

THE SECURITY OF THE SHEEP

JOHN 10:22-30 • TV134A

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John 10:22-30

“And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon’s porch. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, how long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one.”

Open your Bible with me today to the book of **John**. I am going to be speaking to you from the **10th chapter of the Gospel according to John**. We will look at **verses 22 through 30**.

Now, my subject is, I believe, the most interesting subject and one that will interest you. I hope that you will listen very carefully.

Why don’t you take your Bible and open with me to the Scripture. I am going to read several verses and I think that it would be beneficial if you would follow along with me in **John Chapter 10**. Let’s begin reading at **verse 22**.

THE SECURITY OF THE SHEEP

JOHN 10:22-30 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Now here is the subject: I am going to speak on the subject: **“THE SECURITY OF THE SHEEP.”** Now, let’s make that the subject: **“THE SECURITY OF THE SHEEP,”** just exactly as I have expressed it: **“THE SECURITY OF HIS SHEEP.”**

In **John 10:22** the Scripture says: *“And it was at Jerusalem, the feast of the dedication and it was winter and Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon’s porch. Then came the Jews, (that is the religious leaders and their followers, and they came round about Him, they encircled Him).”*

They said to Him, to the Master: *“how long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.”* And Jesus answered them and said: *“I told you, but you believe not because you are not of my sheep, I’ve told you but you believe not.”*

He says: *“You believe not the witness, the works that I do in my Father’s name; they bear witness of me. Not only do you not believe me but you didn’t believe the works that I did and the witness of the Father:*

“But you believe not because you are not of my sheep. As I said unto you, my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them to me is greater than all and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one.”

Now, my subject has been argued, it has been debated and it has been studied for centuries and many professing Christians have had some harsh words over this subject. Many people have fallen out over this subject.

It has been called by many names. It’s been called: “once in grace always in grace.” It’s been called: “eternal security of the believer.” It’s been called: “once saved always saved.” It’s been called: “the preservation and the perseverance of the saints.” It’s been called by many names.

But, our Lord states it very plainly. This is what I prefer to call it; He says: *“my sheep hear my voice and they follow me and I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. My Father which gave to me is greater than all and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”*

I prefer to call it: “the security of the sheep.” Now, the hymn writer put it this way;

**“The soul that on Jesus
Hath leaned for repose
I will not, I will not,
Desert to its foes,**

**That soul thou all hell
Should endeavor to shake
I’ll never, no never
No never, forsake.”**

THE SECURITY OF THE SHEEP

JOHN 10:22-30 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Now, this message today and I hope you will listen carefully, that you will stay with me. I am going to answer three questions:

First of all: What is the truth that we are preaching, what is this that I am saying, what is this that you are reading from the Word of God?

Secondly: What does the Bible say about it? Not, what were the church creeds or catechisms or church fathers had to say, but what does God's Word have to say about this subject?

Thirdly: Why is it important, why is it important to preach on this subject, the security of the saints?

I think that is three good questions and I believe that if you will listen carefully that we can learn some things together.

First of all: What is the truth that we preach?

Now, it's important from the beginning that you and I both understand and make clear what we are preaching. Most of the abuse which this truth has suffered through the years and through the centuries has been brought to bear upon it because it's been misunderstood.

People don't know what we are saying when we say: "the security of the sheep" and the perseverance of the saints, or whether you say, "once saved, always saved, or once in grace, always in grace." They do not really understand what we are saying.

So, right away we need to make clear what we are talking about, what is the truth that we are preaching? Right away we know this from this passage: we know of whom the Lord is speaking when He talks about security, we know of whom He's speaking. He keeps talking about "*the sheep*." That's what He is talking about.

He's not talking about church members or professing believers or religious people or religious leaders or even pastors and people. He keeps saying: "*my sheep*." Listen to Him back there in **verse 11**, the Lord says: "*I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep*." In **verse 14** He says: "*I'm the good shepherd; I know my sheep*." Underscore that, "*my sheep*." "*I know my sheep*."

