

Jesus on the Outside



The Door Only You Can Open (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you Keys to Successful Living which God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry. The title for my talks this week is "The Door Only You Can Open."

But first, let me say "Thank you" to those of you who have been writing to me. Before I finish this talk, we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It means a great deal to me to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you so please take time to write even if it's only a brief note. And now, back to our theme, "The Door Only You Can Open."

A door, of course, is a familiar feature in the life of all of us. The use we make of a door can be crucial in deciding the course of our lives. On the one hand, we can open a door and let someone in; on the other hand, we can close a door and keep someone out. Depending on who the person is, this decision that we make in opening or closing the door can have a decisive effect on the entire course of our lives.

In particular, there is one door in your life which only you can open. The decision which you make in opening that particular door will determine the course of your life, not only in time but also in eternity. Can you guess what the door is? There's a very vivid picture of this door in the Book of Revelation in a message that Jesus sends to one of the seven churches in Asia, the church in Laodicea. The message is found in Revelation, chapter 3, verse 20. It is Jesus who is speaking. Bear in mind He's speaking to a Christian church. This is what He says:

> "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me."

We need to ponder the implications of this picture. Here we have a Christian church, established before the end of the first century, they acknowledged the name of Christ; they professed faith in Him; they repeated the creed, probably; prayed; sang hymns; they celebrated the communion or the Eucharist in memorial of Him, and yet: Where was Jesus? His words indicate very plainly, He was on the outside seeking to gain admission. Isn't that an amazing picture? A church that

acknowledged Jesus, that believed in Him, that sang His praises, prayed prayers in His name, and yet He was not there, He was on the outside. Isn't that astonishing? And He was seeking to gain admission. He was very humble. He wasn't going to force His way in. He didn't say, "If you don't do what I ask, I'll batter the door down." He said, "I'd like you to open the door. And if you open the door, I will come in." But it's very clear from the words He uses that the opening of the door is not something that He will do. It's something that the person addressed must do.

And in the Greek language it's very clear, too, that when He comes to that question of opening the door, He's not speaking in the plural to a group of people, He's speaking individually to each person in that church. "If you, individually, will open the door, I will come in."

Why was it that He was on the outside? Were they insincere? Not necessarily. Well, then what was missing? I believe the words of Jesus give the key to answering that question: What was missing? Why was Jesus on the outside? Listen to what He says again:

> "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears My voice and opens the door…"

What is the key? It's contained in that phrase that begins with "if": "… if any one hears My voice." That was the problem in that church, they were not hearing His voice. And consequently, He was left on the outside. I want you to know that this is the decisive personal relationship which alone makes us true Christians—it's hearing His voice, it's having direct communication with Jesus. It's not a form of worship or of religion or a ritual—all those things may be good in their place but not one of them is a substitute for the vital essential which is hearing the voice of Jesus. That speaks about a relationship with Jesus which is direct, it's intimate and it's continuing. It's not confined to a certain day of the week or a certain hour of the day or a certain type of building or certain forms of ceremony, it's something person to person. "If you will hear My voice…"

Jesus makes it plain, really, in many different ways and in many different places in the New Testament that this is what He's after in our lives. He's not just come to bring us religion or good theology or even a lot of knowledge, although these things can all be good in their place. But the vital thing He stresses again in John, chapter 10, verse 27:

> "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me…"

Again, the crucial issue: hearing the voice of Jesus. If you don't hear His voice, you can't follow Him because He leads by His voice. That's the picture of an Oriental shepherd; His sheep followed Him because they recognized His voice and they went where they heard the voice.

Jesus says in the same context, "They don't know the voice of a stranger. They won't follow a stranger." So, the key to following Jesus is hearing His voice. And, concerning those who hear His voice, Jesus says, "I know them." And then He goes on to say, "…and I give to them eternal life and no one can pluck them out of my hands."

You see what total security there is in that intimate personal relationship with Jesus where you hear His voice, He knows you, He gives you eternal life, and there is no power in the universe that can pluck you out of His hand.

