

I am the Gate - Week 1

8/9/24

Over the next few months Paul (and other preachers) will lead us in discovering Jesus through the I AM sayings found in the gospels and applying them to how we live our lives.

- *Describe yourself in 8-10 words starting with "I am" Take turns describing yourselves and then let others add some that they think of too (be nice!)*

'I AM' is the name that the Jewish people in Jesus' time would have recognised for God from the story of Moses at the burning bush in Exodus 3. When God instructs Moses to go to the Israelites in preparation for the exodus from Egypt, Moses asks God "Who should I say has sent me?" God replies with telling him to say that "I AM has sent you" and later uses the term "I AM WHO I AM". The Jews understand this to be the name for the eternal God Not a god of just the past, present or the future, but I AM who IS - the great I AM who is above all else. When Jesus used the term 'I AM', the Jews would have recognised that He was identifying Himself with God.

- *Take a minute in silence to try to imagine God as "I AM" - eternal, not created, so mighty and powerful that His name is simply, but profoundly: "I AM". You could extend this time into worship of the great "I AM" in prayer or song.*

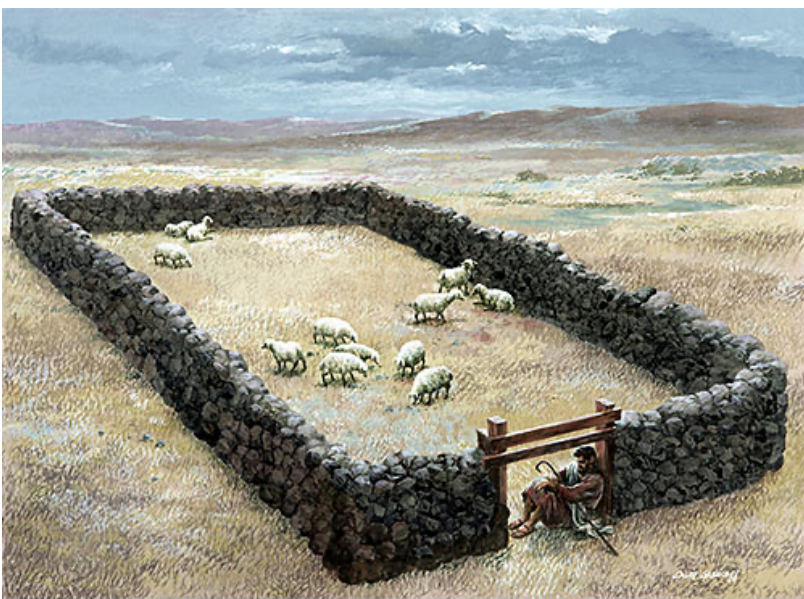
This week and next we will explore Jesus as "I AM the gate"

Read John 10: 1-10

- *Think about doors and gates ... what purpose or significance do they serve?*
- *What effect would it have if some were missing in and around your house?*

In this passage Jesus describes Himself as the 'gate for the sheep.' Sheep are often considered dumb and they don't have defences like most animals so they are easy prey, yet Jesus often uses the term 'sheep' as a description of His followers. Sheep were very valuable in Jesus' time (and have been since) and were a sign of wealth providing milk, wool and meat.

- *Do you think the analogy of a sheep is a good one for believers - in Jesus' time and today?*



