



A Worship Discussion Guide for Individuals, Groups & Families for the week of March 23, 2025

Read the Bible passage aloud in your group meeting. This is a worship discussion guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for your meeting, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

I Am the Gate

John 10:1-11

¹“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. ²But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷**So Jesus again said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.’** ⁸All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”

- **Sheep is an image repeated often throughout Scripture. Name other places in the Bible that come to mind where “sheep” are referenced.**
- **Who intends to do harm to the sheep? How do they enter the sheepfold? (1)**
- **How is Jesus challenging the religious leaders of Israel? If the religious leaders were the gatekeepers, why would they not want to open the door for the shepherd of the sheep?**
- **How is the shepherd described? (2-5; 7-9)**
- **How do you react to Jesus describing those He loves as sheep?**
“Sheep are the most non-self-sufficient animals there are... they can’t get their own food, they don’t even know sometimes the right food if it’s in front of them or not. They can’t find their way home and it’s true that the shepherd names the sheep, gives the sheep a name and the sheep answers to it.” –Tim Keller
- **Jesus was the Shepherd who entered the door (2) and now declares Himself to be the Door of the sheep (7, 9). What would it mean for the sheep to have their Shepherd as the Door?**

Jesus refers to the thieves and robbers (8), those who would steal from His family by leading them astray, deceiving them, for selfish purposes or were less concerned with truth and integrity as they were with wealth and personal reputation. By declaring Himself the Shepherd and the Door, Jesus stands in stark contrast. Jesus didn’t come to steal, He came to give, to sacrifice Himself for us. Jesus, as the Door, will not let anything enter in, or leave, without His blessing or permission.

- **Consider how a door is used. It gives access to something, provides a way through a barrier, and prevents danger from the outside. Can you share a story about Jesus having this kind of ministry in your life?**

For many ancient shepherds, the sheepfold (where sheep slept overnight) was attached to their home, and the shepherd would often sleep at the entrance like a protective guard. So, to enter the sheepfold was to come home. As “the door”, Jesus made it explicitly clear He is the only means of coming home to God. He is the only way one can become part of the people of God-- there is no other way. When you go through “the door,” you are home, able to go “in and out” (9), where you find an abundant life, complete with fullness and freedom in Christ.

- **Think of some ways we might try to get life without going through Jesus (money, relationships, success) What makes those other doors so attractive?**
- **Is it difficult to trust that Jesus came to give you life to the full? When have you been tempted to believe He is withholding from you?**

Thieves and robbers threaten the sheep, and we have hearts that are prone to wander. What a gift we have in Jesus, the Doorway to life, our Protector and Defender!

- **Think of a time where Jesus protected you (from your sin, from harm, through salvation). How did Jesus meet you during that time?**
- **Consider the ways you may be anxious this week (uncertainty in work, tension in relationships, fear about the world). Confess those fears to Jesus and ask the Holy Spirit for grace to trust Jesus is the Door to abundant life.**

Pray together in response to God's Word.

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from Your ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against Your holy laws. We have left undone what we ought to have done, and we have done what we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us. Yet, good Lord, have mercy on us: restore those who repent, according to Your promises declared to us in Jesus Christ our Lord. And grant, merciful Father, for His sake, that we may live a godly, righteous, and obedient life, to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

--from the Book of Common Prayer

Stories from the Church: Jesus Reveals Himself

Each Sunday in Lent we will hear testimonies of how Jesus is faithfully revealing Himself to His people.



This week, we heard from Martha Hills in worship.

"Jesus loves me, this I know; For the Bible tells me so!" I've known about Jesus since I could first walk and talk and sing the words of this song. I was raised in SC in a Southern Baptist church. I heard that "Jesus had died for my sins" every Sunday

morning, Sunday evening and Wednesday evening. But I also heard that we had to obey all the commandments, stay away from sin and the appearance of sin in order to be pleasing to God. Those who didn't do so well at following the rules were judged, criticized and ostracized. I was baptized at 8 years old because I knew Jesus loved me, and I surely didn't want to go to hell.

As a child I was compliant and conscientious, succeeding at most things I tried to do. I tried hard to meet the standards everyone set for me and enjoyed their praise and admiration. I was in a great many ways a perfectionist. I trusted in my performance, but I lived with a hidden fear that if I ever did mess up big time, I would be forsaken and unloved by God and those whose opinions I valued.

I knew the gospel well, but it wasn't affecting the deepest parts of my heart.

I would hear stories of how hopeless sinners had been forgiven and their lives changed by Jesus. It sounds crazy but sometimes I felt cheated that I had been born into a Christian family. It would be so much better to have lived

a sinful life, really screwing things up, so that I could feel more love for Jesus as my Savior and know the joy of a sinner saved by grace.

In the early 1990's I started attending a church where a different understanding of God's grace was preached. I heard that only Jesus was perfectly righteous and that he had fulfilled all the law of God on my behalf. Jesus had died to pay for my sins, but he also offered me his record of righteousness as my record before God. I didn't have to be perfect; I could receive Christ's righteousness as a gift by faith. I began to see that the perfection I was working for was self-righteousness. I was attempting to be my own savior through my works. I became convicted that all the righteousness I created for myself was filthy rags before God and had a stench to it before Him and before others. I wanted the glory that belonged to God for myself. Someone pointed out to me how God was jealous for his glory declaring "I will not share my glory with another!" I was a sinner after all!

As I began to trust Jesus to be my righteousness by faith, I could take looks into my heart and see the vistas of sin I had previously been too blind to see – judgment, contempt, disrespect. I didn't truly love people, I used them to make myself feel better. I needed a big Savior. The Holy Spirit has continued now over many years to convict me and show me the beauty of Jesus with his righteousness that covers me, so that my love for Him continues to grow. Having more recently suffered a number of losses – home, church, friends, job, husband, and the hope of timeless good health, I feel weaker in many ways, but Jesus is teaching me that He loves the weak and can even use me through my weakness, not my ability to perform and be "right!"

A favorite verse I'd like to share is Romans 4:5

"However, to the man who does not work, but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness."

To hear sermons and access past study guides visit www.wepc.org/resources/sermons-media-study-guide. Hear sermon audio for West End Presbyterian Church RVA on [Spotify](#) and [Apple Podcasts](#). Questions? Worship Arts Director, Becca Wethered, becca@wepc.org

Worship Study Guides during Lent 2025 are coordinated with the I AM Statements from the Gospel of John sermon series and the Lent 2025 Churchwide Devotional

