

April 10 Notes

Jesus Is The Gate | Jesus Is _____

Ryan Bramlett | John 10:1-10



Traders Point, how are we doing? So good to be with you. We're going to keep beating that drum, guys. We are just days away from our Easter services. You guys excited for this? I'm telling you, God has been doing so much around here over the past few weeks, and add that to the fact that our lead pastor hasn't been preaching the last few weeks, I'm telling you this place is going to erupt on Easter weekend. It's a weekend you don't want to miss.

Have you ever seen somebody put Mentos in a two-liter Coke bottle? I believe that that is what Easter is going to look like here next weekend. And for those watching online, we have campuses all over our city, four services from Saturday night all the way through Sunday. We would love for you to come and check one out.

As far as today goes, we're continuing in our Jesus Is series. And really the whole concept of this series is opening up the Bible and saying, "Jesus, who do You say that You are?" And what we've seen is that Jesus is polarizing. What He's been doing is He's been making these I Am statements. He's literally saying, "I Am God."

He forces you to love Him or hate Him. There is no middle of the road Jesus, like He's fine. I hear people talk about this sometimes. Like, "I like a little bit of Jesus." Like He's coffee for your creamer. "I like a little bit of Jesus, like Hootie & the Blowfish." It's like, "I like a few of their songs."

But what I want to say is, that if you're here today and you would say, "I think I like Jesus, I don't know if I love Jesus," I'm glad that you're here but I do want to say this: You don't know Jesus. Because here's the truth:

Jesus is loveable, or He is hateable, but He is not likeable.

Do you know what I mean? He will force you to make a decision on who He is. Because here's the truth. He is stepping up saying, "I am God. I am the only way to God the Father."

So, one: He's either a deranged man who should be completely rejected or He is the Son of God, He is the Messiah, and He's the one and only way to God the Father.

We have to make a decision. Are we going to love Him or are we going to hate Him? But to like Him is to not know Him enough. So we're glad that you are here today and what we're going to be doing is continuing in this conversation and looking at these I Am statements that Jesus made.

And this is the one that He makes today. If you're taking notes you can write in the message title:

JESUS IS THE GATE

Jesus is the Gate. This is His way of saying, "I am the only way. I am the way to eternal life and to the enhanced life." One that we all long for here. So if you have your Bibles you can get to John, chapter 10, starting in verse 1. We're going to read a few verses here and then we're going to break it down from there, okay? So starting in chapter 10, verse 1. This is Jesus speaking. He says:

"I tell you the truth, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber! But the one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out."

Alright? So you're probably, right now, in the same spot as everyone else, confused, "Jesus, what are you talking about? You are the Gate?" I don't have a lot of work history with gates or people claiming to be them, so we're in the same spot, a little bit, that everyone else there was too.

But before we talk about what Jesus is talking about, I want us to step back and ask why is Jesus saying what He was saying? Because, what we just picked up, what was going on, we read it like it was normal. But it was a really big deal. Jesus just stepped up to the faces of the Pharisees, the religious leaders, the leaders of society and said, "You guys are thieves and robbers."

To put this into context, this would be like someone showing up in Washington, D. C., at a political rally and this candidate is about to go up and speak, but Jesus steps up and says, "Hey, I'm going to let you finish, but I just want everyone here to know these people are thieves and robbers. I'm the only way. Good day." And then steps off.

What provoked Jesus? What stirred Him up to the point that He goes nose to nose with the religious leaders? What upset Him so much that He would do this? Well, to figure that out, we have to go back a chapter. So we're going to be in John, chapter 9 for a second. Just flip a page.

We have a break in chapter here, but there is no break in the conversation. What happened in chapter 9 spills over into chapter 10. And we see how all of this kind of got started, it was a healing. Jesus is Healer, right? And He does something that the world has never seen before, He heals a blind man. Take a look at this. It says:

“As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. ‘Rabbi,’ his disciples asked him, ‘why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents’ sins?’”

