



HomeGroup **LEADER** Discussion Questions
Week 4: Jan 23-29

SELECT 2-4 QUESTIONS FROM BELOW THAT YOU THINK WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL FOR YOUR DISCUSSION, OR, USE THEM AS INSPIRATION TO CRAFT YOUR OWN QUESTIONS.

Doors are not often on our minds. Sure, some may catch our eye as decorative or ornate, but most are just part of the mundane hardware of life. Unless, that is, you live in a place surrounded by dangers. A well-secured door then is a great reassurance. Or, perhaps you are lost and looking for home. Finally finding *your* door is a great relief. Even ordinary doors offer protection and grant access, yet there's nothing ordinary about Jesus! He is the one and only door that saves.

Main Texts: John 10:1-10

CONNECT

1. Has a locked door ever kept you from getting to a place you needed to be? If it's helpful, think in terms of a locked car door, a forgotten combination, or a lost key.
2. What did you find most significant in this week's sermon? What questions did it leave in your mind?

LEARN

3. For context on this week's passage, read John 9. The Pharisees saw themselves as religious gatekeepers, but how does their "gatekeeping" keep people out of God's Kingdom?
From chapter 9, the Pharisees—the religious "gatekeepers"—kick out from the synagogue the man who Jesus healed (John 9:34). In other words, they cut him off from corporate worship and fellowship. Their actions became an obstacle to God's Kingdom rather than a means to it. They made it more difficult for people to worship.
4. What qualities of a *door* does Jesus claim for Himself in this week's passage? In other words, how is Jesus like a *door*?
Jesus is (1) the means of access to salvation and abundant life as well as (2) security or protection from "the thief" who seeks to steal, kill, and destroy. (John 10:9-10)
5. What does Jesus offer those who "enter by [Him]" from verse 9 and the rest of the passage? What do you think these claims mean (e.g., "will be saved," "will go in and out and find pasture")?
This could be expressed a number of different ways. For example, Jesus offers salvation from sin as well as eternal protection and provision. It's good to remember that this metaphor of the *door* is

combined with that of the *good shepherd* (which we'll look at next week). With the good shepherd in mind, both of these ideas of salvation and provision become more clear and fleshed out. Jesus eternally guards the lives of His people, watches over them with care, and leads them to abundance as long as they stay by His side as their shepherd.

APPLY

6. Jesus presents Himself in exclusive terms as *the* door rather than *a* door. He alone provides access. He alone provides security. What things can you do to remember that only Jesus can provide these in an ultimate sense? What makes it challenging for you to remember this?

This goes against our cultural value of “tolerance” and pluralism (many religions or beliefs are equally valid). These ideas can be so prevalent that they're like the air we breathe—they're everywhere! So, what can we do to help remind each other that Jesus is our only hope for salvation?

7. This passage presents us as sheep who need protection and provision from someone else. How does this compare with the attitudes or values of our culture (and our own hearts) about our condition?

It's common for us to want to be independent and self-sufficient. Think, for example, of the so-called “American Dream” and its value of financial independence. In stark contrast, Jesus says we are like the most dependent creatures on the planet! Consider talking in your group about how this past year has influenced your awareness of your dependence on the Lord.

8. John 10 reminds us that access (i.e., the “door”) to eternal blessing and security is based on who Jesus is, not who we are. What kinds of things are required for access to exclusive places in our world? How reassuring is it that Jesus has already achieved access for us!? Talk about this with your group.

There are a lot of potential ways to think about this. For example, we might need financial resources to access a country club. We might need specific credentials to access a job. We may need to know the right people to access an opportunity. Almost every area of life is set up as a meritocracy, except for our standing with the King of the Universe!

GOING DEEPER (a.k.a., Extra Credit!)

This week's passage is part of the same episode we'll be looking at next week, when Jesus says “I am the good shepherd” (John 10:11). There's a rich backstory to this imagery of Jesus as the door and good shepherd, as well as of God's people as sheep. We encourage you to commit a few minutes throughout this coming week to read about this background.