In **verse 16** he says: "*And other sheep I have which are not of this fold*, (not other professors or church members or religious people) "*other sheep*."

In **verse 26**; now listen, I paused from this a while ago so that I could focus your attention on it; it is very important and it is not quoted very often nor is it read very often.

Our Lord was walking on Solomon's porch and these religious folks gathered around Him, they encircled Him and they began to speak rather harshly and mockingly to Him and they said:

THE SECURITY OF THE SHEEP

JOHN 10:22-30 • HENRY T. MAHAN

“how long are you going to keep us in doubt, if you are the Christ, (if you are the Messiah, if you are the consolation of Israel, if you are the one for whom we look, of whom Moses wrote and who Abraham saw; that is what they were asking,) are you the Christ?”

And they said: *“Tell us plainly.”* He said: *“I told you plainly. Not only did I tell you but the works that I do, they bear witness of me. The works bear witness that the Father sent me.”*

“But, you didn’t believe me. You didn’t believe what I told you and you didn’t believe the works you saw.” And the Lord said: *“I will tell you why you didn’t believe me and why you didn’t believe the works: because you are not of my sheep; my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give them eternal life.”*

Now, let’s ask three questions here about the sheep.

First of all: Where did he get the sheep?

Christ keeps talking about *“I’m the door of the sheepfold.”* This whole chapter; you ought to read the whole chapter and how often, He refers to these people as *“his sheep.”*

“I know my sheep. (I love my sheep). My sheep hear my voice. My sheep follow me: Other sheep I have. You are not of my sheep.”

We are saying that the sheep, the security of His sheep, not the security of every professing church member in the land or every religious person, everybody who crosses himself or sprinkles some water, or says: *“praise the Lord or hallelujah.”* We are talking about His sheep. That’s who he is talking about.

Where did he get them? In **verse 29**; look at it: *“My Father gave them to me.”* That’s what He said: *“my Father gave them to me.”* That’s where He got His sheep.

Turn to **John 6** and read from **verses 37 through 49**. The Master said: *“All that my Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out for I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will but the will of him that sent me; and this is the will of him that sent me that of all which he hath given me; I will lose nothing but raise it up at the last day.”*

In **John 17**, in that blessed priestly prayer, our Lord six times, talks about *“those that the Father gave me.”*

Where did he get his sheep? He said: *“My Father gave them to me.”* That is **verse 29**.

What did he do for the sheep? In **verse 15** he says: *“He laid down his life for the sheep.”* That’s what He did for the sheep. He said: *“I know my sheep; (I love them) I am the good shepherd. I lay down my life for my sheep.”*

THE SECURITY OF THE SHEEP

JOHN 10:22-30 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Well, what do the sheep do? He said: *“They hear my voice, (they hear my Word, they hear my Spirit) and they follow me.”* God’s sheep have two brands; they have two marks on them: they are branded on the ear and on the foot. They hear the voice of the Lord and they follow Him. That’s the folks that we are talking about.

This promise of eternal life, this promise of security of preservation and perseverance is only given to the sheep.

That’s what our Lord is talking about here, the sheep of Christ, not the ungodly, not the unbeliever, not the professor, not the church hypocrite, not the false claimer, not the stony ground hearer, not the tares, the sheep: *“my sheep hear my voice and they follow me and I give them eternal life and they shall never perish.”*

Now, let this note clearly be sounded: once in Christ. We are not saying once in the church, once at the mourner’s bench, or once in the water, or once at the table, once in Christ, chosen in Christ, redeemed in Christ, risen in Christ, seated in Christ, and *“accepted in the beloved.”*

Once in Christ by the grace of God through faith, always in Christ, always in Christ, once a child of God, an heir of God, a joint-heir with Jesus Christ, we are always a child of God.

