

# I Am the Door

by Rev. Dr. John C. Tittle



*Ancient Doors Blue by Lee Anne La Forge*

## Prayer of Illumination

God, when we cross the truth,  
give us the awareness to receive it,  
the consciousness to recognize it,  
the presence to personalize it,  
the patience to preserve it,  
and the courage to live it.  
Amen.

## Background

To better understand our passage, a short primer on Ancient Middle Eastern Shepherding will be of service.

The shepherd would build a sheepfold for the sheep—usually made of low stone walls. The walls would be topped with thorny branches—kind of a precursor to barbed wire. This sheepfold would have one door or gate—an opening for the sheep to come in and come out. There would sometimes be situations where there wasn't a door for the opening. In those cases, the shepherd would act as a door—sleeping in front of the sheepfold entrance, keeping the sheep and the fold in and the wolves out.

*Let's hear now the Word of the Lord from...*

### **Scripture: John 10:7-10 (RSV)**

<sup>7</sup> So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not heed them. <sup>9</sup> I am the door; if anyone enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

*The grass withers and the flower fades,  
but the Word of God endures forever.*

### **SERMON – "I Am the Door"**

If your life were a door, what kind of door would it be?

- *A French door?* Maybe God is clearly calling you to walk on through those wide-open doors into something new?
- *A Doggie Door?* Maybe you're coming into the sanctuary this morning humbled, kind of crawling on all fours through the small flapping doggie door—barely making it through?
- *A Revolving Door?* Maybe you feel like you're not getting anywhere, just going around in circles and not making it into the room you want to be in?
- *A Prison Door?* Maybe there's a door, but it is slammed shut and the key is with the jailor and you ain't goin' anywhere.
- *A Fire Escape Door?* Maybe you're trying to get out of a building that's on fire.

Maybe it's a totally different kind of door.

*What kind of door are you?* Or to think of it another way, if the door of your life had a sign on it, what would it read?

- Do not disturb
- Welcome, come on in!
- Enter at your own risk
- Out to lunch
- Closed
- Open for business

*What does the door of your life say?*

Doors have a way of grabbing our attention. One of the things in literature I love are magical doors. **Lucy** stepping into the wardrobe that leads to Narnia. **Frodo** and his fellowship in the Lord of the Rings coming to the Western Door that gives access to the Mines of Moria. The enchanted door will only open to those who know the secret password engraved upon it with these elven words: *Speak, friend, and enter.*

**Alice**, after going down the rabbit hole, drinks a potion to shrink herself down to get into the door to Wonderland. **Harry Potter** encounters all kinds of magical doors: the door to the Chamber of Secrets, the door to the Vanishing Cabinet, the door to the Room of Requirement, disappearing doors, walls turning into doors, and fireplace portals.

We love crossing thresholds into new worlds, leaving behind our mundane lives and stepping into magical lands. Entering that door is a way for us to break on through to the other side, to a life of wonder, adventure, challenge, and purpose.

Doors involve leaving the old and entering the new:

- The sacred and the secular
- The internal and external
- The seen and the unseen
- What is and what can be
- The past and the future

Jesus says in our passage in John's gospel, "*I am the door.*" I like that metaphor. Jesus is saying that the Holy One is a doorway of divinity, an entryway into the abundant life and green pastures.

Finding the right door is not always easy in the hallway of life. But when it has opened for us and we walk through, life is never the same. It can be a little scary to cross that threshold, but spiritual growth and transformation require uncertainty, loss, and sacrifice. As we walk through the door there are no guarantees. Questions remain. But faith demands a willingness to give up control and to live with some ambiguity as we step into the unknown. We have to train our spiritual ears to distinguish Christ's voice from other voices that wish to do us harm. It takes faith and courage.

*Have you ever noticed what is regularly found at the doorways and entrances of ancient temples, buildings, and cathedrals?*

Gargoyles, lions, dragons, winged bulls. Joseph Campbell writes that these intimidating creatures are the guardians of the threshold. They make it daunting to go through. You have to exercise spiritual energy and commitment to walk through those doors. The faint-hearted may decide to not even enter at all. These symbolic creatures remind us we have to acknowledge and wrestle with our inner demons and fears if we're to enter into new places.

But if Christ is the door and the gate, we know that he's with us in the crossing through. He tells us, *"be not afraid."* He's protecting our going in and our going out. We're free to shed our false perceptions. We let go of our clutched safety blankets and the crutches we've been leaning on.