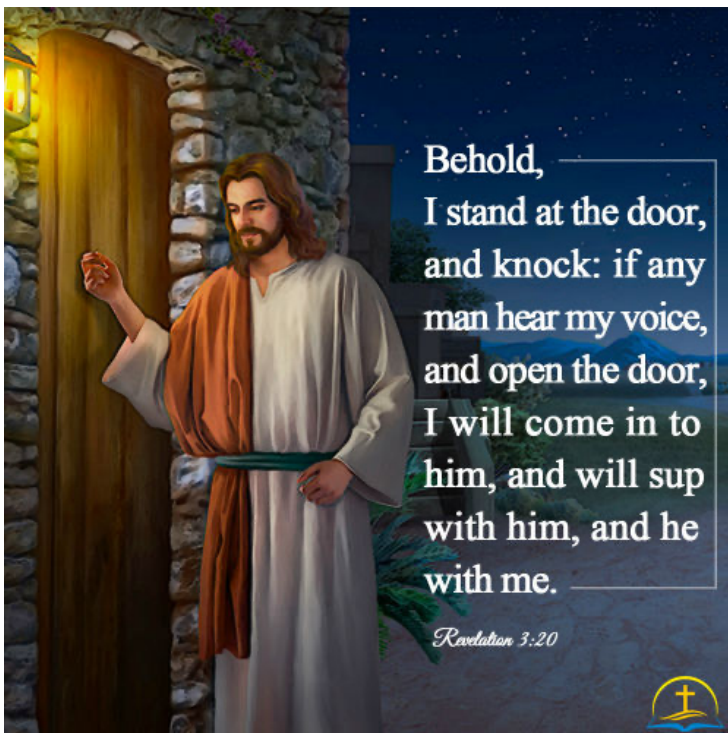
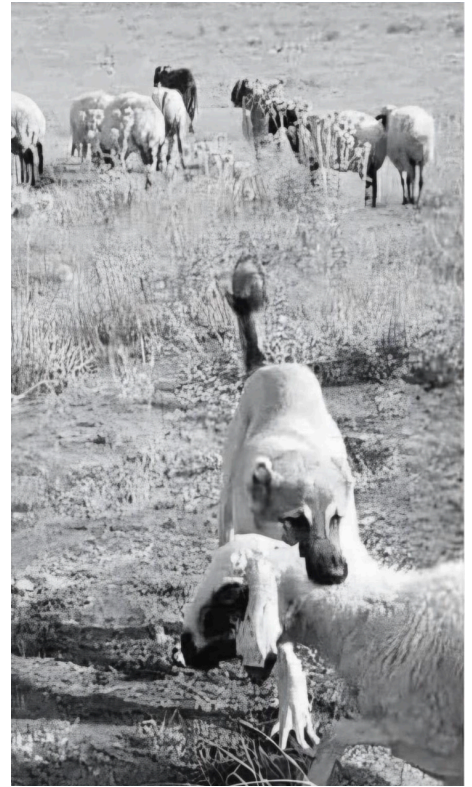
Sheep are tendered by shepherds. In gospel times they didn't have the fenced off fields that we have today and so they needed shepherds who took them out to open pasture during the day, yet needed to keep them together in a pen at night to keep them safe from predators. Pens were built in the pastures and during the day time the sheep could go in and out through the gap in the pen. At night the shepherd became the 'gate' by lying in the gap so that the sheep could not leave.

Jesus describes Himself as the gate, the one who places his body in the gap, and that “whoever enters through me will be saved.” His body and blood was the sacrifice that made this possible, for us to be reunited with the great ‘I AM’. There is only one door or gateway into the pen - and there is only one way into the kingdom of God, through the bodily sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.

The walls of the pens were not very high, meaning that a thief could enter. But only a thief would need to enter that way, the shepherd would just use the gateway and by being the ‘gate’, he was right there to protect the sheep. So there is also safety in Christ being the gate - in life, in pain, in trials we need not have fear because Jesus is always with us.

The sheep also knew their shepherd and his voice because he was always with them, even as the gate at night, so there was protection in knowing his voice so well that they would not be tricked into following the wrong shepherd or a thief.

- *What aspect of Jesus being ‘a gate’ is most meaningful to you at the moment?*



Rev 3:20 is written to a church. Jesus is standing at a door knocking, waiting for someone to let Him in so that He could fellowship and eat with them.

If Jesus was knocking at our door today:

- *What do think He might be wanting to say to us as a church?*

-*What do you think Jesus may be wanting to say to you personally?*

-*Pray for each other, pray for God to speak to us and for us to listen and obey.*

-*Pray for those you know who have not entered the gate and do not yet know the Shepherd.*