



If Jesus asked you this question, what would you reply?

Would it come from your knowledge (head) or the way you live your life (heart)?

Both are important but often we believe the facts but do not embrace them in our lives. Why is this?

There are seven “I Am” statements made by Jesus in the Gospel of John.

During 2023 we will reflect and pray about all seven.

Last month we did “I Am the Light of the World.” Check out our website for further details.

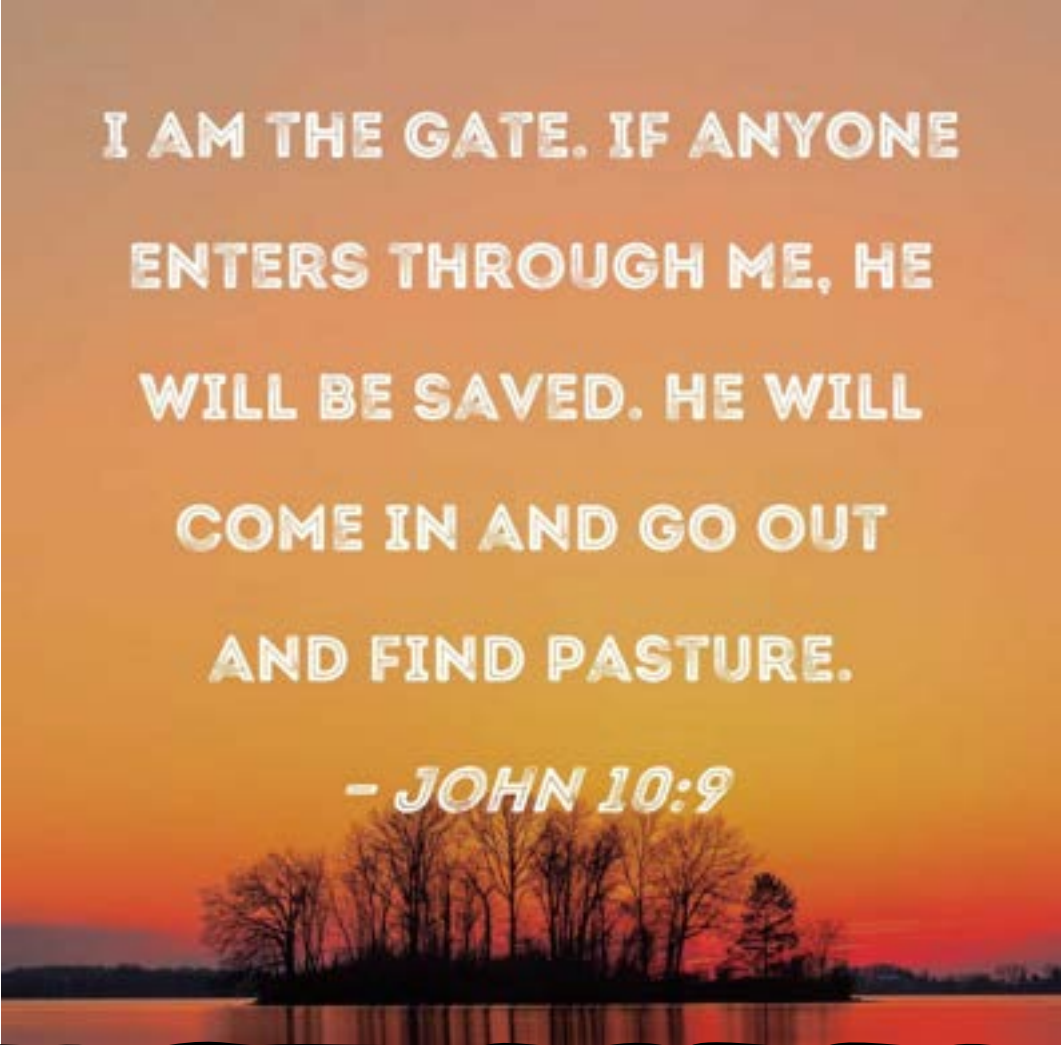
<https://godmanchesterbaptist.org/prayer/>

