

John – I Am
Part 3
John 10: 1-10
Pastor Charles Price

Well thank you, Gregg. If you have a Bible with you, I am going to read this morning from John's Gospel and Chapter 10. John's Gospel Chapter 10; I am going to read the first 10 verses, which breaks off in the middle of a discourse that Jesus is giving, but what I want to talk to you about this morning is in these first verses.

John 10 Verse 1 Jesus says,

“I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.

“The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep.

“The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

“When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.

“But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice.”

“Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them.

“Therefore Jesus said again, ‘I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep.

“All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.

“I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture.

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.””

I am going to stop reading there, and you will know, if you have been here in recent weeks, that we are looking at some of the “I am” statements that Jesus made.

And today I am going to look at the statement “I am the gate” as it comes here in the NIV or “I am the door” as most translations will put it.

And when Jesus says, “I am the door” of course He doesn’t mean, “I am a block of wood with a handle on it”. This is part of an allegory that Jesus is giving.

An allegory is a message given through story and symbols where every part has a role in the picture and the truth that is being portrayed.

It is different to a parable in that sense. A parable is teaching one central truth.

Now we must be careful not to press every detail of an allegory into significant meaning but the main features all represent a truth that is going to be best retained in this picture language. And that is what Jesus is using here.

The main features in this allegory are sheep, a shepherd, a sheepfold, a gate. And then the “B” role features in this story are thieves, robbers, wolves and people climbing over a wall to get into the pen.

And in this story, in this passage, are intertwined two of the “I am” statements of Jesus. “I am the door” (which we are going to look at today) and “I am the Good Shepherd” (which we will look at next time).

Now the NIV, which is what I am using (New International Version) reads “I am the gate of the sheep”, which is appropriate because it is talking about sheep and about sheep pens.

I checked 12 different translations earlier this week to see how they translate this and 9 of them translate it “I am the door” and 3 of them translate it “I am the gate.” And either of them is legitimate because the Greek word that Jesus uses here is the word ‘thura’.

Neither specifically means door or gate, but rather it means an opening. It means an entrance or it means a passageway into something. Or it means a vestibule or it means a gate or it means a door. Depending on the context you determine what word you might use when you translate it into the English language.

And so the word “gate” or “door” is purely at the discretion of the translators.

Now if it were a rural congregation, such as the one I grew up in, you would know all about sheep and sheep pens and shepherds and gates.

My father was a shepherd and he bred and worked sheepdogs and not terribly successfully did he get them all to work as they should work.

But I grew up with sheep and sheep pens and sheepdogs and shepherds.

Hilary, my wife’s mother is married to a farmer. Actually his family name is Shepherd. And he has had sheep all his life.

So I am very at home and very familiar with this whole rural picture that Jesus is painting here.

But because we are an urban congregation, doors are much more familiar to us. It is very likely this morning you came out of the door of your bedroom; you opened the door of your bathroom.

You probably opened the door of a cupboard and the door of a fridge to get some breakfast. You probably came out of the door of your house. You got into the door of your car or the door of a bus or a subway train. You came into the door of the church here and you entered through the door of this auditorium.

So doors play a pretty significant role in all of our lives. In fact, one day this week, just for fun, I started to count how many doors I went through from the time I got up. And by about midmorning I got to something like 34 or 35 and then I forgot I was counting and so later in the day, “Oh, I was supposed to be counting all these doors”, so I couldn’t go back and try to remember which door I had gone through. But I would think I went through about 60 doors in the course of the day.

And of course this is a wonderfully simple and commonplace metaphor that Jesus is using. “I am the door,” “I am the access point.”

Verse 7:

“I tell you the truth, I am the door for the sheep.”

That is, “I am the access point.” “If sheep are going to come into whatever the fold represents, they have to come through Me.”

Verse 9:

“I am the door; whoever comes through me will be saved.”

Now we are talking about sheep here and of course the Bible often refers to people as sheep or as being like sheep.

I can give you just a few examples, but there are many more.

In Isaiah 53:6 he writes,

“We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way.”

Now I know sheep quite well, and they go astray, but they are not like cats, you know. If you try to herd cats; every single one goes its own individual way.

But actually sheep are different. Sheep always follow the one that is in front. And you can be absolutely sure that if you are taking sheep from one meadow to another or taking them down a road or something, that if there is a wrong way the first sheep can go, it will go there. And every other sheep will follow.

