

Title: **“THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH!”**

Text: John 10:27-30

Subject: *The Infallible Security of God’s Elect*

Introduction:

Sheep are weak, helpless, defenseless creatures. They have no strength to withstand their enemies. If they are **lost**, they cannot find their way home again. If **sick**, they cannot fight off their disease. If **threatened**, they cannot run fast enough to escape danger. If **attacked**, they cannot defend themselves.

The only security sheep have is in their shepherd. If their shepherd is wise, good, and strong, they are secure. If the sheep survive, if they live and flourish, the honor belongs to the shepherd. If the sheep perish, the blame belongs to the shepherd. It is the shepherd’s responsibility to keep the sheep. With those things said, let’s read our text together—John 10:27-30.

¹ Date: Sunday Morning — December 13, 2009
 Cancun, Mexico — December 10, 2009

Reading: *Ezekiel 34:1-31*

Tape: John #68

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John 10:27-30 “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. 30 I and my Father are one.”

The doctrine of our Lord in this text is very plain and obvious: We who believe are Christ’s sheep, weak, helpless, defenseless creatures. And the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is our Shepherd, wise, good, and strong. Because Christ is our Shepherd, we are secure in him.

This is what the Son of God, our dear Shepherd, says concerning all his sheep: — **“THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH!”** I want to take those words of our Lord for my subject, and preach to you, as plainly as I possibly can by the power of the Holy Spirit, about the absolute, infallible, unwavering security of God’s elect in Christ.

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OBJECTIONS

I realize that many pervert the doctrine we preach, the doctrine of Holy Scripture, concerning the eternal security and preservation of God’s elect in Christ. Many twist it into a lie to the eternal ruin of their souls. They attempt to justify their ungodliness by claiming to believe in God’s sovereignty to the exclusion of all responsibility. And they try to soothe their consciences with the delusion that they really are saved, though they live in utter, abhorrent ungodliness.

Others cry, “Such preaching as that promotes lawlessness and antinomianism. Because they must be ruled by law, they presume that everyone must. Because they are forced servants and mercenary soldiers, they presume that there is no such thing as voluntary obedience to the Son of God.

I am sorry for that. But I will not hold back the truth of God for fear that some godless reprobate will pervert it or be offended by it. Our Lord never hesitated to preach the truth, even when he knew that

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the people to whom he was preaching would twist his words, pervert his doctrine, or be offended by the gospel he preached.

- Christ preached the fulfilment of the law; and his enemies said, “*He is an enemy of the law.*”
- Our Lord preached election; and they took up stones to kill him.
- The Son of God preached the free forgiveness of sin; and they said, “*He is the friend of publicans and sinners, a promoter of licentiousness.*”
- Christ preached the blessed freedom and liberty of grace, and his enemies said, “*He is a glutton and a wine bibber.*”

Following the example of Christ, I intend to proclaim to you, in the clearest terms possible, the absolute security and preservation of God’s elect in Christ. Some of you may be confused by it. Some of you may twist and pervert my doctrine to the ruin of your own souls. But, **for you who believe, the doctrine that I now preach to you will be full of comfort and assurance for your souls.**

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PERSEVERANCE

I recognize that the Word of God teaches the perseverance of the saints. Those who are born of God must and shall persevere. They will continue in the faith of Christ. We both believe and keep on believing. The true believer begins in faith, lives in faith, and dies in faith. True faith never quits (Matt. 10:22; John 8:31; 1 Cor. 15:1; Col. 1:23; Heb. 3:6, 14).

(Mat 10:20) “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.”

(John 8:31) “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed.”

(Col 1:23) “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.”

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(Heb 3:6) “But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.”

(Heb 3:14) “For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.”

The Word of God is very clear in this matter: Only those who continue in the faith shall enter into glory. This is the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints.

PRESERVATION

However, the Bible also teaches the preservation of God’s elect in Christ. Those who are truly born of God will most certainly persevere in faith, because we are preserved in Christ by almighty grace. Not one of God’s elect shall ever perish. The Word of God teaches the preservation of the saints just as plainly, just as fully, just as forcibly as it teaches the perseverance of the saints.

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We believe and preach both. **Perseverance** **is** the believer continuing in faith. **Preservation** **is** God keeping his people in faith. **Perseverance** **is** the believer holding Christ by the hand of faith. **Preservation** **is** Christ holding the believer by the hand of his omnipotent, immutable, efficacious grace.

Jesus is our God and Savior,
Guide, and Counselor, and Friend:
He will never, never leave us,
Nor will let us quite leave Him.

