

John 10

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[0 : 0 0] well if i could encourage you please to turn back to john chapter 10 john chapter 10 and seeking the lord's help we come back to study some verses in in this chapter a friend who was with us actually in the service here a couple of weeks but from edinburgh and we go back through university and during university to try and make ends meet and finance studies he he did a few jobs and one of the jobs he did was he used to write and he used to manage murder mystery evenings i don't know if you've heard of such things but i suppose it was like interactive cluedo he would organize things where he would write a plot and he would engage some of the drama students and a meal would be presented in a hotel and at the end of different courses different characters would come out the plot would have been told there's been a murder there's been a crime and as the characters came out in full costume and full person they um they would present their case and the people sitting around the tables they were left trying to figure out who were the goodies and who were the baddies who was trustworthy and who wasn't trustworthy and there's a bit of that going on in john chapter 10 because in john chapter 10 we have yet another clash between jesus and those in authority the religious leaders and as the crowds who were gathered as they looked in and as they listened in to try to understand what was going on they were trying to figure out that question who can we trust here there was a clash they were polar opposites in terms of what was being said and they were trying to understand who can be trusted now we read this for the benefit of knowing what's to come but try and put yourself in the the sandals of somebody standing there in in that crowd they were confused here on the one hand was this amazing man jesus and he healed miraculously and he taught with such out of this world authority and his promises were were so rich and so attractive and his compassion was so compelling he seemed to have a genuine care for the people he had such courage he went head to head with those in power and as they tried to trap him the wisdom of christ was astonishing and so the people both naturally and supernaturally they were drawn to him they crowded him but then there was the religious leaders and they were the ones that the people had been taught since they were that high to trust and they were so clearly and vociferously against jesus so who do we believe said the crowds and if we want to be saved said the crowds if we want to have this eternal life that seems to be the theme of so many of these sermons how do we get it who do we trust and it's into that context that jesus says in verse 7 through to verse 9 i tell you the truth i am the gate for the sheep all whoever came before me were thieves and robbers but the sheep did not listen to them

i am the gate whoever enters through me will be saved this is the third of the i am statements of jesus in john's gospel there's some of the standout statements in all of scripture there's some of the the most sparkling jewels of verses in all of the bible but see when you go to a jeweler's shop if you're going to pick up a ring or a bracelet or something you go to one of the jeweler's shops in the east gate than everyone else you don't see rings and jewels sitting on a kind of wooden table like this you wouldn't see them against a background like this but these sparkling jewels are always set on a dark background a velvet cloth or something of that nature and it brings out their beauty all the more and jesus words which are so rich and so attractive and so compelling so sparkling on the pages of scripture these words that are so full of assurance and comfort and hope for those who trust in him they're set against a dark background and so the wonder of them is all the more compelling for the crowds and for us as we still gather around them who lurks then in the dark background well it's those that jesus exposes as thieves and robbers and that's the first point of the sermon today two points first of all we'll look at the thieves and the robbers those that jesus identified and then we'll look at jesus as the gate and the good shepherd so first of all the thieves and the robbers how do we spot them well jesus essentially he paints for us or he sketches out for us a photo fit of what a thief and a robber looks like you ever watch crime watch crime watch still on

television i haven't seen it for a lot of years is it still on but you'll remember crime watch off the television if it's not still on crime watch was a program when various crimes that were reported would be kind of highlighted in this program and then they would name the suspects if they knew the suspects and they would put the picture the sketch of the suspects up on the screen so that if you saw them you wouldn't approach them but you'd pick up the phone and you'd report their whereabouts and in these verses jesus essentially gives us the photo fit of those that he describes as ecclesiastical spiritual soul criminals and he tells us in verse 1 of the chapter he says i tell you the truth the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate but climbs in by some other way is a thief and a robber so that's the statement so who then are the baddies who are the thieves and the robbers well according to jesus words here there are those who do not enter by the gate so who is the gate well jesus identifies himself as the gate so the thieves and the robbers are those whom jesus exposes as having no faith in him and no desire for the glory of christ so who then are the thieves and robbers of that day so the crowds

are trying to work out well they were the religious Pharisees they were those who claimed to be spiritual leaders so what criminal activity were they up to in the spiritual realm well they were leading people into death and destruction through their religion and so jesus many times and here again he is angered by them and jesus exposes them and i look around the congregation just now and i don't see shocked faces because we've had this script for a couple thousand years now this doesn't come as a shock to us but again think yourself back into that crowd think about the stunned silence in that gathered crowd sometimes you watch a film thriller you're following the plot of the thriller you're getting to know the characters and you see this character and you think he's good you follow his tracks around the story of this film you think he's good he presents himself as somebody that's to be trusted and then in this unpredictable twist your stomach sinks and you see that the person you were trusting that exposed as somebody who are far from trustworthy we can all think about films we've seen where we've just been shocked at the turn of events you think they're good but this guy that you've been trusting he's the killer and Jesus here he's exposing the Pharisees the religious

