

Sun., April 7: HC, Fifth Sunday of Lent

Threshold: Jesus at the Heart's Door (Letting Jesus In)

Sermon: Thresholds #6: Your Heart's Door

Scripture: John 1:6-14 (The Word became flesh...any who receive Him become children of God.)

Text: "Look! I'm standing at the door and knocking. If any hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to be with them, and will have dinner with them, and they will have dinner with me." -Rev. 3:20

Memory Verse: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." -Matthew 5:8

Children's Lesson: Skit: "Knocking on the Door" -Andrew

Blurb: Do you hear that knocking? We can usually hear it best when all is quiet and we are alone. It's that inner calling, tapping. Isn't there more in life? Doesn't my life have value...meaning? Isn't there more to reality than what I can see? That's Jesus knocking at your heart's door. This is the next threshold in our lenten message series. This Sunday we'll listen to that knocking and learn how to open our heart's doors to Jesus!

Call to Worship: *Cover the Earth* -Andrew

Welcome: -Pastor David

HC: Open table.

Memory Verse:

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." -Matthew 5:8

Worship Music: - Sanctify

Sing to the Lord

How Great Is Our God

Simple Pursuit

Worship Prayer - Andrew

Skit/Kid's Moment: "Knocking on the Door" -Andrew

Message Bumper

Message: Thresholds #6: The Heart's Door

PP#1: Thresholds: The Story of the Bible, The Story of Salvation

The Heart's Door

"Look! I'm standing at the door and knocking. If any hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to be with them, and will have dinner with them, and they will have dinner with me." -Revelation. 3:20

Thresholds: The Story of the Bible, the Story of Salvation. The Heart's Door. Revelation 3:20, "Look! I'm standing at the door and knocking. If any hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to be with them, and will have dinner with them, and they will have dinner with me."

We've been following the thresholds that appear throughout the grand story of salvation in the Bible. And when we put these thresholds side-by-side, we begin to see that they tell the story of salvation.

The thresholds of the Old Testament tell the story of paradise, paradise lost, and God's promise of paradise restored. But it's in the New Testament that we see God fulfilling that promise. Jesus comes to restore people back to God.

Last week, Reese told us how Jesus pointed out two gates, two entrances, two choices, for our lives. One is the wide gate, that opens to a wide path, a path that is easy and enticing, but doesn't take us back to God. The other is the narrow gate, that leads to a narrow path. It is steep and hard. It is the path of discipleship, and it changes us. Jesus says, "Take the narrow gate! It leads to life, abundant and eternal." And then, Jesus walks through it first, all the way up to Calvary, making a way for us to follow.

PP#2: John 1:1-5 (CEB)

1 In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. 2 The Word was with God in the beginning. 3 Everything came into being through the Word, and without the Word nothing came into being. What came into being 4 through the Word was life, and the life was the light for all people. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness doesn't extinguish the light.

John explains this, by going back to the story of creation in the opening chapter of his Gospel. Turn to the first chapter of John. Do you remember how it begins? "In the beginning was the Word." This Word was God. This Word was how everything was created. Verse 4, "Through the Word was life, and the life was the light for all people."

The Word, the Light, was back there in paradise. He made paradise! And for paradise to be restored, we need that original Word, that Light, to come back and make all things new again.

So, let's watch closely: John tells us more about this Word, who came as a person named Jesus, who walked and talked with John and the other disciples. John saw Him give Himself up as the sacrifice that restores people back to Life.

PP#3: John 1:6-14 (CEB)

6 A man named John was sent from God. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning the Light, so that through him everyone would believe in the Light. 8 He himself wasn't the Light, but his mission was to testify concerning the Light. 9 The true Light that shines on all people was coming into the world. 10 The Light was in the world, and the world came into being through the Light, but the world didn't recognize the Light. 11 The Light came to His own people, and His own people didn't welcome Him.

