

Guest Preacher - Rev Kenny I Macleod

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Preacher: Rev. Kenny I Macleod

- [0 : 00] Let's turn to the chapter we read in John's Gospel, John chapter 10. I want us to look at two verses, two very well-known verses. First of all, verse 9, and then verse 11.
- We'll just read 9 to 11, but it's these two statements that Jesus makes. In verse 9 he says, in John 10, verse 9, I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.
- The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. And then verse 11, I am the good shepherd.
- The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Now, as we know, Jesus was very, very descriptive in his teaching.
- Every day as he went about and as he taught people, he often used illustrations. And he often would maybe take a coin or point to the cornfields or maybe to the hills or he would put to the trees, to different things.
- [1 : 13] And he was very illustrative in his teaching. And of course, two of the pictures that he uses here, two illustrations to point out to who he is, are two very, very vivid ones.
- Because Jesus tells us that he is both the door and he is the good shepherd. The picture of the shepherd, of course, is one of the great pictures that the Bible gives us.
- We know that many of the great men of the Bible were shepherds. Abel was a shepherd. Jacob was a shepherd. Moses, for 40 years, looked after his father-in-law's sheep before God called him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.
- Of course, the shepherd that we always automatically think of was the shepherd King David. And really, only a shepherd could have written Psalm 23 because the understanding and the graphic imagery of that and the way that he applies it spiritually is, without a doubt, the work of a shepherd.
- And God terms himself Israel's shepherd. And Jesus, he, when he came, termed himself the good shepherd. Sometimes in the Scripture he's called the chief shepherd as well, and the great shepherd.
- [2 : 41] But the picture of this shepherd is any human shepherd or crofter or farmer who works is just a little picture.
- Because when we apply all the shepherding that goes on in the course of a year, it gives us an idea of what the true shepherd, the good shepherd, really is like.
- And one of the wonderful things about the good shepherd is that he goes out to search for his sheep. That's what he's doing today, what he's doing all over the country.
- He is going out to shepherd, and he's going out to look for his sheep. And he takes his sheep, everyone that comes to faith, enters into the fold, comes through the door into the fold.
- And one of the amazing things is that he employs other sheep to go out to help, to find the sheep. Now, of course, it's not the human shepherd, it's not any of you or me that actually saves somebody, because we know the empowering, the enabling, the saving is done by the Lord.

[3 : 57] But we are commanded to go out and to witness by word and by life, so that our influence will be an influence that is for good upon people.

And I'm sure as you look back over your life, and if you're here today as a Christian, and you look back over your Christian life, you will remember that there were many influences by many different people that brought you to the place where you came to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Things that people said, things the way that people lived, how Christians reacted and acted in different situations, all these things had an impression upon you along the way.

And maybe you remember there were certain things that somebody casually said to you that had a huge impact upon you. And I'm sure if we're honest, and we were to go back and to think over all the different influences on our life before coming to faith, there would be many and they'd be varied.

But that's what the Lord is doing with us. He's using us to bring in more sheep all the time. Because we remember we're called to be living epistles, read of all men.

[5 : 20] And we know that many people have no idea of Christianity. There are many people who never, they don't own a Bible, they never open a Bible, they don't know anything.

And they will make their assumption of Christ and what the Christian faith is by looking at Christ's people.

It's quite a solemn thought because I'm sure we're all conscious that there are so many times that we haven't acted the way we should or lived the way we should or spoken the way we should.

And when that happens, we are always conscious that we're letting the Lord down because, as it says, we are living epistles, read of all men, because a Christian life speaks.

And so Jesus searches out and he finds all his sheep and all his lambs and he takes them into the fold. And, of course, they come through the door.

[6 : 17] And the wonderful thing is that Jesus never misses a sheep or a lamb. At the end of the day, there is never one missing.

Now, there's no crofter and there's no farmer and there's no shepherd in their lifetime who will say, you know this, I never lost a sheep. Because, you know, when you go gathering, we know that sheep can wander miles.

Sheep can jump fences. Fences for some sheep, it's a barrier. For other sheep, it's not a barrier. They can jump fences. And sometimes at gathering time, you will find sheep from districts far away in other parts of the island.

