

## The Shepherd Who is the Door to Life

John 10.1-10

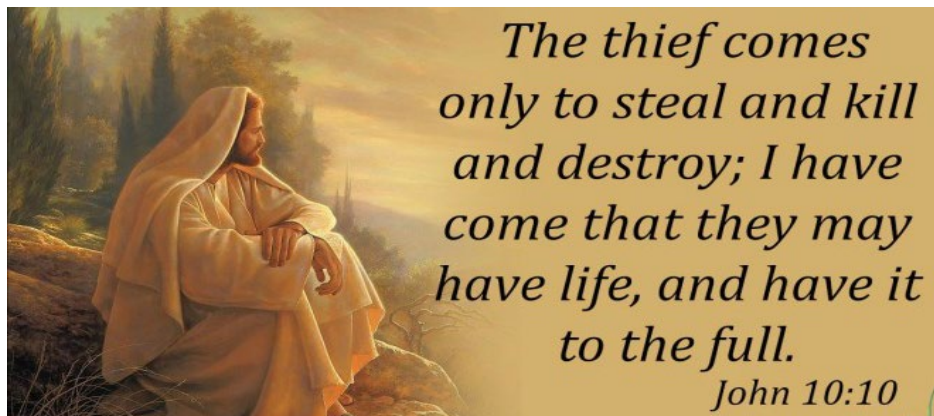
In John's record of Jesus' life, the crucifixion is growing near. Religious leaders, like false shepherds, are doing anything they can to deter people from believing in Him. To expose them, and explain His mission, Jesus talks about shepherds, sheep, doors, and thieves.

Jesus Tells Two Parables (1-5)

- The Shepherd and the Thief (1-3a)
- The Shepherd and the Stranger (3b-5)

Jesus Explains a Parable: "I am the door" (7-10)

- False shepherds...  
...do not believe in Jesus (8)  
  
...steal, slaughter, and destroy (10a)
- The true Shepherd...  
...gives salvation and 'pasture' (9)  
  
...gives life – eternal, and abundant! (10b)



1. Of all the metaphors Jesus used to explain His ministry, perhaps the most descriptive and loved is that of a shepherd. In John 10, Jesus develops this imagery more completely than anywhere else in the Gospels. He begins by telling two parables – general story-pictures that represent truth – in John 10.1-5. These ‘set the stage’ for the teaching that follows. What truths about shepherds does Jesus give in these verses? What kind of people does He contrast shepherds with in verses 1-3a? In verses 3b-5? Who is He alluding to here?
2. In Jesus' day, priests and religious leaders were like politicians are today. They were in positions of power, but they were not generally *loved*. For centuries, they had connived and bought their offices of influence – all to line their own pockets! Are there religious leaders like this today?
3. Since Jesus' listeners don't understand what He is driving at (6), He begins explaining His metaphors in v7. He first describes Himself as the door (or gate) of the sheep. Jesus is choosing different aspects of His opening parables to illustrate His ministry (later, He will present Himself as the shepherd), and contrast it with the religious leaders of the day. What does it mean to “enter through the door” (Jesus)? Do thieves and robbers enter that way (v1)? Who is Jesus describing as “thieves and robbers”?
4. In v9, Jesus illustrates those who ‘enter through Me’ as sheep, and says that they will be “saved”. See other times John recorded Jesus saying He came to “save” (Jn. 3.17; 5.34; 12.47). What does being ‘saved’ mean in these verses? Jesus adds that these ‘sheep’ “will go in and out and find pasture.” What does this mean for our lives?
5. In v10, Jesus contrasts “the thief” with Himself. This seems to refer to an evil force behind all “thieves and robbers,” someone opposed to all that Jesus has come to do. Who is this (cf. Jn. 8.44)? Reflect on how “to steal and kill and destroy” sums up everything he does! In contrast to this, what does Jesus offer? What is “life”? What is “abundant life”?