Proposition: Having Christ as our Shepherd, all of God’s sheep are absolutely secure in his hands. It is not possible for any true believer to perish, because we are preserved by the grace of God in Christ.

Divisions: Here are four things by which our Lord assures us that every believer is safe and secure in his hands. In the hands of Christ we are secure as the glorified spirits in heaven.

1. A Divine Distinction—”*My sheep.*”

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2. A Divine Gift—*“I give unto them eternal life.”*
3. A Divine Promise—*“They shall never perish.”*
4. A Divine Security—*“Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hands.”*

DIVINE DISTINCTION

Here is a **DIVINE DISTINCTION** — *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know the, and they follow me.”*

— Let men denounce it as they may and denounce me for preaching it if that gives them pleasure, but the God of the Bible does distinguish between men. He chose some and passed by others. He redeems some and leaves others under the curse. He calls some and rejects others. He saves some and does not save others. **Grace is God’s prerogative. He has mercy on whom he will have mercy** (Rom. 9:16; Heb. 2:16).

(Rom 9:15-18) “For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. {16} So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. {17} For the

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scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. {18} Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth.”

Hebrews 2:16 “For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.”

Our Lord clearly teaches his sovereignty in salvation in this chapter. He said to the unbelieving Jews, who refused to believe his word, — “*Ye are not of my sheep.*” And he told them that the evidence of that was fact that they did not believe him (v. 26). The gift of faith and all other grace is reserved for God’s elect. And no one has any reason to imagine that he is the object of God’s mercy, love, and grace who does not trust Christ.

Catch these words and let them sink into your heart. God our Savior says of you and me who believe — **These people are “My sheep.”** In everlasting love,

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by sovereign grace, the Son of God has distinguished us from all other people, and made us to be his own sheep, his own peculiar possession. We who believe are Christ’s sheep by—

A DISTINCT ELECTION — We became his sheep by his own eternal choice. In the covenant of grace God branded his sheep and set a hedge about them, securing their eternal salvation (v. 16).

John 10:16 “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.”

The Lord Jesus says, “*I know them.*” And his knowledge is the peculiar knowledge of his own elective, omniscient love.

- I know who they are.
- I know where they are.
- I know what they are.
- I know all that they have done and all that they have been.

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- I know what I will make of them.
- I know when I will be gracious to them.
- I know how to bring them home.

A DISTINCT PURCHASE (vv. 11,15).

John 10:11, 15 “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep...As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.”

Christ Jesus laid down his life for his sheep, in the place of his sheep, as our Substitute, in our room and stead.

- Christ offered himself as a voluntary sacrifice for sin.
- Christ died as a vicarious Substitute, suffering the penalty of the law for his sheep.
- Christ accomplished redemption for us as a victorious Savior.

A DISTINCT CALL — “*He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.*” — “*My sheep hear*

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my voice, and they follow me.” — This is that special irresistible call that Christ issues to his sheep alone. It is always effectual. It always accomplishes salvation. It always brings the sheep to the Shepherd.

- The good Shepherd calls his own sheep (v. 3).
- He calls his sheep by name.
- He leads them out — Out of darkness into light! — Out of bondage into liberty! — Out of death into life!
- They follow him — *“These are they that follow the Lamb withersoever he goeth.”* Do you hear the Shepherd’s voice?

NOTE: God’s sheep will not follow a stranger. They know truth from error (v. 5; 1 John 2:20, 27).

John 10:5 “And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.”

1 John 2:20, 27 “Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things...The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing

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teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.”

A DIVINE GIFT

Here is **A DIVINE GIFT** — “*I give unto them eternal life.*” — This is one reason why we must believe in the eternal security of God’s elect. — Eternal life is the gift of God! Eternal life comes to men as a matter of free grace! Man does not have eternal life by nature. Eternal life does not evolve from man’s sinful heart by some mysterious process of “spiritual evolution.” It is given to men graciously. It is performed in the heart by the power of God’s sovereign grace. The very word “give” forbids the idea that eternal life comes to men as a matter of debt or reward. — “*The gift of God is eternal life.*”

- There was nothing in our hearts or conduct that caused God to bestow eternal life upon us (Jer. 31:3; Rom. 8:30; Eph. 2:1-4).
- And there is nothing in the believer’s heart or conduct that can cause God to take away his gift of eternal life (Isa. 54:10; Psa. 89:30-36).

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Psalms 89:30-36 “If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; 31 If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; 32 Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. 33 Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. 34 My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. 35 Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. 36 His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.”

R. L. Dabney wrote, “God was not induced to bestow his renewing grace in the first instance by anything which he saw meritorious and attractive in repenting sinners; and therefore the subsequent absence of everything good in them would be no new motive to God for withdrawing his grace.”