First Century Sheep Husbandry



In ancient Palestine Jewish shepherds would keep their sheep in one of two types of sheep pens. The first would be a permanent pen usually constructed of stones topped with thorny branches. This pen would be fully enclosed by walls that would serve as protection for the sheep and create a sense of safety for them. There would be one doorway into the pen. This doorway would be narrow so that the shepherd would be able to look at each sheep as they entered one by one. This provided the shepherd the opportunity to see each sheep and examine them while making sure each sheep had returned. Once all the sheep had entered, the door would be shut, and the sheep would be safe and protected.

The second type of pen was more of a makeshift pen constructed out in the field where the sheep would be grazing for days and weeks at a time. This pen was made from whatever the shepherd could piece together. Like the other pen, it was a place that afforded the sheep a sense of protection and safety from predators wanting to eat the sheep such as wolves and other animals who were active at night. Unlike the permanent pen this one would normally not have a door. Instead, the shepherd would lie down across the opening, becoming a sort of human door. All those desiring to enter, or exit would have to pass over (through) the shepherd.



I AM THE GATE. IF ANYONE
ENTERS THROUGH ME, HE
WILL BE SAVED. HE WILL
COME IN AND GO OUT
AND FIND PASTURE.

- JOHN 10:9

I AM THE GATE

Reflection: Jesus is the “gateway” or “doorway” into God’s kingdom. Trusting in Jesus allows us to enter the full and abundant life God wishes for us.

Read John 10:1-10

- Is there a phrase that stands out for you? Reflect and pray about it.
- Have you put your total trust in Jesus’ death and resurrection to give you access into God’s kingdom or are you looking for another way?

Read Luke 13: 22-30

- Imagine Jesus as a door.
- How have you experienced Jesus, as a narrow door or as a wide-open door? Has this changed throughout the years you have journeyed with Jesus?

PRAYER OF EXAMEN

This is a tool used to help you reflect upon your day to help you better partner with God and be aware of how you are or are not experiencing the reality of God in your life.

Maybe ask yourself some questions such as:

- When did I sense an invitation from Jesus to enter something?
- When did I sense Jesus providing a way of escape, an exit for me?
- How was I a doorway to Jesus today for those around me?

BREATH PRAYER

This is a style of prayer you incorporate throughout your day as you breathe.

It is typically 7 – 9 syllables.

This month's breath prayer is "Jesus, doorway to life, my protector and defender."

ACTIONS

Write a pledge – As a sign of your total trust in Jesus cut out a paper heart shape and write on it:

"Jesus, my saviour, I choose to trust in you alone to bring me into God's kingdom."

Sign your name, and then stick this heart to a doorway in your house which you use every day. Every time you walk through that door pray for someone who doesn't know Jesus yet, that they would come to faith in Him too.

The Door and Gate Challenge – Pause at interesting gates and doorways on a walk and use them as a prayer prompt. There are some examples on this board in Godmanchester but use ones in your own community.

What might God be saying about our community?

Keep a gratitude jar – Take an empty jar, decorate it and use it to keep a memory daily for the next month of the things that you are grateful to God for.

Enjoy a blessing today – Check out the words in the pink hearts on this board. Which one of the Lord's blessings do you need to receive by faith today? Pick one and pray the following:

