

I AM the Gate

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- [0 : 0 0] Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we come before you this morning with our hearts open and our ears ready to hear your voice.
- ! As we turn to your word in John 10, we ask that you help us to recognize the voice of our true shepherd. Remove every distraction.
- Quiet every fear and draw us into the safety of your presence. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.
- One day, I was at the Johor Bahru, Johor Bahru Senai International Airport, waiting to fly back to Kuching. I went to the departure gate as indicated on the boarding pass.
- Since I was early and I was tired, I was tired because my mother's funeral ceremony was just over.
- [1 : 0 4] So I was tired, I was early, so I took a nap, short nap. Just took a short nap at the departure gate, near the departure gate. Sitting, I was sitting there.
- So when it's boarding time, I opened my eyes but did not see any movement of passengers to the departure gate. Something was wrong.
- So I asked around, I asked around and found out that the departure gate has been changed. You know, panic, panic, panic, panic, you know, boarding time, wrong departure gate.
- I quickly rushed to the new departure gate and thankfully boarded the plane. Oh, what a relief. I did not miss my flight. When I was in the plane, I realized something was missing.
- Can you guess what was missing? A small gadget, some of you are holding it. I have left my handphone on a seat at the other gate.
- [2 : 1 4] Actually, I asked the active workers, can I go out just for a while, get my handphone? What's the answer? No, of course no. Bye-bye, handphone. I was distracted and I lost my phone.
- But if I had remained at the wrong gate, I would have lost something far more important. I would have missed my flight. The phone was a loss but missing the flight would have been a greater loss.
- This incident is a reminder that some losses, some losses, however painful, are minor compared to the tragedy of missing your ultimate destination.
- This is essentially the human struggle. All of us want to be winners in life. No one wants to be a loser in life.
- Who wants to be a loser in life? No one! We fear loss. We fear failure. We fear missing out. We are surrounded by voices that promise fulfillment.
- [3 : 3 1] That promise success and peace. They all claim to be the gates that will lead you to a better life. Yet, so many of these gates lead only to dead ends.
- Leaving us feeling more lost, more drained, more like losers. In John chapter 10, Jesus cuts through all this confusion with a startling proclamation.

Jesus declares, I am the gate. He confronts us. He confronts us with this ultimate choice. Do you want to go to the gates that harm you or to the gate that saves you?

He exposes the danger of the many wrong gates. And he proclaims that there is only one gate that leads to a life that truly wins.

The truly good life. To fully understand what Jesus is saying, we must understand the context, the setting for this proclamation.

[4 : 41] In John chapter 9, the previous chapter, Jesus heals a man who was born blind. A blind man now can see. This is an amazing miracle.

But the Pharisees refused to believe that Jesus is sent by God. The healing of the blind man should be an occasion for celebration.

People should be happy for this blind man who now can see. Instead of rejoicing with him, the Pharisees actually threw him out from the place of worship.

The Pharisees were supposed to be the shepherds for the people of Israel. Caring for them, pointing them to God. Instead, we find these Pharisees threatening, intimidating, and harassing the people of God.

It is in this tense situation, this charged atmosphere, that Jesus speaks directly to the Pharisees in John chapter 10. Jesus begins with this strong warning.

[5 : 55] Verse 1. Very truly, I tell you, Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.

In ancient Israel, shepherds gathered their sheep at night into a stone enclosure, enclosure made of stone. There was only one opening, the gate.

There are some people who will not enter by the gate. Instead, they climb in. They are the thieves and the robbers.

They represent false shepherds. Not true shepherds, false shepherds. They seek power. They seek personal gain without sincerity, without sincerely caring for the flock.

Jesus is actually pointing at the Pharisees. They were the religious authorities. They were supposed to be the shepherds of Israel.

[6 : 56] But the way they treated the healed blind men revealed their true nature. They were spiritual thieves, using their authority not to guide the people to God, but to control them, to burden them, and to lead them away from Christ.

Today, there are false shepherds like that. They may not put on the Pharisees' clothes, but their voices, their voices carry the same deceitful tone.

Some promise success. Teaching that faith is a method for achieving personal gain and worldly comfort. Believe in God.

You believe in God and you will be healthy and wealthy. Others promise spiritual power or emotional peace without any dependence on Christ.