Jews as killers and as thieves and as destroyers of salvation now in the days that we live in I think we're very polite I think we're very uncomfortable with this kind of language I think there's much that we read coming from the mouth of Jesus and if we had got alongside him we might have said maybe change your phraseology a little bit it's a bit strong it's coming across a bit harsh I can imagine somebody coming up alongside Jesus and saying no come on they're earnest people aren't they they're well meaning they're serious about their religion and all that's true they were they weren't those who who practiced something different to what they preached they were earnest they were jealous they were sincere but they were wrong and they were leading people the wrong way and we saw that in the last chapter in

John 9 the blind man I mean glance back when you go home through that chapter and see all the attempts that the religious people had to try and drag this blind man away from Jesus in verse 24 of the past chapter they say very explicitly to the man we know this man is a sinner we know this Jesus is a sinner get away from him he's not to be trusted and agree with us on this point and you're out of the synagogue and they threw him out because he wouldn't agree but what were they trying to do they were trying to lure this blind man away from the saviour they were trying to lure this man in spiritual need away from the only one who could give him life and salvation they were trying to lead him down the road to death and destruction they were so thieves and unbeknown to them they were acting as agents of the soul thief the destroyer satan they were engaged unbeknown to them in a mission to rob people of the eternal life that is found only in

[12 : 50] Christ and they were involved in a mission to rob Jesus of the glory that he was due remember back in school days the chemistry class you were given a solution in a glass like this one and you were asked the question what's in the glass what's in the solution what's in the beaker is it acid or a colyte you couldn't tell by looking at the solution you had to get the paper the litmus paper and dip it in and see the colour and that would reveal whether the liquid was acid or whether it was alkali and Jesus he's giving them and he's giving us the spiritual litmus test for that day and this day he's saying this is how you can tell if somebody is to be trusted or if someone is a robber of souls it's not about the type of colour it's not about the gowns it's not about the degrees that are on the wall it's not about their title it's not about the denomination they're part of it's not about how eloquently they can speak it's not about how many they can draw into a church building but it's all about how they how we respond to Jesus it's all about whether we point to and lift up and glorify

and preach and worship

Christ if the deity of Christ no matter how spiritual no matter how respectable no matter how apparently religious some name may seem if the deity of Christ is being denied if the cross of Christ is not first and foremost being pointed to as the only means of salvation if people are putting their ways and their ideas and their thoughts before Jesus Jesus calls them a robber and a thief and Jesus who is the light of the world he exposes them and he warns the crowd then and the crowd here not to listen to them so whenever anybody stands in this place or any place that you attend as a means of worship this is what you and I are looking for not gowns not callers not certificates not credentials not eloquence not wisdom what do they say about

Christ what do they say about the cross of Jesus what do they say about how we can be saved 1 John 4 dear friends do not believe every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they are from God because many false prophets have gone out into the world this is how you can recognize the spirit of God every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God this is the spirit of the antichrist which you have heard is coming and even thou is already in the world you dear children are from God and have overcome them because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world they are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world and the world listens to them we are from

God and whoever knows God listens to us but whoever is not from God does not listen to us this is how you recognize the spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood it's an important passage in a world and a country that is overlooking truth you want to know truth you want to know who to trust it's all about the acknowledgement of Christ and his finished work anybody who diverts us from Jesus anybody that begins to speak about salvation being another way or many ways thieves and robbers it's a dark background now we move to the light Jesus is the gate that's the second point now what is a gate we're in the process of doing stuff around the man and we're looking at fences and we're looking at gates what's a gate what is a gate for well a gate is a means of access from one place to another place a gate leads people in and a gate leads people out so we just think about that as a very simple illustration where does