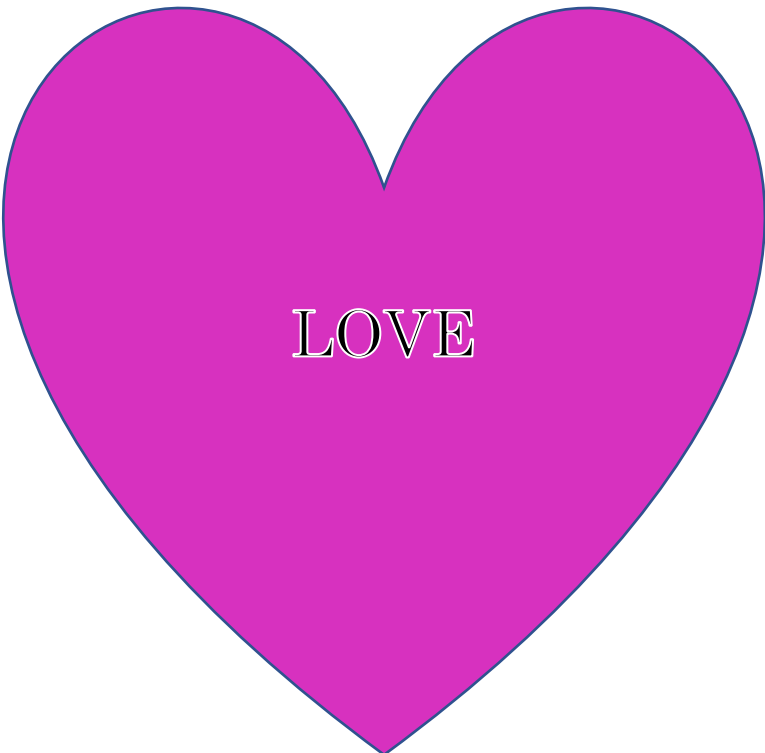
"Lord you are the gate to everything good in my life. Thank you for all the wonderful blessings you make freely available to me. I now receive by faith your blessing of Thank you Jesus. Amen."