And they manage to work their way. That's the way they go. Because there's no animal like a sheep for wandering. But the thing is that sometimes sheep will fall off a cliff.

They'll go to the edge and they'll go over. So that in the history, in everybody's personal history, if you have sheep, it's inevitable that at some point or another, you will lose a sheep.

[7 : 24] The heavenly shepherd has never, ever lost a sheep. And he gives that lovely illustration saying that if you were 99, that he's like the one who would go out and find that he has 100 sheep.

One missing. He will leave the 99 and go out until he finds the one that is missing. And so that differentiates Jesus from every other shepherd because he is the shepherd who has never, ever lost a sheep.

We could say it reverently that Jesus is a great heavenly search and rescue. Because he is the son of man who has come to seek and to save those who are lost.

And if today, by any chance, you are still here and you have not come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, I would ask that you would ask the Lord to save you.

That he will open your ears to hear. Because, you know, there's probably no place anywhere where people hear but don't listen quite like church.

[8 : 33] You can hear, but you don't. I remember when I was a boy growing up, my father, who grew up most of the time in Portree and Sky, and my father was in Ardelve and then Portree and Calanish.

I still remember in these years he would ask, right, tell me something of the service today. And I was terrible for hearing but not listening. So then I would really try and fail, have to try and get hold of something when he asks.

Very often I would even forget the little bit that I had tried to remember. And it's very easy to go through a whole service and to hear but not to listen.

So listening is important because faith, we're told in the Bible, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. So whenever we come under the Word of God, we must give it our full attention.

And we've got to remember that at the same time as we gather together, there is an enemy of our souls who will do anything and everything to distract you. And I'm sure we make more plans in church.

[9 : 39] And we do more things thinking of our future, about what we're going to do, what's going to happen, about this and that. It's incredible because our minds go off just like in a moment.

The devil, all he has to do is put one little thought in our mind and we're away. So it's very important that we're prayerful and attentive to God's Word.

Because Satan knows that faith comes by hearing. And he will do everything possible to stop people from listening and laying hold upon what the Word is saying. So ask that the Lord would open your ears to hear.

Open your eyes to see. Open your mind so that you'd be able to understand. Open your heart in order to receive. All these things are part of what is important in coming to lay hold upon the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

And today Jesus is calling in the gospel. Because, you know, one of the wonderful things about gathering together as we do today is that Jesus has promised to be here.

[10 : 43] He says where as few as two or three gather together in his name. He's there in the midst. And, you know, it's an incredible privilege when you think of coming together to meet us.

We do today to know that the presence of Jesus is here with us. And so I know that we're very fortunate in the day we're now living where we have the online facilities that can bring the gospel into people's homes.

And we know that there are many people who have been blessed through that. But if we're at all able, we should come to gather together with God's people where Jesus has promised his presence.

So today Jesus is calling in the gospel. He's here and wherever the gospel is being preached, he is there, the presence through the Spirit. And he is inviting people.

He is calling people. Now, as we know, there's a general call in the gospel that goes out wherever the invitation is given. There's that what we call a general call. But what you are asking for is a personal call into your heart.

[11 : 52] That you will hear his voice like in a way you've never heard before. And that you'll know that this is Jesus and he's calling you to himself. And today that gospel is going out.

And I believe that even today the Lord is speaking to people, not just in church, but in all the different places, in different ways. Maybe there are some people in great shopping malls just now with no interest in church.

But maybe one here and one there. The Lord is beginning to speak to them about the emptiness of putting all their hope in material things. And maybe some of the great sporting venues or some of music places that take place.

Maybe the Lord is touching one here and one there saying, the true happiness you're looking for in life. It's not here. It's in me. And God has spoken to many people in different places where he has began to touch their heart and to show this is not where you'll find the true happiness.

So today the Lord is reaching out with the gospel. And so Jesus tells us that he is the door. And you say to yourself, well, why do you need a door? Well, very obviously we need a door because of sin.

[13 : 09] Because as we know at the very beginning, when Adam and Eve fell in the garden, and we were rooted in Adam and Eve, and we fell too. And remember what happened.

