

WE ARE DOORKEEPERS

[JOHN 10:1-3]

I. SUMMARY OF “I AM THE DOOR”

A. JESUS IS THE DOOR OF THE SHEEPFOLD—WHO:

1. Gives access to the sheepfold and the Father—He saves
2. Prevents access to false shepherds and predators—He protects
3. Opens the way and leads His flock to green pastures—He provides

B. HE PROVIDES ACCESS IN THREE SPIRITUAL CONTEXTS

1. To the **kingdom** of God
2. To the **city** of New Jerusalem (heaven)
3. To the Father’s **house**

C. WE HELP HIM—BY:

1. Proclaiming—the Good News of salvation
2. Guarding—His flock—protecting His church
3. Providing—for others—being a nurturing church

II. DOORKEEPER IMAGERY AND TEXTS

A. MODERN IMAGERY—ILLUSTRATIONS

- Hotel doorman—Park Avenue doorman—in uniform
- Porter at Oxford college
- Ticket takers at Ballpark—College Stadium—Cowboys Stadium
- Security guard at gate or entrance
 - Retirement community—Broadway Plaza
 - Corporation/plant—Lockheed/Alcon/TI
- Guard at gate of military post/base—Carswell NAS
- Prison guards—give access at each level
- Administrative Assistant—at business

B. OT IMAGERY IS FORMAL → KINGDOM—CITY—COURT

1. Israel had two types of doorkeepers and gatekeepers
 - **Civic**—guards at the camp—city—palace—and courts

- **Religious**—priests at thresholds of tabernacle and temple
2. The priestly doorkeepers formed a special group (**I K 12 and II Chr 9**)
 - In David's day—there were **4000** (**I Chr 23:5**)
 - In Nehemiah's day—there were only **172** (**Neh 11:19**)
 3. Duties of priestly doorkeepers—(**II Kings, I Chr, Ezra, Nehemiah**)
 - Guarded the temple entrance
 - Cared for the ark
 - Supervised the offerings
 - Helped with purification services
 - Guarded the storehouses

C. OFTEN QUOTED OLD TESTAMENT TEXT

Ps 84:10—*For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.*

1. Linguistic differences
 - a. Hebrew word (*safaf*) can have two meanings
 - Either one who *guards* the threshold
 - Or one who *stands* at the threshold
 - b. Septuagint translates this: 'outcast' [at the threshold]
 - c. Latin version says (abjectus): 'the abject one' [at the threshold]
2. Two possible interpretations
 - A 'door-keeper'—who stands **guard**
 - A 'door-stander'—who waits like a **beggar**
3. **Three key points** stand out here
 - There is a threshold—that divides inside from outside
 - The 'door-keeper'—is indebted to God—maybe even a beggar
 - He would rather be inside than outside

D. NEW TESTAMENT IMAGERY IS MORE INTIMATE

1. One reference is about a **formal** doorkeeper at court—**Jn 18**
 - While Jesus was being questioned before the High Priest
 - One of the disciples—John?—helped Peter gain access to the courtyard
 - This disciple knew and spoke to the High Priest's 'doorkeeper'

2. The other passages deal with **informal** and **domestic** scene

- The doorkeeper of the master's house—**Mk 13**
- The doorkeeper of the sheepfold—**Jn 10**

E. THE FOCAL PASSAGE

John 10:1-3—*1 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. 2 But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.*

- **Three key points**

1. The **doorkeeper listens** to the shepherd—his master
2. The **doorkeeper opens** the door
 - For the shepherd to enter sheepfold—and sheep's lives
 - For sheep to follow the shepherd out to pastures
3. Passage mentions **nothing about** the doorkeeper *closing* the door!
 - The Shepherd decides who belongs to His flock
 - We help Him *protect* the sheep from predators
 - We can exclude them from the sheepfold for their actions
 - But we do not decide who His true sheep are by nature
 - We have no authority permanently to exclude anyone
 - We should think of being door-openers—not door closers

III. WHAT IS DOOR-KEEPING?

A. AN IMPORTANT CONDITION—THERE IS A THRESHOLD

1. The door—is more than just an entrance and exit
2. It has a **threshold** that demarks a **boundary**→ IN—or—OUT
3. The threshold divides insiders from outsiders
 - Either we are INSIDERS—or we are OUTSIDERS
 - Doorkeepers *cannot* be outsiders!
4. Doorkeepers are INSIDERS who decide who gets access!