- It is contrary to the nature and character of God to take away his gifts so freely bestowed (Rom. 11:29).

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- This gift of eternal life is a gift, freely bestowed, is in no way dependent upon the contingencies of this present, mortal existence.

If we acknowledge that eternal life is entirely the gift of God, in no way earned by or dependent upon the goodness of man, it must be concluded that those to whom eternal life is given are eternally secure in Christ (Eccles. 3:14).

Ecclesiastes 3:14 “I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.”

Any child who has not been blinded by religious error must recognize that **eternal life must of necessity be eternal.** — I realize that “*eternal life*” refers more to the quality of the believer’s life union with Christ than it does to the duration of his life. But it certainly implies a life of eternal duration. When our Lord says, “*eternal,*” he means “*eternal.*” How can life be eternal if it comes to an end? If I have received from God the gift of eternal life, it is not

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possible for me, by any act of mine, or upon any grounds, to lose it and perish. — *“The gift of God is eternal life.”*

NOTE: That which is born of God, the new nature created in us by the power of God cannot sin and cannot die (1 John 3:5-9).

The believer’s life must be eternal because it is a life in union with Christ. — We who believe are so really and truly joined to Christ that we cannot possibly perish, unless he also perishes. We are truly one with Christ. He says, — *“Because I live, ye shall live also.”* This union between Christ and his people is an immutable, indissolveable union.

- We are married to Christ (Hos. 2:19-20; Eph. 5:30).
- We are members of Christ’s body, the church (Eph. 1:23).

(Eph 1:23) “Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

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Can you imagine Christ with a maimed body? Perish the thought! Yet, his body would not be complete if so much as one member were lost.

The believer’s life in Christ must be a life of eternal duration, because **we are preserved in life by the power and grace of God the Holy Spirit** (Eph. 1:14; 4:30).

(Eph 1:13-14) “In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, {14} Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

(Eph 4:30) “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

The Holy Spirit was sent into the world both to call and to preserve God’s elect. He is the Giver of life and the Preserver of life. The Spirit of God is the seal of the new covenant.

- A seal is a mark of ownership.

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- A seal that which keeps something legally secure.
- A seal suggests permanent freshness.
- A seal means everything is okay!

Here is a divine distinction — “*My sheep.*” — Here is a divine gift — “*I give unto them eternal life.*” — Here is...

A DIVINE PROMISE

“*I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish.*” — **Our Lord here makes a blanket, unconditional promise. It takes into consideration all times, all circumstances, all contingencies, all events, and all possibilities.** Our Lord says, concerning all his sheep, — “*I give unto them eternal life,*” and because they are my sheep and I give eternal life to them, — “*they shall never perish.*”

- What if they are babes in Christ and their faith is weak? — “*They shall never perish.*”
- What if they are young men in Christ and their passions are strong? — “*They shall never perish.*”
- What if they are old men and their vision grows dim? — “*They shall never perish.*”

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- What if they are tempted? — *“They shall never perish.”*
- What if they are tried? — *“They shall never perish.”*
- What if all hell breaks loose against them? — *“They shall never perish.”*
- What if they sin? — *“They shall never perish.”*
- What if they sin again? — *“They shall never perish.”*
- What if they fall? — *“They shall never perish.”*
- What if they fall seven times a day? — *“They shall never perish.”*
- What if they fall seventy times in a day? — *“They shall never perish.”*

This promise takes in all the flock. — *“They shall never perish.”* Not one of Christ’s sheep shall ever perish; no, not even one! This is not a distinctive privilege reserved for a few. It is a common mercy to all the chosen flock. If you are a believer, if you trust the Lord Jesus Christ, if you have received eternal life, you shall never perish! Christ himself has

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promised it. No, you cannot even sin away the grace of God bestowed upon you in Christ.

Noah — Abraham — David — Lot — Peter — They all tell us one thing: — **“Salvation is of the LORD!”** Christ’s sheep shall never perish!

This doctrine of the believer’s security in Christ is in every way consistent with all revealed truth. It is most surely believed among us. Deny this promise and with it you deny every promise of God. If one word from God cannot be believed, no word from God can be believed.

SEVEN REASONS

Here are seven reasons why the sheep of Christ shall never perish:

1. **The promise of God must be fulfilled** — *“They shall never perish”* (2 Tim. 2:19; 1 John 3:19).

2 Timothy 2:19 “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth

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them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

1 John 3:19 “And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.”

2. **The purpose of God cannot be frustrated** (John 6:37-40).

John 6:37-40 “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39 And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

- God’s covenant cannot be disannulled.
- God’s purpose in election cannot be overturned.

