

“Two Truths, One Proof, Full Comfort” – John 10:22-30

Have you ever spent minutes, maybe hours, looking for something you have misplaced? Keys, important papers, your wallet, a credit card, a password written on a scrap of paper – these are but a few of things we struggle to find and then to keep. I have spent lots of money replacing books that I could not find until they were repurchased and only then did the lost ones make their appearance. Ordinarily when something is lost we have two questions: where can I find it and how can I hang onto it this time? In John 10 we learn that with our relationship with God the matter is completely reversed. The one who is truly God does the searching and HE and he alone is able to do the keeping.

John 10 records a time in December at the Festival of Dedication (Hanukkah), the Festival of Lights, an eight-day festival held on Kislev 25 on the Hebrew calendar—comparable to December in our calendar. It celebrated the restoration of the temple (165 BC) after its desecration by the Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes. Symbolically, Jesus is the One who restores the true temple of God and is true Leader (Shepherd) over Israel. The date was probably December 18, AD 32, roughly three-and-a-half months before Jesus' crucifixion.

First Truth: Jesus is fully and completely God. We know that his enemies took that to be his claim because this is the third time in John's Gospel (5:18, 8:59, 10:31) where they want to execute him for blasphemy. Today as well as then Jesus' enemies ask him to declare himself clearly: “Are you the Messiah, tell us plainly.”

Jesus had already revealed himself by his **WORDS** and his **WORKS** much as God revealed himself to be the creator in Genesis 1 by creation through his Words and in Genesis 2 by creation through his Works. But in the case of Jesus, neither were enough for those who were set not to believe them or receive him. “He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him” (John 1:11).

Words: Jesus had already told them, “Truly I tell you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live” (John 5:25). “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

Works: And, he had shown them many works which authenticated who he was. John documents 7 great signs in the first half of his Gospel: 1. Changing water into wine at Cana in John 2:1-11 - “the first of the signs”; 2. Healing the royal official's son in Capernaum in John 4:46-54; 3. Healing the paralytic at Bethesda in John 5:1-15; 4. Feeding the 5000 in John 6:5-14; 5. Jesus walking on water in John 6:16-24; 6. Healing the man blind from birth in John 9:1-7; 7. The raising of Lazarus in John 11:1-45

The passage we had a couple of weeks ago said: “Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” – John 20:30-31. **The** purpose of these “signs” was so that people would know who he was and believe in him. Jesus is completely God.

Many years ago Christian writer C.S. Lewis observed that Jesus was no tame deity who we could trifle with or dismissively ignore by reducing him to the level of a “great teacher” of religious truths. “That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

The sad reality, however, is that left to our own devices, we do NOT believe.

“There is no one who is righteous, not even one. ¹¹There is no one who understands. There is no one who searches for God. ¹²They all turned away; together they became useless. There is no one who does what is good; there is not even one” (Rom 3:10-12).

Our natural man is turned in on itself and seeks to escape and evade the weight and burden of the convicting and accusing law of God. An apologetics speaker tells the story of presenting the truth claims of Christ on a secular campus only to have a professor scoff that he rejected the evidence-based presentation for "intellectual reasons" When he was asked what evidence would persuade him, he replied, "None." "Well," the minister answered, "Your problem not with the reasonableness of the claims, but your own will." You do not want to believe.

Second Truth: Both Father and Son are committed to the perfect protection and preservation of Jesus' sheep.

Lots of physical dangers in this world. After children left home, thought my worries were over. Nope! Still concerned about them AND my grandkids. Think about the worries you have for your kids, your spouse, yourself! But, physical danger not the only problem. Spiritual dangers as well. Recent Pew Research supports the fact that more people today identify as "unaffiliated" with any church than ever before (3 in 10 in USA). And, there are many sophisticated temptations to lure them away from faith. But, even if you are not prone to doubt, you **are** prone to sinning. A man asked me the other day if it was possible for him to sin so much that he would lose his salvation.

BUT: 1. My sheep listen to my voice (10:3, 8, 16); 2. And I know them (10:3, 14; 3) and they follow me (10:4, 5); 4. And I give them everlasting life (10:10 and on 3:16); 5. And they shall certainly never perish (3:16); 6. And no one shall snatch them out of my hand (10:12).

This is one of the clearest statements in the Bible that one who believes in Jesus for salvation will never be lost. Notice it does not promise that we will never sin. Believers sin and stumble, sometimes a lot! But Jesus as the perfect Shepherd loses none of His flock (cf. Luke 22:31-32). While it is true that believers in Jesus sin and stumble, they also repent their sin and experience the joy of complete pardon.

This week I saw an artistic representation of the Prodigal Son parable with the Father running to meet the prodigal. It asked "if the prodigal son left 3, 5, or 99 more times for that faraway country, and dragged himself home again, reeking of booze and cheap perfume and pig slop, would the Father still welcome him home with a hug and a party? Yes without a moment's hesitation."

"I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices" Is 65:2

"I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). He's greater than all the wolves that try to snatch away Jesus' sheep. These sheep rest secure in the double, unbreakable grip of Jesus and his Father. But this **double grip** is really a single grip of doubled strength, because Jesus and his Father are one. "One" is neuter, not masculine. So Jesus and his Father are **one in the action** of gripping Jesus' sheep securely, and this oneness of action derives from their **oneness in deity**. They're not one person; for 1:1 made clear a personal distinction between the Word, who became Jesus, and God the Father of Jesus. But they are one in Godhood and one in their effective purpose to keep us safe.

Two Truths: 1. Jesus is Fully God & 2. Father & Son are united in protecting (keeping) the sheep.

One Proof: The Resurrection – John's Gospel is structured to mimic Genesis: Both start with "In the beginning." The 7 days of Genesis stand in parallel with the 7 signs of John 1-11; 7 days = 7 signs. The resurrection stands as an 8th sign, an 8th day, the beginning of God's new creation. The resurrection is proof that Jesus was who he said he was and that God is doing something great and new with us through him.

A fair paraphrase of Rom 3:25 would be: "Jesus was handed over to death because we had sinned, and he was raised to life because he had justified us." The resurrection is the proof that truth 1 and truth 2 will work with you. God will find you even when you are lost and he will keep you even when you have sinned.

So here is my equation for our Good Shepherd text: 2 truths + 1 proof = full comfort.