



WHO JESUS SAYS HE IS

The Gate and the Good Shepherd | Stephanie Fehr | March 19, 2023

Context

- John 7-8: Jesus participates in the Festival of Tabernacles
- John 9: Jesus heals a blind man
 - Blind people were ostracized
 - God prohibits the mistreatment of people who are blind (Deut. 27:18, Lev 19:14) and promises to give sight to the blind (Isa. 42)

John 9: healing the blind man

- The man's parents: "just ask our son... we don't know anything..." (vv.20-23)
- V. 27: "...Do you want to become his disciples too?"
- Pharisees: "God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from" (v.29)
- Who is the blind one now?
- They throw him out: ostracized
- Literal and spiritual blindness

John 10:1-10: "I am the gate"

- V.6: "figure of speech" - it's not a parable
- Traditional interpretation: whoever enters through Jesus will be saved (go to heaven)
 - However...
 - V.9: the sheep "will come in and go out..." - do you leave heaven?
 - V.9: "will be saved" - "will be kept safe" - ongoing care
 - V.10: "...life, and have it to the full." - abundant life

John 10:1-10: “I am the gate”

- Focused on relationship
 - They are his, they know his voice
- ch.11: story of Lazarus, call his name
- Ch.20: Mary, says her name
- when the gate is open, it is safe to go through; when the gate is closed, it is not safe to go through.
- Gate symbolizes care and ongoing abundance

John 10:1-10: “I am the gate”

“The man blind from birth is saved from isolation and marginalization. His healing saves him from everlasting darkness. Never again will he wonder where his next meal will be or who will answer his pleas as he sits outside the city. He will know the safety and sanctuary of community...”

John 10:1-10: “I am the gate”

“...That salvation in 10:9 is linked to the promise of pasture and protection (in and out of the sheep pen) suggests that the man born blind will know sustenance and security. For the disciples overhearing Jesus’ words, what is for the blind man is for every disciple, every believer. The basic needs of life, food, water, shelter, belonging, community, and intimacy Jesus affords...” Karoline M. Lewis, *John*

John 10:11-18: “I am the good shepherd”

- Foreshadows Christ’s death
- Significant cultural context of shepherds
 - Numbers 27:16-17: “May the Lord, the God who gives breath to all living things, appoint someone over this community 17 to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the Lord’s people will not be like sheep without a shepherd.”

John 10:11-18: “I am the good shepherd”

- Ezekiel 34: shepherds
 - V.2: “Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock?”
 - Vv.15-16: “I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down... I will shepherd the flock with justice.”
- John 10:16: “I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen...”
- the love of God is available to all

Luke 15: Parable of the Lost Sheep

- Jesus spending time with tax collectors and sinners
- In response to grumbling Pharisees
- Jesus consistently shows us that the way to love people is to draw them into community
- Reckless Love: Oh the overwhelming, never ending reckless love of God, Chases me down, fights till I'm found, leaves the ninety-nine, I couldn't earn it, I don't deserve it, still You give yourself away

Takeaway from the passage...

- meditate on the images and metaphors of Jesus as “the gate” and Jesus as “the good shepherd”
 - “The gate” – which emphasizes care and ongoing abundance, the symbol of abundant life.
 - “The good shepherd” – which emphasizes a love that is so great, it is reckless
- Breath Prayer:
Inhale: Good Shepherd,
Exhale: I'm in your care today.
- intentionally choose to love – especially people who have been ostracized or made to feel unlovable