

Arvada
United Methodist Church

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10 Thousand Doors
Matthew 7: 2-8

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Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and the door shall be opened unto you. That's one of those lines from our Scriptures that I'm not sure what to do with. How many are the times I've knocked and the door I was trying to get into didn't open.

I'm struck by the promise made in that statement, something that sounds a little like "When our faith is strong enough God will give us what we want." Humpf.

Think about entering this church. If you have come anytime during the week, you likely experienced the same thing I did on my first visit here. Only one door opens during the week. Newcomers aim for the same wrong, locked door, walking passed the very large sign over the walk that says "Weekday Entrance", with a nice arrow and all. They all do it, just as I did.

And as they back off of the locked, wrong door, looking around, perplexed, they try each of the other doors until they reach the one that opens—the last one they try. And *then* they see the rather large and obvious sign that they missed walking up to the building. "Weekday Entrance." Now of course, by then, someone has likely seen them fumbling around out there and opens a door for them pointing out the one "right" door, usually a little apologetically.

We who are used to this arrangement seldom remember what it was like on our first visit—how silly we felt at missing that sign, the frustration at finding the doors locked. We who are used to it likely know by now that there is very good reason for the arrangement—namely that if any but the single, right door is used, the cold air in the winter blows right on the volunteer sitting at the desk, and blows down the hall.

It makes sense, the locked doors, eventually. But what about your first time here during the week? Knock and the door shall be opened unto you. Not always. Not here, and not in life.

So what does Jesus mean by that? This passage is part of his sermon on the mount. It's that famous instruction by him on how to live authentically. It's

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about how to live from that place in us that is real and true and good and whole.

So, says Jesus in his litany of how to live,

When we give alms, or gifts, don't make a fuss of it or sound the trumpets. Do it because it's good.

When we pray, don't make a fuss of it; do it because we know it's good.

When we fast, don't make a fuss of it; do it because we believe it helps us re-set our priorities, and that's good.

Make sure what we're cherishing what lasts, rather than what turns to dust.

Worrying gets us no where.

Don't judge others, because it doesn't support what is whole and good.

Then comes our line in question this morning:

Knock and the door shall be opened unto you.

What do we do with this?

Let's consider coming to worship on Sunday morning for example. Look around the room at those gathered here. Go ahead... look around... We are as different as the vast array of leaves popping out on trees all over Arvada.

We come here knocking on different doors, wanting different things from our experience here. Some of us come for the music, some for the sermons, some for our children, some for our parents. Some of us come for quiet reflection, some for inspiration, some for laughter, some for community, some to learn more about the Bible.

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Some of us come for a single hour in the week when no demands are being made on us, a chance to drift in the land of our thoughts; some come hoping for an intellectual treatise in the sermon and some come for a heart warming experience. Some come for the fellowship, coffee and donuts. And some come to grow spiritually, in faith. Some enjoy the clapping in worship, some don't. I know what you're thinking now: Almond Joy's got nuts; Mounds don't.

Look around again. What on earth are we all doing here, now? Why did we come through the doors of this place, on this spring morning? What door are we knocking on? And how is it that the church draws us back week after week, year after year? What happens here that draws us together? What is it that occurs here that is good and real and whole? What is the essence of why we're here?

We've been asking that question a lot in the halls of this place for a while now. It's a question asked all over in mainline denomination churches. It's asked especially intensely as we look toward the future of liberal Protestantism, especially with regard to young adults.

Is the essence of why we're here something that reaches them? Do we as 'the church' have something vital, life-giving, transforming to offer? Is it a message worth trying to find new ways to communicate?

The general United Methodist Church has been asking the same questions in the halls of Nashville and in meetings held all over the place: Surely what we have is worth sharing; what is it, and how do we share it?

The UMC has come up with something. Something new, but it's actually ancient. Something different, but it's quite familiar. Something that rethinks church, and asks us to do the same, offering "church" as a life-changing, world changing gift, to the younger generations who are our future.

Let's see what the UMC has come up with:

[Rethink Church](#)

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What if we imagine church not as a place to come for an hour on Sunday morning, but as what we do with our lives Monday through Saturday? And what if we could convince the world to do the same?

The Christian faith is surely about living in a way that is good and true and whole; it's about letting our own hearts be transformed by the love and grace of God, and supporting that in the lives of those around the world.

I think the UMC is onto something. Such transformation is not about what happens on Sunday morning, no matter what we come here for. It's an eternal message of grace that we enter through any of 10,000 doors. It's an eternal message of love that naturally leads us to offering our lives in service to others. It's an eternal message about living authentically that lines us up into whole human beings.

And when we come from that true place within us that is one with what is truly good, then what we ask for changes. How we knock changes. And whatever doors open, even those that lead to rough terrain, we walk through with grace.

Our community is about to explore what we're about. We'll do this May 29 and 30 in our Vision Retreat. We encourage you to spend some time imagining what doors we might seek to open to others. We encourage you to imagine us cultivating a life of faith together that offers open doors through which anyone can walk and know the love of God, the call of justice, the life-changing grace that can transform the world.

What if we were to re-think church? And what if the world were to do the same?