And just to give you a little bit of help here, have you ever tried to give God two options? Chances are there is going to be a third. “God, is it A or B?” He’s like, “It’s C.” It says:

“‘It was not because of his sins or his parents’ sins,’ Jesus answered. ‘This happened so the power of God could be seen in him.’”

I think this is a good moment to pause and just to think about your theology. Because whether you’ve named it or not, maybe you’re living this way. When something bad happens to you, or your experiencing pain or loss, your mind goes to, “Well, God must be upset with me. God must be punishing me.”

But what we see throughout Christianity is that because Jesus has already paid the penalty for our sins and taken the punishment we deserve, that when things happen, it’s not because we’re being punished, it’s not because we did something wrong. But there is an opportunity, because we live in a broken world, for God’s glory to be shown through whatever that is.

Sometimes that means that there is a healing that needs to take place and God will heal you in that moment to bring glory, to show that He is powerful above all of it. But sometimes God gets His glory through faith. And when you’re going through a rough situation, and it’s just trial after trial, and it doesn’t lift but you keep going, your testimony, your ability to endure, that is what gives God the glory.

People are looking at your life like, “How is she still going? How is she still standing?” And they ask and you say, “I don’t know but all I do know is that God has given me everything that I need. I know I’ve lost a lot, but I will never lose God so I’m going to be okay.”

There are moments for God to get the glory, always. But Jesus meets this man on the side of the road, been blind from birth, right? And Jesus sees him, has a little conversation, and says, “I’m going to heal this man.” And He spits into mud, rubs it all together, puts it on this guy’s eyes, wipes it off, he was blind and now he can see.

There is a miracle that happened. Everyone there is pretty excited, as you can imagine. But the Pharisees and the religious leaders are angry. They are so upset right now. Can you try to process that? Why would people be angry that a blind man was just healed?

Well if you are a leader, and your leadership is based upon the power that you have, if you are the one of the gatekeepers between the people and God, when someone comes through and has more power than you do, that makes you a little uneasy. When there is someone who comes through and is doing things that you can’t replicate or duplicate, you get threatened.

And when we get threatened by God, we'll either submit and say, "Okay," or we will start a fight. They chose the latter.

So this man is walking through town, as you can imagine, he's the talk of the town, They were like, "This is the guy, remember? He was blind. He's always been blind. But look at him now. He's seeing everything."

And then finally the Pharisees grab Him, and they bring him into the Temple, and they sit him down at the table, it's like Law and Order style, right? They are investigating the situation. Like, "Tell me where you were, why you were there." The spotlight is on him. And answer after answer they are not liking his answers.

Finally they get so frustrated they pull the ultimate trump card. A card that I've never seen pulled on an adult, only on kids. They get so mad they said, "You know what? We're done here. We're calling your mom." I promise you. If you read this, that is what they say, "We've had enough of this. Nice try. We're calling your parents."

They bring in his parents. And his parents say the same thing, "I don't know. He was blind. I promise you. I know that much. I don't know how he can see or why he can see. He's an adult. Talk to him."

But they just keep peppering him with questions, peppering him with questions, "Who is this man who healed you? Who do you think he is? And look at his response. He says:

"I don't know whether he is a sinner," I don't know if he's the person he is saying he is, "But I know this: I was blind, and now I can see!" John 9:25 (NLT)

"I don't have all of the answers for who this man is, but if you're asking all I can tell you is I was blind and now I can see." What a beautiful testimony. What a beautiful story.

There are so many of us who have stories like that, where you were blind, maybe not physically, but you were blind to so many other things of God and then God rescued you and God saved you and now you have a new life in Him.

I just want to take a moment to pause here, because I think in his one statement there, he captures what it looks like for us to be able to share our testimonies, to share our stories. And it's just in three lines here. It's:

I was

For him it was, "I was blind." And then:

Jesus is

"I am no longer blind."

Now I

"Can see."

A lot of us, our story can fit into this. Who you were before Jesus, who you became when you met Jesus, and now the life that you live.

I know for me, I was someone who tried so hard to get it right. I tried so hard to be not just good but perfect. I had this lie in my head that if I could be good enough, then my goodness could take away the pain of other people. If I could just shine a little bit brighter, if I could do the right thing, then I could not only help myself to deal with the ache that I had—this want to be right and to be good—but I could also take away the pain of others. But it never worked out. I could never be that good. I always fell short.

