

Easter 2019
The Door
Pastor Mike Fabarez

Well, I rarely have the police show up at my front door, at least not on official business. But a few years back I had two uniform deputy sheriffs show up at my front door, knocked on the door, I answered it, I thought, "Oh no." And they said, "We have a complaint from one of your neighbors." I thought, oh great. Good Neighbor Pastor Mike getting complaints from his neighbors. They said, and my mind is just racing right now, what have I done, what have I done? And as I'm just kind of coming up blank on all of that I thought what have my teenage boys done? I figured, you know, that probably the right question to ask. And sure enough, just as I was thinking that through, the deputy said, one of the deputies said, "Your neighbor has reported damage to his house being pelted by golf balls." I knew exactly what had happened. I invited him into the back yard. I said, "Can you come around and show me?" We have a backyard, a little bit elevated, it's got a little slope behind it, a street, and then there are houses down there. And both my boys on the golf team in high school, I constructed a net for them to hit their golf balls into in the backyard. I mean, it's a pretty big net. There it is. Hit the net and you're OK. And they said, "Yeah, it's that house right down there." I said, Listen, officers, I'll take care of this, I'm going to deal with it. Man, am I going to deal with this." I thought, we're going to deal with this. And so they laughed and they said that's all we want. Just make peace with your neighbors. I said, "Great." So, I was waiting for the scoundrels to get home who were, by the way, out golfing at the time. They come home and you know how that is. Right? Just dad's like I'm just ready to lay into these boys. I got two boys that, you know, they're just about a year and a half apart. And when you have kids that are that close and then dad finds out there's been a problem and confronts them and I get this a lot. Right? Because I said, "Alright, you know, I just had the sheriff's department here and they said that the house across the street right there has been pelted with golf balls. I mean, I constructed a net for you guys. We built this thing together. It's easy to hit. You guys are supposed to be good golfers and they've pelted the house, you've pelted the house. Which one of you did it?" They're like, you know, I couldn't get either one of them to admit it. So I don't really care at this point. I said, "You're marching down this hill, you're going down to that house, hat in hand, you're going to apologize, you're going to tell them you're going to pay for whatever damage was caused. You're going to make this thing right." And so they dutifully with their heads down march down the hill. And of course, I'm looking through the back-fence kind of watching. I want to see what's going to happen. And I got a little scared because they got down to the front porch and I'm kind of, you know, I can't, it's too far, I can't hear anything, I can't read lips from that distance and they go in the house. The guy invites them in and I'm just like what's happening down there? So I don't know. They stayed for a long time. I was about to call the deputies back, I thought they might have been in big trouble. So anyway, they come back up the hill and, you know, they promised to pay with their allowance and fix the thing. So I was so angry with my boys for this, you know, kind of giving me a bad reputation and us as, you know, the pastor's family in the neighborhood. I was not happy. And it took me a long time to even start sharing the story with people. But about a year later, you know, whenever neighbors would come up or you know something about golf or whatever, I would sometimes tell the story. And, you know, I was always mad that no one would admit that, you know, they did this. Well, I told the story to one of my colleagues here, my fellow pastor and he said, "Oh, that's interesting." He said, "Remember when you had me take your trash cans in when you guys were out of town? Yeah, I went in your backyard, noticed the clubs, noticed the balls,



tried to take a few shots into that net, but I didn't hit the net, kind of sprayed the ball across the street. I hope everything over there was OK. (from the audience) Who was it?" You'll have... you'll have to figure... you'll have to figure that one out (smile). But I wasn't happy.

Then I was so embarrassed that I had really held this against my boys for a year. I didn't tell them for another year (smile). Literally took me two years before I finally told the boys, I said, "Listen, you want to be mad at someone, his initials are Pastor Pete (smile). So... But it was good to make peace with my boys at that point. You know, I don't think they got a good laugh out of it, but at least everything was restored. It was good the cloud had lifted and it felt good that things were made right.

And in a way, I mean, that is what Easter is all about. Every year we celebrate, historically on this day, that God has made right what was wrong with human beings. Those of us who have repented of our sins and put our trust in Christ, we have the problem between us and God solved. It's a doctrine called reconciliation and we've been talking about that this weekend on Good Friday that there is a barrier removed and things are fixed. It's one thing when you're innocent, you know, falsely accused and this barrier is removed and this cloud is lifted. It's an entirely different kind of level of sweet and good when we're guilty and that cloud is lifted and that barrier is removed.

That is what Easter is all about, when we get right with the living God. And I'm telling you, Jesus tries to help us with parables in the Scripture and one of them that we read in our service here from John Chapter 10 helps us recognize what it's like to be rightly related to God. All the way back to the Old Testament this image of being a sheep in the fold of God and to have God as our shepherd. One of the most famous psalms, if not the most famous psalm, Psalm 23, "the Lord is my shepherd." To have that connection with a living God. And then in the New Testament in John Chapter 10 as we heard read to us, here is Jesus saying, "I am the Good Shepherd, I am that one." I'd like you to look at this passage, we read the whole text to you, but I'd like to look at verses 7 through 13 in particular, because if you listen carefully when the Scripture was read this morning you'll see that there are two things going on here in this passage.

He doesn't just simply say that he's the Good Shepherd, though he gets around to that in verse 11. He says it there, right there, "I am the Good Shepherd." But before that there's a twist on this analogy. And he says, "Listen, I'm not just the Good Shepherd." Let's start with this, "I'm the door. I'm the doorway to get into this sheepfold." Let's start in verse 7. It says, "So Jesus again said to them," this is John 10:7, follow along as I read it, "Truly, truly I say to you." Now we don't say that anymore, as the Greek word "amen" which we transliterate into the word we say at the end of our prayers, and some people, if they're very active in church, and I guess the preachers are really good, they shout it out when they're preaching. But it just... (smile). I'm not trying to say that you're a dud or anything, but it's just our cultural kind of chill, copacetic attitude that you never break into my sermons and say Amen. But anyway... I'm not asking for that, please. We don't have time. Right? We don't have time for you to interrupt me with Amen. And preachers even ask for it. They say, Amen? Right? So, I said we don't have time to interrupt me with Amen. Amen? That's what they say, and they expect you to say something, and that's not even working and we're moving on.