They offer shortcuts to fulfillment without repentance. They preach a gospel without a cross. They preach a kingdom without a king.

[8 : 07] These are the thieves and robbers. They deceive the vulnerable, the weak. They deceive the desperate with attractive promises.

They may even use the language of scripture, the word of God, but they twist it to build their own empire, their goal, their purpose is not your freedom, but your bondage.

Jesus' warning is clear. Not everyone who speaks in his name truly represents him. Beware of these false shepherds.

In contrast, the true shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. Verse 3. Verse 3. He knows them personally.

Jesus doesn't drive them from behind. He leads them from the front. What a beautiful image of Christ. He knows his sheep by name.

[9 : 12] He also knows their fears, their weaknesses, their history, good and bad. Most of us like people to know our good history.

We like to tell people about our past experience, especially those who are retired. We like to talk about our past glories. none of us want to tell people about our bad history.

But God knows. He knows you. He knows your history, good and bad. He calls each one and they recognize his voice. How do we as sheep in the 21st century learn to recognize that voice?

We learn it. We learn it through the faithful, consistent revelation of his word. The Bible is the record of the shepherd's voice, revealing his character, his promises and his ways.

We learn it through the gospel, the grand story of his love, sacrifice and victory. And we learn it through the quiet inner witness of the Holy Spirit who guides us according to his word.

[10 : 23] The more we know his word, the clearer his voice becomes. What is the response of the sheep? Verse 5, they will never follow a stranger.

The sheep will never follow a stranger. In fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice. Remember the story of the blind man who was healed by Jesus in John chapter 9.

He did not listen to the Pharisees. Rather, he listened to the voice of the shepherd. He listened to Jesus.

True believers, true believers have a spiritual instinct. They may sometimes wander away, you know? You know, believers, right? You are believers.

We may sometimes wander away, but we will not ultimately follow a stranger's voice. The spirit within them draws them back to Christ.

[11 : 30] That's both a comfort and a warning. If we find ourselves growing more attracted to the voices of the world, voices that tell us to chase after power, voices that tell us to chase after pleasure, after possessions, we must stop and ask, whose voice am I listening to?

Am I listening to the right voice? Jesus' sheep hear his voice. They may stumble, we may stumble, but they know whom they belong to.

Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand. Jesus did not actually expect the Pharisees to understand his figure of speech because their hearts were already hardened against him.

These Pharisees have seen Jesus' work, and they have heard his words, yet they refuse to believe that he has become spiritually deaf and blind.

Though the Pharisees were the immediate audience, Jesus' words were also meant for the listening crowd and for future readers of the gospel like us.

[12 : 48] John records this saying, John wrote down these sayings, not just to show the Pharisees' blindness, but to reveal to us who God is, who Jesus is, who Jesus is. Even when the Pharisees didn't understand, there were others present, listening in, listening in to the conversations.

Common people, the spiritually hungry people who might begin to see and understand. So, Jesus' words served a wider purpose.

He spoke not only for them, but also for us. And so, Jesus spoke again, using another figure of speech. This time, he makes a proclamation.

He speaks not just about the gate, he declares himself to be the gate. I am the gate. In ancient Israel, if there is no physical gate at the entrance of the ship pan, the shepherd would often lie down across the entrance.

He would lie down across the entrance. His body literally became the gate. Imagine the shepherd lying down across the entrance of the ship pan.

[14 : 02] No wolf, no thief, no danger can reach the ship without first confronting the shepherd. His body, his body is a barrier and also the passage.

This is a powerful picture Jesus claims for himself. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved. Let's unpack it.

Let's unpack what it means that Jesus is the gate that leads to the abundant life. First, the gate provides salvation and safety. People are very comfortable with Jesus only as a gate.

They have no problem with Jesus as merely a gate, but they find it hard to accept that Jesus is the gate, the gate. Jesus is not arrogant with this claim of being the gate.

He is telling the truth. If a doctor says, the only cure for your illness is this specific treatment.

[15 : 13] The doctor is not being narrow-minded. The doctor is being accurate. Hopefully, most of doctors are accurate. Accurate. Jesus is describing the spiritual reality of the world.

Sin separates us from a holy God. This separation cannot be overcome by our good works, cannot be overcome by our religious rituals, or by our philosophical pursuit.

It could only be overcome by God himself in the person of Christ through the death on the cross. The gate is not an ordinary doorway.