And on my good days, I was arrogant because I believed I was better. On my bad days, I was crushed by the weight of not being able to live up to my own expectations for myself.

But then I met Jesus and Jesus is the Vine. Jesus is the One that when I heard the story, His gospel, who He is, I realized all of the longings that I had, that want to be good, that want to be right, that want to be perfect, He had already done it. He truly did live the perfect life.

And that want to be just good enough and take away the pain of others, He literally already has done it. And because of who Jesus is, now all I have to do is come to Him and surrender all of that.

I become a branch connected to the Vine and He produces fruit. I come to Him, and I don't have to bear all of that weight. He now carries that weight. And now I experience true and good and real life, a rich life that I have in Jesus. And I try to take that weight up every once in a while and God kindly reminds me that it is not mine to carry, and I get to experience a beautiful life.

You have a story. And we would love to hear your story. There is power in your story. Even if you are saying, "I don't know if my story is dramatic enough, I don't know if it has enough trauma in it," if there is a moment where who you were and then Jesus met you and now you're different, you have a story that could benefit and impact this church. You can benefit the people sitting next to you. And we would love to hear it so we can celebrate with you. So just type it down, take a picture of it. Send it to tpcc.org/story.

This is one of the most powerful things that you can do. Open up God's Word and we look at this love letter that He has written and how He interacts with people, how He saves—it's a beautiful thing to look back and see how God worked 2,000 years ago, but it's also beautiful to look at how God is working right now, this week, in Indianapolis and all around this state:

Share your story

The Pharisees didn't love this story. The more that they pushed, the answers that they got, they disliked more and more. And so finally they'd given up. They kicked his parents out, and finally they grab him, and they throw him out of the Temple. They throw him out of the sanctuary, and they said, "You can't stay here."

And this beautiful thing happens. Jesus is waiting for him. Even when we are rejected by people, God is waiting for us on the other side. And He comes into contact, he hasn't seen Him since He healed him and Jesus asked him, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

He said, "I want to believe. I want to believe, who is He?" And Jesus said, "I am He."

And then look at the man's response:

"Yes, Lord, I believe!" the man said. And he worshiped Jesus." John 9:38 (NLT)

Hear me when I say this: Jesus is lovable, or He is hateable. He is not likeable. He is to be loved to the point that you have to worship Him or hated to the point that you will want to kill Him. These are the two camps that we have in front of us between John 9 and John 10.

This is what really angered Jesus. This is what caused Him to step up and to call them thieves and robbers. It's because of how they were treating His people. They didn't care about this blind man who had been blind all of his life. When he got healed, they threw him even farther out of society, out of the Temple.

And He said, "This is not okay. I have come back to be the Good Shepherd of this flock."

That is why He steps up and says all of that stuff. Everyone is confused but He's going to double down now. So, back in John, chapter 10 look at what He says:

"Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn't understand what he meant," you guys are in the same boat and I'm with you, "so he explained it to them: 'I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them.

"Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.'" John 10:6-10 (NLT)

These are the words of Jesus. So He steps in, and He begins to explain it. And maybe you're still in the same spot, "Still not sure what gate this is and where it goes."

So what He's referring to, He's building these two metaphors back-to-back. He's the Good Shepherd and the people are the sheep, and He is the Gate.

When you think about a sheepfold, this is what it would have looked like in ancient Israel [a round pen made of rock walls with one entrance]. It was big enough that probably a handful of families would have used it. They would have put all of their sheep into this fold and then there is only one way in and one way out. It is a gate.

And what He said earlier was, "Hey, anyone who gets in here that doesn't come through the front door is a thief or a robber." We can make sense of that, right? I'm not saying that I have ever broken into a house, but if you do, you don't get to go through the front door, right? You've got to go through an open window, you've got to slide through somewhere else.

And Jesus says, "Those who have climbed in over the fence, who snuck in, they are not the Good Shepherd. They are false shepherds. They are hired hands."