I did preach in Santa Ana once, it was this great, I don't know, a conference or something. This has nothing to do with anything at this point but, they were so active. I had like, you know, I preach a long time, I'm sorry if you're visiting, I do. We try to make it so it doesn't feel that long but it's feeling longer right now the more I speak. But the idea of preaching, I had it like a 40-minute message prepared and, I mean, I could speak about 20 minutes of the material because they interrupted me the whole night. But it was kind of fun I must say.

Anyway, so Jesus is saying, "Truly, truly," which are the Greek words Amen, Amen, which again we don't say anything like that in that context but basically Jesus is saying listen up. He said that twice in this passage. Up in verse 1, he says, "Truly, truly, I say to you," this is super important, you've got to get this. "Listen up, man," that might be a good, you know, vernacular for that today. He says, "I say to you, I am the door of the sheep." Now look back up at verses 1 and 2 here. He's saying "The one who doesn't enter the sheepfold by the door." So he's already brought this idea up, look at verse 2, "He who enters by the door is the shepherd." So there's this concept of a pen, which in the ancient world they would set up at night, these pens, these kinds of corrals for the sheep, and while they'd go out during the day and they'd find places to eat and pasture and the shepherd would lead them out, they'd bring them in at night and they would put them in this pen. They would put like thorns around the top, like the crown of thorns that Jesus wore, they would put those around the top of that stone wall and there'd be a little portal, a little gateway, a little place for you to walk through, and then this kind of the ancient version of barbed wire on the top of the stone. That would be that the pen, the place where they would stay and they'd be protected.

And there was a way to get in there. Even the ancient world talks about the shepherds would even lay down and sleep in the doorway, so if there was a wolf or there was something that was going to attack the sheep, he would be the gateway, the doorway to the sheep pen. That's the picture here and he's talking about there are people trying to lead these sheep and they're climbing over the fence and those are not the Good Shepherd. Those are bad shepherds. Now he's going to say in verse 11, I am the Good Shepherd, but now he's saying, "I'm the door to the sheep." You want to get into this pen you got to go through the door. "All who came before me," verse 8, he says, "they're thieves and they're robbers."

Jesus has no problem being very definitive, very, you know, dichotomizing people saying, listen, there's good and there's bad. And he's going to say, "I'm the Good Shepherd and there are lots of bad shepherds out there, they're thieves and robbers, and the sheep," by the way, the real sheep, those that really know God, "they don't listen to them." And again, verse 9, "I am the door." I'm the gateway. I'm the portal, I'm the way to get in. "If anyone enters by me," you want to be in this pen, "you'll be saved and you'll go in and out and find pasture." That great picture of what it is to have the shepherd, a good relationship with the shepherd. You go out, you find pasture, you come in, you have safety.

"The thief," now back to this theme of verse 10 says, "the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they might have life and have it abundantly." Now he's going to say, "I am the Good Shepherd," I am the Good Shepherd, verse 11. "The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, well he sees the wolf coming, leaves the sheep and flees, the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep."

So again, the picture of wanting to be rightly related to God, which of course certainly requires and demands that the life of the shepherd is laid down. Right? And we'll talk about that, but the idea being rightly related to the shepherd, we got to make sure we pick the right shepherd. That's very important here in verses 7 and 8. I just want to just think about the importance of shepherd when it comes to sheep.

Now, let's think just through those first two verses where Jesus is saying, "I'm the door to the sheep," and here's the deal, you are the sheep. We may wonder who the gate is and who the shepherd is and there are good shepherds and bad shepherds, but there's no really confusing that we're supposed to be the sheep, the people, the people who are looking for leadership.

Now, if you're looking for some boost for your ego or your self-esteem, you're not going to get it with this analogy, even though we're all city folk, we don't much understand the whole concept of sheep. Most of us don't at least. You know that the thing about sheep is they're not tigers, they're not leopards, they're not, you know, not even kangaroos or dolphins, they're just dumb sheep. They're defenseless, they don't have fangs, they don't, you know, they can't fight, they can't defend themselves. They need leadership, they're dumb, they follow, you know, whoever's in front of them, all kinds of stories about them following other sheep off the cliffs and dying. There's a lot of just real built-in, I don't know, humility when you think about the fact that Jesus is saying we're sheep, which is we need leadership. And more than that, the inclination of sheep is just to go wherever their nose wants to take them, they just wander. Now think back to so many biblical concepts and Scriptures that I'm sure you've heard and you know about sheep and they stray. Right? Isaiah 53 talks about the fact that we all are like sheep. And Paul reiterates this in Romans. He says we've all gone astray, each has turned to his own way. Here's theologically the connection to us, every one of us, every one of us, like sheep, we wander around and do whatever we want.

Now the real concern here, if you look back up to the context, verses 1 and 2, you've got people who are wanting to lead the sheep. And really, if you want the best context, you look up in Chapter 9 because if it says, "Truly, I say to you," the question is who is "you." That's a plural "you." In the south they'd say y'all. "I say to you all." Who's he talking to? There really is no break between Chapter 9 and 10 in the flow of the context. You've got these Pharisees who had just kicked this blind man who had been healed by Christ, out of their environs there, out of the place where they were teaching and leading, and the Pharisees were mad about the fact that Christ was coming on the scene and saying that the Pharisees had something wrong with them and they needed to get right with Christ. They said, "Are you calling us blind?" Jesus said, if you were blind, if you knew you're blind, if you say that you're blind, then you would be seeing. But the problem is you can't admit that you have a problem.

And so now he turns to speak of those leaders. He turns to speak of these people who are looking at these leaders saying, "There are a lot of people who want to get in the sheepfold," they want to lead the people and they "climb in through another way. They don't go," as it's going to say, "through me." And he says "they're robbers and they're thieves." "Whoever enters by the door," verse 2, "is the shepherd of the sheep. And to him the gatekeeper opens." Well, he's the gatekeeper, as he's about to say in verses 7 and following, and "the sheep hear his voice, and he calls to his own sheep by name and leads them out." Now, right here we're not talking about Christ being the shepherd, we're talking about other people being teachers, true teachers. Matter of fact, if you want to get a verse down to where we know that not every

single person who came before and tried to lead the people of God were bad, you might want to jot down Ezekiel. Ezekiel... Well, look through the entire book would be good. Get it in the book and you'll find it. No. How about Jeremiah? Would that be better? That would be better if you looked in Jeremiah for the verse I'm thinking of, Jeremiah Chapter 3 verse 15 (smile). Pastor should have their sermons polished by Easter morning. Right? They should have it down pat. They should know that if you get to look at a passage in Jeremiah that you shouldn't mention Ezekiel. But if you're taking notes, scratch out Ezekiel and put Jeremiah Chapter 3 verse 15.

