

# Gospel Lesson for the Week

April 13, 2008

## Fourth Sunday of Easter

Please read

[John 10:1-10](#)

Read also

[Acts 2:42-47](#)

[Psalm 23](#)

[I Peter 2:19-25](#)

*"Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.*

*The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.*

*When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers."*

*Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture.*

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."*

--- John 10:1-10

### SHEEPCARE

Not given to sheeppcare  
or animal husbandry  
and unfamiliar as I am  
with ancient customs  
in the Middle East,  
I puzzle and ponder  
over Jesus' allusions.  
It's comforting to know  
that even those close to him  
and to that time and place,  
had trouble understanding,  
causing him to change his  
figure of speech.

And there is comfort too  
knowing that even learned scholars  
differ on the setting  
and the meaning of the words.  
But back to the text.

Mixing his metaphors,  
Jesus describes himself  
first as the gatekeeper,  
then as the gate,  
and later, as the chapter unfolds,  
as shepherd.  
And while the meaning  
may at points be obscure,  
three things are clear to me.

I need a sheepfold,  
a corral of comfort,  
where I can find safety  
and companionship,  
I call it church.

I need a gatekeeper  
to police the entranceway  
to my every thought and action,  
and to bar the door into myself  
to all that would break in and steal.  
I call him Spirit

I need a shepherd  
whose loving, intimate care  
will insure my protection,  
so that I may fear no evil,  
whether by the still waters, or  
through death's shadowy vale.  
I call him Christ.

It's good to know  
that in my sheeplife,  
wayward and  
unfocused as it is,  
the Shepherd

stands by the gate,  
guarding my goings and comings,  
my guarantor of life,  
life that is abundant,  
assuring my protection  
and his love.  
I call him Savior.

--- *rvc*