And now Jesus has come to the front, and He says, "I'm the Gate. I'm the way in, I'm the way out. And what I'm here to do right now is to call all of My sheep out of these false folds that they have been living in and I want to welcome them into God's flock. They have been abused. They have been mistreated, but now that I am here, they will hear My voice and they will follow Me."

Do you get the picture that Jesus is coming for His sheep? He's coming for His people. Look at this. It says:

"The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out." John 10:3 (NLT)

His voice first went to those in Israel, God's select people. And He called them out. That's who they were. But God is not done calling people out of false folds. God is not done calling people away from false shepherds and leaders today.

Maybe you're saying, "I didn't grow up with religion. I don't think I have a shepherd or a flock." But you do. There are also false shepherds who are worldly, people who demand things from you, steal from you, make you feel less than. You believe lies about who you are.

And Jesus steps up and says, "I am the Good Shepherd. And now I'm standing at the gate and all who come through Me will experience a rich and satisfying life."

He actually pulls out three things there. He says, "If you go through this Gate it will be very different because I'm not like them." He said, "The thief has come to steal, kill, and destroy."

And maybe you've heard those verses before, maybe out of context. And you always thought those verses were directed toward the devil. And I'm not saying that they don't apply to the

devil, but when Jesus uses them here, He's talking about the religious leaders. And He contrasts Himself to them. He says, "They steal, they kill, and they destroy. But Me? Here's what I'm coming to offer you. Here's what's on the other side of Me."

He says: "They will be saved, they will come and go freely, and they will find good pastures and they will have a rich and satisfying life." So let's just go through each one of them and what Jesus is talking about here. What it means to have life to the full. The first one, He said:

They will be saved.

They will be saved. And what Jesus is talking about here is eternal life. We can have safety and security in Him, not just in this world, but in the world to come. Because there's this part within us that longs for safety, that longs for security. And when we don't have it, a lot of times what will come in is fear. And when we don't feel safe, we don't feel secure, fear will come in and it will actually shape who we are. We become people we were not designed or created to be.

I know for me, I spent a lot of years working for Indy Parks. I worked at all of the parks. If you've ever seen one, I worked there, alright? And I worked in some tough neighborhoods. The kids were great. The adults were pretty tough.

These guys would come in and they would want to play basketball. And they would want to pay basketball for free. But it was actually \$3.00 to play. We all knew the rules, but they would come in, check in and go to get into the gym and I was like, "Hey, really quick. I'm going to need that \$3.00." And they were like, "I'm not paying to play." And I'd be like, "Well, then you're not playing."

And it would immediately go from that conversation to, "Hey, let's fight." I'm like, "Okay, well we missed a few steps here." You can look at me, right? I'm not built for a lot of that. So, "Take it easy man."

There are only so many times that you can flip the panic switch, you know. And nobody comes. But you're like, "Alright." And that fear grows, and you begin to get more tense and more worried. And you have two choices. Either you can just leave, run, or you become someone. And my fear turned me into somebody I was not. I am not a tough guy. But it would turn into, "Hey," it would escalate, they would want to fight, and I was like, "Alright. I get off at 9. I'll see you in the parking lot."

You should have seen their faces. Their eyes would get big, and it was like, "Either he knows something that I don't know or he's crazy." Either way, no one ever met me in the parking lot, thank God.

But it shaped me. It changed me. I became someone who was hard. I was not that person. But walking around with clenched hands and being nervous all of the time that's what was brought out of that, fear.

Jesus says the opposite. He says, "You will be saved. You will have eternal security. Here's what that means. You have salvation. And when you have that kind of peace, knowing what happens forever, it seems to bring you a little bit of peace here and in the right now. And we go from being afraid to being saved.

And God says, "This is the gospel. We fell short. We have sinned. We didn't measure up, but God came, He sent His Son, who died the death we deserved, lived the life that we should have lived, and now we have that, we are secure in that. That's what He talks about here in the first part: you are saved. He's talking about eternal life.

Then look at what He says next. He says:

They will come and go freely and will find good pastures.