Verse 6. "A man named John was sent from God. [This is not the author, John the Disciple. This is John the Baptist, the announcer of the Messiah when He arrived.] He [John the Baptist] came as a witness to testify concerning the Light [remember, we just learned that this Light is the Life for all people], so that through him everyone would believe in the Light. [This is how our broken relationship with God, the giver of our life, is restored. We believe in the Light, the Life, the Word.] He himself wasn't the Light, but his mission was to testify concerning the Light. The true Light that shines on all people was coming into the world. [This is what all the thresholds of the Old Testament taught us.] The Light was in the world [the Light, at creation, created all light, and now the Creating

Light shows up in person in the world He created] and the world came into being through the Light [so the world *should* recognize the Light, because His light is in us!], but the world didn't recognize the Light. [The Light who came back as Savior was rejected by His own creation! Garden of Eden all over again. Problem still in effect.] The Light came to His own people, and His own people didn't welcome Him." In fact, everyone abandons Him, and the Jewish authorities have Him crucified!

John, in telling the story of Jesus, begins by going back to creation, because the same problem that happened in the Garden of Eden, is still in effect. Paradise is still lost!

PP#4: John 1:6-14 (CEB)

12 But those who did welcome Him, those who believed in His name, He authorized to become God's children, 13 born not from blood nor from human desire or passion, but born from God. 14 The Word became flesh and made His home among us. We have seen His glory, glory like that of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

But now things change. Jesus makes a way to change everything. In verse 12, John describes paradise regained. Look at this carefully: "But those who did welcome Him, those who believed in His name, He authorized to become God's children, [Ah, do you see it? Become God's children! In Jesus, God doesn't just forgive our sin, He recreates us, making us new! We are reborn! Verse 13,] born not from blood nor from human desire or passion [human conception and physical birth], but born from God. [New beginning, restored back to God's original intention. 14,] The Word became flesh and made His home among us. We have seen His glory, glory like that of a father's only son, full of grace and truth." The eternal Word, the Life of all things, the Light of creation, became a person. We call Him Jesus!

Go back to verse 12. Jesus authorizes, makes possible, makes the way for us to become restored children of God. But look...how does this happen? Jesus came to give us new life. How do we access that?

Remember creation: people, since Adam and Eve, have walked away from God. We have all put our trust in ourselves. When Jesus comes to restore us, He makes a way for things to be different. He give us a second chance. Look what verse 12 says, "Those who did welcome Him, those who believed in His name..." We can choose differently now! We can choose to put our trust back in Him. We welcome Him, we believe in His name. Do you remember what Jesus' name means? We heard it at Christmas. Jesus means "God saves." We welcome our Savior in and we choose to trust in God who saves.

This is where we see another threshold! It is the door we open to let Jesus in.

PP#5: John the Apostle ("John the Elder," "The Beloved Disciple")

Wrote: John (the gospel)

1st John (the epistle)

2nd John (the epistle)

3rd John (the epistle)

Revelation (or "The Apocolypse")

John, the disciple who wrote this Gospel, also wrote more of the Bible. In fact, John also wrote the last book of the Bible. What is that book called? [Revelation.]

We normally think of Revelation being about the end times. But not all of it is. There are a couple of chapters in the beginning where Jesus talks to His followers. And just as John, in the

beginning of his Gospel, talks about welcoming the Savior, so in beginning of Revelation John records this same message.

PP#6: “Look! I’m standing at the door and knocking. If any hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to be with them, and will have dinner with them, and they will have dinner with me.” -Rev. 3:20 (CEB)

It’s Revelation 3:20. Jesus proclaims, “Look! I’m standing at the door and knocking. If any hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to be with them, and will have dinner with them, and they will have dinner with me.”

Here is the threshold! Jesus on one side, us on the other. Jesus knocking and asking to come in. We, on the other, have a decision to make. Will we welcome Him? Will we let Him in? Jesus has done everything to make us *able* to open the door. But the question still remains, will we? It’s a matter of our trust. Before, we chose to trust in ourselves. Now we have a second chance. Will we choose to put our trust in Him, open the door, and welcome Him into our lives?

Now, pause here a minute. Normally, we might think that this verse is for people who do not know Jesus. This seems to describe the need for conversion. This is the door of our heart. Jesus isn’t ours yet, but He is knocking, asking to come in. If we open our heart’s door and give it to Jesus, He will come in, and we will be saved.

Well, this certainly is true. If you do not know Jesus, I invite you to open your heart’s door to Him. He will come in.