Day 1: Psalm 23

This famous psalm is attributed to King David and was likely written about 1000 B.C.

Day 2: Jeremiah 23

Jeremiah's words are set in the final four decades before Babylon invaded and conquered the city of Jerusalem and the surrounding area of Judah (see below for dates)

Day 3: Ezekiel 34

Written during the years when Babylon had already begun invading Judah, a period of time that spanned from 605 to 586 B.C. Some from Judah, including Ezekiel's audience (see Ezekiel 1:1-3), were already in exile.

Day 4: Psalm 78

This psalm is attributed to Asaph and may have been written during the time of King David's reign.

Day 5: John 10

FINAL NOTES

1. **Starting Point is Feb 21st. If you know of people who are new to Calvary, please go to <https://calvarybible.com/startingpoint/> to find more information on how to register.**
2. **Here is some supplementary information on the background of shepherding in the ancient world that you may find helpful for these next two weeks in our current series:**

Jesus' allegory plays off of shepherding, one of the three major occupations of Palestine along with fishing and farming. Shepherding is deeply imbedded into the Middle Eastern culture. And it is also a frequent metaphor in the OT. Both of these facts make Jesus' words particularly poignant. He says a lot with just a few words. To fully appreciate Jesus' allegory we must understand a little bit about both Palestinian shepherding and about sheep themselves.

After a long day of grazing, the sheep were kept in caves or pens with only one opening. Sometimes it had an actual door on it (v. 3), but often it was simply a hole in the rock wall, and the shepherd would lay himself down across the opening. Several flocks could be kept together in one pen. In the morning, when the shepherds called them, each sheep would recognize his own shepherd's voice and follow (v. 3). The oriental relationship between a shepherd and his sheep was personal. He knew all his sheep by name, and they knew his voice (v. 5). Even if someone dressed themselves like the shepherd and imitated his voice, the sheep would not be fooled (v. 5). If they were in the pen, they would stay put. If they were in the field, they would scatter with fear.

If the shepherd could afford hired help, he might employ a night watchman. His job was simply to guard the door of the pen against intruders, wild animals and stupid sheep who wanted to wander off. Only the chief shepherd could gain access through the watchman (v. 3). That is important because the sheep were a valuable commodity and easily stolen. Palestine was full of both thieves (*kleptēs*), who snuck in to steal, and bandits (*lēstēs*), who used violent force rather than stealth (v. 1). Another peculiarity of Oriental shepherds is that they led their sheep (v. 4). In other parts of the world, sheep are driven. This is another indication of the kind care Palestinian shepherds took with their sheep. Now, for the interpretation of this allegory (lit., *paroimia*—a figure of speech which conceals lofty information, v. 6). We must weave together both the cultural symbols and the OT theology behind these symbols. Jesus is clearly the Good Shepherd. But that was a position occupied by God in the OT (Ps 23; 79:13; 95:7). It was also promised to the Messiah, as God's delegate (Ezek 34:23). This is yet another bold claim of Jesus to be the Messiah. We also have thieves and robbers who steal and kill the sheep for their own advantage. Certainly Jesus has in mind the leaders of the Jews who were part of his present audience (Jn 9:40; 10:19). By rejecting Jesus, they refused most adamantly to

enter the fold through the gate. Yet they want access to the sheep. They plunder avariciously without concern for the sheep's welfare (e.g., Mt 23:14–15; Ezek 34:1–6).

Nothing in this *paroimia* is difficult to understand, especially against the background of OT shepherding imagery (esp. Jer 23:3; Amos 3:12; Micah 2:12; 5:7–8). This makes verse six somewhat surprising. We might well assume their inability to understand was part of God's hardening (Mt 13:13–16; Rom 11:25).

Mark E. Moore, [The Chronological Life of Christ](#) (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 2011), 364–365.