

Realizing The Truth About Believers

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John 10:27-31

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So as you know, holidays can be some of the very best times of the entire year, right? We look forward to holidays. We plan for them. We get everything ready for them. Holidays come with anticipation and excitement and hope that a great time is going to be had by all. Now, while that's true, the reality is that holidays could be some of the worst times of the year, right? I mean, especially if there's conflict between members of the party who are going to be together that holiday, or especially if there's one person that everybody knows like, "If he comes, we're going to have problems."

Well, in John 10, the people in Jerusalem are celebrating the holiday of Hanukkah and that one person that they thought was going to ruin everything if he showed up was Jesus and there he was in the temple. Last time he was there just a few months prior, angry mob tried to kill him, and here he is back in the same exact place because he's the courageous savior. Most likely he's not talking to the same exact mob of people that tried to kill him prior. But by the end of our time today, we're going to see that the desire to kill Jesus is right back again. In spite of that though, Jesus is giving these people one last shot to believe in him. You see, his ministry after this chapter is going to shift from being a public ministry to the crowds, to being a private ministry to his disciples. So this is their last shot to believe in him. I mean, here he is the God of the Jews in his own temple where they are there to worship and celebrate him, and instead of that, they want to kill him.

As we saw last week, human beings are responsible for their unbelief, this unbelief that I'm describing now. Jesus chastises these same people. He chastised them that day for not believing him. They don't come to him that they may have life. They love darkness rather than light. They did not receive him. They rejected him. They refused to believe in him. As we saw last week, God is sovereign over unbelief. So in John 10:26, Jesus told this crowd who did not believe in him, he said to them, "You do not believe because you are not my sheep," that his sheep believe in him and non-sheep don't, that in order to believe in Jesus, a person must be a sheep first or they won't believe.

Did a deep dive on that last week, not going to rehash that, but with those words from last week, Jesus exposed the truth about unbelievers. Now, today, his words will expose the truth about believers. What is the truth about believers in Jesus? What is it that's truly true about you? If you're a Christian, what is more true than what we see on the outside? What is more true than what is happening in your life? That's what we're going to find out today, the really real when it comes to a Christian.

Now, as we jump into the text, let's start where we ended last weekend, verse 26, "You do not believe because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me." Notice the context here, there's a contrast as in, "Unlike you who don't believe, who aren't my sheep, my sheep hear my voice. I know them and they follow me." Unlike these men, Jesus sheep respond. Those who are not his sheep, they do not hear his voice. They are not known by him, and they do not follow him. What you have here in verse 27, I think, is three stages that the sheep go through on their way to eternal life, which is what Jesus says in verse 28. Notice first that they hear Jesus' voice or better they pay attention when he calls to them. When he calls, they answer.

Look at John 10:3, the very top of the chapter there and says, "The sheep hear the Good Shepherd and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he's brought out all his own, he goes before them and the sheep follow him for, they know his voice." So Jesus calls individual sheep out of the darkness of Judaism, that's the context here, and into salvation in him. This is what Jesus talks about in John 6:44. He's in connection with his Father. He says, "No one can come to me unless," here's the exception, "the Father who sent me draws him." Oh, what does that mean? Jesus continues. "It is written in the prophets and they will all be taught by God. Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me."

So the Father and the Son, they both speak. They teach. They call. They draw a person and that person comes or they believe in Jesus. Romans 10:17 puts it this way, listen. It says, "Faith comes from hearing and hearing through the Word of Christ." Now, the thing about that verse is that the word Word usually refers to a spoken word and the phrase Word of Christ is better translated the word from Christ. So what am I saying? What I'm saying is that when the gospel is proclaimed accurately, the one who is speaking is Christ through the preacher. In the words of 2 Corinthians 5:10, "God makes his appeal through faithful preachers." So when a person responds, when they trust in Christ, they're not trusting in the preacher. So when a person rejects the faithful preaching of the gospel in a church or work school, whatever, they're not rejecting the preacher, they're rejecting Jesus as if he were standing there in front of them or they were standing there in John 10.

Then second verse 27, after believing, they're brought into a personal relationship with Jesus, which is what it means that verse 27, notice, "They know him." The result of believing in Jesus, verse 27 is following him and loving obedience becomes their new lifestyle. They follow his teachings. They follow his examples. They follow his lead. So this is what it means to believe. Notice again, they're his sheep before they follow him. They're his sheep before they hear his voice. They didn't become sheep when they believed, they were already sheep and that's why they believed.

So what truth does this expose about believers? Well, this text describes as *point #1), The Sheep's Definite Salvation*. If you're taking notes, point number one is *The Sheep's Definite Salvation*. The salvation the sheep experience, in other words, is guaranteed. It's definite. There's

no hesitation. There's no doubt in these words. In contrast to the non-sheep, these are statements of fact. This is what will happen in every one of Jesus sheep.

