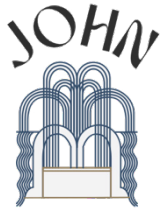


An Exposition of the
GOSPEL OF JOHN



“The Signs of a True Believer”

John 10:19-30

Theme: A true believer is one whose faith rests in the person of Christ to save them, sustain them, and ultimately deliver them safely to glory.

Introduction: **[READ TEXT]** There are few questions more important—or more revealing—than this one: *How do you know if someone truly belongs to Christ?* Not how they identify themselves... not what they claim with their lips... but what actually marks a life that has been touched by the saving grace of God.

In every generation, there has been confusion on this point. Some equate salvation with a past decision. Others rest in religious activity. Still others assume that proximity to the truth is the same as possessing it. But when we come to John 10, the Lord Jesus Christ cuts through all that uncertainty with clarity and authority. He does not merely describe what people say about themselves—He reveals what is true of those who are genuinely His.

And what makes this passage so compelling is the setting. Jesus is speaking to a divided crowd. Some are skeptical... some are hostile... and some are drawn to Him. The tension is real. Opinions are strong. Yet right in the middle of that confusion, Jesus identifies the unmistakable evidence of a true believer—not from a human perspective, but from the divine Shepherd Himself.

This is not a passage designed to create doubt in the hearts of God’s people, but to produce clarity—clarity that leads to assurance for those who truly know Him, and honesty for those who do not. Because the reality is this: a true believer is not defined merely by what he professes, but by how he relates to Christ. His faith does not rest in himself, his performance, or his religious efforts—but in the person of Jesus Christ alone... to save him, to sustain him, and to ultimately bring him safely home to glory.

As we walk through this passage, we will see that Jesus describes His sheep in very personal and relational terms. They are not distant from Him. They are not indifferent toward Him. They are deeply, unmistakably connected to Him.

- I. **They are captivated by Christ – vv. 19-27** – believers are drawn to Him, listening to Him, responding to Him.
- II. **They are cooperative with Christ – v. 27** - believers follow His voice with a willing and submissive heart.
- III. **They are confident in Christ – vv. 28-30** – believers are resting securely in His power, His promises, and His unbreakable grip on their souls.

This morning, this text invites each of us to look beyond outward appearances and ask a far more searching question: *What is my relationship to Jesus Christ?* Not merely what do I say about Him—but how do I respond to Him? Because according to the Good Shepherd, the marks of a true believer are not hidden—they are evident, they are relational, and they are rooted entirely in Him. **A true believer is one whose faith rests in the person of Christ to save them, sustain them, and ultimately deliver them safely to glory.**

I. They Are Captivated by Christ – *10:19-27a*

A. The Agitation of the Unbeliever – vv. 19-26

1. Jesus' confrontation of the religious leadership as mercenary and self-serving created quite a reaction among the Jews.
2. In addition, His laying open His heart and expressing the yearning He has for intimacy with those the Father has given Him has confused many.
3. We are told that *“a division occurred again among the Jews because of these words.”*
 - a) Many were directly opposed to Him, claiming that *“He has a demon and is insane”* and rejected listening to Him, concluding that it is foolishness.
 - b) Others were simply unsure what to do with Him – cp. **v. 21**.
4. This state of agitation existed for over three months (October – December) until the *“time of the Feast of the Dedication [modern day Hanukkah] took place at Jerusalem.”*
 - a) This is around the time of the winter solstice (December 22) – *“it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon ...”*
 - b) We are not sure where Jesus went during these three months, but it appears He had not been in Jerusalem – He had returned to continue teaching.
5. It is now that *“the Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, ‘How long will You keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.’”*
 - a) Jesus had declared His identity as the Christ to some, but not to all – cp. **John 4:25-26**.
 - b) However, Jesus refused to make such a clear statement of His identity to these Jews – to them, the Messianic role was a political one, that would result in rebellion against Rome.
 - c) Had Jesus made such a clear declaration – even under such pressure, it would have been misunderstood.
6. However, *“Jesus answered them, ‘I told you, and you do not believe’.*” - It isn't as though Jesus had not made it clear that He was the Anointed One sent from God.
 - a) He had told them through His words:
 - (1) He made Himself equal with God – **John 5:17-18**.
 - (2) He claimed divine prerogatives:
 - (a) He is divine provision – **John 6:35**.
 - (b) He is divine illumination – **John 8:12**.
 - (c) He has divine existence – **John 8:58**.
 - (d) He is divine guidance – **John 10:11**.
 - b) He had told them through His works: **John 5:36**.
7. The most clear demonstration and expression of who Christ is is the

An Exposition of the
GOSPEL OF JOHN

miraculous works that Jesus had performed – before their very eyes – *“the works that I do in My Father’s name, these testify of Me.”*

8. However, these people refused to believe – by so rejecting Him, they show themselves as outside of His flock: *“But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep.”*
9. This is clearly an indictment of their rejection of the truth He had made abundantly clear to them.