HEALING



ACCEPTANCE



LOVE



HIS
PRESENCE



BELONGING



PEACE



FREEDOM



FORGIVENESS



LIFE



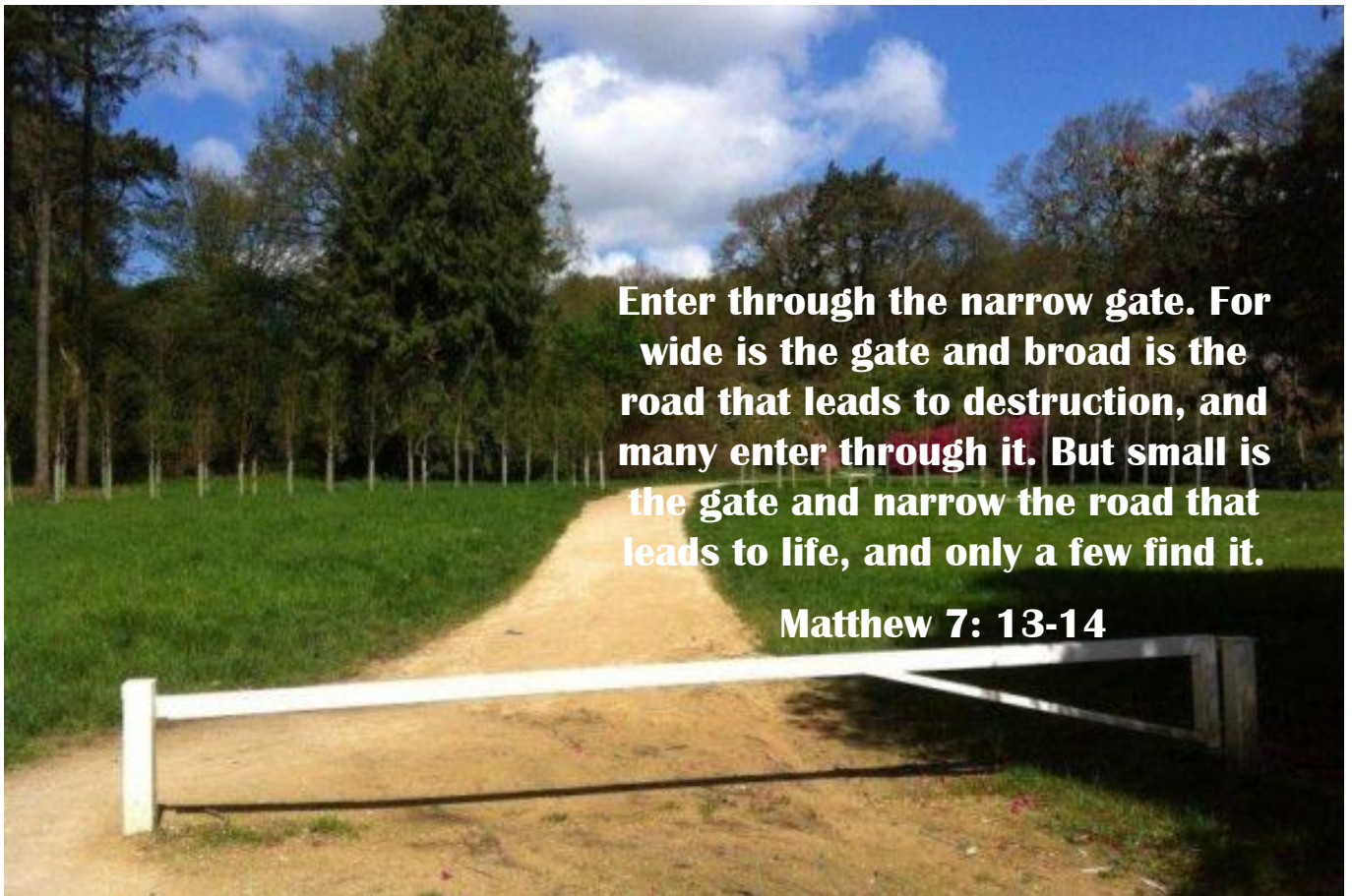
HOPE



