

LifeGroup Sermon Series Study
2022-2023
Series Five



“The Door”



In Revelation 3:20 Jesus says, “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me . . .”

When Jesus lived on this earth He interacted with many different people and He did something for everyone that He met . . .knocked on their door. Not a physical door but a spiritual door. Their heart’s door. He is knocking on people’s doors today. They have a choice to make when Jesus is knocking on their door– will they open the door to Jesus or keep it closed?

This series is about seven men with whom Jesus interacted and knocked on their heart’s doors. We see these men with various responses to Jesus. Some outright rejected Jesus, others wanted to believe but something kept them from following Jesus, and still others gave their lives to Jesus completely.

Whether we are willing to admit it or not, Jesus is still knocking on doors today. Jesus may be knocking on your heart’s door, or maybe He’s knocking on someone in your family’s heart door, or maybe He is knocking on a friend’s heart door, or maybe He is knocking on your neighbor’s heart door. Many times, Jesus uses us today to do the physical knocking.

This Easter/Lent season, may we be listening to Jesus’ knocking. May we be open to speaking to whom someone who Jesus is knocking on their heart. May we be willing to allow Jesus to use us to do the knocking. May Jesus continue to knock, and people respond by opening the door.

For His Kingdom,
Pastor Doug

Week 1
“The Door: Judas”
Matthew 26:14-16, 47-50; 27:3-10

I. Purpose:

- A. To help us understand where Judas' faith fell short.
- B. To help us know how Jesus tried to knock on Judas' door.
- C. To help us see that Judas had a choice.

II. Community that Cares:

- A. What is your next step and how are you doing with taking that step?
- B. How are you doing with your 5-5-5 this week?

III. Community that Understands the Background:

We may sometimes forget that Judas wasn't the only one to fail Jesus. All the apostles failed Jesus. Judas betrayed Jesus but the apostles abandoned Jesus. They all ran away! Peter denied Jesus. Sometimes Judas gets a bad reputation as being the only one who hurt Jesus. Judas, just like all the other apostles, continued to misunderstand Jesus' purpose and methods. Judas along with the others continued to have expectations of Jesus overthrowing the Roman government but Jesus kept talking about dying. It seemed like Jesus broke every religious rule and social etiquette. They all felt various degrees of frustration, anger, and confusion. Judas was right there with them.

We don't know why Judas betrayed Jesus but we do know that he put himself in a situation where Satan was able to manipulate him. Judas agreed to betray Jesus for money which he later would try to retract. In his desperation, after seeing what was happening, he could not face what he had done. He could not retract his testimony against Jesus and chose to end his life. His betrayal sent Jesus to the cross to give all of mankind a second chance.

Week 1 cont.

Sin always separates us from God. It puts us in a place of being an enemy of God. We are either for God or against Him.

Sin puts us in a position of being against God. But because of Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection, we can experience forgiveness after committing even the worst of sins. Praise the Lord for that hope! May we always remember that truth!!!

IV. Community that Learns:

- A. Review the points of the Pastor's message. What spoke to you, challenged you, or encouraged you in these points?

- B. Sermon outline: "The Door: Judas" (**Matthew 26:14-16, 47-50; 27:3-10**).

- C. Josh Jones will be preaching.

V. Community that Applies:

- A. Why do you think Judas went to the chief priests in the first place?

- B. Why do you think Judas asked for money for his cooperation?

- C. Was it really about money to Judas? Why or why not?

- D. Why do you think that Judas used a kiss as his signal to betray Jesus?

- E. What was the chief priest's reaction to Judas' confession? Why was that significant?

- F. How was Jesus knocking on Judas' heart door?

- G. Are you betraying Jesus now? How?

Week 2
“The Door: Caiaphas”
Matthew 26:57-68; 27:1-2

I. **Purpose:**

- A. To help us understand how closed-minded Caiaphas was.
- B. To help us know how far off we can become when we have a closed mind.
- C. To help us see how Jesus knocked on Caiaphas’ heart but he refused to open the door.