The family of God is secure once justified by His grace. Once justified by His grace, always justified by His grace. When sin is blotted out, when sin is put away and remembered no more, it’s a permanent work; it’s a work of God. Once we have passed from death unto life, we’ll always pass from death unto life.

Paul said in **Romans 8:33**: *“Who can lay anything to the charge of God’s elect; it is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea rather, is risen again who is even at the right hand of God who also maketh intercession for us. Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can death or life or principalities, or powers, or height or depth, or angels or any other creature?”* No sir, once in Christ, we are secure in Christ.

I’m not saying that a true believer will never sin. I’m not saying that a true believer will never err, this happens. To their own grief and to their own sorrow, believers, the sheep of Christ, do fail, they do fail.

Go down the list. Noah behaved shamefully when he came out of that Ark and Abraham to protect his own life, denied his wife Sarah. And Lot took up abode in a wicked city. Jacob deceived his father and his brother.

David sinned and killed a friend to cover it up. Solomon committed his wives to worship idols. Peter, three times denied his Lord. Paul and Barnabas argued and broke fellowship; they split up their missionary work. One went one way and one went the other.

THE SECURITY OF THE SHEEP

JOHN 10:22-30 • HENRY T. MAHAN

My friends; what I'm saying is this: I'm not saying that a believer will never err. I'm not saying that he will never sin. I'm saying that a true believer will never totally and definably depart from Christ.

John said of those folks that left the people of God and left the Gospel of Christ, he said: *"they were never of us. If they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us."* Paul said in Hebrews: *"We are not of them that turn back."*

Now, a believer may lose his comfort; he may lose the comfort of grace, but never the truth of grace. He may lose the feeling of grace but never the fact of it. He may for a time have doubts and fears about himself but he never doubts his Lord. He never doubts His sufficiency and the efficacy and saving power and ability of the blood of the Son of God.

First of all: Now, that is the first thing that is settled: What is the truth that we are preaching?

We are preaching the security of this sheep, the purpose of God, the glory of God in redeeming a people whom He gave to His son, in which His Son effectually redeemed by His sacrifice and who were called invincibly and irresistibly by His mighty Spirit.

Secondly: What does the Bible say about this subject?

You and I know this; the Word of God is our only true test of any doctrine or any teaching. The Scripture says: *"To the word, to the law, (to the prophets). If they speak not according to his word there is no light in them."*

My friend; I go to the Word. Listen to **John 5:24**: *"Verily, verily, I say unto you; he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life and shall never come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life."* That's the promise of our Lord in **John 5:24**.

Then **John 6:37**: *"All that my Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."*

Three times in these next five verses the Lord said: *"I will raise them up at the last day: Those that my Father gave me; I will raise them up at the last day. Those that seeth the Son and believe on him I will raise him up at the last day."*

John 6:44: *"Those that are taught of the Father I will raise them up at the last day."* In the text that I read a moment ago: *"my sheep hear my voice and they follow me and I give them eternal life and they shall never perish."*

In **Romans 8:28** it says: *"And we know that all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are called according to his purpose: For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son:"*

THE SECURITY OF THE SHEEP

JOHN 10:22-30 • HENRY T. MAHAN

“And whom he did predestinate, he called, and whom he called, he justified and whom he justified, he glorified. What shall we say to these things?” We say: “If God be for us who can be against us?”

Then in **Philippians 1:6** the Scripture says: *“Being confident of this very thing that he that hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.”*

So, the Word of God is very clear. That which God does is forever and nothing can be added to it and nothing can be taken from it.

This is the issue to be settled: “Who is the Saviour?” Does man by his work save himself or does God by grace save? Is salvation a reward or a work done or is salvation the gift of God?

Is salvation something that I do for myself or I do for God or is salvation something that God does for me? Is it something that God does for me and if it’s a miraculous, life-changing, heart-changing work of grace, then it is forever, it’s permanent, it’s secure in Christ?