PP#7: Revelation 3:14-20 (CEB)

14 “Write this to the angel of the church in Laodicea: ... 15 I know your works. You are neither cold nor hot. ... 16 So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I’m about to spit you out of my mouth. 17 After all, you say, ‘I’m rich, and I’ve grown wealthy, and I don’t need a thing.’ You don’t realize that you are miserable, pathetic, poor, blind, and naked. ... So be earnest and change your hearts and lives. 20 Look! I’m standing at the door and knocking. If any hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to be with them, and will have dinner with them, and they will have dinner with me.”

But, I fear, this verse is not about conversion.

You see, this verse comes in a message from Jesus to the church in a town called Laodicea, present day Turkey. Look at Revelation 3, but back up to verse 14. “Write this [the angel tells John] to the angel of the church in Laodicea.” The angel is the symbol for the keeper of the church. This is a message to *the church*. These are Christians! They’ve already been converted and have invited Jesus into their hearts. Jesus says that He is standing at *their* hearts’ doors and is wanting to come in!

What’s going on here? Have these Christians fallen away, are they backslided? Well, no, not really. They’s not cold. But they’re not hot, either. They’re just growing complacent. Verse 17, they are rich enough to have all they need. They’ve grown *comfortable*, and don’t realize that they are missing out on the *abundant* life that Jesus intends. They are *getting by* with the bare minimum of Jesus. Yes, they have chosen Him, but they are not living as disciples. And they are missing out.

Do you know what that means? That means that this verse, Revelation 3:20, is for people like you and me! The threshold here, the door, is *our* heart doors! This is not for non-believers or un-believers. This is for believers! This threshold, in this Bible story of salvation, is ours!

Well then, perhaps we had better sit with this a bit longer. Let's go back to that verse and take a closer look at this threshold of salvation.

[The following I have adapted from Reggie A. Braziel and Bro. John Seamonds:
<http://christianhopechurch.com/sermons/IsJesusKnockingOnYourDoor.pdf>]

I want to offer four quick points to help you absorb this verse as for you.

PP#8: The Heart's Door

1. The Person: Jesus!

“Look! **I'm** standing at the door and knocking....” -Rev. 3:20

The first is the *person*. Notice who's standing at the door knocking. It's Jesus! This is the Word, the Life, the Light. He who made all things, who is Himself the Life. It is our Savior and God! The life in you that may seem stuck, or passionless: it originally came from Him! The light in you, that may seem dim and flickering, He gave that to you! He is asking to restore your life and light. The divine is knocking on the door of the human. The sinless is knocking on the door of the sinful. The innocent is knocking on the door of the guilty. This is Jesus, the Son of the living God!

PP#9: The Heart's Door

1. The Person: Jesus!

2. His Position: Outside!

“Look! I'm standing **at the door** and knocking....” -Rev. 3:20

Next, notice His *position*. He's on the outside wanting to come in. We can profess Jesus and believe in Him. We can even have invited Him in. But through complacency, or sufficiency, or a sense of security, or lack of focus, or a lack of attention, we have slowly slid Jesus farther and farther way. Jesus knocks on the doors of self-sufficient, lukewarm Christians. He will not barge in. He will only be invited in. He wants to be the center of your heart, but He will do that only as He is invited. We control our own heart's doors. God always has, and always will, let us keep that. It's up to us. Being a disciple means opening all our doors to Jesus, holding nothing back, giving Him your all. Every door you keep shut, even if only one, Jesus knocks at it. Jesus wants all of you!

PP#10: The Heart's Door

1. The Person: Jesus!

2. His Position: Outside!

3. His Plea: Attention and Action!

“...If any **hear my voice and open the door....**” -Rev. 3:20

Jesus is *pleading*. Stop and let that soak in. The Son of the Most High God, is begging. This is our Savior! Can you hear *His* heart?

He pleads for our *attention*. This may be our biggest struggle. Life is good and busy and full. We zoom along. We give our attention to the next thing, and the next. “My, I'm just so busy!” And our attention slowly drifts off Jesus. It's a way of pulling our trust off of God and putting it back on ourselves. Can you see it? Jesus is pleading for our attention. It just made since how this verse is about us! Most often it is the Holy Spirit who speaks into us when we read the Bible. Consider, how is your Bible reading routine? How are your devotions? Your prayer life?