It is the cross through which God's mercy flows through us. To enter through this gate is to be saved, to be rescued from the penalty and the power of sin, to be reconciled to God, and to be transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.

How do you enter through this gate? You enter the gate by putting your faith and trust in Jesus Christ. It is trusting in who he is. He is the son of God and trusting in what he has done through his atoning death and victorious resurrection.

[16 : 39] This is the foundational aspect of the better life. Before we can talk about abundance, we must talk about salvation. Before we can experience freedom, we must be saved.

The world's promises, the world's promises of a better life often ignore the fundamental problem of our separation from God.

We are not just misguided, we are not just misguided, we are lost, we are not just unfulfilled, we are condemned in our sin.

Jesus, as the gate, solved this primary problem. By his blood, we are reconciled to God. When we place our trust in him, our sins are forgiven.

The condemnation we deserve is taken away. We are saved. Second, the gate is a place of absolute security.

[17 : 46] When the shepherd lay down at the gate, the sheep were saved. Wolves, thieves, and dangers could not get in without confronting the shepherd first.

For the sheep inside, there was peace. They could rest. This is a profound security we have in Christ. We are not saved by our ability to hold on to God, but by his ability to hold on to us.

Our security rests in the finished work of Christ and his protective presence. He said, it's all printed in your notes, he said, I give them eternal life and they shall never perish.

No one will snatch them out of my hand. John 10 28. This security allows for deep spiritual rest. We don't have to live in constant anxiety, wondering whether our faith is strong enough or whether we have been a good enough Christian.

Christ holds us, Christ guards us and keeps us. His greed is stronger than our weakness. Sometimes when we preachers talk like that, then the Christian listeners, they listen.

[19 : 10] God hold on us, it doesn't depend on my hold on to God. Then I can live as anyhow, I can live any way I like. Christians who talk like that are not listening to the voice of the shepherd.

If you talk like that, if you ever talk like that, I can live the way I like. I don't have to follow this teaching because God holds on me. God holds on me. If you talk like that, you are not listening to the voice of the shepherd.

You are not his sheep. His sheep will never talk like that. His sheep will follow his ways. We may sometimes wonder, but we will come back to him. Our standing with God is secure because it is based on Christ's performance, not on our own performance.

Third, the gate provides freedom and sustenance. Verse 9, they will come in and go out and find pasture. This is a beautiful picture of the Christian life.

To come in and go out is an ancient Hebrew way of describing life, describing a life of security, a life of freedom and well-being.

[20 : 28] A sheep that can come in and go out is not a prisoner in the sheep pen. It has freedom. Come in is to come to the place of safety and rest in Jesus.

Go out is to go out into the world, to go out into your family, into your workplace, into your school, into your college, into your community, to be the ambassadors of Christ, to be salt and light in this world.

We can go out with confidence because we know we have a safe place to return to. we are free to live, to love, to serve and to take risk for the kingdom because our identity and security are not out there in the world.

Our identity and security are anchored, are firmly rooted in Jesus who is the gate. They will come in and they will go out and find pasture.

They will find pasture. pasture is the spiritual nourishment God provides. What are these pastures? His word, God's word, which is our daily bread.

[21 : 46] His spirit, who is living water. His fellowship, which restores our joy. In Christ, our deepest hunger, our deepest thirst are met.

as Augustine prayed, you have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you. If Jesus is the only gate that provides freedom and sustenance, that means all other gates, no matter how attractive, no matter how desirable it might seem, are making false promises that will lead you to a spiritual desert.

only Jesus, the true gate, leads to the green pastures and still waters that restores the soul. Fourth, the gate provides abundance.

Verse 10, Jesus concludes this passage by contrasting the thief's harmful purpose with his own life-giving purpose. Verse 10, I have come, Jesus speaking, I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.

This life is an abundant life, an overflowing life. This is the good life we have been searching for, the winner's life.

[23 : 08] What does this abundant life mean? The world's idea, the world's idea of abundance is quantitative, you know, quantitative, more money, more possessions, more followers, more experiences, more travels.

It is an abundance that is external, fragile, and ultimately unsatisfying. Jesus' idea of abundance is qualitative.

It is the kind of life, not just an amount of living. It is the God kind of life, eternal life, which is not merely life after death, but a new dimension of life that begins the moment we enter through the gate.

