

Christ the Door

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Doors, we have them everywhere. We have them in our homes, we have them in our stores on our cars. They even are in our idioms, and in our literature. All doors take you from one place to another. They are the portal that takes you from one realm to another. I know it's obvious, but doors that are closed to you bar you from entrance. In the parable of the 10 virgins you hear about the door closing. 10 And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. 11 Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' 12 But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.'

Having the door closed on you. How scary and frightening that is. To have the Lord say "Truly, I say to you, I do not know you." What is this? This is the unforgivable sin of rejecting what Christ has done for you. To deny that is to have the door closed on you. To say that you have to add to what He has done for you. If you don't think what He has done for you isn't enough then that door is closing on you.

Christ calls Himself the Door. "I AM" the door. He is the door in which you pass. He is the only door in which you pass. Through Him you pass from death into life. You go from exile to family. You go from cursed to blessed. This is what you receive in Christ's death and resurrection. This is still Easter season and Christ being the door in which forgiveness, salvation and eternal life are given is the focus. His resurrection solidifies the fact that He has opened the way for mankind to leave the slavery of sin to a land flowing with milk and honey, a place where there is no want because He has given us His kingdom.

What does Christ say to Nicodemus? "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered,

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ So you must be born again and you must enter through the gate as the gospel says I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. Both point to what we all see as the door into the body of Christ. Baptism. Baptism in which the baptized is united with Christ in His death and brought into new life with His resurrection. Baptism, God’s Word united with water is what ushers dry bones into sons and daughters of Christ. Forgiveness and eternal life are through baptism. Christ, the door, opens it, but it is only through Christ that anyone can enter. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

This gospel is referencing baptism and its benefits. You all have entered the gate of Christ through your baptism. You have been transformed. You are robed in Christ’s righteousness and have been washed in regeneration and renewed with His Holy Spirit. This peace and assurance you have right now. You are His sheep! You ... are His ... Sheep. This means now and ever since your baptism He has been your Shepherd. He has gone before you. He maintained perfect obedience and He faced the wrath of God so that you could come after Him. So you could follow in His footsteps. His obedience is your obedience by faith in Him. Your sins are paid for by having faith that He paid for them once and for all on the cross. Everything Christ did and everything He still does is to protect His sheep, to protect you. Is this not what you receive in your baptism?

The gospel also says that “The sheep hear His voice.” Where do you hear the voice of God, but in His Word. Every Sunday, you hear the Word, you hear Christ and what He has done for you. Being in the Word teaches you who Jesus is, it teaches you the faithfulness of God, it teaches you His love for His people. It teaches you that you were bought with something more precious than gold or silver, but by the blood of Christ. Hearing the Word you learn His commandments, you learn who He is in the Creed, you learn how to talk to Him in the Lord’s Prayer, you learn the promises He has given you in the Sacraments and the Office of the Keys. Being the Word helps you discern what is of God and what is not.

You hear His voice and know it. Not by your will do you hear His voice, not by your strength do you hear His voice, not by your intellect do you hear His voice, but because He has given you the Holy Spirit. His Spirit resides in you and through His Spirit He teaches you, He guides you, He advocates for you. You having His Spirit, the third person of the trinity, the Spirit knows and is well acquainted with the other two persons. You know His voice, because His Spirit knows His voice. You learn and master His Word, because the Spirit knows His Word. What a great gift you are given to have the Spirit of God with you given to you in your baptism. His Spirit resides within you now and always. Romans 8 is a great text to show what life in Spirit is like.

You knowing His voice, discernment given to you by the Holy Spirit, you are able to discern false teachings. For example, if I said as a Christian if you truly are a Christian must go out and witness to other people or your salvation is in question. Or if I said to truly show your repentance and receive His forgiveness you must read His Word everyday. Hopefully, as I said those things you felt that it sat wrong, it brought agitation to your ears. For that is of the devil, can you add to Christ's deed? Can you add to what Christ has already accomplished on the cross? The answer is a most resounding "No!". Anyone saying that works must be included so that your salvation is guaranteed are those strangers we hear of in the Gospel. What do the sheep do, but flee from them. These voices of strangers are false teachings and false doctrines. They are spewed to entice and pull the sheep away from the shepherd, but again you know that sheep know His voice. The Word of God is what the church is founded on. Christ is what the church is founded on. All of scripture and all of God's promises hinge on what Christ did on the cross. His death for the forgiveness of sins, His resurrection for the guarantee of eternal life is what all scripture point to. It is what your faith is based upon and any other teachers are those strangers. Again, the promise Christ gives you in your baptism is assurance that you can go forth with confidence that you are saved.

Baptism is God's promise to you that daily renews you. It reminds you that you are His sheep and that He is your shepherd. Your baptism reminds you that He has already taken you through Himself, the door, He

has brought you from death to life, He has taken you from exile to child of God. He has taken you into His death on the cross and into His resurrection on that Easter morning. When you proclaim Jesus Risen during this Easter season. You proclaim that you have been saved and you have eternal life. You proclaim that He has paid for your sins.

Christ is alive! The Door still is bringing people into His fold. He is still the Shepherd that watches over this church, and still watches over you. The resurrected Lord still strengthens you and feeds you. What does the gospel say? That anyone who enters by Christ will be saved and find pasture. Here Christ shows that He is alive here at this altar in which you receive His living flesh, and His life giving blood. He feeds you, He feeds His sheep and reminds you again that He cares for you. You hear His voice in the Words of institution. You receive His gifts in it. You receive that same forgiveness you received in your baptism, you are renewed just like you are renewed in your baptism. He the door, He the Good Shepherd always looks after and will continue to look after you from the time of His death on the cross to eternity. Alleluia Christ is Risen!

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