II. **A community that Cares:**

- A. What is your next step and how are you doing with taking that step?

- B. How are you doing with your 5-5-5 this week?

III. **Community that Understands the Background:**

Caiaphas was the Jewish leader of the most powerful leadership group outside of the Roman government. This elite group was wealthy, powerful, and influential. This leadership group was called the Sanhedrin. Rome was supportive of this group because they controlled the Jews.

Jesus was a threat to this group. His preaching threatened their position, authority, and wealth. Caiaphas was a man who dealt very severely with people who threatened his power. Caiaphas wasn’t concerned with **whether** he should have Jesus killed, he was concerned about **when** to have Jesus killed.

Caiaphas’ mind was so closed he couldn’t see the truth. He was only open to “his” truth, and that was that Jesus had to die. Caiaphas presided over a mock trial in which almost every rule was broken to condemn Jesus. He manipulated the charges so that they could move the trial to Pilate so that he could sentence Jesus to death.

Week 2 cont.

Caiaphas was a person who would not believe in Jesus when He knocked on Caiaphas' heart because it would cost him too much to follow Jesus. He chose power, pleasure, and prestige instead of what Jesus offered. What Caiaphas didn't realize was that his actions were playing out exactly the way God intended so we could have a chance to choose eternal life. May we always remain open to God's call on our lives.

IV. **Community that Learns:**

- A. Review the points of the Pastor's message. What spoke to you, challenged you, or encouraged you in these points?

- B. Sermon outline: "The Door: Caiaphas" (**Matthew 26:57-68; 27:1-2**)

- C. Caiaphas' response to Jesus' knocking:
 1. Caiaphas was closed (_____) and thought Jesus had to die to save the nation. John 11:45-53

 2. Caiaphas (_____) a trial and condemned Jesus. Matthew 26:57-68

 3. Caiaphas (_____) the charges so Pilate would execute Him. Matthew 27:1-2

V. **Community that Applies:**

- A. What do you think it was like for a Jewish leader, a member of the Sanhedrin, to be under Roman law?

- B. Why was Caiaphas so closed-minded?

Week 2 cont.

- C. Why do you think Caiaphas thought that the death of Jesus was his only option?
- D. Why do you think no one stood up and challenged Caiaphas and his dealings with Jesus' trial?
- E. Do you think that Caiaphas ever questioned himself as he watched Jesus go through the trial process with Pilate?
- F. What causes your heart to grow cold and creates a closed mind?
- G. What is an area spiritually that you are closed-minded about that maybe you should be more open to?

VI. **Community that is Accountable:**

Is there something you need to start or stop doing because of what you learned about Jesus knocking on Caiaphas' door?

VII. **Community that Prays:**

Spend a few minutes praying about your next step.

VIII. **Community that Looks Ahead:**

- A. The scriptures next week are **Matthew 26:58, 69-75**.
- B. If you missed Sunday's sermon, watch online at www.lifewatercc.org before the next Life Group.
- C. Reflect on next week's questions during your five minutes of daily silence.

Notes: _____

Week 3
“The Door: Peter”
Matthew 26:58, 69-75

I. Purpose:

- A. To help us understand why Peter’s outcome was different than Judas’.
- B. To help us know what steps Peter took when Jesus knocked on his heart’s door to experience complete forgiveness.
- C. To help us see the steps we need to take to experience complete forgiveness.

II. Community that Cares:

- A. What is your next step and how are you doing with taking that step?
- B. How are you doing with your 5-5-5 this week?

III. Community that Understands the Background:

Peter was an impulsive personality. He did things without thinking it through. But Peter’s heart was pure and he wanted to do the right thing. He loved Jesus with all his heart even though he stumbled many times.

When Jesus came knocking at Peter’s heart, he willingly followed Jesus. This simple man who was a fisherman became something completely new. His goals for life and purpose completely changed. He left everything to follow Jesus but he never became perfect. He was the perfect picture of graduating from the spiritual school of hard knocks.

