

The Door
John 10:7-10
April 25, 2021

We go through many doors each and every day. When you open a door, you are leaving one place to enter into another place. Every exit is an entrance to a new place, new experience, new opportunity, and new life. Each door we open and close will lead to different opportunities and experiences; and all the doors we choose will ultimately determine our destiny. Doors of education, jobs, career, relationships, marriage, will lead us to a certain path and will eventually determine our future. Your life, to this point, is simply the sum of all the doors you have chosen to walk through.

Every person is seeking security, significance and satisfaction. Every person on this planet makes a decision each and every day. Every decision we make leads to a specific life experience. What we do each day, what we read, what we listen to, even what we eat and drink will have significant impact on our present and future, and every decision we make is for our security, significance and satisfaction.

With the Coronavirus, the world leaders are talking about the possibility of having the “Great Reset” of capitalism. The basic idea is to destroy free-market capitalism and moving toward socialism. This may be the most ambitious and radical plan to transform this world. This will affect every industry and every part of our lives.¹ Although we are not sure exactly what the world will look like once the “Reset” actually happens, it seems like we are heading toward a different world than what we are used to. Life is already overly complicated and extremely unpredictable as it is without the Great Reset. With the Fourth Industrial Revolution, our world is already changing too fast, much faster than we can cope with. All the automation, greater dependence on artificial intelligence (AI), machine to machine communication, internet of thing, collaborative smart cities such as the Austrian city of Vienna, the world is changing faster than we can handle. I am sure the focus of all these is to make our lives more comfortable but for a person like me, who is somewhat technically challenged, all this is scary. All these changes that are coming are more than enough to make our lives insecure, let alone adding the Great Reset. All of these are more than enough to heighten our sense of insecurity and uncertainty.

So let me ask you. Do you feel you are secure? Do you feel that you are ready for all these changes? Apart from all these we have our own personal issues,

¹ [Introducing the 'Great Reset,' world leaders' radical plan to transform the economy \(msn.com\)](https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/economy/story/news-2020-04-28-introducing-the-great-reset-world-leaders-radical-plan-to-transform-the-economy)

societal issues, denominational issues, etc. So, do you feel confident in where you are heading, as an individual, as a church, as a denomination, and as a nation? Do you feel that you have significance in this fast-changing world? Do you feel that you are positively contributing to things that really matter in this world? Are you making a difference in this world? Are you content with your life? Are you satisfied?

How will you find security, significance and satisfaction?

Jesus says, “I am the door of the sheep...If anyone enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture...I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

In Israel, there were two kinds of sheepfolds. In the villages or towns, there were communal sheepfolds where all the owners of sheep put their flocks together in place and sheltered them. The owners of the sheep would pool their resources and hire someone to guard their sheep overnight. These sheep were protected by a strong gate. Only one person had the key to the gate, and that person was the one who was hired by the sheep owners.

The other kind of sheepfold was out on the hills and away from any village. During the warm season, the shepherds kept the sheep on the hills or in the fields and did not return to the villages for weeks at a time. At night, they would keep the sheep in those sheepfolds on the hills.

Those sheepfolds were a walled enclosure with no roof. The shape of it was either rectangular or circular. The walls were about 3-4 feet high and made of rocks. It had a small opening about 4 feet wide. The sheep would enter into the sheepfold through that opening. Then the shepherd would lie down in front of that opening. He literally became the door of the sheepfold. Nothing could go in or out unless the shepherd allowed it. That is what Jesus is talking about here.

“I am the door (gate) of the sheep...If anyone enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”

As the door of the sheep, the shepherd provides security and protection. Whether the sheep realize it or not, the shepherd protects them with his life. The sheep are his possession and his asset, so the shepherd would protect them with his life.

What Jesus promises is that through him we may find values in life which will enable us to have satisfying, fulfilling, and meaningful lives.