Jesus lead us into and where does Jesus lead us out to I'm taking verse 9 in particular we see two things in response to that question the first thing is Jesus leads us into salvation Jesus the gate leads us into salvation I am the gate verse 9 whoever enters through me will be saved there is a picture and I think if we can get a wee glance at the picture that might be helpful in the I don't know if you can see that you can't see that fairly well in the ancient near east when Jesus was speaking the sheep and the shepherd when the sheep were taken into the fold the fold had no gate as you can see there the fold had no gate there was no mechanism that opened and closed with a hinge and a latch on it there was no gate so the shepherd himself became the gate he was the one who called them and who led them into the fold and once in the fold as the sheep we can just see off the screen there the sheep in the fold once the sheep were safely into that fold the shepherd he positioned himself between the sheep who were now safe and any impending danger that we want to encroach upon the sheep he became the gate the shepherd so that no wild animal and no danger could get through to the sheep as long as the shepherd was the gate and so when [19:57] Jesus said I am the gate and then he immediately afterwards says I am the good shepherd it made perfect sense to those who were listening they understood there's no disconnect between these two metaphors they fit together so as the original listeners listened into this they would have got the point they would be able to see that the sheep who entered by the gate the sheep who were under the care of the good shepherd they were safe because the good shepherd stood or he sat between them and her here's a question have you come to Jesus the gate have you come to Jesus and met him and trusted him as the good shepherd if you have you're safe so for those who are

Christians here today this morning there may be a thousand things going on in your life you may have many anxieties and many troubles many stresses but in terms of eternity and time you're safe safe from what well to answer that question we have to go back to the cross because to continue thinking about that picture the cross was the place where Jesus positioned himself between his sheep and all that would seek to harm and destroy them on the cross Jesus positioned himself he came between us and Satan and all Satan's demonic dark army on the cross

Jesus he came between he positioned himself between us and our sin which ultimately would kill us if it were not dealt with he took it upon himself on the cross Jesus he came between us and death our last great enemy and on the cross Jesus he came between us he positioned himself between us and the hell that we were destined for where our sin not dealt with on the cross Jesus who is the light of the world he went to war with darkness and he overcame how do we know he overcame because it's Sunday it's the day it's the first day of the week it's the day where we remember the resurrection it's the day where we remember that

Jesus rose and in doing so he demonstrated that death and sin and Satan and hell had been overcome as people were saved are you saved if you don't remember anything else today take this question home with you are you saved if you die soon do you know that you're safe do you have confidence that you will not die in your sin but you'll live forever that full abundant life that only Christ can give live forever is a song it's been in the news over the last week again I listened to it a lot in the 90s and probably afterwards but it's a song that was sung I think it was last Sunday night in that concert in Manchester thousands they gathered in that stadium to remember the events of the past few days they gathered in that stadium and they sang the chorus over and over again you and I are going to live forever that's our desire God has set eternity in our hearts we desire rightly to live forever but that promise is not a promise a rock star can make but it's a promise that Jesus has made it's a promise that everybody will realize if they are in him are you in him

[25 : 28] Jesus leads us in the salvation he positions himself between us and all that would seek to kill our souls and so our calling is to trust him there is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved there is no other way to find peace and relationship with God the father there is one way there is one name and it's the name of Jesus and in him we are safe out of him we are in the gravest danger that we could ever be in we can come that close to the kingdom we can come that close to the gate but if we are not on the right side of him we are exposed to every danger whether we are five feet away from that gate or whether we are out in the wilderness still there is danger so we need to come to him and trust him he leads us in the salvation he leads us out to sanctification if we are his sheep but that's another message for another day time is gone so let's pray lord god we thank you for your word and we thank you for the absolute clarity the black and whiteness of all that Jesus said against the backdrop of the confusion and the words that we hear around us today so many grey areas so much confusion so little grasp on the truth we thank you that into this culture today Jesus speaks and he says I tell you the truth and we thank you that in these matters of eternal life and eternal death Jesus doesn't leave us guessing but he makes it very clear that anybody who seeks to divert or gaze from him no matter how respectable they may appear to be they are not to be trusted they are thieves they are robbers so we thank you that Jesus has made that promise that all who will come to him all who will enter through him who is the gate all who will receive him and trust him and follow him as the good shepherd we thank you that there is absolute assurance of safety for all eternity and even when we go through turmoil in this world even when things hit us that we wish didn't hit us we thank you that we have the promise the good shepherd has not taken his eyes off us but he is there and he is with us through every attack every hassle and lord we thank you that he takes us on to that eternal peace and security in the home that he has prepared for all who love him and trust him so give us we pray to know that we are yours and if we are not yours we pray that not one more moment would pass where we remain in that state of danger but that we would come and find peace and security in the love of

Christ hear our prayers and continue with us in Jesus name we pray amen