Take a look at chapter 10 verse three again. I'll show you. "The sheep hear his voice and he calls his own sheep by name," that's individual, "and leads them out." When he has brought out how many? All. "When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them and the sheep follow him for they know his voice." He knows each sheep's name. He does not overlook a single one. He brings all of them out of darkness and into salvation. Now, that's the positive aspect of these ideas. But what about the flip side? Listen to the next verse, verse 5. "A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him because they do not know the voice of strangers."

Notice they will not follow a stranger. They will flee from him because they do not know the stranger's voice. Well, what does that mean? It means all the rivals, all the substitutes, all the heirs, all the lies, the sheep will not follow any of them when the Good Shepherd calls. When he calls these strangers, these lies, these false teachings are seen for what they truly are. They're not Jesus. They're not the truth. Then Jesus is seen for who he is, and we believe. This is like Acts chapter 16, where there is a woman named Lydia. She's selling things in the city of Philippi. In response to hearing the good news of salvation in Jesus, verse 14 says this, "The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul."

God didn't open her heart there because she was falling asleep and needed a little shot of spiritual adrenaline. "Hey, wake up." No. What that means is she believed. God opened her heart so that she would believe, and you know that because the next verse says after that, she was baptized. She believed because God opened her heart. So for you, why did you leave that cult that you were in, or why did you leave the anti-Christ ideology that you were indoctrinated in her? Why did you leave the shackles of unbelief, or to put it differently? Why is it that you have never gotten enticed by the massive lies that are out there? Or why is it that things suddenly made sense to you one day? Is it because you were smarter than other people? Is it because you were more spiritual? Is it because you had more insight than others did? Is it because you just figured it out? Because you just knew the right thing to do, is that why? No.

No. According to Jesus, in verse 3, verse 4, verse 16 and verse 27, he called, you answered and you answered because your heart or your spiritual eyes were open so that you just knew that you knew that you knew what you needed to do. You needed to give your life to Jesus. That's why one day this whole thing made sense. That's why it was like the preacher was just talking to you like you were the only person in the room. Jesus used the preacher's mouth and spoke through him to you, and the result was you were saved. You believed. Do you remember that moment when everything finally made sense, when you finally got the truth, when you had the clarity that you didn't have before? That friend is your personal experience of John 10:27. You heard his voice and followed like a child who recognizes her mother's voice, calling her in a massive crowd.

This is a definite salvation, a salvation that is guaranteed, a call from the Good Shepherd to every one of his sheep that cannot be anything but certain and successful in bringing every last one of

his sheep out of darkness and into the kingdom. Not one of them will be left in darkness. Not one of them will refuse to respond. Not one of them will refuse to hear. Not one of them will hear and ignore. Not one of them will be left behind. He brings them all out when he calls each one by name. This is the definite guaranteed certain salvation of Jesus sheep. So is this how you think about salvation, that it is guaranteed, or for you, is salvation uncertain?

Jesus addresses this in what he says next about his sheep. Verse 28. "I give them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of my hand." Talk about a definite salvation. Let's break each phrase down. Jesus gives eternal life to the sheep that he knows who hear his voice and follow him. Eternal life is not something his sheep are waiting to have. They have it when they believe. "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life." That's John 3:36. John 6:47, "Whoever believes has eternal life." It's theirs by gift from Jesus. If it is there, that life is what? That life is eternal, which means that it can't ever, ever come to an end. The result of having eternal life is verse 28. They will what? Never perish. That is they will not ever perish. This is the strongest way in Greek to negate something happening in the future. In other words, it is impossible for any sheep to ever perish.

To further solidify that fact, Jesus, the Good Shepherd, puts himself up as the defender, which is why they will not ever perish, because notice verse 28, "No one will snatch them out of his hand." No one, no person, no entity can remove even one of them from his hand. That is his control, his care, his protection. Then as if that's not enough, Jesus then adds verse 29, "My Father, who's given them to me, is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." The Father gave the Son his sheep. Like we saw last week, he did it before the sheep believed. In point of fact, he did it before the foundation of the world, but that was last week.

Next phrase, "He is greater. He's more noble, more glorious, more powerful than all." That is all beings ever, and being with the Father is the most powerful being in existing. Notice, "No one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." That same phrase is used of both Father and Son. To underscore the idea, Jesus is not guaranteeing the salvation of his sheep apart from the Father, but what? In coordination, in conjunction, in reliance on his Father, he makes these promises. The salvation of every one of Jesus' sheep then is guaranteed. It is as guaranteed as the mighty power of God is unconquerable, invincible, indestructible, unbeatable. That's God. There's no power, no being in existence that is greater than what is protecting God sheep.

