heard the cries again, “ *help, help.*” Finally, she threw back the covers and headed downstairs toward their living room. “ *Help,*” she heard the voice again. “ *Where are you ?*” the woman replied. “ *In the fireplace,*” came the rather shocking answer. Sure enough, dangling in the fireplace with his head sticking through the flue was a burglar, upside down and quite snugly stuck. The police and the fire department got him out eventually, but not without taking apart the fireplace. Perhaps the best part of the story was what this woman did in the meantime. She flipped on all the lights and videotaped the whole thing.

I don't know what the woman and the burglar talked about while waiting for the police and the fire department to arrive, but perhaps she should have gotten out a Bible and shared with the crook the reading of (Jn Ch 10) “ *Verily, verily I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is*

a thief and a robber.” You see, we must never forget that these words were spoken primarily to crooks. The Pharisees, the religious leaders of Christ's day who were leading the people astray. Indeed this very passage flows out of (Ch 9) There the Lord Jesus had just healed a blind man, who was then taken to the Pharisees but rather than rejoicing with the man, the Pharisees excommunicated him for being born blind, claiming that his sin was responsible for his condition. So in (Ch 9) we have the *False Shepherds* who did not care for this man instead they mistreated him and threw him out (9:34) but in (Ch 10) we have the *Faithful Shepherd*, the Lord Jesus who came to him and took him in. (9:35-38) You see, Christ makes it clear here that the fold here is the nation of Israel (10:16) and as the door of the sheepfold He makes it possible for sheep to leave the fold, the religion of Judaism and to enter his flock. In contrast to the false shepherds of Israel who were self appointed and self righteous (Is 40:11 56:9-12) the Lord Jesus is the good shepherd who giveth his life for the sheep. Now that is the background to this verse, but look at the burden of this verse.

Here is a Simple Statement: “ *I am the door,*” there are no big words in it, no difficult words in it, nothing here to make it hard to understand.

Here is a Specific Statement: It is clear and concise, nothing in it to blur its content. And it is definite in its affirmation.

Here is a Spiritual Statement:

It tells us how a sinner becomes *related* to God
It tells us how a sinner is *reconciled* to God
It tells us how a sinner is made *righteous* before God
It tell us how a sinner gets *ready* for heaven

(1) A PICTURE OF THE LORD

For Christ is portraying Himself as the door and how captivating and instructive that picture is. There are some famous doors aren't there ? *A picture of a large black door with the number 10 on it would immediately identify 10 Downing Street.* This the door behind which the Prime Minister resides and government meets. It's only a door yet it identifies one of the most famous and most powerful buildings in the world. You see, the door is the symbol of identity, for you can identify a building by its door. Now Christ says " *I am the door.*" You see you identify salvation with Christ. If you are looking for a salvation but it does not have Christ as the first point of contact you are at the wrong door and if you are at the wrong door you are at the wrong house. Now when Christ says " *I am the door,*" he is taking our minds back to the sheepfolds of His day. You see, in Christ's day sheep were kept in two ways.

The first way was in cities and in villages. Usually there was a large holding corral where shepherds would bring their flocks to secure them at night. This was a public pen able to hold several flocks under the care of a porter whose duty it was to guard the gate during the night and admit the shepherds in the morning. The shepherds would walk into the pen call their sheep and the sheep would

respond to the voice of their shepherd who would lead them out to pasture. I think Christ is referring to that picture here in the opening verses of this chapter.

But the second was how a shepherd would tend his sheep in the country. Several years ago the great preacher G. Campbell Morgan was travelling across the Atlantic with the Old Testament scholar Sir George Adam Smith. The two men began discussing this very passage and Smith shared this personal insight. While travelling in the east Smith came upon a shepherd with his sheep. He initiated a conversation which led the man to show Smith where he led the sheep at night. It consisted of four walls and a narrow opening. Smith asked, " *is this where they go at night ?*" The shepherd replied " *Yes and when they are here they are perfectly safe.*" Smith replied, " *but there is no door.*" The shepherd replied, " *I am the door.*" Now the shepherd was not a Christian, he was simply speaking from an Arab shepherd's point of view. Smith asked, " *What do you mean you are the door ?*" He said, " *when the light has gone and all the sheep are inside, I lie in the open space, and no sheep goes out but across my body and no wolf comes in unless he crosses my body, ' I am the door.'*" That is the picture Christ is referring to in this verse. You see, a door is for exiting and entering.