Jesus also pleads for our *action*. Open the door! This takes work, and effort, and intentionality. Restore those habits, those healthy, holy habits, that keep you close to Jesus. Choose Jesus over the game on your phone. Open the door by opening your Bible. Don't buy that thing or meal, or experience, and instead give that money away for God. Go over and apologize, or offer to pray, or change your schedule and stay and listen. Open the door. Only you can do that. Notice, the threshold at the Garden of Eden is guarded by cherubim with flaming swords. But then, Jesus came. And now, the only barrier across the threshold back into paradise, is the door that you control.

PP#11: The Heart's Door

1. The Person: Jesus!
 2. His Position: Outside!
 3. His Plea: Attention and Action!
 4. His Promise: His Presence and His Joy
- "... I will come in to be with them, and will have dinner with them, and they will have dinner with me." -Rev. 3:20

And lastly, notice the promise that Jesus makes while knocking on your door. "I will come in!" You don't have to do anything but open the door. You don't have to coax Him, or impress Him, or earn His favor. He is eager to spring over the threshold. You can have the fullness of that personal relationship with your Savior, your Creator, the Word, Life, Light, abundant life, all that God intended, created you for. Restored! Paradise!

Jesus uses the image of eating together to describe the joy He offers. Imagine the perfect experience, eating with someone you love: laughing, crying, sharing deeply, sitting as time flies by. This is the image Jesus uses. You, at your happiest, most contented, most centered. Shalom.

PP#12: *Image of eating with Jesus, an image full of laughter and joy.*

There is a meal prepared here this morning. It is a symbolic meal, we call it Holy Communion. But every time we come to it, we eat with Jesus. And Jesus is here again this morning. He wants to eat with you. He knocks on your heart's door and calls to you, "If any hear my voice and opens the door, I will come in to be with them, and will have dinner with them, and they will have dinner with me."

I invite you to use this time of Holy Communion as an opportunity to answer Jesus' knocking. Today, right here, right now, you can eat with Jesus!

Holy Communion

Prayer of Confession

We begin our Holy Communion with prayer, prayer of inner reflection and confession. To help us do that together, I'm going to read some thoughts on this verse of Revelation 3:20 by the Rev. John Piper, back when he was still a pastor in Minneapolis. He still is chancellor of Bethel University and Seminary, by the way. As you hear his words, I want you to let them go deeply in your hearts. Listen for how the Holy Spirit is speaking to you. Let Him in. Be open. Be honest. Be real.

Let's pray.

This passage "is addressed to lukewarm Christians who think they have need of nothing more of Christ. It is addressed to churchgoers who do not enjoy the riches of Christ or the garments of Christ or the medicine of Christ because they keep the door shut to the

inner room of their lives. All the dealings they have with Christ are businesslike lukewarm dealings with a salesman on the porch.

“But Christ did not die to redeem a bride who would keep Him on the porch while she watched television in the den. His will for the church is that we open the door, all the doors of our life. He wants to join you in the dining room, spread a meal out for you, and eat with you and talk with you. The opposite of lukewarmness is the fervor you experience when you enjoy a candlelit dinner with Jesus Christ in the innermost room of your heart. And when Jesus Christ, the source of all God's creation, is dining with you in your heart, then you have all the gold, all the garments, and all the medicine in the world.

“How do you buy gold when you're broke? You pray, and trust the promise: ‘I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.’ There is an intimate communion and fellowship with Christ which many of us . . . need to seek in earnest prayer. Because when He dwells in the innermost room of our affections, He brings the power we want more than anything – the power to conquer selfishness and live for others.”

(“How to Buy Gold When You're Broke,” a sermon on Revelation 3:14-22, January 2, 1983, <http://www.desiringgod.org/>).

[*Silent prayer.*]

Jesus, come in! It is hard, for we want to keep some doors closed. Help us to open every one. We want to eat with you!

Thank you for coming to us, and wanting us, wanting to be with us. Thank you for crossing the gulf and closing the gap. But now, this last threshold, the one that we control, help us to open the door! Amen.

Words of Assurance

Words of Institution

The Great Thanksgiving

Prayer of the Holy Spirit

Distribution of the Elements

Offering

Song: *Come thou Fount of Every Blessing* -Sanctify

Closing Song: *He Lives!* -Sanctify

Memory Verse:

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” -Matthew 5:8

Announcements: -David

Delivering soap drive.

Still shelter openings available.

Echo & Echo Jr.

Youth mission trip drive - Over 2/3rds there!

Benediction: -David