So what truth does this expose about believers? This text describes verse *point #2*), ***The Sheep's Defended Security. The Sheep's Defended Security.*** Let me put it as simply as I can. No one has ever lost his salvation. No one. Say it with me, no one. That's what you get at the 11:55. I don't do that any other service but here. Christian, if you fear that you will lose your salvation, summarize these verses and tell these verses to your fear. If you have salvation, you can never ever lose it. The finality of your salvation is defended, guarded, protected, making your ultimate salvation as dependable as God is, making it the most guaranteed, the most certain, the most inevitable future that there is.

Listen to Jesus talk about this. John 6:37, he says, "All that the Father gives me will come to me and whoever comes to me, I will never cast out." Two verses later he says, "And this is the will of my Father that I should lose nothing, nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day for this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day." The power to be saved comes from God, and the power to stay saved comes from him too.

Romans 8:35 puts it this way, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" How would you answer that question? He gives some examples, through tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, sword. Any of that separate us? Answer, no. Why? Verse 38, "Because I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels or rulers, these powerful beings, nor things present or anything to come, nor powers, nor heights, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation has the ability to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

Why is that possible? Because God, according to Jude verse 24, Jude is Jesus' half-brother, says, "God is able." Just add a little word there. God is infinitely able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before his presence, before the presence of his glory with great joy. He is invincibly able to save you. Now while Christians stay committed to Jesus, the ultimate keeping of our salvation does not depend on our effort, our free will, our good works, our virtue. Our salvation is eternally dependable not because we hold so tightly to Jesus, but because what? He holds so tightly to us. It's not just him, it's what? It's the Father too, verse 29.

I mean, can anybody steal from God? Can anyone overpower God? I mean, can anyone trick God? "Hey, God, look over there." You can't do that. I mean, it's silly to even think that, but that's what Jesus does. He appeals to the power of God as the basis for our secured salvation. So a person cannot lose their salvation. They can never ever lose it because they're protected, shielded, defended by none other than God. The Father and the Son, the Lord Jesus keep us saved. So to teach that the Father and the Son together can lose even one sheep is to say that something in the universe is more powerful than the combined power of Father and Son to defend just one sheep.

I mean, that's as ridiculous as it is arrogant, especially if a person thinks, "Well, the text doesn't say that I can't take myself out of his hands." Oh, yeah, it does. It says it twice actually. The words no one, "No one will snatch them out of my hand and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand, including you." To teach to the Christian can be saved and then lost is to contradict this text, but beyond that, it's to attack the character of Jesus suggesting that he's not capable or he's not competent to shepherd and protect all the people that God gave him is to call Jesus a liar and to question his and the Father's ability to save.

I know at this point there are some questions that you might have in your minds like, "What do we do with people who used to go to church who said they believed in Jesus? Maybe they got baptized and served in the church and sang in the choir, whatever. What do we do then? Now, today, they walked away from what they once believed. What about that? Did they lose their salvation?" No, they didn't. One of two things is true. Either one, they're truly Christians and

after a period of rebellion or after a great fall, they will come back. They won't stay in rebellion like Peter after he denied Jesus three times. That's not a minor thing. If you were there that day, you would look at him and think, "He's not a Christian," but he came back, or two, they were never really saved to begin with like Judas, followed Jesus for over two years, but fell away and here's the key, stayed away.

To say that they were saved and lost, it goes against the text that we've looked at today. To say that they were never saved is what 1 John 2:19 actually says. It's talking about people who left Christianity because of false teaching, and John writes this quote, "They went out from us, but they were not of us," as in they were not really Christians because if they had been of us, if they had been Christians, they would've continued with us, but they went out, they left, they fell away that it might become plain that they all are not of us, meaning they weren't really Christians in the first place. So to summarize, if you have it, you can't lose it. If you lose it, you never had it to begin with.

Now, does this mean a person living in unrepentant sin can look at you and say, "Well, I prayed as a kid. It doesn't matter how I live my life. Once saved, always saved." Well, that's false. That person is actually self-deceived. Why do I say that? 1 John 2:3 says this. "By this we know that we have come to know him. This is how we know we have a relationship with him if we keep his commandments, not if we pray to prayer. Whoever says I know him but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him." Now, does this mean that a true Christian will not struggle with sin and even struggle deeply? No, it doesn't mean that at all. Think about it. Think about what Jesus says in 28 and 29. If he says, "No one will snatch you out of his hand and no one is able to snatch you out of the Father's hand," doesn't that suggest that some things are trying?