Because so often in Jeremiah here is what's happening. Jesus is saying you got a lot of bad shepherds out there and he defines them as feeding themselves, but here's what he says in verse 15, "I'm going to give you shepherds after my own heart, and they will feed you," it says, "with knowledge and understanding." And certainly Moses and Isaiah and Daniel and Ezekiel, there are lots of great prophets who fed the people with wisdom and understanding, knowledge and understanding. But then there's a lot of bad ones like Pharisees and the Sadducees and the scribes. There were great ones, even in that day, like John the Baptist who Jesus hailed as the greatest prophet of all, save himself, of course, besides himself.

But the reality is you got to be careful who you choose to lead you. Why? Because we all have, like sheep, a tendency to want to go in the direction that we feel like we should go. And the Bible says in Second Timothy Chapter 4, we're going to find teachers who are going to suit our desires. If we want to go this way, guess what? There's always a shepherd who will take you in that direction. If I want to do this and think this is important, if I want to go here and think this is right, if I want to go there and have some sense that this is the best way and God approves it, there's always going to be teachers. You can align yourself under whatever teacher you want because there will be teachers and we'll accumulate teachers for ourselves to suit our own desires, our own passions. And so you got to be careful.

Basically, the lesson here at the beginning of the chapter, based on the bad experience that took place in Chapter 9, is that you better be careful about the leaders who you choose. Now, Christ is the ultimate leader and here's how Peter put it. He is the chief shepherd. What you're going to look for, because all of us are going to have leaders in our lives, you going to look for an under-shepherd, an under-shepherd who's going to point to the chief shepherd and make sure that they see that their job is simply to connect you with Christ. That's the picture in the Bible.

You can see throughout church history or even just throughout political history or philosophical history or educational history, there are a lot of people who say, "No, this is about me." That's what the Pharisees were all about. "This is about you following me." And whenever there was a hint of that natural connection between sheep and shepherd and the person wasn't, you know, seeing this as a conduit to connect with the living God, to be the good shepherd in their lives, then Jesus would say things like this: "You got to fix this." When they were saying in Corinth, I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollos, I'm of Peter, he says, "Stop that. We're nothing." The teachers of real Christianity are really not the point. Right? We can all be replaced. We're not that important. We're not claiming like so many others have, like Joseph Smith, or even the popes of the Catholic Church or Mary Baker Eddy or whoever it might be who becomes this leader who says, you know, or even outside of Christianity, the Dali Lama or



Buddha or Krishna or Muhammad saying, "Listen to me, I am the key person and you need to follow me." See, Christian leaders should never do that.

Christian leaders are under-shepherds. They're just trying to connect you to Christ. They're trying to say, "This is not about my following, this is not about me trying to benefit off of you, it's not about me being, you know, materially profited or my ego stroked by this, this is about me just trying to connect you with a living God." That's what real leaders should do. And the Pharisees weren't doing that. Matter of fact, they're saying they're just thieves and robbers and ultimately, verse 10, they just come and they're stealing from you. Right?

And they ultimately, for your spiritual life, they kill you and they destroy you. They're not doing you any good. And really, it's people who we want to teach us things that we feel like are part of where we want to go. We accumulate leaders who we follow who meet the desires that we want. If we think material things are important, there are plenty of teachers who will take you in that direction. You think intellectual prowess is important? We got plenty of teachers who will take you that direction. If we think, you know, political activism is right? You got plenty of teachers who are going to take you in that direction.

But we need to find teachers like John the Baptist, who Jesus said is the greatest. And when John the Baptist was confronted by people who said, "Wow, we're all about you John the Baptist." And they asked him this question: "Are you the anointed one? Are you the Messiah? Are you the Christ?" He gave an illustration and it's a good one. It's a really good one. As a matter of fact, as a pastor who's officiated many weddings, I mean, I really appreciate the illustration that he gives.

He gives the illustration of when you're at a wedding and you're a groomsman, the job of the groomsman is really to try and make sure that the attention is on the groom and that the bride is connecting to the groom and that's all the groomsman cares about. And officiating weddings, I've done a lot of wedding rehearsals for instance and spent the weekend dealing with the people in the wedding parties, when you got that guy who thinks, the groomsman, who thinks that this event is all about him, and I won't name any names so don't ask me, but I feel like there are guys, I just think, "Dude, you are the worst groomsman ever." Right? "This party is not about you. This rehearsal dinner is not about you. This bachelor party is not about you, the wedding is not about you. It's about the groom and the bride. That's all that this is about. You were there to help. You're there to assist."

And John the Baptist gave the illustration, "No, I'm not the Christ. Matter of fact, I'm not even worthy to untie his sandals. All I'm trying to do is to get the bride connected with the groom. That's my job. My job is to put the groom on a pedestal and make sure that the bride and the groom connect with each other. And I'm an attendant in this wedding. That's all that I am." Matter of fact, it ends with a famous line that you might remember as he confronted the people who were saying, "Oh, you're the guy." He said this, "I must decrease and he must increase." "I've got to see Christ be the point of all this. And I got to see me just, I'm just a conduit."

And when you see someone say that kind of thing, you might have the false impression that maybe he's turning down speaking engagements and he's not, you know, trying to influence people or his sermons are getting shorter, that's not at all what was happening with John the



Baptist. He was preaching more and more and more until they arrested him. I'm sure he didn't slow down at all. He was stepping it all up. But it was the attitude of his heart that when he taught people about God, his whole point was to get people connected with God. We're not an intermediary. That's why you don't call Christian leaders priests, do you understand that? You shouldn't at least. We're not like the Old Testament arrangement where you had a mediatorial relationship with God through the priesthood. Right? There's no such thing in the New Testament. We believe in what's called, because the Bible teaches it, the priesthood of the believers. Everyone is connected directly to God. My job, if I'm a leader among God's people, is to connect you to that God by making sure you understand the book that he wrote and doing my best to feed the flock. As an under-shepherd, yeah, I'm doing some shepherding, but I'm trying to get you connected to the ultimate shepherd.