SECURITY

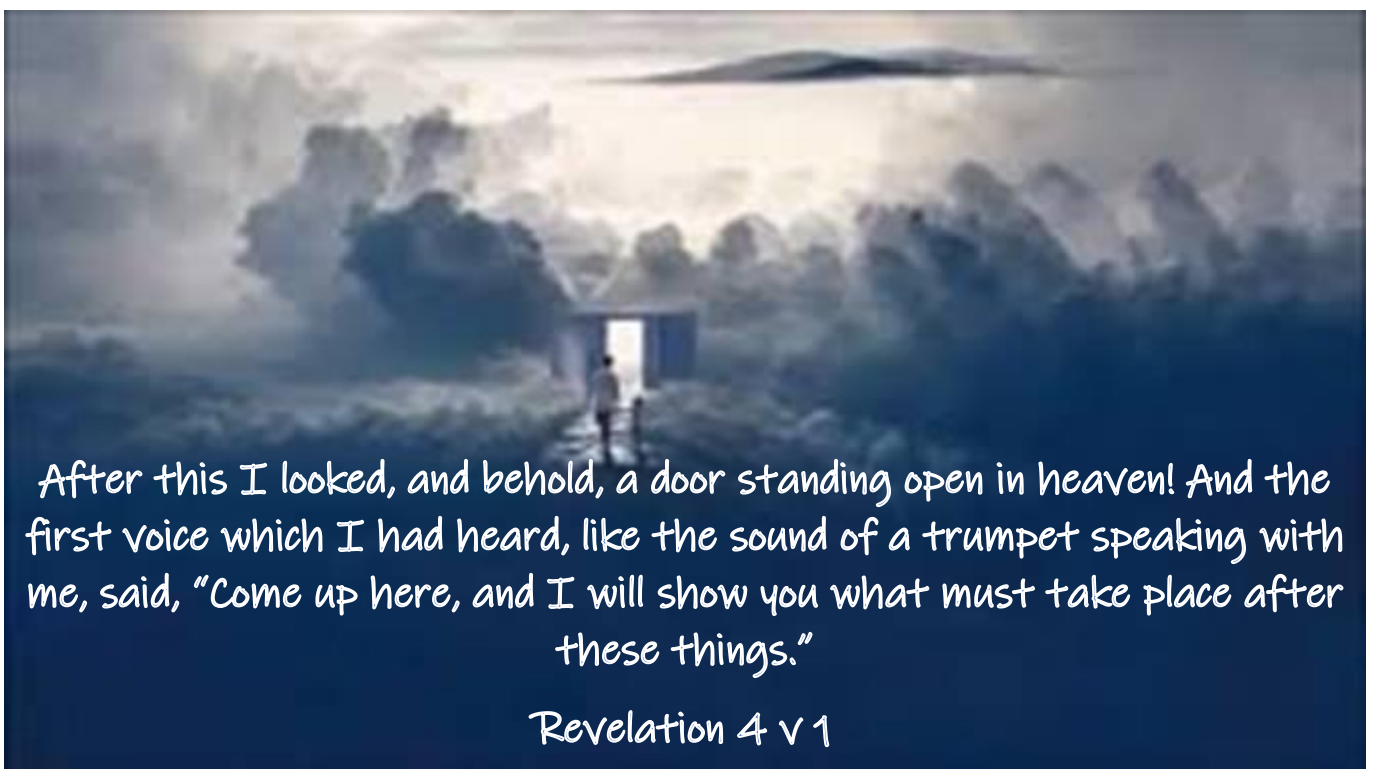


JOY



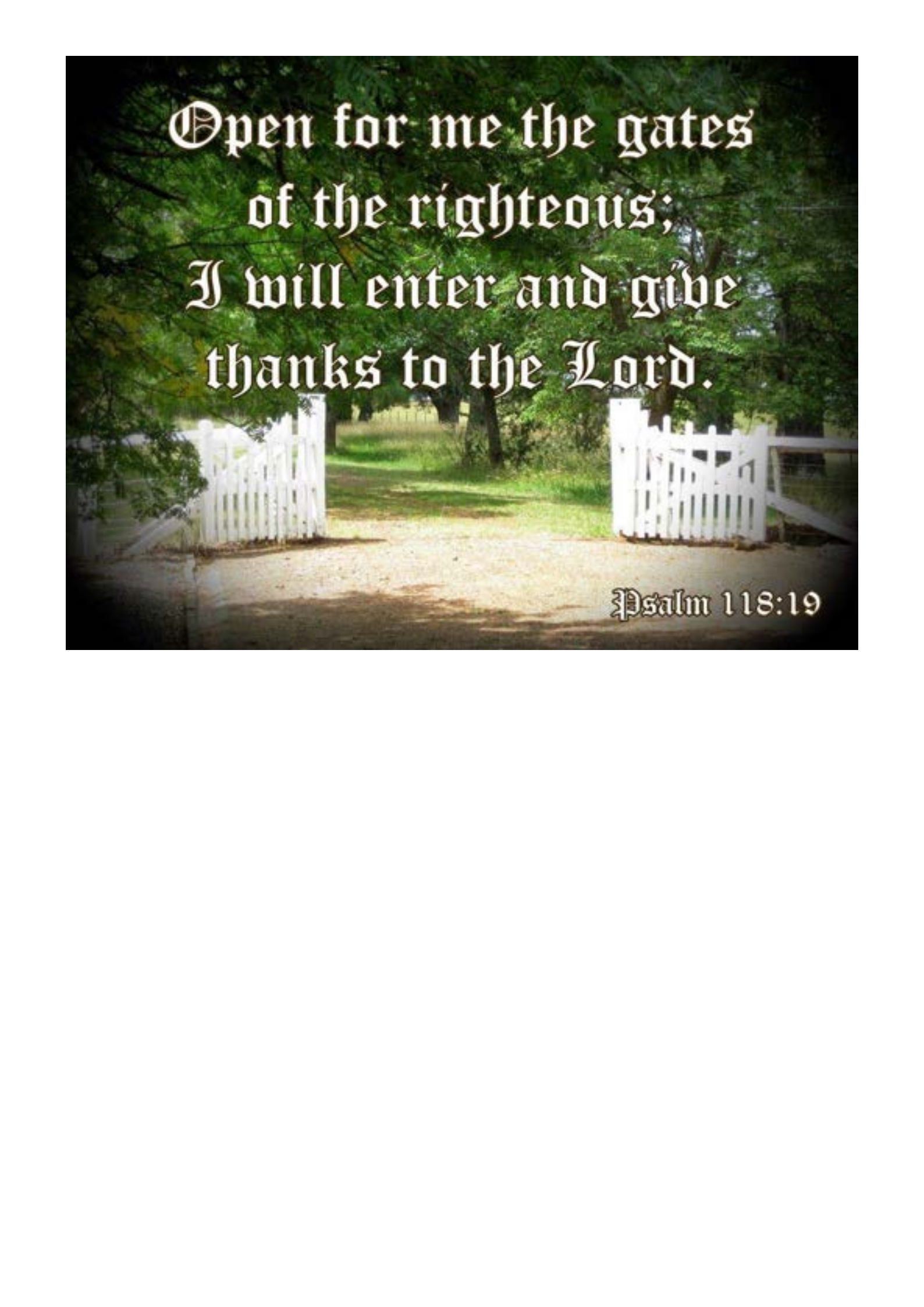
Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