The very attributes of God suggest that the sheep are secure. Listen to **Malachi 3**: *“I am the Lord; I change not. Therefore, you sons of Jacob are not consumed. I am the Lord; I change not.”* God doesn’t change, not in His purpose, not in His providence, and not in His love.

Listen to **Romans Chapter 11:29**: *“The gifts and calling of God are without change.”* Salvation is a gift; it’s a gift of God and it’s a calling. It’s a calling of the Holy Spirit. So, the gifts and calling of God are without change.

Listen to this: most of you know something about the office work of Christ; the Bible very clearly talks about the offices of Christ and most of the theologians talk about the offices of Christ.

He’s Prophet, Priest, and King. He’s Husband, Brother, and Friend. He’s all of these things. Many of the hymn writers wrote about the office work of Christ.

Let me ask you some questions: What kind of head is Jesus Christ said to be? He is the head of the church! He’s the head and we are the body. What kind of head would Jesus Christ be if the body perish or any member of the body perish?

He’s been given; He’s been given the task, the mission, the work, by God the Father to redeem the whole body of Christ. What if He loses some of that body? What kind of head is that?

Then this; what kind of Shepherd would Christ be? We know that he is *“the good shepherd, the great shepherd, and the chief shepherd.”* That’s how He refers to and presents Himself in the Word.

What kind of shepherd would Christ be if He loses some of the sheep? You know, one great, old, song writer said this:

THE SECURITY OF THE SHEEP

JOHN 10:22-30 • HENRY T. MAHAN

**“If one sheep of Christ could fall away
I’d fall a thousand times a day.”**

But my protection, provision, providence and security are not in my hand or in the hands of the church; it is in the hands of my Shepherd. *“The Lord is my shepherd; (therefore) I shall not want:*

“The Lord is my shepherd, (wherefore) he leads me in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. The Lord is my shepherd; (therefore), I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.”

What kind of Shepherd would Christ be if His sheep perish? What kind of Husband would He be, if the bride of Christ perishes? What kind of Priest is Christ if the atonement is not sufficient, if the atonement fails? You come along and tell me that Christ died for me and paid my sin debt and I still go to hell to pay the same debt, what kind of payment was that that He made?

What kind of atonement was it? If it didn’t atone, if it didn’t redeem, if it didn’t save; what did it do? What kind of Physician would Christ be if the patients all died? What kind of King is Christ if the kingdom fails? Oh, that’s foolishness isn’t it?

**“Jesus never fails
Heaven and earth may pass away
But Jesus never fails.”**

My friend; you can’t find one example in the Bible of a true child of God who departed from Christ, not one.

“Judas was the son of perdition from the beginning.” It’s written about him over in the Old Testament that he would sell the Master for 30 pieces of silver. The potter’s field would be bought with the very money that he returned. That’s all written in the Scriptures.

Pharaoh; God hardened his heart. He told Moses *“I will harden his heart. You go down and tell Pharaoh to let my people go. He’s not going to listen to you. He’s not going to let them go. I’ll harden his heart,”* God said.

But, you can’t find one example in the Scriptures, not one, of a truly redeemed person, of a sheep of Christ, of one given to the Son by the father, who fell away.

Why is this important? Why do I take the time on this television program to preach on this subject: **“The Security of the Sheep?”** Let me give you three or four reasons:

First of all: Because it is good news! You know; when the angels came to the shepherds on that Judean hillside that night they announced the birth of Christ, they said: *“we bring you glad*

THE SECURITY OF THE SHEEP

JOHN 10:22-30 • HENRY T. MAHAN

tidings (good news) of great joy, good news from a far country.” “Blessed are the feet of those that come bringing good news.”

This is His good news; this is good news that God loves sinners. Isn't that good news? Its good news that Jesus Christ came into the world to be my representative, to be my sin-offering, to be my sacrifice.