So we need to understand this, and I put it this way in the outline after a lot of talking already. Here you go. Number one, "Realize We're Vulnerable." We are vulnerable. We've got to pick the right leaders. We need to recognize how vulnerable we are to being led by people. You're always going to have a leadership vacuum in your heart. You're going to look for the right teachers, the right leaders, the right philosophers, the right educators. Even in growing up, we look to our parents and I'm not saying we shouldn't, we should obey our parents. But you've got to realize, no one becomes a Christian until they get to the place, particularly those of you who are growing up in church, I see a lot of young people now in the congregations this morning, then we say, this is not about you connecting with your parents about their perspective on God. It's about you connecting directly with the God who they may actually have a relationship with.

That was pivotal in my upbringing and being raised in church. I had to get to a place where this is not about some kind of decision or some kind of direction that pleases my parents. This is about my pleasing God. There has to be a complete disconnect in my own loyalty to every other leader in my life to say that God is going to be the exclusive leader who I follow. We are vulnerable, just like sheep are vulnerable.

The shepherd cares mostly about keeping those sheep alive because they are so defenseless and, ultimately, that's the problem that we face. Right? We have a problem with death and that is the issue. Right? That's bigger than all of us. All of us who think well I'm, you know, as Henley used to say in his famous Invictus poem, you know, "I'm the master of my own fate, the captain of my soul and I get to figure out myself." Some of us think that way in America. We're just bigger than everything and we're going to do it and we pull ourselves up by your bootstraps.

Well here's the thing that equalizes everyone. Here's a foe you cannot beat. It's called death. As I often quote the statistics on death, as George Bernard Shaw said, are quite impressive. 1 out of 1 people, they die. Everyone's going to have this problem. Right? And we all in our hearts, according to the Bible, have this eternity that God has imprinted on our hearts and we know this is a problem, we don't want to die, people should live on. You say "Well, you know, Granny lived an old life, she's 95 or whatever and, you know, it's her time to go." Listen, the only reason you may ever be tempted to think that is because Granny's 95-year-old body was struggling and suffering and it was hard for her. But I'll tell you what, no one is sitting there going, "Well, I loved this person but I'm glad they're gone." Right? No, we want people to endure. God has set eternity in our hearts.

As Woody Allen, the wry comedian once said, he says, "I don't want to achieve immortality in my work. I want to achieve immortality by living forever." That's the point is that we want to continue to live on. But death is the problem. And just like the shepherd is concerned with keeping those sheep alive, that's almost his number one objective, that is his number one objective. Keep those sheep alive. We need to recognize this, Jesus comes on the scene and says, "I am the shepherd and my concern for you goes beyond the horizon of this life. And I've got something that I'm going to grant to you that is going to solve this problem," the vulnerability we have ultimately before death.

As we think about it, it's appointed unto man once to die. We need help. We need leadership. We need leadership that's going to move beyond just rearranging the deck chairs on the sinking ship of life. Right? That we are people who have more than just a good time before we die. But we need something that's going to take us beyond the horizon of this life, because eternity is a whole lot longer than the life here that we now live. So, let's make sure that we understand our vulnerability of sheep and our need for a shepherd, a shepherd who is going to lead us beyond this life. That is what this passage is all about. That's why the word "saved" is introduced to us in verse 9.

Let's look at verses 9 through 11 real quick. "I am the door," Jesus says. You want to get in this pen where we're going to be safe and you're going to have the connection with the Good Shepherd, well, you've got to enter through me. "If anyone enters by me, he will be saved, he'll go in and out, he'll find pasture. The thief comes to steal kill and destroy. But I came that you can have a life and have it abundantly." Now this is the great, you know, famous passage that the prosperity preachers preach. Right? That you can have abundant life. I assure you that the context of this passage is not just about you having a yacht in the harbor and a nice house on the hill and a vacation home in Aspen. That's not what this is about. This is about the reality of the wolves and the things that can kill you and the things that can threaten your well-being, being somehow protected and defended because you're part of the sheepfold, you're protected by the Good Shepherd and that you are going to be saved.

And of course, the temporal illustration speaks beyond the temporal realities of this life and it speaks to the eternal issues that Jesus is always talking about. And he talks a lot about the problem. The problem isn't you dying in some kind of revolt when Titus, the Roman general, comes through and decimates Jerusalem. He talked very little about that and yet he knew it was coming. He was concerned about heaven and hell. He was concerned about you facing your death and either being ushered into the "kingdom that's prepared from the foundation of the world" for the people who God wants to bless, or "being cast out into outer darkness where there's weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth." Those aren't my words, those aren't even Paul's words, those aren't John's words, those aren't Thomas' words, those are Jesus' words, over and over and over again. You need to be saved from the consequence of the things that you've done that don't measure up to the moral standards of God.

God is a just God. He hates sin. And he's got to solve the problem of sin. Just as much as you don't apologize for needing air to breathe. Right? You don't breathe water. You don't apologize for saying I need food instead of drinking antifreeze. You don't apologize by saying I wash my body with soap and water instead of fire and sulfur. Right? That's just the nature of who you are. And God by nature is a holy God. And he looks out at a sinful world and by

nature, as we studied on Friday afternoon, by nature he says this is not acceptable. It creates a barrier and not only a barrier of passive separation but a distance that really is focused at a hostile aggression. There has to be the judge looking at a criminal before him and saying I cannot go light on you. I have to be good as a good judge and judge you justly.

And so God, in measured justice, is going to judge people. And yet, in this passage, Jesus says, "I came to bring your life, abundant life. You're going to have all that you need." Why? "Because I'm the Good Shepherd." Now, here's the crescendo of the whole point of being the Good Shepherd. "I lay down my life." Now here's the keyword. You don't think it's a keyword because it's a little preposition in the middle of this sentence but it's worth highlighting and circling. It's the word "for." "I lay down my life for the sheep, for the sheep." This is not just for the good of the sheep. This little Greek word "hyper" is a great word used throughout the New Testament so often in critical theological moments.

And that is that God is saying, "I'm going to take you and your problem and I'm going to have someone who is going to, in your place, substitute for you, and I'm going to solve the problem that you have by treating that person as though he were you. And I'm going to treat you like you were that person. The person that I need right is someone who is holy." The holy God needs holy people. We're not holy. I need to somehow satisfy the justice before the tribunal of an eternal God by saying it's been paid. "I'll take his eternal worth, I'll punish him instead of you, and I will take you and treat you as though you lived the righteous life that he lived." The substitution.

First Peter 3:18 says, God had Jesus, the righteous one die, "hyper," for the unrighteous. "The righteous for the unrighteous, that he might," here's the concept of reconciliation again, "bring us to God." So we're going to have a relationship with the Good Shepherd when the Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. You need to recognize that's our only hope.