Jesus changed Simon’s name to Peter because that was what he would become after Jesus left this earth. Peter was a real person who had real issues, but his love for Jesus never wavered. He made a major mistake in his denial of knowing Jesus and that broke him. But he learned from that experience. Peter spent the rest of his life following Jesus after He knocked on Peter’s door. May that be said of all of us.

Week 3 cont.

IV. Community that Learns:

- A. Review the points of the Pastor's message. What spoke to you, challenged you, or encouraged you in these points?

- B. Sermon outline: "The Door: Peter" (**Matthew 26:58, 69-75**)

- C. Peter's response to Jesus' knocking:
 1. Peter was (_____) about what was going to happen.
Matthew 26:58

 2. Peter (_____) into the pressure around him.
Matthew 26:69-74

 3. Peter (_____) bitterly because he was a broken man.
Matthew 26:74b-75

V. Community that Applies:

- A. Why do you think Peter did not stay hidden but followed Jesus to the courtyard of the high priest?

- B. Would you have followed the crowd to the courtyard of the high priest? Why or why not?

- C. How much pressure do you think Peter was feeling when the people accused him of being with Jesus?

- D. Do you feel pressure that people will discover that you are a Christian today? Why or why not?

Week 3 cont.

- E. How do you think Peter's brokenness impacted him for the rest of his life?

- F. Do you believe that brokenness is an important step in the growth of a Christian today? Why or why not?

VI. **Community that is Accountable:**

Is there something you need to start or stop doing because of what you learned about Jesus knocking on Peter's door?

VII. **Community that Prays:**

Spend a few minutes praying about your next step.

VIII. **Community that Looks Ahead:**

- A. The scriptures next week are **Matthew 27:11-31**.
- B. If you missed Sunday's sermon, watch online at www.lifewatercc.org before the next Life Group.
- C. Reflect on next week's questions during your five minutes of daily silence.

Notes: _____

Week 4
“The Door: Pilate”
Matthew 27:11-31

I. Purpose:

- A. To help us understand how Jesus knocked on Pilate's door.
- B. To help us know that Pilate had a choice.
- C. To help us see how Pilate chose to shut the door on Jesus.

II. Community that Cares:

- A. What is your next step and how are you doing with taking that step?
- B. How are you doing with your 5-5-5 this week?

III. Community that Understands the Background:

Pilate was the 5th governor over the province of Judea which included Jerusalem. Very little is known about this governor who was so involved in God's plan to redeem mankind. We know nothing about him before gaining power as governor. Nothing is also known about why he was appointed to this position at this particular time.

We know from the historian Josephus and the gospel of Luke that there was tension between Pilate's administration and the Jews. When the Jewish leaders brought Jesus to Pilate we see that he was amazed that Jesus would be silent when his accusers were spreading such serious accusations. There is also a hint that Pilate was a “seeker” when he asked Jesus if He was the ‘King of the Jews’. I don't believe Pilate wanted just to see if Jesus was a threat to the Roman government but I believe he was asking if Jesus could be the promised one that the Jews were waiting for.

Ultimately, Pilate could not or would not stand against the hostility, hatred, and threat that the crowd represented. He first tried to negotiate with the crowd. But when that did not work he condemned Jesus to death even though his wife warned him not to do this. Pilate was sent back to Rome by the ambassador of Syria to answer for an incident before Tiberius, but the emperor died before Pilate arrived in Rome. Nothing is known about what happened to him after this event. The Ethiopian Church believes

Week 4 cont.d

that Pilate became a Christian and adores him as both a martyr and a saint, a belief that is historically shared by the Coptic Church. If that is true, then Pilate did respond favorably to Jesus' knock on his heart's door.

IV. Community that Learns:

- A. Review the points of the Pastor's message. What spoke to you, challenged you, or encouraged you in these points?