And I remember once some sheep, when I was a kid this was, we were herding some sheep and there was something in the path they were going along that they had to jump over. So we did the obvious thing – we went and pulled the thing away and they didn't have to jump. And every other sheep still jumped over the nothing that was left.

That's how sheep are wired.

And says Isaiah, we are wired the same way as well. People are like that. So we follow the trends. We follow the fashions. We follow behaviour of the crowd. We don't actually like to be different.

And ultimately this gets us into some trouble. That's why he uses that analogy in Isaiah 53.

In Jeremiah Chapter 50 [Verse 6], God says to Jeremiah,

“My people have become lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray and caused them to roam on the mountains.”

Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew Chapter 10,

“Go to the lost sheep of Israel.”

And when Jesus in John 21 said to Peter, “Do you love Me?” And Peter said, “You know everything. You know if I love You.” And Jesus then said, “Feed My sheep.”

And so that is enough evidence from many verses. We are likened to sheep in the Bible, and as some churches would say, somebody say, “A-a-amen” because we are a sheeepy lot.

That's the context of this allegory Jesus is going to give. And I want to talk about three things this morning.

First of all, there is a door to enter. This is the key. There is a door by which you enter into the fold that He is speaking about.

“I tell you the truth,” said Jesus in Verse 7, “I am the door for the sheep.”

In Verse 9:

“I am the door; whoever comes through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture.”

Notice there is an exclusiveness here.

“I am the door of the sheep.”

In other words, there is no other.

“I am the door; whoever enters through me will be saved.”

In Acts Chapter 4 [Verse 12], Peter preaching there in Jerusalem says,

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

There is an exclusiveness that is being spoken about here. And Jesus said, “If anybody else lets you in by any other way, he is a thief, he is a robber; I am the gate.”

There is a myth that is very common, and easy to understand actually, but it’s a common myth that all religions are basically the same. They all boil down to the brotherhood of man, the sisterhood of women etc. and the fatherhood of God.

And the myth usually includes the idea that we are all climbing different paths but up the same mountain where we converge at the top and we look back. We realize although our experiences on the path were different, we were all actually heading the same direction and we all end up in the same place.

That’s a common myth. According to Jesus, that is not so. And the reason why He says this in Matthew 10 is that He is placing Himself in sharp contrast with the Pharisees.

We are grateful for the chapter and verse divisions in our Bible – it helps us to navigate them easily. So when I say I want to read in John Chapter 10 Verse 1, it doesn’t take you long to get there.

But sometimes they become a hindrance because John 10:1 actually begins right in the middle of a John Chapter 9 story which hasn’t ended and is the setting for these statements of Jesus here.

And what happened in John Chapter 9 is there was a man who was born blind and who had been healed by Jesus, given back his sight. His neighbors, his friends, were amazed by this, they were excited by this, and they brought the man to the Pharisees in their excitement and said, “Look, this man who was born blind can see again. He met with Jesus and He healed him.”

Well the Pharisees weren’t as excited. They quizzed him. They called his parents to come for verification that he actually had been born blind, this really was their son.

And his parents were a little nervous about giving witness to the Pharisees because, as John 9:22 says, the Jews had already decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogues.

Now why is that?

Because they had made themselves the gatekeepers of who's in and who's out when it came to the synagogue.

So when the man insisted that he was healed by Jesus, "All I know is this; once I was blind, now I can see. All I know is that the man who healed me was a good man because only good men could do this and all I know is that that man's name was Jesus."

That was his kind of witness to them.

So in Verse 28 of Chapter 9 it says,

"They hurled insults at him" (this is the Pharisees) "and they said, 'You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses!'"

"You were steeped in sin at birth – how dare you lecture us!"

And they threw him out. When they threw him out, Jesus heard about this and He went to find the man. And when He found the man, a group of Pharisees gathered around Him, no doubt to now fight Him even more.

And it is then that Jesus begins to talk about the fact there is a sheep pen, there is a flock of sheep, and there is a way to go in, to become one of those, and "I am the door. Whoever enters through Me will be saved. You, Pharisees; you are not the gatekeepers; I am the gate."

The Pharisees have thrown the man out of the temple – it says that twice. He had been put out of the synagogue and then they threw him out. Why?

"Because you think you are the gatekeepers."

And then Jesus went and found him and welcomed him. The Pharisees had no jurisdiction as to who was in or out of the fold. Jesus did.