Number two on your outline, "See Christ As Your Only Hope." You've got to enter through one portal, one gate, one doorway, and Jesus says, "I am the doorway." That wasn't new to Jesus' preaching. He said that often. Not in the context here of shepherds and sheep and sheep pens. But you might remember the story he tells in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7. He says, "there's a gate over here and it is narrow and small and few people want to enter by it. And then there's a gate over here and it's super big and the path to get to it is super broad and all kinds of people want to enter by it."

I guess in summary, lots of ways to get to hell, only one way to get to heaven. I know that people, they really chafe against that today, don't they? Certainly in our day of, you know, having a million different toothpastes that we can use and a million different potato chips we can eat and if I want soda for lunch today I can have 100 different kinds if I just go to the right place. I mean, we want choices. We don't want to say there's one way to do things. In reality though, that's what the Bible teaches, that's what Jesus said. And some of you know the passage where he says very clearly, "I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life," John 14, "no one's going to come to the Father except through me. I am the portal. I am the door. I am the only way to get right with God."

And I understand that people say that, and they say it with a wagging, condescending, accusatory finger, do they not? They say, "How can you do this? How can you say this?" They

look at us and say, "You mean to tell me if I don't believe like you as a Christian believing in the Bible and Christ, that I'm going to go to hell? Is that what you're going to say about all the sincere Buddhists and all the honest Muslims and all the people out there who are just questioning agnostics? Is that what you're telling me? I've got to believe like you?" And I'm saying, you don't have to believe like me. Right? That's not the point. I didn't come up with any of this. But I am saying there is a way out of here, it's been revealed in Scripture and Christ has said, there is a way out. It's right here. Here's how you get out.

If there's a huge fire right now that breaks out behind this wall and that wall, that's where all the exits are. Right? And I say there's a giant fire, I can see it, there it is. But there's a little door back over here. This is a way out and here's a safe way out but you got to come up here and go out that little portal and I know it because I've been there and I know how to get out that way. And so everyone, if you want to be saved, you come out this way. Now, if there's a fire there crackling behind those walls where all the exits are and you say to me condescendingly with a wagging finger, "You mean to tell me that if I don't believe like you I'm going to be burned in this fire?" And my answer would be, "Yes." And it's not because I'm arrogant, it's not because I'm narrow-minded. As a matter of fact, I think you should thank me, not accuse me, because I'm telling you there is a way out. That's the whole point.

If we are in a sinking ship and I say there's one lifeboat on this ship and you may say, "Well I'd sure like there to be a helicopter and why isn't there a submarine?" And I said, "Well, I don't know why there's not any of that. But I'm telling you this there is a lifeboat and it's been provided for you." And as the ship is listing, if I go to your cabin door and I rap on your cabin door and I say the ship is sinking, and for some reason you start to believe that this ship is sinking, maybe you're feeling the listing, maybe there's conscience, if I'm just gonna take this illustration to its furthest extreme, you have a sense that the truth of the Gospel is right, you feel the conviction of sin. And I say, "Hey, everyone who feels that, there is a solution. You can get off this sinking ship. You can have safety, you can have blessing, you can have all the things that you need, security and all that you want. Life is offered to you. But you've got to get out of your room, you've got to get on this deck, you've got to get in the lifeboat and you can be saved.

And for you to stand there and argue with me in the hallway and say, "I can't believe you're so arrogant and narrow-minded." Right? "Are you meaning to tell me if I don't believe you, I'm going to drown on this ship?" And again, I'm going to say yes but it's not because I'm narrow-minded and it's not because I'm a bigot, it's not because I'm some kind of pompous person. I'm just telling you here's the solution and here's the problem.

Everyone in the world who sits there and claims they've got a solution to the problem of death, I mean, they have to, even in their conscience, get around to the place of saying, "I know it's because I have a sin problem. I don't measure up." My fear of death really is going to be connected to what God wrote in his Word and it's written on our conscience and that is the "wages of sin is death." How is that problem solved? And people will say, "Well, I know how it's solved. I'm trying to do good things, trying to clean up my act." They come up with lots of solutions. But the Bible says here's what the holy God needs: the holy God needs holy people. You are not holy. The holy God looks at sinful people and says sinful people need to be punished for their sin.



And God has, in Christ, taken that and made this great exchange of your sinful life exchanged for his righteous life. And God now treats you, if you would trust in him and enter through that portal, that one gate that's available to you, and say I am trusting in God's provision that Christ is going to be all the human righteousness I need, it will be imputed to me, it will be credited to me. And all my sin, as it's put in Colossians, will be appended to his cross. It will be as though everything I've ever done that is wrong before a holy God can be nailed to the cross and that God can look at my sin and say, "Paid in Full, because I've spilt out my justice on some human being who has eternal quality and eternal value."

And every sin you've ever committed can be paid for. And the judge, the just judge, as I said on Friday, who should judge us, becomes the one who is judged. And there we have the solution, that Christ lays down his life for the sheep, "I'm the door, I'm the only way you're going to get there." And when it comes down to it, and even every other religion, even philosophers will sometimes get to this place, where they recognize that when we say things about the absolute nature of God giving us a solution, they're always trying to argue about what God may or may not have done. But the concept of God, at least generally speaking, I mean, is conceded in the fact that there is someone who must be in charge of all this.

Now humans have a hard time, at least on the street level, figuring that out. But I remember going to the University of Arizona, go Wildcats, and I remember the professor... It was the time, certainly, everyone's talking about you're doing your own thing and doing, you know, going your own way, and making your own path, and everyone's right, and everyone's entitled to their opinion. And that is until the professors give us assignments. I remember we're sitting in my French Lit class, which I have no idea why took it, maybe I had to, but I sat in my French Lit class and they assigned a paper with six or eight pages to write a paper on, you know, I don't know, Victor Hugo or Voltaire or who knows who it was. And instead of turning in the assignment that the professor asked for, of course learning all that I was learning about the philosophy of how I should live in the world and make my own way, do my own thing, and everyone's right in their own way, I just turned in a sketch of the student union building, which I thought was a really great picture that I drew during my break.

