

Saturday - April 3

So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

John 10:7-10 (NRSV)

I just finished an amazing full-course meal in theology, scripture, and history in connection with Jesus' crucifixion: *The Day the Revolution Began* by N.T. Wright. While reading, I was reminded of what C.S. Lewis said: "Any theories we build up as to how Christ's death did all this are, in my view, quite secondary: mere plans or diagrams to be left alone if they do not help us, and, even if they do help us, not to be confused with the thing itself." ¹A theological understanding of this event alone can't fully provide meaning. It is experiencing, acknowledging, and accepting the Crucifixion, followed by the Resurrection, that truly changes us.

I'm 42 years old, and I imagined I would be married with kids, have all the trappings of a lucrative career, and live in a nice house in a nice neighborhood. My family and I would spend quality time with my parents, extended family, and friends.

Instead, I'm single, live far away from family, and have bought a house in the Hilltop area of Columbus, one of the rougher parts of the city. Prostitutes regularly work on my street. I see people living in violence, filth and strung out on drugs. I indulge in my passion for firearms at a shooting range, unlike some of my fellow residents who discharge their firearms into the air on celebratory occasions or sadly, at each other. Nevertheless, there are some awesome people and places to visit in the Hilltop.

My life has been forever changed because of the Crucifixion. Moving to the Hilltop was a calling, and I feel like this is where I've always belonged. I'm surrounded by family all over the greater Columbus area, spanning from my parents' generation to the kids I thought I would have. I have a great job that allows me creativity and flexibility to do the things that are important to me.

Life is not what I imagined it would be - it is so much more! I'm living in abundance and thank God every day! Jesus says that he is the gate through which we are offered abundant life. I can't tell you precisely how this works, but I know that acknowledging, accepting, and living through Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection is the way.

Matt

¹ *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis

Prayer: God, please help us to recognize the abundance that you offer us through Jesus' death and resurrection. For those who may have difficulty seeing your abundance or have yet to see it, I pray that their experience of the Crucifixion and Resurrection this year will transform their lives. Amen.