And the Pharisees had fallen in to a common trap. It's a trap that is still around. The trap was that they felt "if you belong to us, then you belong to God. And we know therefore if you belong to us or not and we know therefore whether you belong to God or not. So we are the arbiters over who belongs to God and who does not, determined by who belongs to us."

They adopted the idea "if you conform to our requirements, that is what pleases God and therefore we know who is pleasing God because you fit in with us. If you satisfy us," was their thinking, "you will satisfy God. And we therefore are the arbiters of your standing before God."

Actually the reverse of that is the truth. If you belong to God, you should belong to us. Anybody God calls His son, I must call my brother, if I am going to be a New Testament Christian without the divisions that we so often artificially set up.

And the danger is that these ideas are still with us today. There are those who say, “If you are baptized by us, you will be a child of God.” There are people; there are churches that actually say that.

There are those who say, “If you belong to our group, if you belong to our church, if you are part of our sect, then you will belong to God. We will promise you that.”

“If you are regular at communion, then you belong to God. If you keep our rules, then you belong to God.”

You know in part of the part, such as the Middle East, when your birth certificate is made out, there is a place to write down your religion or your religious affiliation.

And so there will be a box that says Christian and there will be those who check that box. Parents will check that box when the child is 3 or 4 days old only.

And on that basis, recent figures tell us that 33.39% of the world’s population are Christian. We are a population of about 7 billion at the moment. That means 2.3 billion claim to be Christian, higher than any other religious group. 22.7 claim to be Muslim, 13.8 to be Hindu, etc.

Now that does not seem to be incredulous to us. In the last Canadian census 67% checked the box that they were Christian – that’s two thirds. And this is information people give about themselves.

So I imagine they come to the check box where they are supposed to identify their religion and there are those who say, “Well, I was baptized as a baby,” check the box. There are those who say, “Well my grandmother was a Christian”, so check the box. “Well, I migrated here but I was born in Poland so I must be a Christian so I check the box.”

Or, you know, “I got married in church” so check the box. Or “actually I am a pretty good person, so I will check the box.”

This week I was in a hospital waiting room and I got in a conversation with a lady – I will tell you in a moment how the conversation started – but she told me she used to go to church. She grew up as a Lutheran, was taken to church every week.

But she said, “But they always talked about sin and they always talked about being a sinner and I’m not a sinner.” (She said that quite emphatically.)

So I said, “Really? Are you sure - some teeny, weeny ones maybe?”

She said – this is what she said – I wrote down our conversation when she had left me – she said, “Maybe there were a few sins when I was young, but that is just growing up, but I am definitely not a sinner.”

She was emphatic and indignant. So I said, “So you gave up Christianity?”

She said, “No, of course I didn’t. I am a Christian.”

The interesting thing is the conversation came about because she sat down in the waiting room opposite me. After a minutes she said, “Do I know you?”

And I said, “I don’t know.”

She said, “You look familiar to me.”

She said, “Now you speak, your voice is familiar, and” she said, “your smile is familiar. Have we met?”

I said, “I don’t know.”

And so I kept her guessing a little bit and I said, “Do you watch television on Sunday mornings?”

And she said, “Oh that’s it! You’re the preacher on television! Oh, I listen to you quite often.”

I thought, “Oh boy, and she’s still not a sinner. She still doesn’t know.”

But you see there are 67% self-confessed Christians in Canada from, for many, the flimsiest of evidence; to others, real conviction about it, but who may have never come through the gate, never come through the door, which is Christ Himself.

They can be let in by some priest – that’s the thief and the robber – let in by some pastor, let in by some sect, let in by some self-appointed arbitrator. But trying to get in by any other way than Jesus Christ Himself, Jesus describes,

“One who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way is a thief and a robber.”

And from the context, the thief and the robber is the one who lets them in, lets the sheep in by some other way, or takes them out by some other way. The true Shepherd brings them through the gate.

And do you know, I talk about 67% of Canadians claim to be Christian – we know that’s a bizarre figure in reality, but you know, you can be brought up in a good Christian family and yet not know Christ and just assume, “well, I’m a Christian.”

You can be a good person like this sinless lady I met, but not know Christ. You can actually be an elder in a church, you can be a board member, you can be a leader, but not actually know Christ. Know Christianity – yes, of course.

You can be a pastor, you can be a missionary, you can be a Christian worker, yet not know Christ. You can be a musician every Sunday in the church, you can be a choir member, yet not actually know Christ for yourself.