- B. Sermon outline: "The Door: Pilate" (**Matthew 27:11-31**)

- C. Pilate's response to Jesus' knocking:
 1. Pilate (_____) the right question. Matthew 27:11

 2. Pilate was (_____) at the silence of Jesus when false testimony was brought against Him. Matthew 27:12-14

 3. Pilates tried to offer an (_____) to crucify Jesus. Matthew 27:15-23.

 4. Pilate gave in to the pressure and (_____) Jesus to be crucified. Matthew 27:24-26

V. Community that Applies:

- A. Why do you think Pilate asked Jesus if he was the king of the Jews? Do you think Pilate believed Jesus?

- B. Why was Pilate amazed that Jesus was silent when his accusers were presenting their case?

- C. What was Pilate's purpose for offering Barabbas?

- D. Do you think Pilate's wife's message had any impact on Pilate's decision? Why or why not?

- E. What was Pilate afraid of?

- F. Do you feel pressure when it comes to expressing your belief in Jesus?

- G. How does that pressure impact you in your willingness to share your faith?

- H. Do you ever make a decision that you know Jesus would not make because you are concerned about the consequences at work, at home, or in your neighborhood?

VI. **Community that is Accountable:**

Is there something you need to start or stop doing because of what you learned about Jesus knocking on Pilate's door?

VII. **Community that Prays:**

Spend a few minutes praying about your next step.

VIII. **Community that Looks Ahead:**

- A. The scriptures next week are **Matthew 27:15-26**.
- B. If you missed Sunday's sermon, watch online at www.lifewatercc.org before the next Life Group.
- C. Reflect on next week's questions during your five minutes of daily silence.

Week 5
“The Door: Barabbas”
Matthew 27:15-26

I. Purpose:

- A. To help us understand who Barabbas really was.
- B. To help us know how he had an opportunity to open his door to Jesus.
- C. To help us see how Barabbas saw the gospel displayed right in front of him.

II. Community that Cares:

- A. What is your next step and how are you doing with taking that step?
- B. How are you doing with your 5-5-5 this week?

III. Community that Understands the Background:

We know very little about Barabbas. All we know is that Barabbas was a notorious prisoner. We don't know why he was notorious. We know that he had taken part in the rebellion against the Roman government in Mark 15:7. He also had committed murder in his part in the insurrection. This may have made him a hero among the Jews.

The Jews were a fiercely independent group who hated being ruled by the Romans. They hated paying taxes to support the pagan Roman government. The Roman officials equally hated the Jewish people in return. The time was ripe for rebellion. The fact that Pilate even considered releasing such a dangerous individual was a miracle in itself.

Barabbas was in the front seat, watching the gospel play out. People could choose who they wanted to be crucified. They would choose Jesus to be crucified. Jesus was going to be crucified in Barabbas' place. He was going to be the first to see the gospel's impact. His life would be spared as Jesus paid for Barabbas' sins.

Week 5 cont.d

In reality, we are all Barabbases. We are sinful people who deserve death but Jesus paid that price for us. Praise God for His sacrifice.

IV. **Community that Learns:**

- A. Review the points of the Pastor's message. What spoke to you, challenged you, or encouraged you in these points?

- B. Sermon outline: "The Door: Barabbas" (**Matthew 27:15-26**)

- C. Barabbas' response to Jesus' knocking:
 1. Barabbas was the (_____) of the worst.
Matthew 27:15-16

 2. The crowd (_____) a guilty Barabbas over the innocence of Jesus. Matthew 27:17-23

 3. Jesus took Barabbas' place and (_____) his price.
Matthew 27:24-26

V. **Community that Applies:**

- A. What do you think Barabbas thought of Jesus?

- B. Does Barabbas seem angry to you? Why or why not?

- C. Do you think that Barabbas wondered why the crowd was cheering for him to be released?

- D. Do you think that Barabbas noticed that Jesus was going to die in his place? Why or why not?

