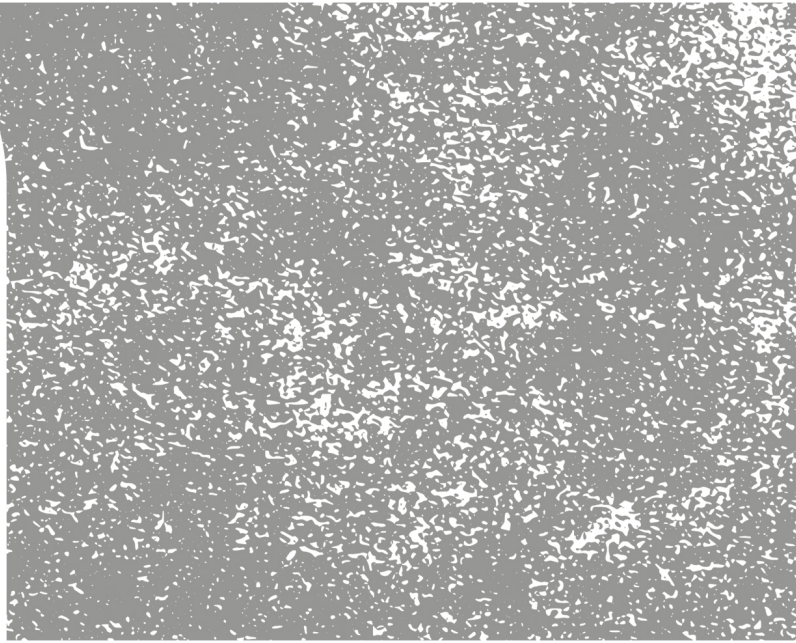




Groups



Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides! If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions beginning at the bottom of page 2.

NEW this year: These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders. As always, use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group. And of course, please continue to give us feedback.

LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE
for the Sermon given on March 5, 2023
by Pastor Bryan Wilkerson
"I AM the Gate" John 10:7-10

Question: Who was Jesus?

Bottom Line: If Jesus is the Gate, we're free to flourish in Him.

We are in week 4 of our series exploring the I AM statements of Jesus. Seven times in the gospel of John, Jesus very intentionally declares himself; assigning a NAME to his identity and mission. The premise of our series is that the better we understand who Jesus is, and why he came, and what his life was all about, the better we understand who we are, why we're here, and what our lives are all about.

Today, we're going to consider a fourth metaphor – another word picture that helps us understand Jesus and understand ourselves. This week Jesus will tell us that he is The Gate.

Let's begin in prayer before we begin reading and discussing our text.

Main Scripture Reading:

John 10:7-10

Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever 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. They will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full."

Group Discussion Questions

In the ancient world, the sheepfolds in the field typically had a circle of rocks or woven branches to discourage predators from attacking the sheep. During the night after the shepherd guides the sheep safely into the fold, the shepherd would sit or lay down right at the opening to keep sheep in and predators out.

Q – The gate provides **access**. Pastor Bryan expounds that the access is based on a **RELATIONSHIP** between the shepherd and the sheep. The relationship is what sets Christianity apart from other religions.

Pastor Bryan asks us to pause and ask ourselves, "have YOU had a personal encounter with Jesus?" Take a moment to briefly share how your relationship with Jesus began.

Q – The second thought Pastor Bryan shares is that a gate provides **security**. A gate provides protection and safety against predators, like wild animals or people.

Take a moment to reread the first part of John 10:10 together.

What comes to mind when you read "thieves and robbers?"

Are there areas in your life that feels robbed, killed, or destroyed?

Or do you see this happening for someone you know and love?

Now take time to read John 10:11 together.

How does the truth of knowing Jesus as the Good Shepherd offer hope?

Q – While the gate is designed to keep enemies out to protect the sheep, it is open to as many sheep who want to come in.

Are there other sheep God is putting in your heart?

How can we point them towards Jesus as the Gate?

At the end of the small group time, take a moment to lift the people by name for their salvation.

Q – The third point Pastor Bryan shares is a gate provides **freedom**. As Jesus mixes the two metaphors, describing Himself as the Good Shepherd and the Gate, there seems to be a connection with freedom and a flourishing life.

What does a life of freedom and flourishing in Christ look like?

Are you experiencing that kind of freedom?

What is the next step of action God is putting in your heart so you can take a step towards a flourishing life?

Homework Until Next Time:

Ask the members of your LG to complete the Discipleship Planning Tool and the GPS Assessment Tool before your next meeting. Here is some fresh language:

We're all on a journey; where is yours taking you?

The beauty of the way of Jesus is that it's not just good for us, it's good for the world around us. But that kind of beautiful life doesn't come from just hearing the words of Jesus; it comes from putting them into practice. Three kinds of practice, actually:

- The with-God life of our personal habits and routines;
- The with-others life of our genuine and life-changing relationships; and
- The for-the-world life that makes an impact beyond our immediate homes and families, into our communities and beyond.

Growing as disciples of Jesus will make a Kingdom difference in our world and a transformative difference in our lives as believers and as a group. And these resources are helpful in identifying the next steps for our journeys.

Support for the Leader (These Teaching Points are provided to help the group leader make connections from the message to their group with both insights from the Biblical text and also opportunities in the life of our church).

How to Use These Study Guides:

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another.
- You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
- Don't feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with, and see how the conversation flows.
- If your group meets over Zoom:
 - You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
 - Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.
- Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

Group Leader Support: Please reach out to your Campus Pastor or your Coach if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic. If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor Tim or Grace Lee from the Group Life team.