Christ is the door to forgiveness: Those who trust Him exit condemnation (3:17) Those who trust enter justification. (Rom 5:1)

Christ is the door to life: Those who trust Him exit spiritual death (Eph 2:1) Those who trust Him enter a new life. (2 Cor 5:17)

Christ is the door to heaven: Those who trust Him exit the road to hell (3:136) Those who trust Him enter the road to heaven. Christ says, “ *I am the door,*” the way of access into the very presence of God. (1 Pet 3:18 Heb 10:20) Now Christ is,

(a) THE ONLY DOOR:

For when He says “ *I am,*” he means “ *I alone,*” “ *I and no one else.*” “ *I am the only one through whom men find access into God’s presence.*” Now no-one else could make that claim. There is not one figure on the stage of human history who could speak the way Christ speaks here. There is salvation for us but it is in Christ alone. Now,

1. Christ is the Only Door for Shepherds:

Now remember He is contrasting Himself here with the false shepherds of Israel who were self appointed and self righteous. He says all that ever came another way were thieves and robbers but the sheep did not hear them. *Do you ever get concerned about the many that are in the ministry today but they have not entered through this door ?* Many have entered in by their learning. Now learning is good and not to be despised but it is not the door. Many have entered in by their gifts, they are men of eloquence, mighty in word, but these gifts are not the door. Many have entered in by their influence. They have great influence and are held in high esteem, but influence is not the door. You see, the true shepherd of souls is he who has come to God through Christ and has entered the ministry with the call of Christ, for the glory of Christ,

labouring to bring others to Christ. In one word, Christ is the grand touchstone of the true shepherd of souls. And the man who makes little of Christ is but a “ *blind leader of the blind.*” (Matt 14:15) Do you ever hear them at funerals ? These false shepherds ! They would do your head in. They have not got a word for the sheep. There is not a word about sin, salvation, Christ, eternity, heaven or hell. It’s as much as they can fill in the time and Paul says the judgement of God rests on them. (Gal 1:8) 1.

2. Christ is the Only Door for the Sheep:

Now when you think about a sheep, you realise that a sheep is not one of the smartest animals around. In fact,

- **A Sheep is Dumb:**

It really is. I mean, how many of you have seen a circus with a trained sheep ? Horses are trained, lions, monkeys, elephants but not a sheep. Why ? Because a sheep is not too smart. Why you say, “ *I was top of my class.*” My you misunderstand me, I am talking in spiritual terms. I wonder are you like Nicodemus intellectually sharp but spiritually dumb ?

- **A Sheep has no sense of Direction:**

It’s easily lost. Isaiah says, “ *All we like sheep have gone astray.*” (53:6) Sheep nibble and browse here and there and they get further from the flock, and the Shepherd and they are out there lost. My do you realise that you are lost, separated from God because of your sin ?

- **A Sheep is Dependant:**

On the Shepherd. You see, by nature each one of us is separated and cut off from God. Sin, like a barrier wall rises between us and our God. A sense of guilt makes us afraid of Him. A sense of His holiness keeps us at a distant from Him and the very first question we need to ask is this. “ *How can I draw near to God ? How can I be justified and stand in the right before God ? How can I sinner like me be reconciled to God ?*” And the Lord Jesus stands before us and He says, “ *I am the door.*” My through His sacrifice on the cross Christ has opened a way through the great barrier. He has “ *suffered for sin the just for the unjust to bring us to God.*” He has opened a way right into the presence of God through the shedding of His precious blood and now He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. (Heb 7:25) My how do you stand before God ? Do you stand before Him without fear because you have been accepted in Christ ? (Eph 1:6) Listen, Christ is the only door.

It's not *the door of Philosophy*: (Acts 17:16) It's not *the door of Science*: (Rom 1:20) It's not *the door of Other Beliefs*: It's not the door of *Roman Catholicism*: It's not the door of *Mariolatry*: Do you know what Rome says ? “ *Nobody can approach Christ except through the mother.*” (Ott, Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma, 214) Do you know how Rome refers to Mary ? “ *As the Door of Paradise and the Gate of Heaven.*” But Christ cries “ *I and no one else am the door.*” Have you grasp it ? It's not the Door of *Loyalism*: It's not *the door of Blameless Character*: It's not *the door of Knowledge*: It's not *the*

door of baptism: It's not *the door of personal merit*. Christ is the only door. There is no other door to forgiveness. There is no other door to new life. There is no other door to heaven. “ *One way God says to get to heaven Jesus is the only way.*” (a)