So if the first statement referred to eternal life, this one speaks to here and now. It's this idea that they will come, and they will go. This is day in and day out. The picture we get here is that Jesus came to that fold, and He called all of us out from these different folds that we were in, and He brought us into this new fold, God's flock.

But He doesn't just keep us there to have this holy huddle, right? It's not like, "Okay, just wait right here until you die and then we'll go to the good place." No, He says that He rescued us from over there, from that false way of living, and then He brings us into this new way of living, where we say that we are secure but then He brings us out and we get to live our days experiencing the enhanced life that we all long for.

You begin to see this life that Jesus has for you, it really brings Psalm 23 to life. Psalm 23 moves from just being a poem to being what life looks like with Jesus. Take a look at this. This is the enhanced life, when we step through that gate and we have Jesus, it says:

"The LORD is my shepherd; I have all that I need." Imagine waking up with that kind of peace. Nothing to fear. Nothing to worry about, I have all that I need.

"He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams." Think about this. Think about how many people in your life encourage you to rest. "You know what, go take a nap." Think about the leaders who are above you. How many of them are worried about you getting enough rest? God says, "When I'm the Shepherd of this flock, I promise you I will make sure, I will build it into the rhythms of your life. You will find rest. You will find green meadows." He says:

"He renews my strength." Think about how much of life right now is just taking your strength, taking every bit it can. He says, "No, I actually renew your strength. Go ahead, live life to the fullest, with everything that you've got. But you know when you come back to Me I'm going to fill you back up, fuller than you've ever been."

“He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name.” He’s going to lead me every step of the way. “Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me.” This is that even if kind of prayer, “I believe that God is with me. I believe He has a good life for me, but even as we go, I know that I live in a broken world, I know that there is going to be some darkness, some pain.” But the picture you get is that God is going to be with you.

You see this little kid kind of reaching out to hold his father’s hand. And he can’t see. It is dark and he is worried and he’s a little bit nervous, but the only thing that brings him peace is knowing that he’s not alone.

“It doesn’t matter what’s on the other side of this, if God is with me, I’m going to be okay.” This is the life that He is talking about. It says:

“Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me. You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies.” It’s the idea, once again, that we are going to come across people who maybe attack us, who take shots at us, and our enemies may surround us, but here’s the thing, he says:

“You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies.” This is the idea that, yeah, the attacks will come. The enemies will come, but their presence is going to be overshadowed by God’s presence. And no matter what comes this way, I know that my God is with me.

“So I’m going to be alright, because I’m not afraid of anything. Who do I have to fear? The one person I had to fear was the One who could not only destroy the body, but my soul as well. But He decided that I was worth dying for. He’s already saved me. He’s already protected me, so who’s going to stop me now?” You prepare a feast:

“You honor me by anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings.” You’ve been too good to me. “Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the LORD forever.” Psalm 23: 1-6 (NLT)

If you want something to say before you go to bed at night, followers of Jesus, that is the line, “And I will live in the house of the LORD forever.” Whatever happened that day, it went good, it went bad, whenever you’re laying your head down at night you can close your eyes and you can rest assured that you will live all of your days in the house of the LORD.

Those are the first two things. You’re going to be saved and you’re going to come out and you’re going to come back in and there are going to be green pastures. And then the third thing He speaks to is kind of a culmination of the first two. He says:

They will have a rich and satisfying life.

Another translation says it like this:

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” John 10:10 (NLT)

So He’s packaging both here. As a result of our eternal destination being secure, and as a result of Him being with us every step of the way, He said, “You’re going to have life and you’re going to have life to the fullest.”

The terms here rich or life to the fullest denotes a surplus. There is a mathematical term that at the end of the day, the week, the year you would have a surplus. That’s what it means to have a rich life and a full life.

And with Jesus, what He’s saying here is, “If you step through this gate, if you come into this and you experience new life with Me in this relationship, you will have something that the world cannot offer.

“At the same time, I’m not only going to give you what you could never gain in the world, I’m going to secure you in a place, I’m going to place you in My hand, because what I gave you, the world can’t take. The storms can come. Enemies can come. Anybody can come, but who’s going to take you from My hand?”