Matthew 7: 13-14



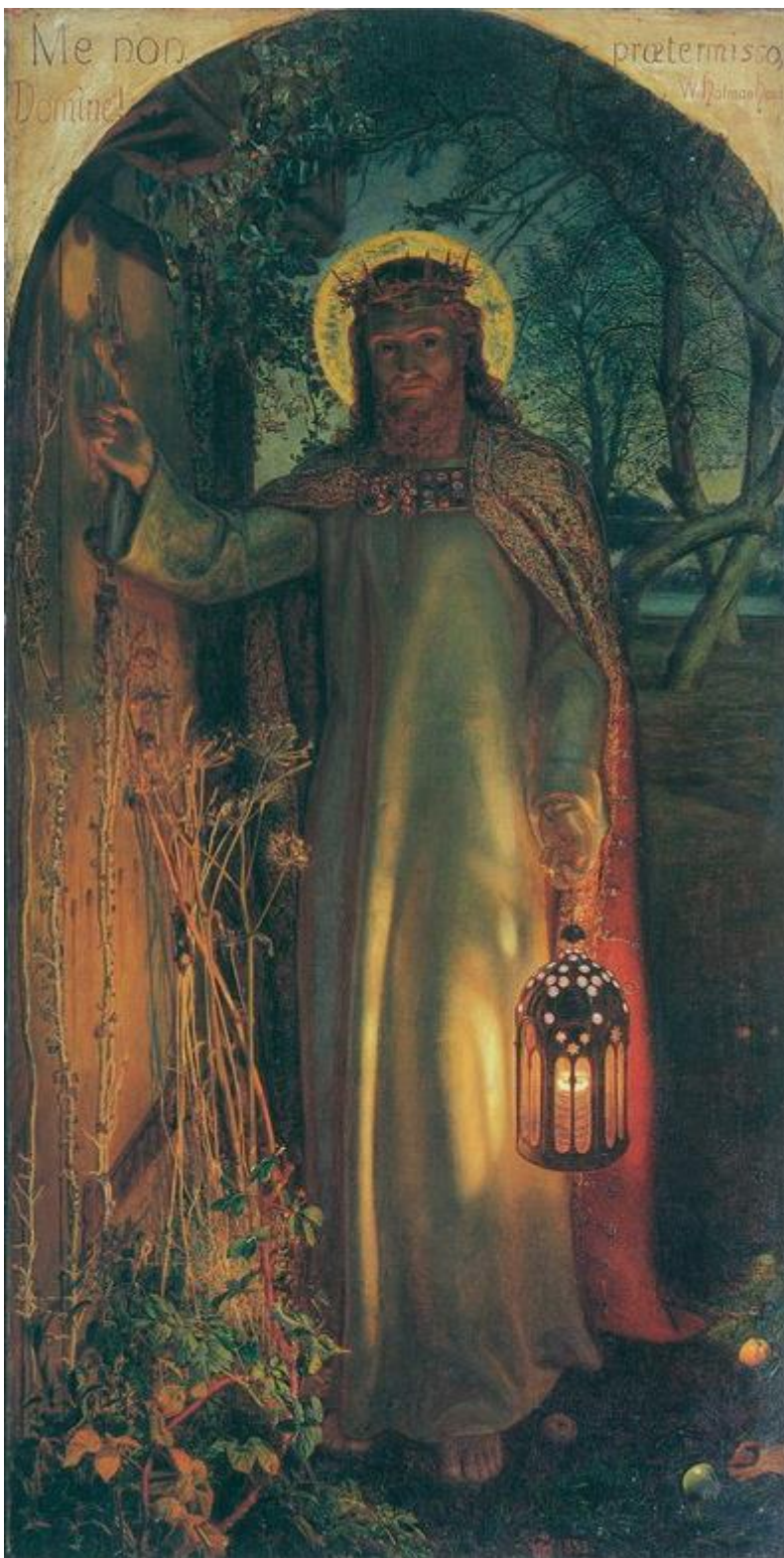
After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."