(b) THE OPEN DOOR:

“ *I am,*” present tense “ *the door.*” The glory of this door is that it is not locked. It is not even closed. Even though we may close our door against Christ He does not close His door against us. His door is wide open. But remember time is short. (1 Cor 7:29) Compared with the long eternity that is to follow, time is but a moment, a breathing space. My the few short years that the door is open before you will soon pass away, and then the door will be shut throughout all eternity. (Lk 16:26) You see, in a lost eternity you'll look back on this sweet time when the door was opened but you refused to enter and now it's shut to you for ever. Do you know something ?

I cannot stand here this and say that this gospel door will be open for you next year, next month, or even next week. For soon the master of the house will rise up and shut to the door and this present day of salvation will be followed by the great day of His wrath. (Rev 6:17) My do you not see the urgency of this matter ? The door is open now. Christ is now the door. Today there is a way of pardon, peace, and power open before you, tomorrow it may be closed for ever. (1)

(2) A PROPOSAL BY THE LORD

What is this amazing proposal ? Just this. “ *By me if any man enter in.*” (10:9) You see, you are faced with a decision, will you enter in or will you turn your back on the door and walk away. Do you remember Judas ? Judas kissed the Lord Jesus, he kissed the door of heaven and then walked out on his journey to hell. Christ says, “ *By me if any man enter in.*” What a proposal. Do you see,

(a) *THE SCOPE IT EMBRACES:*

“ *Any man.*” C.H. Spurgeon told of a man who had two dogs and he gave them the run of the house. He liked them to go in and out of the house freely. So he had two holes cut in the door. He was asked the reason for this and he said, “ *Well, the little hole is for the small dog and the big hole is for the great dog.*” Surely said the person, “ *the small dog could have gone through the same hole as the big dog.*” “ *My,*” he said, “ *I never thought of that.*” The dying thief walked on the dirty side of the broad road, the self righteous Nicodemus walked on the clean side of the broad road but they both entered heaven by the same door. Do you see how broad this invitation is ? “ *If any man.*”

In (Ch 1) we see salvation coming to the *unlearned and ignorant fishermen* who had not been trained in the rabbinical schools of their day. In (Ch 3) we see salvation coming to *the religious, respectable, self righteous Nicodemus*. In (Ch 4) we see salvation coming to *the immoral woman of Samaria*. In (Ch 5) we see salvation coming to *the man who was ill* for thirty eight years. In (Ch 9) we see salvation coming to *the man who*

the religious authorities did not want anything to do with. “ *If any man.*” John Wesley was riding across Hounslow Heath one night singing a favourite hymn when he was startled by a fierce voice shouting “ *Halt.*” Then the man demanded, “ *Your money or your life.*” Wesley emptied his pockets of the few coins they contained and invited the robber to examine his saddlebags which were filled with books. Disappointed at the result the robber was turning away when the evangelist cried, “ *Stop, I have something more to give you.*” Wesley then said in solemn tones, “ *My friend you may live to regret the sort of life in which you are engaged. If ever you do remember this, ‘ the blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin.’* The robber hurried off and the man of God prayed that the Word spoken would bear fruit. Many years later at the close of a Sunday evening service with people streaming from the building, and many anxious to speak to the preacher, a stranger stepped forward and begged to speak to Mr. Wesley.

What a surprise to find that this was the robber of Hounslow Heath, now a respected business man but better still a child of God. The words spoken that night long ago had been used of God in his conversion. “ *To you dear Sir, I owe it all,*” he said. “ *No, my friend not to me, but to the precious blood of Christ which cleanses us from all sin.*” “ *If any man,*” You say “ *but I have despised Christ all my days.*” “ *If any man,*” “ *But I have sinned against godly parents, the Bible, my conscience,*” “ *If any man,*” “ *But I have committed sins I am ashamed of,*” “ *If any man,*” rich or poor, Jew or Gentile, young or old, religious or not, you are invited to enter. (a) But notice,

(b) THE STEP IT DEMANDS:

“*Enter in,*” I mean, could it be more simple or clear ? By coming through this door one is saved. You see, a door is not to be admired or looked at but used, you must enter. If you called at my home this looking to speak to me, I would invite you to enter and you would step into the hall and then the lounge. Now what you have done literally by stepping, you must do spiritually by coming. You see,

1. Many Hear about the Door:

They like to hear the gospel preached. They know the way of salvation. They can talk about it. But still they do not enter in. They do not forsake their sin. They do not appropriate Christ. They do not wash in his blood. 1.