Week 5 cont.d

- E. Why would Jesus die for a person like Barabbas?
- F. What does this tell you about Jesus?
- G. Do you ever think you have done something so bad that you cannot be forgiven?
- H. What do you think Jesus would say to you today?

VI. **Community that is Accountable:**

Is there something you need to start or stop doing because of what you learned about Jesus knocking on Barabbas' door?

VII. **Community that Prays:**

Spend a few minutes praying about your next step.

VIII. **Community that Looks Ahead:**

- A. The scriptures next week are **Matthew 27:32-44**.
- B. If you missed Sunday's sermon, watch online at www.lifewatercc.org before the next Life Group.
- C. Reflect on next week's questions during your five minutes of daily silence.

Notes: _____

Week 6
“The Door: Simon”
Matthew 27:32-44

I. Purpose:

- A. To help us understand who Simon was.
- B. To help us know how Jesus knocked on Simon's door.
- C. To help us see the long-term impact of Simon's experience.

II. Community that Cares:

- A. What is your next step and how are you doing with taking that step?

- B. How are you doing with your 5-5-5 this week?

III. Community that Understands the Background:

Simon was only in the limelight for a fraction of time but the impact could be felt for generations. Simon was not a willing participant and was not even planning on experiencing Jesus' crucifixion up close but he did. That experience had to have changed his life and we know that it impacted his wife and child. Simon's wife was like a mother to Paul. Paul was described as chosen by the Lord in Romans 16:13.

Simon was placed in the front row to see Jesus at the most challenging point of His human life. He was forced to carry Jesus' cross when He was too weak from the brutal beatings and floggings that He had endured earlier. Simon saw Jesus' compassion for people in the midst of His suffering when Jesus spoke to mourning women. He saw the physical pain that Jesus was enduring and could touch Jesus' broken body and His blood.

That experience had to have changed him. Jesus had knocked on Simon's door and he responded to the next generation. What about you? Does God have you in a situation where you are on the front row of something truly tragic but amazing all at the same time? God has great news for all of us. He sent His son, Jesus, to come to live, die, and rise again so that we might experience salvation. Let's choose life on this Good Friday.

Week 6 cont.d

IV. Community that Learns:

- A. Review the points of the Pastor's message. What spoke to you, challenged you, or encouraged you in these points?

- B. Sermon outline: "The Door: Simon" (**Matthew 27:32-44**)

- C. Simon's response to Jesus' knocking:
 1. He saw Jesus' physical (_____) up close.
Matthew 27:32

 2. He saw the (_____) and hatred for Jesus up close. Matthew 27:32

 3. He saw Jesus' (_____) up close.
Matthew 27:32, Luke 23:27-29

 4. He saw Jesus' (_____) up close. Matthew 27:32; Mark 15:21; Romans 16:13

V. Community that Applies:

- A. Why do you think Simon was in Jerusalem on that particular day?

- B. Why do you think Simon was at the crucifixion of Jesus?

- C. Do you think it was just by chance that a Roman soldier chose Simon to carry Jesus' cross? Why or why not?

- D. What does it say to you that Simon's wife and son were so active and important to Paul and the church in Rome?

Week 6 cont.d

- E. What impact do you think Simon's experience would have had on you if you would have been there and chosen to carry Jesus' cross?

- F. Is there something you are experiencing that you view as being tragic but God may view it as something good? Do you need to adjust your attitude?

VI. **Community that is Accountable:**

Is there something you need to start or stop doing because of what you learned about Jesus knocking on Simon's door?

VII. **Community that Prays:**

Spend a few minutes praying about your next step.

VIII. **Community that Looks Ahead:**

- A. The scriptures next week are **Matthew 27:57-61; John 19:39** .
- B. If you missed Sunday's sermon, watch online at www.lifewatercc.org before the next Life Group.
- C. Reflect on next week's questions during your five minutes of daily silence.