And my professor gave me an F. And I said, "Well, why did you give me an F?" This didn't really happen, this is an illustration, but I turned in a really bad paper on Victor Hugo, I think. But anyway, the idea is I'm saying to myself why would the teacher now all the sudden saying, no you get an F? "Why would you fail me?" The teacher said, "Well, because I asked for a paper on Voltaire and you gave me a sketch of the student union." But I said, "yeah, but didn't you like my sketch?" He replied, "Well, I don't really care about how good your sketch was because what I asked for was this. This is what I require because I am the professor and you are the student." It's interesting how those things seem to work in terms of people's minds when it comes down and we get around to the fact that that's how the universe is set up.

There's a God and you're not him. I mean, that really, there's a tweetable line right there right. There is a God and you're not him, and that God gets to make the rules for the universe. Think that through. Right? That's the bottom line of the authority that we find just by definition in that there's someone in charge. We don't like that, but there is someone in charge. We may think I can think whatever I want, I can believe whatever I want, I go out whatever door I want, but God is so gracious to provide us the information that there is a solution. It's been

provided in Christ. There is a problem, it's real, but you need to take advantage of that by going through that door.

"Christ suffered once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous that he might bring us to God." The Good Shepherd laid down his life for the sheep. And don't get me wrong as you think of cuddly sheep. I've dealt with sheep for the sake of preaching and illustrations that some of you have seen in past Good Fridays and I have no natural affection for sheep. They look cute, I suppose, on someone's, you know, Facebook page but they are, I mean... I won't go any further because you love sheep but...

The substitution that took place was not based on, as I tried to make the point on Friday, if you were here, based on the fact that there was some kind of natural affection that God has for us as beings. We unfortunately are in our state of sin, we are rejectable to this God.

There's a story in British history of the Lord of Nithsdale (William Maxwell) who was sentenced to death and execution for a political crime. His wife on the day he was to be executed in the afternoon came in in the morning to visit him and they allowed visitors and she came in and she swapped clothes with her husband and put him in the outfit, you know, that it kind of covered her up, long dress and he walked out of this prison and the guards didn't even notice. And so they go to execute, of course, that day and they find her there. She puts herself at great risk and her husband is freed. Look this up in history, an amazing story of substitution. I think of that kind of a sinner, I think well what a risk this loving spouse made to try and save the life of her husband.

And yet the reality for us is that Jesus came to demonstrate his love for us and while we were yet sinners, hostile, we didn't care, wandering sheep, each going our own way, and the shepherd lays down his life, not for this lovable, domesticated animal like you might come home to after church and say, "Yeah, my dog, really, really I just love my dog, my dog loves me." Listen, that's not how this is. It's wayward, stubborn, rebellious, defenseless dumb sheep that the Shepherd says, "I'm willing to lay down my life for." He came to save sinners. And Christ is our only hope, as narrow-minded as you may accuse me of that being. It certainly is the reality that we have to grapple with.

Verses 12 and 13, it ends this way. Take a look at it. He was a hired-hand, at least our passage is going to end this way, all we have time for today. Hired-hands, someone who comes here, is the hourly worker. Just, you know, can you watch my sheep for a while? He is not the shepherd. He's not a shepherd because he doesn't own the sheep, not the real shepherd. The hired-hand, the guy who's just there kind of doing a little, you know, moonlighting working for some sheep owner, sees the wolf coming thinking I'm not going to risk my life for these sheep, these dumb sheep. He leaves the sheep and he flees. And the problem is the wolf comes and snatches them and scatters them. And again that's the picture of the bad shepherds. The bad shepherds, they don't really have a concern for the sheep. He flees, the bad shepherd does, because he's a hired-hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

The great news in the Scripture, as it relates to what God has done for us, is sending his Son to be our Good Shepherd, and the Bible is very clear that that Good Shepherd does love us. He loves us and he cared for us. He loved us as enemies, he changes our heart. The great thing about reconciliation is it transforms our heart to where now the hostility we had in being

dumb, wayward sheep changes and our heart that's wanting to be impulsive and do our own thing is now beating in sync with a God who's designed us and we want to please God now, as imperfectly as we do. That desire changes everything about our relationship. God says, "I love you, I care for you, cast your anxieties on me, I care for you." As we were dealing in Psalms last week, that idea of knowing that God is a God who wants to look after us, as Peter speaks of, he cares enough to say, "I will lead you. I will care for you."

That's the kind of trust that should be exclusive. It should be exclusive for salvation, it should be exclusive and focused and settled in terms of our daily lives. I just want to look at that from two different perspectives. But first let's give it a quick heading if we could. You need to, and the Scripture is so clear on this and the reformers love to say it this way, "We Need to Trust Christ Exclusively." We need to trust Christ alone. We need to have our confidence as it relates to salvation and our daily lives saying I'm going to put my confidence and trust in Christ.

Let's just start with the big issue, the big issue of heaven and hell. If I'm going to go into the flock in the corral of God, be part of God's people, and then go out into pasture, that ultimate pasture of walking into the kingdom one day where everything is right, then what I need to do is to trust God exclusively. Three things people often are tempted to trust in. Number one, they're tempted to trust in their good works. Right? And we know this, we clearly know this. Ask the average person who you see at the restaurant this afternoon or when you walk by them this week at work, say, "Hey, do you think you're going to heaven when you die?" And they will say, "Yeah, I think so." Most people think they are, most people think they do, most people believe in heaven and hell still, even an American Westernized society.

And you say, "Why do you think you're going to heaven when you die?" And they will answer you, and you know it, you've heard it, you might even be sitting here thinking it, "I know I'm going to heaven because I am a good person. I'm a good person. I'm a basically good person." You can point out all day long the sins that they might have committed and they still think, "Yeah, well, that's OK. I'm still basically a good person." And their view is that there's some kind of big scales up there in heaven, and then when you get there, we're going to put all our good works on one side and our bad works on the other side, which I even think is somewhat delusional when we think that through carefully, and they think, "Well, I just think it's going to weigh in favor of 'I'm a good person' mostly because I'm better than the people I read about, all the criminals and slime of my society, on my news feed. So I think I'm going to be OK. God's going to like me."

And then, if you say, "Do you believe in Jesus? Do you believe Jesus died for your sins?" A lot of them, still even today, say, "Well yeah, I believe that." And you say, "We need to trust him." "Well, I kind of do to make up for all the bad that I've done." But basically their answer is and the fundamental driving reason they think they're going to be right with God is because they are good people. Which means they're trusting in their good works.