You will have a surplus. Here's the idea. If I have Jesus, even if I never get another good thing, if He never gives me another good thing, or even this, if He takes every good thing that He’s already given me, if I have Jesus, I will die with a surplus. One more time. We’ll get there. If I have Jesus, if I have this relationship with Him, no matter what the day brings no matter what the day takes, I will always have a surplus.

Come what may, our God is for us. This is the secret to life. If you want to know the secret to life, this is it. This is how to be content in any and every situation. And we learn about this in Philippians, chapter 4. Look at this. It says:

“Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing,” anybody in here living on almost nothing? “... or with everything...”

This is the idea that people, especially those who don’t have anything, they think that if they had more of this thing then they would be okay, but that’s not the truth. I meet with people all of the time who have everything that you could possibly dream of, they’ve got it and they are still empty. But he said:

“I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.” Philippians 4:11-13 (NLT)

This is the secret. When I go through this life it’s not a clean road and rain is going to fall on me, it does not mean that I won’t experience pain or loss or any of that. But what I’ve been

given is God's Spirit and what I've been given cannot be taken. So if I have that, I have a surplus. So I'll know how to live with nothing, and if God blesses me with a bunch of worldly resources, I'll know how to live with that too. That won't corrupt me. And this won't kill me because I have Jesus.

This is what He says is on the other side of Him. Think about this. He's not just saying if you go that way then you will have this life. He's saying, "Through me. You have to go through Me to do this." This is why I say that He is so polarizing. You've got to love Him, or you've got to hate Him. But He won't let you stay in the middle.

You see, if you follow Jesus' life just a few more chapters after what we read, we see that the Pharisees just get more and more upset. They get angry. They are losing more and more of their reputation and their power. So they actually decide that it is time. They plot a way to kill Jesus.

And they don't do it in the middle of the day. They don't do it when He's teaching at the Synagogue. They wait until the middle of the night. And they sneak out and they find Him off the beaten path. Because the true blind persons in this story are not the blind man, it was the Pharisees. They could not see Jesus for who He was. They just saw Him as a threat that needed to be dealt with.

And you get this amazing picture where Jesus is with His followers, His disciples. And then around the corner come these Roman soldiers. Roman soldiers who have been bred to do this. To arrest people. To kill people. They are warriors. Not afraid of anything. And they step up and they are not the first ones to speak. They stand there and you get the feeling that they are standing at a distance.

Jesus is the one who steps up when He sees them coming with their lanterns and their gear. And look at what He says:

"Who are you looking for?" he asked."

And you almost get the feeling that they didn't really want to answer. Like, uh, it's.... Did you text us that name, is it Jehoshaphat? No. I don't even know if you guys have seen Him. If you have, maybe not, then we'll go, "Jesus the Nazarene," have you guys heard of Him? And look at what Jesus says:

"I am he," another one of His I Am statements, He said, "I am God. I'm not just Jesus of Nazareth, I'm not just a person they told you about, I'm God."

"(Judas, who betrayed him,)" he was one of His closest friends, the one who brought them there, "(was standing with them.) As Jesus said 'I am he,' they all drew back and fell to the ground!" John 18:4-5 (NLT)

Try to process this. The most powerful empire in the world has just come to arrest Jesus. He steps up and says, "I am He," and as His voice goes out all of these men fall to the ground almost like they are bowing before Him. They do not take Jesus. Jesus goes willingly. No one takes His life. He lays it down for us. This is some powerful, superhero type stuff.

It reminds me of my son. He's seven years old right now and he is loving reading in general. But he's loving that he just started reading the Bible. And every night he'll read a story and he'll come down and he'll tell me about what happened and how wild it was. And he had this amazing line the other night. He said, "The Bible is crazy but it's true."

I was like, "Man, I don't think we could sum it up any better than that." He also said that he's thinking about being a preacher one day. So, this is his first sermon point. I'm speaking it into existence. My man, Rhys the beast, will be up here one day, Lord willing, preaching the gospel.

