

## **Sermon on John 10:1–10 (Sixth Sunday of Easter)**

*“I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved.”*

My mother chose this verse from the Gospel of John as her confirmation verse. A confirmation verse is meant to be something special—a companion for life’s journey.

When we were asked to choose our own confirmation verses, I asked my mother what hers had been. And I liked that it was the same as mine—that this verse connects us.

Back then, I would never have imagined that one day I would preach on this very text—and that it would meet me again in such a different moment of life.

Because I also preached on this verse at her funeral, after her battle with cancer ten years ago. And through that, this verse has become something very special to me—a word of grief, but also of hope. And that is why it fits so well into the Easter season, and also into Good Shepherd Sunday.

“I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.”

Doors meet us everywhere in daily life. When we leave our house early in the morning, when we go shopping, when we ring a neighbor’s doorbell, when we...

Doors look different. They can be plain and simple, or beautifully decorated, like the gate to a castle.

Without even thinking about it, we cross a threshold into another place. It is something completely ordinary.

Doors are diverse—and I don’t just mean in how they look.

Sometimes it is easy to walk through them. Sometimes we can hardly wait. When we are full of anticipation, when we are excited about what awaits us on the other side. Like children at Christmas, waiting with excitement to finally be allowed into the room with the tree and the presents—almost unbearable, that tension until the door finally opens.

At other times, it is difficult. When we have to admit a mistake. When something challenging is waiting on the other side—like an exam.

Then doors can feel threatening. Like entering a lion’s den.

But most of the time, we pass through doors without thinking about them. They are simply there. Part of everyday life. Doors open new paths for us.

And into this everyday image, Jesus speaks—not only, “I am the gate,” but in the same chapter of John’s Gospel also: “I am the good shepherd.”

The two belong together.

The good shepherd and the gate.

In the world of shepherds back then, this was very concrete: At night, the shepherd would often lie down in the entrance of the sheepfold. He himself became the “gate.” No sheep could go in or out without passing by him. The shepherd was protection, boundary, and access all at once.

So when Jesus says, “I am the gate,” this is not an abstract image. He is saying: I am the one who protects. I am the one who gives access. I am the one who stands between danger and life.

And when he says, “I am the good shepherd,” it becomes even clearer: He is not only the one who knows the way—he is the one who walks it with us.

The good shepherd is not distant. He knows his sheep. He knows their voices, and they trust him. He does not only go ahead—he stays with them.

It is an image both gentle and strong: relationship instead of control, closeness instead of distance, trust instead of fear.

And right in the middle of it: the gate.

When Jesus says, “I am the gate,” he is not only access to something—he himself is the connection.

To life with God.

To trust.

To safety.

As my mother’s confirmation verse, and as the verse I preached on at her funeral, it is deeply connected to my life.

This verse speaks of grief—but also of hope and of trust. The hope of eternal life in God’s kingdom. The hope that death does not have the final word. And the assurance that Jesus is our shepherd, caring for us—even when we lose our way.

Because that is exactly what Jesus is saying in this image: He is not only the gate we pass through. He is the one who has opened the way for us in the first place. He is the good shepherd who watches over us. And even more: He has gone ahead of us through that gate.

That is why this verse has become an Easter word for me.

Because it does not stop at farewell—but leads us into the hope that Christ himself embodies.

Because Easter means: The good shepherd does not remain in death.

And the gate does not stay closed.

Easter means: Christ goes through death himself—and comes to meet us as the living one.

The good shepherd does not abandon his sheep.

The gate is not the end—it is a passage.

Maybe that is the depth of this image:

That we do not have to go through the doors of our lives alone.  
Not the easy ones.  
Not the difficult ones.

Because the good shepherd is there.

And the gate is not something we have to open by ourselves—but someone who says:

“I am it.”

And maybe that is the invitation of this text today:

That we do not see our lives only as a sequence of open and closed doors—

but as a journey with the good shepherd,  
who himself is the gate through which we may pass.

Amen.