Illustration—II Kg 7:3-11—the lepers with good news

- At the time of Elisah and King Jehoram of Israel

- Arameans had invaded Israel and threatened Samaria
- 4 lepers left the city **gate** to ask mercy of the Arameans
- They discovered God had caused the army to abandon camp
- They told their story to the gatekeepers of Samaria
- **Gatekeepers** did not let them into the king's household
- The lepers were OUTSIDERS
- But **gatekeepers** passed on the message—Samaria was saved

5. What does it mean to 'cross the threshold'

- a. Gain access—going from OUTSIDER to → INSIDER
- b. Brink of opportunity
- c. New beginning—new life/home—as in marriage
- d. 'Threshold' also meant 'storehouse'—access to blessings

B. THE DOORKEEPER'S PURPOSE

1. Two functions

- To let others come in—provide access
- To keep out—to guard—to protect

2. **Illustration—Jn 18:15-17—the high priest's doorkeeper**

15—Simon Peter was following Jesus, and so was another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest. 16 but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in. 17 Then the slave-girl who kept the door said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you? He said, "I am not."

- The 'other disciple' was an 'insider—Peter was an 'outsider'
- The slave-girl admitted the 'other disciple', but not to Peter
- The 'other disciple' knew the high priest—and *she* knew this
- The 'other disciple' acts as a secondary door-keeper
- She admits Peter on the credibility of the 'other disciple'

C. WHO ARE DOORKEEPERS?

- 1. They **know the Master** of the house—or the Shepherd of the sheep
 - a. So they know the Master's **will**

b. Because He has **clearly communicated** it to them

Example: receptionist not transferring phone call—she did not know

2. They **obey the Master**—or the Shepherd

a. Obeying the **Shepherd**—[see here]→ **Jn 10:2**—they open the door

b. Obeying the **Master**

Mk 13:33-35—*Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time will come. It is like a man away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert. Therefore, be on the alert—for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—in case he should come suddenly and find you asleep. What I say to you I say to all, “Be on the alert!”*

3. They have a **sense of urgency** about their calling [see above]

4. They **provide access** to what is on the other side of the door

a. They know what is on the other side of the door—they have *seen* it!

b. But they do not own what is on the other side of the door

c. Yet they decide who gets access to the owner

Example: GOMO office for GO's

d. How this works:

1. The owner **knows** and **trusts** them

2. He **entrusts** His Word with them

3. They are **responsible** to **open** the door and **share** this Word

4. The owner holds them **accountable** for **opening** the door

5. Then the **owner gives** what is on the other side of the door

Store illustration—4 doorkeepers—4 gifts—4 recipients—1 giver

○ Gift # 1 = candy

○ Gift # 2 = book

○ Gift # 3 = CD

○ Gift # 4 = game

5. They are **not self-important**—but they are very **important to God**

- **Jn 18** doorkeeper was ‘just’ a **slave-girl**—but she controlled access to the high-priest—she had great power!
 - **Example:** seminary secretaries at seminary taking abuse from arrogant pastor-students
6. They are INSIDERS who were once OUTSIDERS!
 - a. SO—they are always **humble**—never presumptuous
 - Like the ‘door-**stander**’ in **Ps 84**—who is ‘abject’
 - They always maintain a **servant attitude**
 - b. They stand in **awe** of being allowed to keep the Lord’s door!
 - c. They do not focus on ‘position’—but on **relationship** with Master
 7. They know their main job is to **bless** people—not to restrict them
 - There is a difference between being a **door**-keeper and a **gate**-keeper

Illustration: going to the Pentagon—a blessing or a curse?
(17 door/gate-keepers)

1. Gas station—credit card (clerk for paper receipt)
2. Airport—ticket booth
3. Infield parking
4. Ticketing and baggage check
5. Baggage security check
6. First ID check
7. X-ray screening
8. Gate ticket and security check
9. Three security checks
10. Exit baggage claim
11. Rental car check-in counter
12. Exit guard
13. Hotel check-in desk
14. Metro ticket
15. Pentagon security screening
16. I.D. check
17. Administrative Assistant in Chief’s office (or XO)

IV. APPLICATION

1. **We are all** door-keepers
2. We help OUTSIDERS get INSIDE—**our call** to **bless** not restrict
3. We help them get **access to** the one **who has the treasure**
4. In the Kingdom of God—this is access to Christ
 - a. **We** must be INSIDERS first—we must be saved
 - b. *Then* we open doors for OUTSIDERS to be saved

- c. **Every** Christian is supposed to do this
 - d. And only *you* can do it where God calls *you* to do it—not I
5. But we also are door-keepers in everyday life too
- a. We help God improve others' lives in many everyday ways
 - b. Every Christian has a calling to do this too
 - c. Only *you* can do it where God calls *you* to do it—not I
 - d. Only you can open doors of opportunity for others—OUTSIDERS
 - At home—helping family know they are accepted unconditionally—they are a blessing—and you love them
 - At work—helping someone find a job—and to advance
 - At school—helping others learn—and get 'accepted'
 - In social life—including others in your circle of acceptance
 - e. These pathways of life are how the Gospel enters people's lives!