It's a spiritual principle that we can't move forward unless we're willing to leave something behind. Faith recognizes when the time is right and the door is open, that we need to not linger at the threshold. When it's finally time to act, we boldly step through the entryway to the abundant life awaiting us.

When we see Jesus as the Door, we have eyes to see the mystery, the wonder, and the change he can bring. He becomes for us the entry point to the abundant life—or as John says earlier, *"from his fullness we have all received"* (1:16).

Reframing Jesus as The Door is so important, especially when we're physically, emotionally, or spiritually hitting the wall. We go to Jesus who is that opening for a breakthrough. We're reminded to not only go to him, but to go through him. Not around Jesus or over Jesus, but to enter through the door. *"I am the door."*

Jesus has an open door policy to us, his sheep. He's the open door to new pastures. He's that door flung open wide to a new and living way that's different from what others are offering. His way isn't through selfishness, abuse, or intimidation. His way is a way of peace, protection, and love. He's our entrance to the Garden of God.

But there are times Jesus is a closed door. We don't close the door, but he does. We don't own or possess Jesus. He isn't our door, he is The Door, not a dividing wall. Jesus didn't say I am The Wall. Jesus is a closed door to thieves and robbers who don't have our best interests at heart. Thieves and robbers are denied access—not to Jesus, but they're denied access to the sheep that they seek to fleece and slaughter. Like the big bad wolf, those with selfish motivations come before Jesus huffing and puffing to blow the house down of the three little sheep. And Jesus, our protector says "heaven no." You've got to go through me first before you can get to my sheep. Jesus is not only The Door, he is the Good Shepherd and the Guardian of our souls, looking out for us.

**Jesus, The Door** provides boundaries for us:

- **Protection.** These are seasons of secluding and cloistering, getting smaller. Those are times of coming into the fold.
- Jesus also provides **Pasture.** These are seasons of expansion and freedom—getting bigger. Times of going out and exploring.

We need both protection and pasture.

Boundaries are like a fence with a swinging gate. Jesus knows when to call us in to protect us from outside harm. But this pen or sheepfold isn't a fortress or a prison. It also allows us to find pasture—set free to enjoy wide open spaces and green pastures. *"If the Son has set you free, you*

*will be free indeed.*" We can come and go, without fear. We can live our lives with courage and vitality. This is real life.

The abundant life Jesus offers isn't just for a heavenly afterlife. It's a present gift for us to enjoy and experience and extend to others. It's a quality of life for us to enter into now—participating in the abundance of God, fellowship with God and others—enjoying the fullness of love, joy, and peace. The abundant life is not just existing, but participation in the preciousness of the gift of life as it's meant to be, with body, mind, and spirit. Real life is the anticipation, the blessings of what is yet to come on the other side. It is *salvation*.

Jesus is the doorway to a meaningful life, to our flourishing—imparting to us security, sufficiency, significance, agency, and the power to press on. He's the passage and portal to transformation, where we die to our old self and awaken to the new creation we are in Christ. It's good news, not bad news. Christ uniquely brings life, rather than taking it from us.

Sometimes we look behind other doors, thinking they'll give us what we're really looking for.

- The Door of Philosophy
- The Door of Possessions
- The Door of Power
- The Door of Pleasure
- The Door of Production

But they only lead down confusing corridors and empty rooms. And we feel empty.

The correct door is always Christ. There are many ways we can enter through the door of Christ:

- A profession of love
- A heartfelt prayer
- A sudden realization
- A sense of peace in a difficult time
- A door of opportunity to seize
- A book or movie that speaks to us powerfully
- A life-altering conversation
- A resolution to change a bad habit or unhealthy relationship patterns
- Or the courage to face a daunting challenge

Stepping out in faith and walking through doors leads us to a deeper and more focused understanding of ourselves and what God is calling us to do.

Crossing the threshold of Christ is a doorway to growth and change, to be more fully who you really are, to no longer live in the past or be defined by coulds and should, oughts and musts.

To walk through the door of Christ is to walk away from a life of regret. Approach Christ with confidence in your heart and walk through into his new and living way.

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Let's pray—

*Jesus, you are not only The Door, but you are the Guardian of the Threshold. Protect and support me in the unlit hallways of life and in waiting rooms. Your love and presence are stronger than my fear. Thank you for delivering me from evil. Your hope is greater than my doubt. Jesus, thank you for all the possibility and abundant life you open up for us. Give us the courage to walk in it. Receive once again my life, my time, my resources for your service and your kingdom.*

Amen

Sermon Art: *Ancient Doors Blue* by [Lee Anne La Forge](#)

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