It is a life characterized by peace, peace in the midst of storms, because we know the shepherd is in the same boat with us. It is a life of purpose that gives meaning to every ordinary task because we belong to God's eternal story.

I don't know how you feel. I got a friend whose wife is bedridden for 10 years, and this later part of his life, he has to jagger the wife 24-7, okay?

[24 : 34] And he was a pastor, he acts like a pastor of his church, and he ministered to the wife like this. When you think of it, what is the meaning of life? What is the purpose of life? Is there any purpose like that?

Taking care of the wife for so many years, bedridden. What is the purpose? But in God's eyes, in God's economy, there's purpose. Because we belong, even my friend, belong to God's eternal story.

This is a beautiful thing, because some of us do ordinary work, as if there's no purpose. But in God's eternal, in God's economy, you are part of his eternal story.

That's what the purpose is. it is a life of joy. It is not dependent on circumstances because it is rooted in our unchanging salvation.

It is a life of love that we can both receive from God and extend to others, even to our enemies. It's difficult to love your enemies.

[25 : 41] Even to love your neighbors is difficult already. Love your enemies is even more difficult. but because God's love can fill us, God's love can be passed on to us and we can share with others, even to our enemies.

A life of love, a life of hope that looks beyond the grave to a resurrection and a new creation. This abundant life is not the absence of trouble.

The man born blind found abundant life in Christ. He found abundant life in Christ. And it immediately led to persecution and excommunication.

The apostles, all the apostles found abundant life in Jesus Christ. And it led them to prison, to beatings, and to martyrdom.

Abundant life is the presence of Christ in our troubles. It is the deep joy of knowing that we are loved, we are saved, no matter what the thieves of this world try to steal, try to kill, or try to destroy.

[26 : 50] John 17 verse 3 says, Now, this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. According to this verse, John 17 verse 3, it's printed in your notes, true life, above all, is about knowing the Lord himself.

It's knowing the Lord Jesus himself. So, life is not just love, life is not just joy and peace, but ultimately, it is a relationship with Jesus himself.

Love, joy, and peace are just the fruits, fruits of our relationship with the Lord. Life at its fullest, the abundant life, is a relationship with Jesus.

The invitation this morning is very simple, yet it is the most important decision you will ever make. The pursuit of the good life, the winning life, does not end with a philosophy, it does not end with a strategy or self-help program.

It ends at a person, it ends at the gate. Perhaps, you have never entered the gate, you have listened to the voices of the thieves, only to realize they keep stealing your peace, they keep stealing your joy and your hope.

- [28 : 15] You believe the voices that tell you that you need the next item, you need the next achievement, you need the next relationship to finally make you happy. And you found that these promises to be empty.
- Stop, stop listening to these voices. Turn your ear to the voice of the shepherd. shepherd. He calls you by name. He knows your story.
- He knows your pain, your failure, and he offers not condemnation, but salvation. Perhaps, you have entered the gate, but still live in fear and anxiety.
- You have forgotten that you have a gate. You have forgotten the freedom of coming in and going out. you have afraid to venture out in service. You are afraid to venture out in witness, in telling others about Christ.
- You are afraid to venture out in risk taking for the Lord. Actually, I was thinking whether I should share this or not. But I'm getting old, not young. I think better share to young people.
- [29 : 22] I think I should share. I think the young people, when you are single, you should take risk for the Lord. I'm not taking you to climb the highest ladder, go to the roof. I'm not talking about that kind of risk.
- I'm talking about risk for the Lord. Sometimes you are not sure whether to go full time or not full time. Take it. Take a challenge. Give yourself two, three years.
- My daughter did that. Three years full time with scripture union. After that, you know, it's okay. Take the risk. You won't know until you do it. Okay?
- You won't know. Then people may throw back to me. Why not Uncle Yabba? Why not you do it first? Okay? Then I tell my story, right? Okay, after my form six, I just tell you, because I think some young people haven't heard.
- After my form six, I actually went to the church board. I asked them, I tell them, send me to the Bible college. Okay? My parents will not send me, I don't have money. You want me to go to the Bible college, send me?
- [30 : 19] Form six, I went to the church board meeting, you know? You're committing meeting, I was there, you know? Church board meeting, not this church, okay? My home church in Luang. Then they said, you're too young, better study first up.
- Anyway, no parental support. I came from a non-Christian family. Okay, I went to study, I finished my teaching, I'm now teaching in Sarawak. 20 years later, the senior pastor of another church wanted me to be an assistant pastor.
- I said, yes! He submitted my form to the headquarter, headquarter said no. Okay? I challenged young people, you know when you go full-time, submit your, let the church decide whether you are qualified to be full-time or not, okay?
- You submit, let the church decide, don't say, am I qualified? Let the church decide for you, okay? Challenge you, take the risk. I took the risk two times, okay? It seems that God doesn't mind me, anyway, two times.
- I think some of you have not even tried once, okay? Okay? Okay? I tell you this, take a risk. Okay, I come to Sarawak here to serve, right? I studied in KL, then come here, Dr.
- [31 : 26] Kenny, I think Hong Pak, I think you have experience. So we come here as a government servant, we can be sent to any part of Sarawak, okay? When I was posted here, they never tell me where I will be going, you know?
- I only know the place when I reach Kuching. Then they say, this person go to Belaga, this person 30-40 years ago, okay?
- You take a risk. I took a risk, five years because the government say, you go five years, then you come back, you can apply to come back to West Malaysia. So take a risk, go anywhere Sarawak, I will go.