Just coincidentally, this week as I was preparing this message, I heard of a man who is alive now who sat under the Gospel for over 60 years. For 25 of those years he was in the Peoples Church, and he sat in his seat every Sunday in this building for 25 years, sang all the songs, listened to all the messages, but was finally converted at the age of 92, just recently.

And I was given permission to mention this story and his daughter wrote and said this, that now at the retirement home where they live, he is actually involved in reading Scripture at their services. "Did I ever think I would see that day?"

That could be some of us here this morning. We are so familiar with the things of Christ, with Christianity, but we don't actually know Christ and have come to Christ Himself.

You see we cannot just imbibe the Gospel by being around it. You can't catch the Christian life the way you can catch the flu. You know, it's not an airborne disease. Hanging around Christians doesn't make us a Christian.

If you ask somebody, "Are you a Christian?" they can't answer that in the positive by saying, "Well, you know, I have been around Christians for many years and I have been in church for 25 years, so yeah, I must be a Christian."

That would be like saying to somebody, "Are you married?"

And the guy replies, "Well, you know, that's a good question. I have been hanging around women for 20 years. So I supposed I probably am. I like women too. Yeah, I think I am probably married."

You know if you grew up in a Christian home, there are many privileges associated with that, but don't place your security in that. Don't just adopt it as a family belief. Don't just adopt it as a world view. Don't just adopt it as your religious affiliation. You have to do personal dealings with Christ.

"I am the door. You have got to come to Me and through Me."

Parents, don't assume, let's not assume our kids know Christ for themselves because we have brought them up in an environment that should make it easy for them to do so. But don't assume that they do.

The most godly training cannot insure conversion. As Jesus said to a religious man, Nicodemus, "You must be born again."

You know you can be Christianized without being evangelized. There has to be personal dealings with God. And you will know from within yourself, not because somebody else tells you, but from within yourself.

A verse that means much to me – Romans 8:16 says,

“The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”

That something inside of me, the Spirit within me, testifies to me that I am God’s children.

I came into the assurance of my salvation the day after I was born again. You see I had gone to a youth event in the city near which I lived in England. They were showing a Billy Graham film called “The Shadow of the Boomerang”, which was a drama set in Australia and filmed against the background of a Billy Graham crusade there.

And the town hall where we had the meeting was packed out. It was the biggest public venue that we had in our town. And when I got there, there were no seats, so I was with my brother and we stood at the back. And for 90 minutes I watched that film.

And at the end of that film I knew I was not a Christian and I knew I wanted to be one.

And at the end somebody got up and said, “If you are not a Christian tonight and God has spoken to you and you want to become one, come down here to the front and there will be people to pray with you and lead you to Christ.”

Well several people went forward but I didn’t. I was too embarrassed and shy to do something public like that. But I prayed and said something like, “Lord, I am not a Christian; would You please make me one tonight?”

I didn’t feel a single thing. I didn’t know if anything had happened at all. If on the way home, or when I got home, somebody said to me, “Did you become a Christian tonight?” I wouldn’t know if I had or not, though I knew I wanted to.

But the next day was Sunday and I went to the church my parents had taken me to all of my life. And for the first time I could remember the service that morning was interesting. I went back on Sunday night and for the first time the preacher made sense.

And I thought to myself, “This is remarkable! These people have changed overnight. This used to be dull, uninteresting, boring. Now it makes sense, it’s interesting.”

And I knew I had become a Christian 24 hours after I had become one simply because I had an appetite I never had before. The evidence of life is appetite.

And I know God gives that confirmation in different ways to different people. But in my own experience it was an appetite I never had before and I have never lost since – the evidence of life, spiritual life.

It is not a great feeling necessarily when you become a Christian – some people remember the exact moment. I remember that moment because of the next day, the realization something was different.

But we have to come to this alone. We cannot come on the coattails of our parents or our family or our friends or an environment or simply because we are Canadian. We have to come alone.

“I am the door; whoever enters through me will be saved.”

That’s the first thing; there is a door to enter.

Secondly, and I won’t be so long on the second and third points, there is a danger to escape. And the danger to escape is the thieves and robbers who will let you in by some other way, those who will offer you something but rob you of a real experience of God.

Verse 10, Jesus said,

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.”

Verse 1: the thief will let you in through some other way but his agenda will never give you life, it will never give you hope, it will never give you that deep inner peace. He can only offer you things that are negative, to steal, to kill, to destroy.

