



WEEK 4

## I Am the Gate for my sheep

*Matthew 7:13-16a, John 10:7-10*

### OPEN

This is our fourth week of our series called "I Am" where we will be exploring the 7 "I Am" statements of Jesus throughout the gospel of John. As we have been learning, John is using these "I Am" statements to answer the question **"who is Jesus?"**. We have learned how Jesus is the *bread* of life, the *light* of the world, and the *good shepherd*. This week we will learn how Jesus is the **gate for his sheep**. Each of these statements not only teach us about Jesus' true identity, but describe the type of relationship he desires to have with us. As you hear the "I Am" statements of Jesus hear them as an invitation to not simply know who Jesus is but to receive the purposes he has for our lives.

### READ

- **Read Matthew 7:13-20**
  - Jesus is contrasting two ways. One that leads to destruction and one that leads to life. Why do you think that the way to eternal life (through Jesus) is hard to find and follow? Why do people prefer the broad road and wide gate?
  - Jesus describes the way to life as both a door and a path. How is following Jesus both these things? What happens when we reduce Christianity to just one of these things (only a door or path)? *Jesus invites us through him as the door and to walk with him on the path of discipleship.*
- **Read John 10:1-10** *CONTEXT: There were two types of sheep pens, city pens and country pens. City pens were shared by shepherds with different flocks. Shepherds would call their own sheep and lead them to pasture. Country pens were simple and had no doors. The shepherd had to lie in the opening to protect the sheep.*
  - How can we know the voice of Jesus the good shepherd?
  - How is Jesus like a shepherd whose own life/body is our gate?

### REFLECT

- Jesus refers to his followers as sheep who need a shepherd. Sheep easily get lost, have poor instincts, are defenceless and blindly follow even to their death. Even water can be trouble for sheep since they can easily drown and *won't drink from moving water*.
  - Read Psalm 23 as a group. Understanding the nature of sheep how are these words new to you? How does the fact that God leads us beside **quiet waters** encourage you?
  - Jesus warns against others who do not enter by the gate. Looking again at Matthew 7:13-20 how do we know who in the sheep pen are true disciples or false prophets? (see Galatians 5:19-26) How do we ensure we are not scattering the flock ourselves?
- Read again John 10:9-10. When did you "enter through Jesus *the gate*" and find salvation? How has Jesus provided for you, giving you life to the full? Share about that.

### APPLY/PRAY

**Read the prayer by Thomas Merton (read it more than once).**

My Lord God,  
I have no idea where I am going.  
I do not see the road ahead of me.  
I cannot know for certain where it will end.  
nor do I really know myself,  
and the fact that I think I am following your will  
does not mean that I am actually doing so.  
But I believe that the desire to please you  
does in fact please you.  
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.  
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.  
And I know that if I do this *you will lead me by the right road,*  
though I may know nothing about it.  
Therefore will I trust you always though  
I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.  
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,  
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

- What part of this prayer resonates with you? How does it relate to Jesus being our shepherd?
- What do you need from Jesus this week? Pray that for each other.