Let's look at that picture from Revelation once more. Here's Jesus standing outside a church pleading for admission and He says, "…if you will hear my voice and open the door, I will come in." Imagine that! A church that was already in existence within about sixty years of the death of Jesus with its worship, with its ceremonies, with its prayers, with its hymns and yet without Jesus. Isn't that solemn thought? If that could happen in the first century, do you think it could happen in the twentieth century? Don't you think that it has happened in many, many churches in those intervening centuries? Could you picture Jesus outside the door of the church, perhaps, that you attend? Or the church on the street where you live which you don't attend? Maybe you don't attend any church. But there's a picture of the Lord of glory, the Lord of life, the Savior, the eternal King, in His humility, standing outside the door and saying, "If you'll hear My voice, if you'll open the door, I will come in." If that could happen in the first century, how much more in the twentieth century?

What are you relying on for your personal relationship with the Lord? Is it the fact that you were baptized? Or confirmed? Is it the fact that you go to church? Or that you read your Bible? Or that you sing hymns? Or that you offer money to the Lord's work? I don't want to belittle any of those things, they're all important; but yet they are not sufficient without that great single central experience of knowing Jesus personally, hearing His voice, and making Him a part of your life. The amazing thing about Almighty God is, for reasons I think we'll never fully discern, He wants to share the life of His human creatures. He wants to come in. He wants to be part of our life. If He's not part of our life, it's not because He doesn't want to, it's because we haven't met the conditions. And I'd like to ask you, personally, at this very moment: What is your relationship to Jesus? Have you heard His voice? And, if you've heard His voice, what did you do? Did you open the

door?

You might say, “Well, I never rejected Him.” Well, I want to tell you that’s not enough. If somebody’s outside the door, asking for admission, you don’t have to reject that person, you just have to do nothing and He remains outside and you remain without Him. There’s only one adequate response and that’s the response that Jesus asks for: to open the door and to invite Him in. He won’t push His way in, He’s a gentleman. He doesn’t come in uninvited. If you want Jesus Christ in your life as Savior and Lord, as your friend and companion, your counselor and helper, you’re going to have to take action. Maybe you’ve heard His voice even as I’ve been speaking to you today. Maybe for the first time you’ve realized that there is a Savior who wants to come in, who wants to help you, who loves you, who cares for you, who knows you intimately. And yet He’s not on the inside of your life, He’s on the outside. I want to challenge you as I close this message today. What are you going to do about it? Are you going to open the door? Or are you going to leave it closed?

Our time is up for today but I’ll be back with you again tomorrow at this same time. Tomorrow I’ll be dealing with the vital question: How can you hear the voice of Jesus?

Radio Program

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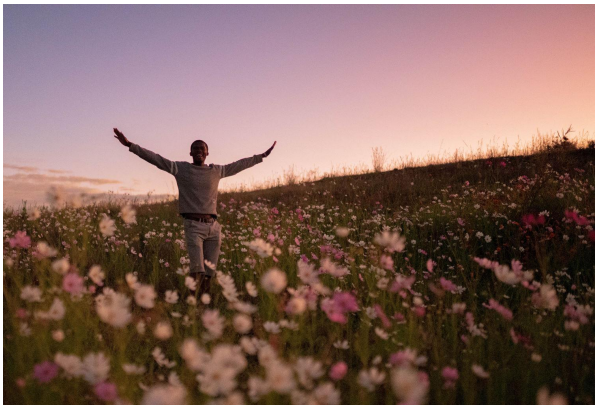

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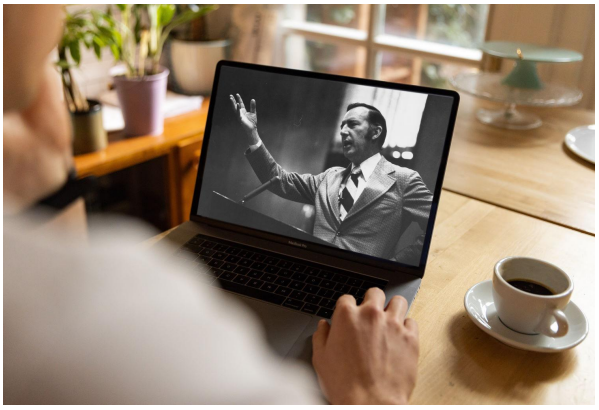

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