And the Pharisees, whom Jesus in the context is contrasting Himself as the door with their gatekeeping mentality, only ever imposed heavy burdens upon people and rules upon people. They had no interest in the people themselves, only interested in the measurement of their own success. Because if you got somebody in, great.

You know I always shudder when I hear a church that sets numbers as a growth target. I will tell you why: because their interest becomes more in the target than in you as an individual. That’s the problem with that. And Jesus is taking interest in them as an individual. The thieves will want you but they won’t give you life.

I said earlier there was an exclusiveness in Jesus’ statement, “I am the door.” But if you read on that sentence in Verse 9, He says, “I am the door” (that’s exclusive); “whoever enters through me will be saved.”

Did you notice the inclusiveness there? “I am the door” (exclusive); “whoever” (inclusive) – “whoever enters through me will be saved.”

That means that any man, any woman, any boy, any girl is a candidate for fellowship and friendship with Jesus Christ and coming into a living relationship with Him.

We hosted a mayoral debate in this building recently and one of the candidates asked a colleague of mine what denomination this church was.

And he replied, correctly, that we belong to no denomination; we are an independent Christian church.

And so this candidate said, “So you mean any Christian can come to this church?”

And my colleague said, “No, any *person* can come to this church.”

And so it is with Christ. Any person – “whoever enters through Me will be saved.”

It doesn't matter what your background is and what your history might be. The Good Shepherd (who we will meet as the Good Shepherd next time) invites everyone in, whoever enters.

Not to make them like us that we conform all those who are part of the fellowship into the same mould – the moment you do that, you make everybody mouldy and we cease to be life-giving.

We bring everybody to Christ and let them celebrate the individuality in Christ, but it's through Christ we bring them.

But you know sometimes the church can be a hiding place from Christ Himself – it's hard to believe, but it can be true.

Many years ago now – in fact, more than 30 years ago – I was invited to go and preach in a church in Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland is a very church-going community and this particular church used to be full every Sunday with a great crowd of people. But it was fairly nominal, certainly not evangelistic in its approach.

But there were a few people in the church who were godly people, who really knew God, who wanted this church to be a place that reached out and led other people to Christ.

A little group of them got together. It was led by the principal of the local high school. And they went to their minister and elders and said, “Could we have an evangelistic mission in this church?”

And they said, “Why?”

And they said, “Well, we want to reach people with the Gospel.”

And they said, “We don't need to. We have plenty of people as it is. This church is full on a Sunday.”

And that was their argument. But after a while, they agreed to hold what they called an inner mission – not outside the walls; this was for people who were already part of this church.

So they planned this inner mission and they decided to find somebody who would come and preach at it and they invited me. And I was free to go.

It lasted for two weeks, three Sundays, fifteen days and they had me preach every night for those fifteen days, nonstop.

And good numbers came. The first week was really, really hard going. It was like swimming in treacle – if you know what that’s like. I don’t, but I can imagine. You just couldn’t get going. It seemed to be stodgy, everything was heavy. Nobody was responding.

On the first day of the second week, on the Monday night of the second week I spoke from a verse in Acts Chapter 19 when Paul came to Ephesus and he asked a group of men this question, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” They were already believers. They had actually already been baptized. They were already called disciples.

But he says, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”

And I began to talk about the evidences of the Holy Spirit living in a person’s life. And people began to realize, “I don’t have these evidences at all in my life.”

And that night for the first time two or three people were counselled afterwards and gave their lives to Christ.

The next night I preached on the same verse. I had no liberty to change it though I was going to speak on something else. And more people got converted.

So that second week I preached every night on the same verse. “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”

And we had elders converted that week. We had youth ministry leaders converted, Sunday school teachers.

On the last day - the pulpit was a high one (it was an old Presbyterian church) – a high one and there was an organ underneath the pulpit where the organist would play.

And during the last song on the last day, the organ stopped playing halfway through the song. And I looked down and the organist had put his head in his hands and he was sobbing like a child, and he too came to Christ that day.

The minister was a backslidden man. He had come to know Christ, had a dramatic conversion in his teen years, had gone to Queens University in Belfast and studied theology and every bit of life had been knocked out of him in that process.

But we went out for dinner on the last day and he wept at the wasted years of his life and came back to Christ.

His wife didn't come back, if she ever knew Christ. She fought it like no other, she fought me – I was supposed to go to their house for dinner and she said, "I am not having him in this house" so I had to get my dinner somewhere else.