The Bible is so clear on this. Let me give you two passages real quick if your note takers. Here it is. Romans 3:20. Romans Chapter 3 verse 20. "No one, no one by the works of the law," not a single person by keeping the rules, "will be justified," made right, acceptable, "before God." There's not a single person who God is going to say you get in because you did good things. Matter of fact, here's the next line. "Through the law," through the rules, people become aware of their sin, "the knowledge of sin comes." That's the whole point. God gives us a set of rules



just to show us we don't measure up and that we need a replacement, we need a substitute. That's the whole reason for the law. Right? It does reflect God's character clearly and it is something we need to make sure we try and assert in our own hearts and certainly it reflects our conscience, but God is saying you don't measure up, you can't trust in your good works.

Secondly, I said two passages, Galatians Chapter 2 verse 21. Galatians 2:21 says, if there were a way for you to be righteous enough to get into heaven, "if righteousness was derived from the law, then Christ would have died for nothing." Here's the logic of the Bible. It makes no sense for Christ to come in and live in our place and die in our place, if somehow there's a big set of scales up there and God just says you've been more good than bad, I'll let you in. He's not Santa Claus. Right? It's not being on the good list because you are basically good. This is a God who is holy, a just God, who sits on a tribunal and unfortunately for us has to punish sin. It doesn't matter that I didn't sin as much or as badly as the people I know on my news feed. The reality is that God has to punish sinners and he cannot dwell with evil as the Psalms say, and so we cannot trust in our good deeds. We got to trust in the good deeds of Christ.

Secondly, we like to trust in our theology, the things we believe about God. We believe we have right thinking about God. I can't tell you how many people come to me and think that when I get to heaven I stand before the gates, so to speak, and I'm there. I know I'm going to be let in because they're going to ask me a series of questions, like a true or false set of questions on a Scantron sheet, and I'm an answer true, true, true when they ask me "Do you believe in God?" True. "Do you believe in Jesus?" True. "Do you believe he died for your sins?" True. "I got all the trues on my test, so I got it right because my theology is good."

No one's getting into heaven because their theology is good. You know who has got really, really good theology? Satan - great theology, really good theology. Demons - they know a lot more about theology than you do. You take your systematic theology book off the shelf, they know all of that stuff. They've been around a long time and here's what the Bible says about the demons: they believe. They believe. That's a mental assent. They can get all the questions right on the theological Scantron sheet and they really believe it. What does that mean? They believe it. What does that mean? They assent to the facts.

Belief in Scripture is not believing the facts and I'll prove it to you. Go throughout the New Testament and every time you see the word faith or belief. Right? Those are generally, in the New Testament, the same Greek word, "pisteuo" to believe, I believe, I trust. OK? That word is usually followed by a preposition and the preposition is "in" or "on." Right? Little epsilon nu, a little Greek New Testament word. And when you say to someone I believe you, that's one thing. When you say I believe "in you" or I believe "on you," that's something entirely different.

You tell me this afternoon, "I've been taking my, you know, flying lessons and I'm going to go fly at the Orange County Airport today. I've got my license, I am a pilot now." I can say "I believe you." That's one thing. That's probably what I might say or would say. But to say "I believe in you" really is the kind of thing I would say if I'm going to walk up the ramp and get in your little plane and fly away with you. I'm trusting you. To believe "in Christ" is something entirely different than what the angels who have fallen into sin do, they believe the facts. They don't believe in or trust in Christ. That's the problem. A lot of people know the right facts and



certainly I grew up with that in my own head and never was converted because I didn't see the difference between "believing" and "believing in" Christ.

And lastly, closely related, I think the third thing that we often are tempted to trust in is our knowledge of the Bible. We believe we know a lot of Bible verses. I grew up in church, I knew the Bible verses, I was the president of my youth group, I was able to recite all the verses. They had all these things you would do, you know, like you get a football if you have these 35 verses memorized. Of course, I needed a football and so I would memorize the verses and you'd ask me what the verse where I'd go blurb, blurb, blurb. Our kids do that all the time in Awana. They learn the verses. And according to John Chapter 5 verse 39, Jesus said you need to know it's not about just your knowledge of the Scripture. "You search the Scriptures because you think in them, trafficking in them, knowing them, having some knowledge of the Bible, in them you'll have eternal life. He says, but you don't realize, all of that attests to me. It speaks to me, it directs you to me." To do what? "To put your trust in me."

You and I have to say the reason I can go to heaven is not because I'm a good person, I get to go to heaven because Christ has done for me what I cannot do for myself and that is to live a holy human life. That's why God took on human form to live a holy human life. And then he died so that all my sins could be forgiven so that God could treat him, in the act of justice on a Friday afternoon 2,000 years ago, to treat him with all the intensity that you can only imagine would be in the heart and life of someone who has the eternal nature of God in human form, to treat him as though he were the sinner that I am. The Bible says that's the only way I'm going to get into heaven, trusting completely in that, exclusively in that.

Some of you sit here today say, "Well, Pastor Mike, I'm already there, I've done that." Great. Then we have to trust Christ between now and the time we see him face-to-face. So, I don't know how many years you got left. I don't know. I mean, you could live on this planet for another 5 years, 10 years, 15 years, 30, 40 years. Who knows? But between now and then the Bible says you need to trust him. That takes us back, does it not, to the picture of the shepherd and the sheep. We have to follow him. We go in and out in pasture, so to speak, every single day. I hope we come home, we study the Bible, we pray, we get a connection with God, we go out into our world every day, and we're heading out there and we're hoping that we can follow Christ faithfully. I need to make sure that we do.

In light of our passage, I just want to say there are a few things we like to trust in that we shouldn't trust in. And let me say this. Number one, we trust in our human leaders and you should never trust in your human leaders. Right? You should never trust in human leaders. Those leaders, they're not the focus of our faith. They never are. As I said earlier in First Corinthians 3, Paul's trying to make it very clear. Apollos, Cephas, Paul. Nothing. What matters is God. Put your trust in him. Don't put your trust in your discipler, your small group leader, your professor, your favorite Christian author, your pastor. We trust in Christ as our Good Shepherd.

You say, "Well, I think I'll be okay because I've done well here financially." You know how easy it is for human hearts to trust in their bank account? Don't trust in your money. First Timothy Chapter 6, Paul says the problem with people who have a lot of money is they start to trust in it, as Jesus told the parable. They store up many things and think, "Hey, soul, relax,



rest, be merry, you got a lot of years here stored up in your silos, it'll be fine, chill out for the rest of your life, now you're OK."