I'm challenging you young people, you know why you should go? Because you have no commitment. When there's no commitment, I'll go. And then, okay, so anywhere, actually anywhere in Sarawak, I'll go. But when your commitment is a different story.

After 20 or 30 years of service to the government, they want to promote me to be the principal. Where? Central Sarawak. I'm married, I've got three children. Now they want to send me to Central Sarawak, they won't tell me where it is until I say yes.

[32 : 34] Okay, you know where they will send me, right? I talk to my wife, I talk to my children, they say they won't follow me. If I go, I go as a mission, you know. Never mind, it's not promotion, you know, lateral, you know, lateral promotion, because of my seniority, lateral, not higher grade, it's just the same grade.

I don't mind going if it's Kuching, Kuching I'll take, okay, I'll take as a mission. More work, never mind, same pay, never mind. But to far, far away, my children don't follow me, my wife don't follow me, different story already.

I cannot do that alone, you know, I cannot, it defeats the purpose, so I didn't go. I'll go. Take risk for the Lord. God will, then, I came here, right, for five years only, actually, I don't want to marry a Sarawakian.

I want to go back home, tell you honestly, my wife knows, that's why I now fell, we're in the same school, you know, that's why for the first three years, I never fall in love with her. I was waiting to go back to Sarawak, I'm waiting to go back to West Malaysia, hoping my heart is West Malaysia, I have to go back, I want to go back, but you know, God kept after three years, changed my heart, you know, you don't know, right, so I found my life, I mean, okay, now my this is a story, that's what a long, it will prolong the sermon, never mind, okay, I'm finishing.

Remember, today, you are not just saved from something, you are saved for something, you are saved to be sent out, you are sustained, so that you can serve, earlier, I share how I almost missed my flight, because I was waiting at the wrong gate, remember, how I rushed toward the right gate, once I realized the first one was wrong, in the process, I lost my phone, but that loss was nothing compared to what I would have lost if I have stayed at the wrong gate, I would have missed the destination, in that moment, nothing mattered more than going to the right gate, in life, in life, all of us will lose something along the way, you will lose possession, your possession, you will lose your opportunities, you will lose your achievements, but the greatest tragedy is not losing something in life, the greatest tragedy is losing the life God offers, because we stay at the wrong gate, the greatest tragedy is losing the life God offers because we stay at the wrong gate,

[35 : 17] Jesus is the true gate, he is open 24 7, he is waiting, he is calling your name, don't sit comfortably at the wrong gate, don't listen to the voices that cannot save you, today, move toward him, enter through him, he is calling you, it's boarding time, it could be your final call, let's pray, Lord Jesus, we thank you for speaking to us through your word today, you know us by name, you call us to yourself, and you lead us into a life that is rich, secure, and full, guard our hearts from the many voices that seek to deceive us, teach us to listen to your word, to trust your leading, and to walk faithfully in the path you set before us, may your presence be our safety, your love our confidence, and your promise our hope, in your name we pray,

Amen. Amen. Bluetooth Bluetooth Bluetooth Bluetooth Bluetooth