But you see they had all been Christianized but they hadn't come to the door. That's a narrowing down, Jesus warned in Matthew 7:13,

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.

"But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."

Only a few.

And I want to challenge you this morning whether you have really come to that gate and come through that gate.

"I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved."

And the next part of the verse says,

"Then he will come in and go out and find pasture."

I forgot about that verse this week. "He will go in and out and find pasture."

Not into salvation and out of it and then come back in again and go back out again. You won't find pasture doing that, if you even could do that.

But I think what it means is this: they will come in for salvation and go out for service, in for worship, out for witness, in for fellowship, out for feeding others, in for ministry, out for mission, in for prayer, out for proclamation.

And when you have this rhythm of the Christian life, in and out, in and out, then He says you will find pasture.

You don't find pasture just being in and selfish about it. You don't find pasture just getting out and not being in where you are resourced and helped and grow and where the fellowship of other believers helps us so much. But you go in and out and there you find pasture.

And lastly, the third thing. If there is a door to enter, there is a danger to escape, danger of being sucked in by the robbers and thieves, there is a thirdly a dynamic to experience because in Verse 10 He says,

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

The thieves and robbers will promise much but they will deliver little, but when you come to Christ, He says, “You come to Me; I will give you life and not just life – life to the full, life as originally it was intended to be lived and experienced.”

Because you see Christ is not an optional extra to living life to the full. We were so created that Christ Himself, the Spirit of God within us, is the fundamental ingredient to life being complete and living it to the full.

And I want to ask if you really know this. Do you know Christ experientially in your life? Take away your creed now, take away your doctrine, take away say, a church. Supposing you never had a church to attend. What would be left of your Christian life? Would you have a relationship where the Spirit of God bears witness with your spirit that you are children of God, that you have an appetite, there is fruit that He produces in your life?

2 Corinthians 13:5 says,

“Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you – unless... you fail the test?”

It doesn't say examine your Bible; it says examine yourself. Is there evidence Jesus Christ is in me?

And I love the way the Amplified Bible translates that. It says,

“Examine and test and evaluate your own selves to see whether you are in the faith and showing the proper fruits of it. Test and approve yourself [not Christ.] Do you not yourselves realize and know [thoroughly by an ever-increasing experience] that Jesus Christ is in you – unless you are [counterfeits] disapproved on trial and rejected?”

Well, do you? Do you know that Jesus Christ is in you?

As I finish you might say, “Well I want to know, I want to be sure.”

You need to do, I am going to say, three things. I mean there are all kinds – this is not a structure that is other than convenient for us to think about just very quickly. We need to A, B, C.

A: we need to *Admit* that I am outside of His fold. I do not have a living experience of God. You may believe in Him. And unlike that woman in the hospital waiting room, you have to admit, “I am a sinner. That is why I am separated and distant from God.”

You need to *Believe* that Jesus Christ came to make a way back to God and He did so through His death, His burial, and His resurrection from the dead. And having satisfied the justice of God, He now imparts to us the gift of His Holy Spirit.

You need to Admit, need to Believe, you need to *Commit*. You need to say this is not just something for now. I am going to give my life to Him without reserve that Jesus Christ might live in me, and living in me by His Holy Spirit, will create in me those appetites and desires that you are not then living under you are supposed to do this and supposed to do that and you have to do this, and you must do that and you shouldn't do that, and you should do the other.

You live under the impulse of a new affection, a new life which, from within, gives love, compassion and a hunger for those things that are right.

I want us to pray together as we close. And maybe there are some of us and we need to pray just a very simple prayer that opens our hearts to the Lord Jesus and allows Him then to open the door into a living relationship with Himself.

I am going to ask you to pray this with me and then I am going to ask you to stand if you pray this. I am going to pray for you. Because there will be one of two here and you may have been around here for many years. You may be new, you may be here with a friend, but you need to come into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Would you pray with me?

Lord, I realize that I am separated from You. There is a barrier between us. But thank You that Jesus Christ came to break that barrier down, to create a door through which I can come home to the Father. And thank You that Jesus Himself is that door. Forgive me my sin. I acknowledge it before You. And I believe, Lord Jesus, You died for me and have risen again and want to live in me. I commit myself to You and as I do so, I know that You will commit Yourself to me and we will live in friendship and fellowship together. Thank You for hearing my prayer.