B. The Attentiveness of the Believer – v. 27a

1. In contrast to the unbeliever who cannot make sense of the voice of God, the believer is characterized by the recognition of the voice of the Savior.
2. When God reveals His truth to men, the ones who are of God’s “flock” embrace that truth because they recognize it as from God – *“My sheep hear My voice ...”*
3. Amidst the cacophony of voices vying for men’s attention, the believer can discern the voice of Jesus Christ and heed His instruction for their lives.
4. The believer always wants to know *“What does Christ say?”* – and the only place this can be discerned is through the revealed truth of God found in the Bible.
5. Consequently, not only can the believer hear and recognize truth, but there is also an innate desire to hear it that keeps him turning to God’s Word for guidance and instruction – ***1 Peter 2:2; Psalm 1:2; Romans 8:5.***

II. They Are Cooperative with Christ – 10:27b

A. The Obedience of the Believer

1. Jesus takes this a step further and declares that not only do they hear my voice, but there is a sense of intimacy that I enjoy with my sheep – *“... and I know them...”*
2. From this intimacy springs the desire on the part of a believer to obey the Lord – *“... and they follow me.”*
3. Because of the relationship a person enjoys with the Lord, they respond by yielding to the authority of the Lord and become “doers of the Word” – cp. ***James 1:22.***
4. This *“following”* [ἀκολουθέω] – means to fall in behind to follow through obedience.
5. This is not describing compulsion, wherein people are threatened or

coerced into compliance with Christ; it is one in which (due to the exercise of the grace of God in their lives) they become overwhelmed by His love for them – cp. **2 Corinthians 5:14**.¹

6. We are compelled by Christ's love for us, not by His threats; by His kindness, not by His anger; by His considerations for us, not merely by His commands.

B. The Objective of the Believer

1. Following Christ ultimately results in the believer becoming conformed to the image of Christ; it is to this we are predestined – cp. **Romans 8:29**.
2. To follow Christ is to **listen** to Him; to listen to Him is to understand Him; to **understand** Him is to know Him; to **know** Him is to love Him; to **love** Him is to obey Him; and to **obey** Him is to be **conformed** to Him.
3. We are told to be imitators of Christ – allowing our lives to be conformed to Him as we grow in grace – **Ephesians 5:1**.
4. It is unthinkable for someone to follow the Lord Jesus and then choose their own path and direction – it requires cooperation and submission to God's will – cp. **Philippians 2:13**.

III. They Are Confident in Christ – **10:28-30**

A. The Benefit of Eternal Life – **v. 28**

1. Jesus describes His commitment to those who have been given to Him by the Father – He says: *“and I give eternal life to them ...”*
2. This describes a perpetuated benevolence on the part of the Lord Jesus – He promises to “continually give” eternal life ...
 - a) *“Eternal Life” is the opposite of “perishing”* – **John 3:16**
 - b) *“Eternal Life” necessitates belief* – **John 3:16, 36**
 - c) *“Eternal Life” eliminates judgment & death* – **John 5:24**
 - d) *“Eternal Life” refers to a quality of life* – **John 10:10**
 - e) *“Eternal Life” is a gift exclusively available in Christ Jesus* – **Romans 6:23; v. 28**.
 - f) *“Eternal Life” is a relationship with Christ Jesus whereby we come to know Him, and once we know Him, we can never “unknow” Him* – cp. **John 17:3**.
3. The assurance of His purpose to deliver us safely to glory is seen clearly in the next phrase – *“and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them*

¹ If “love of Christ” is a subjective genitive – it means Christ's love for us; if an objective genitive – it means our love for Christ. The context seems to refer to a subjective genitive.

An Exposition of the
GOSPEL OF JOHN

out of My hand.”

- a) There is a permanence to *“eternal life”* that is clearly inherent to it – eternal life cannot be eternal if it can possibly become temporary.
 - b) Jesus puts His own potential and trustworthiness on the line by saying *“no one will snatch them out of My hand.”*
 - c) In essence He is saying – *“As long as I have the ability to do anything about it, they will never perish.”*
4. The song we sing: “He will Hold Me Fast” –
- When I fear my faith will fail
Christ will hold me fast
When the tempter would prevail
He will hold me fast
I could never keep my hold
Through life's fearful path
For my love is often cold
He must hold me fast
He will hold me fast
He will hold me fast
For my Savior loves me so
He will hold me fast*
5. The *“eternal life”* given is of such a quality that it cannot ever lose its flavor or essence, it will never diminish into something less than eternal life – cp. ***1 Peter 1:3-4.***

B. The Basis for Eternal Security – vv. 29-30

1. Jesus promises to protect us first of all because of the imputed value we possess in that we are a gift to Him from the Father – *“My Father, who has given them to Me ...”* – cp. ***John 17:6.***
2. Second, we are confident in His protection because there is nothing greater than God that could possibly thwart His will – *“My Father ... is greater than all.”*
3. Third, we are confident in His protection because of the fact that God’s sovereign power is constantly sheltering us – *“and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.”*
4. Finally, we are confident in His protection because the Father and the Son are absolutely agreed on the promised protection – *“I and the Father are one.”* – cp. ***Colossians 3:3.***

So What?

1. Is my obedience selective or submissive? Do I follow Christ only when it is convenient or comfortable?
2. When trials or failures come, do they drive me away from Christ or deeper into

dependence upon Him?

3. Have I substituted knowledge about Christ for genuine trust in Christ?
4. Where am I looking for security—my performance, my consistency, my feelings, or Christ's promises?

Theme: A true believer is one whose faith rests in the person of Christ to save them, sustain them, and ultimately deliver them safely to glory.