2. Many Marvel at the Door:

They just stand and look, with an interest in Christ, but they have never crossed the threshold. Is that you ? Have you admired His life, His teachings, His example, even His death but you have not gone through the door ?

3. Many Come to the Door:

Many of you can say like Agrippa “*Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*” (Acts 26:28) You can see the folly and vanity of this world. You feel deeply your lost and ruined condition. But when you come to the door, you do not enter. Is this you ? Do you realise that you can come so near to the door and yet be lost ?

4. Many See Others Enter the Door:

Have you seen a brother, sister, friend going the door of salvation and yet you do not enter in. My conviction is not conversion. Concern about your soul is not faith in Christ, for they are many who look in at the door and go away sorrowful. Perhaps you’re saying, “*what if I go through the door tonight, what will it happen ?*” (1) (2),

(3) A PROMISE BY THE LORD

“*He shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture.*” (10:9) Do you see what this promise assures of ? It assures us of,

(a) ETERNAL SECURITY:

This word “*saved,*” means “*delivered safe and sound.*” It was used to say that a person had recovered from severe illness, come through a bad storm, survived a war, or was acquitted at court. Some modern day preachers want to do away with an old fashioned word like “*saved,*” but Christ used it. And my the moment you enter the door you’ll be saved. Saved from hell, saved for heaven, immediate pardon, immediate entrance into the love and smile of God. My are you saved ? Do you remember old Noah. The flood was coming and they got into the ark of salvation and do you know what the Bible says ? “*And the Lord shut him in.*” (Gen 7:16) Noah is safe, he is secure. “*The Lord shut him in.*” Do you remember when your kids were small ? It was easy to close up the house at night, to lock the door. They were all in bed asleep. All

was secure. Then they grew up and started exerting their own independence. They weren't always back home when you wanted them, sometimes it was a relief to hear the door closing, to know they were in and they were safe. Of course they didn't understand what you were worrying about. *Of course they were safe, why wouldn't they be ?* Nothing was going to happen to them. But they did not have a parent's heart and concern, perhaps one day they too will experience those long hours of worry in the night just waiting to hear the door close. "*And the Lord shut him in.*" There was safety and security there. Everything was shut in behind the locked door. Listen, there is a Christ who says, "*I am the door,*" do you want to know if you are safe ? Do you want to know if you are secure ? Your security is just as good as your door. Your security is guaranteed by the strength of your door. Do you want to know how strong Christ is ? Well, He says in this very chapter, "*And I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*" (10:28) They are secure in Christ. Is that where you are this ? Are you closed in with Christ, knowing eternal security ? Or are you closed out from Christ facing eternal judgment ? (a)

(b) PERSONAL LIBERTY:

" *And shall go in and out,*" (10:9) Do you know something ? Some of you who are unsaved look at us and think that the Christian life is dull, drab, depressing and difficult. But our pleasures are eternal, yours are temporal, ours are spiritual, yours are sensual, ours will last on, yours will fizzle out. You see, we can "*go in and out.*"

We have freedom. We can eat pork on Friday. We are free from the power of sin. It doesn't mean the right to whatever we please rather it means serving Christ and doing what pleases Him.

(c) CONTINUAL PLENTY:

" *And find pasture,*" My when you make Christ your all, you will find your all in Christ. You'll discover that the Christ who saves, is the Christ who satisfies and the Good Shepherd will never suffer you to lack either here or hereafter. Do you remember that chorus we used to sing as children ?

**One door and only one
And yet its sides are two
The inside, the outside
On which side are you ?**

You see, the door means division. The same door that shut Noah in closed the world out. Have you ever gone somewhere and realized that you were too late ? You got there but the doors were shut. It's not a nice feeling. My don't forget that there is day coming when the door will be shut forever and you might knock at the door and say, "*Lord, Lord open unto us, but He shall say I know you not depart from Me into everlasting fire.*" (Lk 13:25 Matt 25:10) Does He know you ? Do you know Him ? Where are you in relation to Christ ? Have you come through the door ? Are you saved, secure, satisfied in Him ?