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- The Suretyship engagements of Christ cannot be defeated (Heb. 2:13).

3. **The redemptive work of Christ cannot be nullified** (Isa. 53:10-11).

We believe in actual, literal, accomplished, substitutionary redemption. Since Christ died for his sheep, in our room and in our place, we cannot and shall not die.

- He paid all our debts — We have no debt to pay.
- He bore all our punishment — There is no punishment left for us to bear.
- Christ satisfied the offended justice of God for us — There is nothing for us to satisfy!

There is nothing left for us to bear, and nothing for us to satisfy. Justice pleads as strongly as mercy for the eternal salvation of those people for whom Christ died at Calvary (Rom. 5:10; 8:31-34).

Romans 5:10 “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much

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more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

Romans 8:31-34 “What shall we then say to these things? **If God be for us, who can be against us?** 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, **how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?** 33 **Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect?** It is God that justifieth. 34 **Who is he that condemneth?** It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

- If even one of those for whom Christ died were to perish, then his purpose in dying for them would be frustrated (Eph. 5:25-27; Gal. 1:4-5; Tit. 2:14).
- If even one of those for whom Christ died were to perish, then he could never see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.

4. The believer’s justification in Christ is an irreversible act of grace.

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The trial is over. The court of heaven has pronounced an irreversible verdict upon us — “Justified!”

- God will not impute sin to a believing soul (Rom. 4:8).
- God has put away our sins forever by the sacrifice of his Son.
- Our acceptance before God is in Christ.
- Our justification is free, it is full, it is forever!

5. **The work of God’s grace can never be defeated**
(Phil. 1:6).

That which God has begun he will carry on to perfection. Without the least presumption, every true believer may gladly sing —

“The work which God’s goodness began,
The arm of His strength will complete;
His promise is yea and amen,
And never was forfeited yet:
Things future, nor things that are now,
Not all things below nor above,
Can make Him His purpose forego,
Or sever my soul from His love.

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My name from the palms of His hands,
Eternity will not erase:
Impressed on His heart it remains
In marks of indelible grace:
Yes, I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the Earnest is given,
More happy, but not more secure,
The glorified spirits in heaven.”

- God is willing to complete his work in us.
- God is wise enough to complete his work in us.
- God is strong enough to complete his work in us.

6. **The intercessory work of Christ must prevail**
(John 17:9-11, 15, 20; 1 John 2:1-2).

Our cause can never, never fail,
For Jesus pleads and must prevail.

(John 17:9-11) “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. {10} And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. {11} And now I

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am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we *are*.”

(John 17:15) “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.”

(John 17:20) “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;”

(1 John 2:1-2) “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: {2} And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world.”

7. **The seal of the Holy Spirit cannot be broken**
(Eph. 1:13-14).

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Ephesians 1:13-14 “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

Here is a divine distinction — “*My sheep.*” — Here is a divine gift — “*I give unto them eternal life.*” — Here is a divine promise — “*They shall never perish.*” — Here is...

A DIVINE SECURITY

“*Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*” — We are preserved in the heart of his love. And we are preserved in the hands of his power. — “*All thy saints are in thy hands.*” We are in the hands of Christ our God and Savior. We are always in his hands. What a blessed place to be! This is the place of our security.

- These are the hands that were pierced to redeem us.
- These are the hands of omnipotent power.

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- These are the hands that hold the reins of universal dominion.
- These are the hands that hold us in life.
- These are the hands of God himself!

John 10:29-30 “My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. 30 I and my Father are one.”

This blessed doctrine of the believer’s security in Christ draws a strong response from men.

- The self-righteous religionist says, “That is a dangerous doctrine. Such a doctrine will lead men into sin.”
- The presumptuous professor of religion will say, “Let us sin that grace may abound.”
- The true believer will say, “Such marvelous grace compels me to give myself to Christ with a heart of undivided love, praise, and devotion.” (See Rom. 11:33 - 12:2).

Romans 11:33-12:2 “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how

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unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

Grace produces gratitude; and gratitude produces devotion!

Here is **A Divine Distinction** — “*My sheep.*” — **A Divine Gift** — “*I give unto them eternal life.*” — **A Divine Promise** — “*They shall never perish.*” — **A Divine Security** — “*Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*”

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But how can I know that this word of grace is for me? This word of grace is for every self-confessed sinner who trusts Christ alone as Lord and Savior. If I trust him, it is for me. If you trust him, it is for you.

- Do you hear the Shepherd’s voice?
- Do you follow Christ?
- If so you have eternal life; and you shall never perish!

AMEN.