Revelation 4 v 1

A photograph of an open white picket fence gate leading to a grassy path in a wooded area. The gate is made of white picket fence posts and is open, revealing a dirt path that leads into a lush green field. The background is filled with dense green trees and foliage, creating a serene and natural setting. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

Open for me the gates
of the righteous;
I will enter and give
thanks to the Lord.

Psalm 118:19



This famous painting which hangs in the Side Chapel of Keble College, Oxford is the original by William Holman Hunt, painted in 1853.

A larger replica, painted by Holman Hunt when he was nearly 70, hangs in St Paul's Cathedral, London.

Look at the door which represents the human soul, which cannot be opened from the outside. There is no handle on the door, and the rusty nails and hinges overgrown with ivy denote that the door has never been opened and that the figure of Christ is asking for permission to enter.

The writing under the picture, which is rather hard to read, is taken from Revelation 3 'Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me.'





Your Relationship with God – looking UP

- *What are the characteristics of Jesus outlined in these passages? Ask yourself, "Which of these truths do I know, and which have had an impact on how I live my life?"*
- *A gate can be an entrance. Take some time to reflect over your life, seeking to discover how Jesus has been an entrance for you.*
- *A gate can be an exit. List those things that Jesus has provided an exit from for you – take time to thank Jesus for his grace in this.*
- *How have you experienced Jesus as a narrow door or as a wide-open door? Has this changed throughout the years you have journeyed with Jesus?*

Your relationship with your church community – looking IN

- *Historically churches have been seen as a place of sanctuary for people. When the door shut people were protected from the danger outside. Does your church community feel like this?*
- *If the church represents the Jesus' sheepfold on earth, then do you feel a sense of security and sustenance in your church.*
- *The "door" is for everyone. How accepting of this are you and is your church available for use by anyone? Can you help with this?*

Your relationship with those outside church – looking OUT

"They will come in and go out and find pasture."

- *The purpose of the gate is not to keep out other sheep nor to keep the sheep in when they need to go out to new pasture. It guards against threats.*
- *Can we intentionally shepherd others towards a life of loving God and bringing them into the sheepfold to listen to Jesus' voice.*
- *Who do you know who is outside of Jesus flock? How can you pray for them and be a testimony of Jesus love to them?*