But they take Him and He goes in and they bring Him in front of the Roman leaders, Pilate, and it's a sham. They are saying all of this stuff about Him and they end up deciding, "Yeah, we're going to execute Him."

And they beat Him to an inch of His life and then they take Him to the cross. And there He hangs on this cross for you and for me and He dies. But before He dies He shouts out, "It is finished." And people really didn't understand what He was talking about.

So they take Him off of the cross and they place Him in a tomb thinking that this is going to be His forever home. But we know that three days later He rose. Three days later He showed the world that He was who He said He was. That He was the Good Shepherd. He didn't come to exploit his sheep; He didn't come to take advantage of them. He actually laid down His life, even when the cost of theirs was His own, He went through with it all.

Here's the message that comes from the cross. The Good Shepherd's voice could not be silenced. The gate could not be closed. Not even death or sin could shut the gate that Jesus said that we all can come through. He is the only way.

It reminds me of this song that I was listening to this morning, this worship song. It said, "God, I thank You for all of the doors You kept me from." We all have doors in our life that we almost walked through. Doors that when we think back now, if we would have gone through, man, our lives would be a lot different. Some doors we did go through.

I know for me, when I was 16 years old, and I'm going to share something here that I never told my mom, so, "Hey, Mom," I almost went through a door that would have changed my life. I was in a spot where I wanted more money, I wanted more things, and I wasn't willing to wait so I thought about selling drugs.

I knew some people. I could get connected. I could make some pretty quick money really fast. But I couldn't do it. Something about it, I couldn't go through with it. One, because I think I

would be a horrible drug dealer. I'm a 9 on the Enneagram and I would take peace over money any day. I'd be like, "No, you just take it. You just pay me when you get around to it. Don't worry about it."

But I believe God, I thank Him that I didn't go through that door. There were other doors I went through, but even through all of those hallways and all of those doors, I came to a space where I did get to go through His door, where I did get to meet Jesus. And on the other side of that, I've gotten to experience life and life to the full.

I just want to say for those here today that have gone through that door, it does not matter what door, what was on the other side, how long you have been there. I just want you to hear this. There is a Good Shepherd calling for you by name. There is a God on this side who wants to have a relationship with you, who is strong enough to pull you from whatever door you're behind now, to lead you out to green meadows and pastures and a river that is overflowing into a life that you could not imagine without Him.

That life is available for you. At all of our campuses we're going to have people in every room. If you just want to come down and you want to step through that gate, step through that door and begin a relationship with Jesus, you can do that.

What I want to do right now is, I just want to pray. I want to pray that we would not pretend like Jesus is just likeable, that He's just a little extra, but that we could open up God's Word and we could hear who He says He is. To hear how much He loves us. To see the full picture, as much as we can, and to be overwhelmed with love in a way that changes how we worship and changes how we live so that we can experience life to the full. The surplus is available now. A lot of us are living like those funds are on hold. They are available now. God wants us to experience life now.

Would you pray with us?

God, we thank You so much for today. God, we thank You that You are the Door, You are the Gate, and on the other side of You, and only on the other side of You, is true life, is the good life, is the satisfying life, is a rich life.

God, I pray that's what we want to be. That we look at this world and we look at how fast it is and how it shines and how easy it is to be tempted, but God, I pray that we would come to know Your voice and we would follow You and we would step into that door and we would receive all that You have for us: security, safety, salvation and that You would be with us every step of the way.

And, God, that we would know the secret to life. And if we have You, we have more than we could ever ask for. If we have You we will always have a surplus.

Jesus, we love You. It's in Your perfect name that we pray: Amen.

Northwest, what we're going to do right now is... I just want to make sure that you heard that invitation. If you want to pray with someone, you want to meet with someone, you want to begin that relationship, step through that gate, you can today, and we would love to help you take that step. We're going to line this stage with people. Please don't leave here without talking to someone.

And for all of us, as we go, don't wait. Live that Psalm 23 life. Live a life of love. Live knowing that your Good Shepherd is leading, that He is with you, that He wants you to experience a rich and satisfying life.

Church, we love you. Have a great day and even better week. We can't wait to see you back here next Sunday for Easter. Love you guys.