The Bible says that's a fool. As a matter of fact, that's one of the passages in Scripture where God looks at human beings and says, there is a fool. "God says, 'you fool, you fool. Tonight your soul is required of you and who's going to get all the stuff that you've stored up?'" Or as Paul said in First Timothy 6 to the rich people of his day. "Listen, your riches that you're trusting in are so uncertain." God could drain your bank account just like that. We don't put our trust in our bank account. We don't put our trust in our money. We certainly don't put our trust in our health.

When Jesus was being tempted in the desert, Satan said to Jesus, "Why don't you make some loaves of bread out of the stones there?" And Jesus responded with, do you remember what he said? "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." A lot of people recite that, they've heard it, they don't know what it means. The point is he's very, very hungry, feeling like he's going to die out there and Satan goes, "Here, let's give you some bread so you don't die." That was a temptation for him to use his power in a way that God never intended. And Jesus responds by saying, "Man does not live by bread alone."

And the point is it doesn't matter what you have, doesn't matter what medicine you have, doesn't matter what exercise you have, does matter what food you have, with supplements you eat. None of that matters. You live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. And the words, in particular, are LIVE! Right? That's the first word. If he desires you to be alive you're going to be alive today. Right? I trust in God for my life every single day. That's the calling of the Christian life. We trust in him and without him we've got nothing. He gives us life and breath and everything else in that sovereign dispensing of life. We need to trust in him exclusively. There's so much we can say about that. But Jesus loves his sheep. He lays down his life for his sheep. You recognize there are a lot of people who want your devotion, to be their followers. Christ is the only one worthy of that.

I recognize when you come to Compass Bible Church on Easter or Christmas or whenever you might come, you get a tough message from the platform. I often say it, people ask me to preach the Gospel here or preach the Gospel there and I say, "Do you really want me to preach the Gospel because the Gospel is going to have to say to the people who are in the room, you've got a problem with God. I'm going to have to mention things like hell and sin and justice and all of that," And they say, "I just wanted flowers and bunnies and candy and get me ready for brunch. I didn't want all that." Right? Well, that's the calling of the pastor. It is to preach the Gospel. I want to connect you to the Good Shepherd.

Someone might have brought you here this morning and you may not appreciate that they brought you to a place where they're going to preach like this. And I understand that. But it's what we need. It's what we need because so often in life we can think things are going well, we're going the right direction, but all of us who sit here this morning as converted people in this room, we recognize what it is for that act of repentance. To think though I'm going in a direction that I think is good, as it says in Proverbs, there's a way that seems right unto to a man, but its end is in death. You need to be turned around.



I hear UC Berkeley is a hard school to get into. I didn't apply but I hear it's a tough school to get into, about an acceptance rate of 15%. And they got a football team that's hit and miss through the years but the Cal Bears were playing in the Rose Bowl many years ago. There was a very famous play. You can look it up. Roy Riegels was All-American team captain. He was THE guy on the Cal Bear team. Now there was a fumble and he picks up the ball and he runs 69 yards to the end zone. The problem is he ran the wrong direction. He's called Roy "Wrong-Way" Riegels is his nickname on Wikipedia I think. He goes the wrong direction. He ran, I mean, famously toward the wrong goal.

A lot of people tell the story for a lot of reasons and his comeback and how he played in the second half and all that, but the part that's not often told is, I think, is really so apropos this morning. Benny Lom was one of his teammates and Benny Lom was out on the field and sees Roy Riegels going the wrong direction and Benny is a really fast runner and he goes after his own player. Now I can only imagine what's going on in Roy's mind. He's hearing the crowd's cheering, it's just the wrong crowd that's cheering as he's moving the wrong direction. But he's thinking, I could just picture him like, "Yeah, baby this is awesome." And his buddy Benny Lom runs after him, his teammate, and finally tackles him, look it up on Wikipedia, tackles him on the one-yard line. He tackles his own player. Now about the time I'm running here, my victory, about to spike the ball, I guess it was before they spiked the football back in the day, but I'm thinking, "I don't want my own teammate tackling me. I thought you loved me. I thought we're on the same team here." And Benny Lom tackled him because you're going the wrong way.

I am very thankful, and I think many people here are, who have repented of their sins and put their trust exclusively in Christ, for someone who's come into their life and has said you're going the wrong way. I mean, the best thing I can do for you as a pastor or a friend or a Christian is tell you you're going the wrong way. Because many will come to God on that day, it says in Matthew 7, and say, "Lord, Lord." And Jesus will say, "Depart for me. I never knew you." You thought you're going the right way. But the people who were cheering you on were not the angels of heaven, it was the demons. They thought you're going great, just keep on going.

As we said on Friday, we can see a lot of things in our lives, the kindness of God that can blind us to our need for salvation. Just because you have good health, just because you've got a great job, just because you got stuff in your bank account, just because everything in your family seems good, does not mean you have the favor of God in your life right now. Matter of fact, it's the kindness of God, Romans 2:4, that should lead you to turning around, to repentance. So, I hope that someone's been bold enough to share the truth of the Gospel with you, and if no one else, I've tried to this morning. I hope that even if you find that you been running the wrong way for a lot of yards, a lot of years in your life, it's time this morning to repent and put your trust in Christ and I hope that some of you, by God's grace, would.

Let's pray. God, help us this morning on Easter morning here to put our trust completely, exclusively in you. For those who know that they've turned from their sin and trusted in Christ as the only solution for their sin problem, I pray that it be a day for us to reaffirm the fact that we're going to trust you every day in our lives, with all the uncertainties that are out there, all the persecution, all the struggle. That we can follow the Good Shepherd, whether it's by still waters and in green pastures or whether it's through the valley of the shadow of death.



That we'd fear no evil because we know you're with us. We would trust you and follow you, exclusively in you.

And I pray, Lord, that we would have that in a fresh way, in a strong way, that there would be a kind of confidence in you that we have, knowing we're vulnerable, we need leaders. And the leaders that we need, at least humanly speaking, are the under-shepherds who are going to point us to the Good Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, the overseer of our souls as Peter put it. So God give us that in a fresh way and for those who are going to trust in Christ for the very first time this morning I pray it to be a wholesale, complete, entire life commitment to you to choose to walk through that only portal, that only doorway that exists between us and the blessing of God, Jesus Christ himself. Let that be a reality for some. I pray they would share it openly with their friends, their neighbors and then we'd see him back here at Compass, learning and growing in what it is to follow the Good Shepherd every day in our lives. God, make that a reality for us.

We pray, in Jesus name. Amen.