They were expelled out of the garden. They were thrown out of the garden. And there was an angel with a flaming sword of fire banning them entry back into the garden so that they couldn't get back in.

And so there is no way back to God. Without God's intervention, there was no way back. But God didn't leave us.

God intervened. God came in the great plan of salvation. And God sent his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into this world to be the way back to God the Father.

And we must never lose sight of that. That's why Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. There is no other way given. There's no other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved.

[14 : 11] And this is not, as we say, that some group of theologians came together and said, well, this is what it is. It's Jesus, the Son of God, who says, I am the way.

I am the door. I am the way back to God. There is no other way. The expulsion that took place in Eden remains unless you come back through me.

And so this, of course, is at the very heart of the gospel. And so Jesus says, I am a door. A door speaks to us many things, but two main things.

It speaks first of entry, and it speaks of security. When you go home, you go in the door. At night, you lock the door.

Why do you lock the door? To give security. We are very thankful. The area of life, the place that we live in here, because I'm sure, like me, quite often you say, oh, I forgot to lock you good in the morning, and you realize that you'd forgotten to lock the doors.

[15 : 13] It's not, thankfully, a big deal here. It would be a big deal in many places. And we're very thankful for where we live. But a door, a locked door gives security.

I always thought that a door, when a door was locked, that was it. But many doors can be broken in as well. And her son, Norman, is a fireman in Aberdeen.

And we were talking one day about doors, and he said, particularly in apartments, he said, it's incredible how many doors are easy to kick in. They just kick them in. I got a shock at that, because I thought all doors give security.

But they don't. But Jesus is a door that is 100% secure. The security that Jesus gives is an eternal security.

And there is nothing and nobody, no force, no power, that can kick open the door once you are in, in Jesus. And that's what it says, if anyone enters by me, he shall be saved.

[16 : 18] It's not wonderful. But somebody might say, well, it says here, all who come before me, I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

Does that mean that you come in the door and then you go back out the door? No. When you go in the door, we've got to remember that there's the two pictures of the shepherd and the door.

And Jesus is here. He's switching between the two. And straightaway, he's back into the shepherd. And that's what the shepherd does.

The in and out and find pasture is talking about the work of the shepherd. Once you're in that door, the shepherd will take you in and out in the pasture land, in the security behind the door, to feed you.

That's what shepherds do. That's what you do with your sheep. You feed them. In the winter, we take them back in from the moor, from the hill, and we feed them at home.

[17 : 22] And so that's what the Lord does. He provides feeding places for us. That's what's happening today. It's a feeding place. Some days, the feeding is rich.

Other days, it's not so rich. And I'm sure you look back over your Christian life, and you will remember special times where you had a feast. Maybe you didn't realize it at the actual time, but afterwards you said, you know, that was a feast.

My soul was really nourished in that period of time. But sometimes it's not like that. Sometimes the feeding, sometimes, and it's not the shepherd's fault.

But the thing is that in Christian experience, we go through different times. We go through times of rich feeding. Sometimes it's more famine times.

And the Christian experience is so varied. You go back to Psalm 23, and you see the varied experiences there. Sometimes the picture is a beautiful one. Green pastures.

[18 : 28] Lush pasture land. And the sheep are lying down. Sheep only lie down when they're content. A sheep that's hungry or a sheep that's frightened.

You can't get a frightened sheep to lie down. But when sheep are content, they lie down. And so that's the picture that we have, this picture of satisfaction, of contentment, the green pastures and the still waters.

A beautiful picture. But it moves. And sometimes it's into death's dark veil. Sometimes the going is tough and it's rough and it's bruising and it's battering.

And we all know these times in our Christian experience. We wish it was always the green pastures. And we wish it was always the still waters. But it's not. But even in death's dark veil, the shepherd is still there.

His rod, his staff. Sometimes we need prodding. Sometimes we need comforting. We need support. And even when our cup overflows, remember, it's in the presence of the enemies.

[19 : 34] So in this world, we're never free from the troubles and the trials and the difficulties. Even when we're being fed richly by the shepherd.

But the Lord chooses our feeding places for us. That's what the good shepherd does. But you know what I love about what it says here? I am the door.