When we talk about security what do we usually mean? Safety? Worry free? Yes, that is what security means. This could include financial security, political security, public security, cybersecurity, health security, home security and others. In order to have a satisfying life we need all of that. The question is who provides all of that? Who can provide us worry-free security and assurance? Government? Police? Financial investment? Your doctors? Security companies? Cybersecurity services? There is no one who can provide all of that.

Life is insecure. Living assumes risk. Accidents happen. Crimes happen. Life is unpredictable. Perhaps this is the reason why we put so much emphasis on financial security. We think the more we have, the better we will protect ourselves; the more we have, the more secured we will be. This is true to a certain degree. If you don't have financial strength, your life will be very difficult. You may not be able to provide for yourself. This probably is one of the reasons for being greedy.

Leo Tolstoy once wrote a story about a farmer who wanted to have more of everything. One day this farmer received an unusual offer. For 1000 rubles, he could buy all the land he could walk about in a day. The only catch in the deal was that he had to be back at his starting point by sundown.

Early the next morning he started out walking at a fast pace. By noon, he was very tired. But he kept going, covering more and more ground. Late in the afternoon he realized that his greed had taken him far from the starting point. So, he turned around and quickened his pace. As the sun began to sink, he started to run. He did not want to lose this golden opportunity. If he did not make it back by sundown the opportunity to own that huge land would be lost.

He was running as fast as he could. When he could see the finish line, the sun had already touched the horizon. He only had a few minutes to reach the finish line. He ran as fast as he could. He used all his energy to keep on running, gasping for air. His heart was pumping so fast that he could hardly breathe. As he was crossing the finish line he collapsed, blood streaming from his mouth. He couldn't move. In a few minutes he was dead. When he died, his servants dug a grave. The size of the grave was about 6 feet by 3 feet. The title of the Tolstoy's story was: "How Much Land Does a Man Need?"²

² Adapted from Bits & Pieces, November, 1991.

Tolstoy's point is that ultimately, we only need a small piece of land, six feet by three feet. But then, if we choose to be cremated, we don't even need that.

Putting our trust in materialism doesn't bring us an ultimate security.

A biblical scholar William Barclay gives a unique perspective about what Matthew had gained and lost as a result of following Jesus. As you probably know Matthew was a tax collector. Before Jesus' days, the Roman government sold the right to collect taxes in some areas by auctions. The people who bought that right became tax collectors. These tax collectors were responsible to the Roman government for a specific amount, the amount they and the Roman government both agreed upon. Anything the tax collectors could raise above and beyond that amount belonged to the tax collectors. Obviously, this allowed for a tremendous abuse. The general public did not know how much to pay. They were at the mercy of the tax collectors. Whatever was demanded was what they had to pay. As a result, many tax collectors became very rich but because of the serious abuses with this system, it was stopped; and a new system was introduced. Even so, a significant amount of abuse still happened in Jesus' days, and the tax collectors were still very wealthy.

So, when Jesus called Matthew to follow him, he had to make a decision whether to give up his comfortable life as a tax collector. William Barclay says as a result of Matthew becoming Jesus' disciple: "He lost a comfortable job, but found a destiny. He lost a good income, but found honor. He lost a comfortable security, but found an adventure the like of which he had never dreamed. It may be that if we accept the challenge of Christ, we shall find ourselves poorer in material things. It may be that the worldly ambitions will have to go but beyond doubt we will find a peace and a joy and a thrill in life that we never knew before. In Jesus Christ, a man finds a wealth beyond anything that he may have to abandon for the sake of Christ."³

So, while the world leaders talk about the possibility of the "Great Reset" and lead the world toward it, our Lord says to us, "Come to me, all who are weary and tired, and I will give you rest."⁴ "I have come that you may have life and have it abundantly"⁵ beyond material things and worldly comforts. You will have meaning and purpose, and true satisfaction in life.

³ Ibid., p. 331.

⁴ Matthew 11:28.

⁵ John 10:10b.