It's good news that He died on the cross and put away our sin. It's good news that the Holy Spirit will not leave us in darkness but He comes and illuminates us, enlightens us, and reveals Christ to our hearts.

Its good news that we are pardoned from all our sins, that we have a righteousness before the heavenly Father. Isn't that good news?

It's good news that the dead shall rise. They may take my body to the cemetery and bury it but it won't stay there. Christ said: *“Because I live ye shall live also.”*

That's good news, but think; think for a moment; what if in spite of all this I still go to hell! If I come to you preaching good news; God loves sinners, good news, Christ died for sinners, good news! The Holy Spirit calls and the Holy Spirit enlightens and the Holy Spirit seals us. But, in spite of all this, I still perish in my sins and go to hell, where's the good news?

I tell you, once you admit, once you dare admit that a person redeemed of the blood of Christ, called by the Spirit of God, once a person who has faith in Christ Jesus and he's sanctified by His Spirit and justified by His grace, once admit that one of those persons can perish and go to hell, you take all the good news out of the Gospel for everybody to whom you may be led to preach it.

It can't be good news because if they listen to you talk they'll say: *“I still might be lost. I have no confidence. I have no assurance. I'm not persuaded. I can't say with the apostle Paul, ‘I know whom I have believed and I'm persuaded, I'm confident, that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.’ You might still be lost Paul.”*

Job said: *“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”* Hold on there, Job! Wait just a minute! You might get to the very gate of heaven and fall away.

Is that the way you want me to preach? It's not so my friend, not so! I will say to any false professor, any hypocrite; I say to any religious person, I say to any phony church member; I will say to any of those people who are indifferent, you will fall away. It's as sure as there is a throne of God in heaven.

But I will tell you those who belong to Christ, who know Him, love Him, trust Him, those who have been washed in His blood, redeemed by His grace, called by His Spirit, and justified by His mercy; they will never perish, never perish. That's good news!

THE SECURITY OF THE SHEEP

JOHN 10:22-30 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Secondly: I'll tell you another thing: It's important because it makes the work of Christ certain!

The Lord Jesus Christ didn't try to do anything, my friend. The Word says: *"He shall save his people from their sins."*

Isn't that what the angel said to Joseph? *"Thou shalt call his name Jesus; he shall save his people from their sin."*

The Lord said Himself in **Luke 19:10**: *"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost."* He didn't try to do anything. He got the job done.

Isaiah wrote **Isaiah 53**: *"He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied."* Our Lord brings forth no stillborn children, no dead children. They are all alive. *"He sees the travail of his soul and he is satisfied."*

And I tell you that makes the work of Christ effectual. His blood was not shed in vain. He did not suffer in vain. He did not die in vain. He did not put His blood on the mercy seat of glory in vain. He did not go before the Father as the great Intercessor and Mediator in vain.

"The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." God gave Him a job to do and He did it. He said: *"My sheep hear my voice and I give them eternal life."*

Thirdly: I'll tell you another reason it is important; it's important because it gives comfort to people like you and me!

"In this world you will have tribulation." What's tribulation, trial, suffering, sorrow, and trouble? We have trouble from within. We have troubles from without. We have troubles in the home, troubles in the office, troubles on the street, troubles on the job, and troubles in our bodies. We are trouble; trouble on every hand.

We need a foundation that won't move. When the wind is blowing and the rain's falling and the flood is rising, we need our feet planted on the rock Christ Jesus to give us comfort.

We can say with Job: *"Though he slay me; I trust him."* We can say with Eli: *"It's the Lord; let him do what he will."* I don't know what tomorrow holds but I know who holds tomorrow and I know he holds my hand.

Fourthly: Then, it's important that we preach this truth because it's the Word of God!

I must preach the Scripture. My friend; we cannot compromise the truth of God's Word. We cannot preach to please men. The apostle said: *"If I please men I'm not the servant of Christ."*

So, we must preach it because it is the Word of God, it's the Word of God!