If anyone enters by me. That couldn't be greater or wider. Anyone. It doesn't give any qualification about a person's age, a person's background.

It doesn't give any A about their creed, about their culture, about where they live. Anyone. Anyone. You know, that's part of the wonder of the invitation of the gospel.

It's like what Jesus, what the Bible says in Revelation. Whoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. But you know, it's one thing to know that there's an open door.

[20 : 37] And there's an open door today. But you've got to go through. It's not enough to know that it's there. And I'm sure that every person in here today knows that there's an open door.

You know the gospel. If somebody asked you, and today if you're out, you haven't come to faith in Jesus Christ. If somebody said to you, how do you become a Christian?

You could answer as Paul did. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. You could tell people.

So love the Lord. You know these things. But you haven't yet gone through that door. Well, today the door is open. Today we are on mercy's ground.

It tells us in this great invitation that Jesus gives. He says regarding heaven. Yet there's room. Still room today.

[21 : 34] But you know there might come a time when the door closes. There will come a time when the door closes. Remember when Noah, in the time of Noah, when Noah entered into the ark.

There was the eight people went into the ark. Noah's wife and his three sons and their wives. And then it tells us, the Lord shut him in.

In other words, the Lord closed the door. And then when the floods started, nobody could then get into the ark. Noah couldn't open the door then.

Because the Lord had shut him in. The Lord had closed the door. And it's solemn. Jesus gives us that picture of the ten bridegrooms. And five were wise and five were foolish.

Remember the five foolish had no oil for the lamps. And then the bridegroom came. And the wise entered into the marriage feast. The others went off to try and get oil.

[22 : 36] And when they came back, remember what they were told? The door is now shut. They were too late. And you know, I don't believe anybody sits in church and say, I don't care if I'm late.

Because I don't think you'd be here. But I know we're so bad for procrastinating. We put it off to a better time. Because there's always things, you know, there's always things that you need to do before you become a Christian.

I was like that for years. There were certain things I had to do. And many a time I was tugged in my heart. And, oh, I need to get this sorted.

And I've got this and that and that. I can't become a Christian until I do this and that and that. But, you know, there'll always be this and that and that. There is no perfect time as such.

There'll always be something. Now, we're told in the Scripture, now is the day of salvation. And so, it is vital that we look to Christ now. Not later on.

[23 : 42] Not tomorrow. Because we're not, as the Bible tells us, we're not promised tomorrow. So, it's essential that we look to Jesus now.

So, here's this great invitation to come in the door. And once we're in the door, we're saved. Because that's what Jesus says. When we go to verse 28. Verse 28.

I give them eternal life and they will never perish. And no one will snatch them out of my hand. Isn't that beautiful? Because, you know, when you come in the door and we talked about the security.

What is the security? Well, here it is. The shepherd's hand. No one can snatch them out of my hand. Because, as Christians, and as we look at ourselves, and we look at the potential for disaster that we have within us.

When we see the seed of every known sin lurking within our heart. When we discover more and more of who we are. The potential for failure is extraordinary.

[24 : 52] And there are many days you may feel and say, you know, one day my sin is finally going to ruin me. No. Kept. It's one of the most beautiful words in Scripture.

Kept. Kept by the power of God. Kept. And that's what Jesus is saying. I have a hold upon my sheep. Kept.

And no one can snatch them out of my hand. And in order to give a double security, he says in verse 28, I give them eternal life and they will never perish.

And no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father who has given them to me is greater than all. And no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand.

Isn't that talk of security? In Christ, you're in the hand of Jesus and in the hand of the Father. And there's no force or power even in deepest hell that can prize open the hand of Jesus to take you away, to take you out.

[25 : 59] And that's the most wonderful security that we have. Because Jesus gives us, you know, that's why the Bible is full of these great truths to encourage us.

Because by nature, we can be very anxious and we can be very fearful. If that wasn't the case, why are there so many times in Scripture it says, don't be anxious?

How many times in Scripture does it say, fear not? The Lord wouldn't be keeping saying to us, fear not, if we weren't prone to it. And one of the areas that we're so prone to fear is, what if at the end I fail?

Well, you won't. If you're in Christ, you can't. Irrespective of how sinful you feel and irrespective of what you may have done in the past.