Notes: _____

Week 7
“The Door: Arimathea”
Matthew 27:57-61; John 19:38-42

I. Purpose:

- A. To help us understand who Joseph of Arimathea was.
- B. To help us know the impact Jesus had knocking on this man's heart..
- C. To help us see the change that Joseph of Arimathea experienced.

II. Community that Cares:

- A. What is your next step and how are you doing with taking that step?
- B. How are you doing with your 5-5-5 this week?

III. Community that Understands the Background:

Sometimes the light comes to us a little late in life but still has the same dramatic impact. Joseph of Arimathea was one of those people. Matthew describes Joseph as a wealthy man and a disciple of Christ. Mark describes Joseph as a respected member of the Sanhedrin who was looking for the kingdom of God. Luke tells us that Joseph had not agreed to their decision and action about Jesus. John tells us that Joseph was a secret follower of Christ.

Joseph was afraid to let people know that he was a follower of Jesus. The ramifications to his standing, his reputation, and even his safety were too much to answer Jesus' knock on his heart's door. After Jesus' death, Joseph is the one who asks Pilate for Jesus' body to bury it. We see a change in Joseph after Jesus' death. Joseph is filled with boldness and we can assume was ready to choose a side to serve. He had realized that Jesus was really who He said He was and Joseph was ready for persecution and even death for his beliefs.

Joseph had a brand new tomb that no one had been laid in and it was close to where Jesus had been crucified. With the pressure to wrap things up because of Jewish law and proximity, Pilate allowed Joseph to have the body. But he didn't bury the body alone. He had

Week 7 cont.d

help. Nicodemus, another member of the Sanhedrin, helped Joseph properly place Jesus in the tomb. It is amazing how many people were impacted by Jesus' death: Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, the thief on the cross, and the soldier who proclaimed that Jesus was the Son of God. This was only the beginning because Jesus was not going to stay dead. He was going to rise again!!!

IV. Community that Learns:

- A. Review the points of the Pastor's message. What spoke to you, challenged you, or encouraged you in these points?

- B. Sermon outline: "The Door: Joseph of Arimathea" (**Matthew 27:57-61; John 19:39**)

- C. Joseph of Arimathea's response to Jesus' knocking:
 1. Joseph was a (_____) disciple of Jesus. Matthew 27:57; John 19:38

 2. Joseph boldly approached (_____) for Jesus' dead body. Matthew 27:58

 3. Joseph and Nicodemus took care of Jesus' body and (_____) it in the new tomb. Matthew 27:59; John 19:38-42

V. Community that Applies:

- A. What were some of the things that Joseph of Arimathea was concerned with before Jesus died?

- B. Were these things valid? Why or why not?

Week 7 cont.d

- C. Do you have similar concerns with letting others know that you are a follower of Jesus? Why or why not?

- D. What do you think happened to Joseph after Jesus died?

- E. Why did Joseph change his mind about aligning himself with Jesus?

- F. Why do you think that Nicodemus helped Joseph to bury Jesus?

VI. **Community that is Accountable:**

Is there something you need to start or stop doing because of what you learned about Jesus knocking on Joseph of Arimathea's door?

VII. **Community that Prays:**

Spend a few minutes praying about your next step.

VIII. **Community that Looks Ahead:**

- A. The scriptures next week are **John 14:15-21**.
- B. If you missed Sunday's sermon, watch online at www.lifewatercc.org before the next Life Group.
- C. Reflect on next week's questions during your five minutes of daily silence.

Notes: _____

Fill in the Blanks

Week 1 – Josh Jones preaching

Week 2

- 1 – minded
- 2 - manipulated
- 3 - maneuvered

Week 3

- 1 - curious
- 2 - caved
- 3 - cried

Week 4

- 1 - asked
- 2 - amazed
- 3 - alternative
- 4 - allowed

Week 5

- 1 – worst
- 2 – chose
- 3 – paid

Week 6

- 1 – pain
- 2 – prejudice
- 3 – prophesy
- 4 – plan

Week 7

- 1 – private
- 2 – Pilate
- 3 – placed