It's like the waves of the sea in God's sight. It's washed clean. And so Jesus is a good shepherd. And of course, the great thing that tells us of his great love for you is that he laid down his life.

[27 : 06] He couldn't do more. He has given his life for you. He left the realms of glory and took human nature for you. He lived a perfect life fulfilling the law for you.

He went to the cross and died for you. He rose for your justification. All of that is done, and we can apply that personally. He did for us.

And that's why Romans 8 says, He who spared not his own son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him give us all things? So once through the door, you are safe in the arms of the shepherd.

Because it is the shepherd who has led you through that door. And part of Jesus' shepherding work is that he continues to shepherd us all throughout life.

But his shepherding doesn't stop there. Because one day as a good shepherd, he's going to call us home. When? You and I don't know. It's one of the things that often leaves us perplexed and sad.

[28 : 18] It's when all of a sudden the Lord calls some of his sheep home. But he has a purpose. And if we could see the big picture, we can only see the here and now.

Remember what Jesus said in the high priestly prayer? Father, I will that those whom you have given me may be with me that they may behold my glory.

You see, Jesus is longing for the day when you will be home with him to behold his glory, to behold the Father's glory, to be in the Emmanuel's land.

We've got to remember that, that this is, we're just passing through. We're on a journey. This world as it is sung is not our home. We're on a journey to the eternal sheepfold.

And there the shepherding doesn't stop. Because we're told in Revelation that he continues to shepherd. He is the Lamb who shepherds. And he will shepherd us every moment throughout an endless eternity.

- [29 : 28] What a wonderful thing to have been touched by the Good Shepherd. The day your hand goes into the hand of the Good Shepherd, it will never, ever, ever come out.
- Even in death, death cannot separate that. And you are forever part and partial of the glory that he has prepared for you.
- I pray that if there is anybody here today who has not come to faith, that you would ask the Good Shepherd today, take me in that door, Lord, so that I will be in that fold with you.
- Let's pray. Lord, our God, we give thanks for who you are and what you have revealed of yourself to us. We give thanks, Lord, for the great work that you do.
- And we pray that our souls will be nourished and strengthened. And that we will be encouraged in the faith. We are often so poor and needy. And yet we are told that the Lord thinks on us.
- [30 : 31] Lord, we confess our sin before you. And we so often are ashamed of the kind of people that we are. But we give thanks that there is forgiveness.
- There is plenteous redemption. We give thanks, O Lord, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. So we pray that you will forgive us our sin.
- And particularly our sins and holy things. Cleanse us, we pray. And take us all home safely. Part us with your blessing. In Jesus' name we ask all. Amen. We're going to conclude singing from Sing Psalms in the Shepherd's Psalm.
- Psalm 23. Psalm 23. And sing Psalms. The Lord is my shepherd.
- No one shall I know. He makes me lie down where the green pastures grow. He leads me to rest where the calm waters flow. My wandering steps he brings back to his way.
- [31 : 36] And straight paths of righteousness making me stay. This he has done his great name to display. Though I walk in death's valley where darkness is near. Because you're with me, no evil I'll fear.
- Your rod and your staff bring me comfort and cheer. In the sight of my enemies, that table you spread. The oil of rejoicing you pour on my head. My cup overflows.
- And I'm graciously fed. So surely your covenant, mercy and grace will follow me closely in all of my ways. I will dwell in the house of the Lord all my days.
- Psalm 23. The Lord is my shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd.
- No one shall I know. He makes me lie down where the green pastures grow.
- [32 : 37] He leads me to rest where the calm waters flow. My wandering steps he brings back to his way.
- In strength of righteousness making me stay. And this he has done his great name to display.
- Though I walk in death's valley where darkness is near. Because you are with me, no evil I'll fear.
- Your rod and your staff bring me comfort and cheer. In the sight of my enemies, that table you spread.
- The oil of rejoicing you pour on my head. My cup overflows.
- [34 : 08] My cup overflows. And I'm graciously fed. So surely your covenant, mercy and grace will follow me closely in all of my ways.
- I will dwell in the house of the Lord all my days.
- Now may the grace, mercy and peace of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen. Amen.