I mean, you've felt this, haven't you, Christian? Your salvation is always under attack, attacked by false teachers, attacked by your own flesh, attacked by unbelievers, attacked by false teachings, attacked by trials, attacked by sin, attacked by temptation, attacked by the evil one. Even if those attacks are successful for a time in a Christian's life, they will never ultimately win. Why? Because verse 29 says, "No one is able to snatch you out of the Father's hand." Again, while we stay committed to Jesus and we keep ourselves in the love of God and we abide in him and abide in his word, we stay committed. Our dependable, eternal security does not depend on our feeble grip of him. Your ultimate salvation, you living in heaven one day depends eternally on his mighty grip of you.

Jesus looks at each and every believer and says to them, "The Father gave you to me. No matter what happens, I will never let you go." I mean, what's safe for a toddler being told, "Hey, hold your dad's hands while we cross the street," or what, the father holding the toddler's hands? I mean, that is the picture here, Jesus and the Father holding us, not us holding onto them. It's as if you're nickel in the omnipotent hand of Jesus and around his hand is the Father's hand. You are double-handed safe, everlastingly secure, once and for all now and forever protected and defended by God himself. But if you think about this illustration Jesus gives, there's more

because with one hand each is holding you, meaning that both have one hand free to defend you, to defend you from everything that would seek to come after your salvation. You see, nothing can defeat the Father and the Son and their defense of your salvation, nothing.

Now, does this mean that a true Christian will never ever doubt that they're saved? No, it doesn't mean that. Should they doubt? No. But can they? Of course, they can. Doubt may be very legitimate, especially if a person is living in unrepentant sin. However, all true Christians are perfectly safe just like I've been every single time that I've gotten on an airplane because here I am, I was safe. At the same time, many true Christians may not feel perfectly safe, again, just like me every time I've been on an airplane. Christian, if you experience those moments, trust Jesus, trust his words here in this text and not your feelings. Follow his word here and not your heart. I mean, if you truly wrestle with being sure about your salvation, remember the words that start, Romans 8:38. They start with this, "I am sure that nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God," or Philippians 1:6, "I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."

These verses show that you can be sure that you're saved, so let these promises have more sway over your heart and your mind than your doubt. If you still need more help with this, read and read and reread the little chapter, book of 1 John. John says in 5:13 that he wrote this book so that his readers will not guess or wish or hope, but know, know that they have eternal life. You can know that you're saved. Now, the reason Jesus can even talk like this is because of what he says in verse 30. "I and the Father are one." You see, the only chance there is that a sheep could be lost is if either the Father or the Son are at odds, so that one or both stop protecting one of the sheep. He or Jesus is saying that whole scenario is impossible and it is impossible because of what he is.

Let's break this down word for word. Take a look at verse 30. "I and the Father." That speaks of two distinct persons. The word are in that verse is a first-person plural. It means we are again speaking to two distinct persons, that is the Son is not the Father and the Father is not the Son. So that means that those like one is Pentecostals who deny that Jesus is a distinct person from the Father, that view is contradicted in this verse. Jesus is not the Father; he's a distinct person. That is why Jesus will say things like he prays to the Father, he's obedient to the Father, he was sent by the Father because the Father and the Son are not the same person.

Also, Father and Son are one. Now, what does that mean? That's not just one, as in both have the same purpose. I mean, anybody can say, "I want to do God's will." Anybody say that? "Here's what God wants. I want to do what God wants." If you're a Christian, you say that and nobody would bat an eye, but we can see this statement meant more than that because of how the Jews responded to it. Verse 31, "The Jews picked up stones again to stone him." Why'd they do that? Well, because in their minds this peasant, this Galilean carpenter just equated himself with God, which to them is false teaching worthy of death according to Deuteronomy 13:5, and it's blasphemy which is also worthy of death according to Leviticus 24:16, unless, of course, it's what? Unless it's true.

Stoning was to be done after a trial, but the evidence is right there before their eyes. Once again, no waiting for the Romans who they alone had the power of execution. No mob rule was taking over. The judge, the jury and the executioners are all there. He needs to die now. It's why they get so angry that they attempted murder. Well, when Jesus said that he and the Father are one, they knew he was saying one in nature, one in category, one in what they are, namely God. So being one in category is equally God with the Father, that would mean that each is also united in the desire to save all of Jesus' sheep and both are united in the accomplishment of actually securing the salvation of every single one of Jesus' sheep. So groups like the Jehovah's Witnesses who deny Jesus' deity, they're also contradicted here.

So one in nature means the Father is God and the Son is equally God. Two distinct persons mean the Father is one person and the Son is a second person, that Jesus didn't have multiple personality disorder. "I'm the Father now. I'm the Son now." That's not what he did. It's not what this was. He's just as God as the Father is God, yet he's a distinct person from the Father and there is only one God. These Jews are left with either blasphemy or believe in him. They chose door number one, which if Jesus isn't God is the only right door to choose.

So, what truth does this expose about believers? This text describes verse *point #3*), ***The Sheep's Divine Shepherd. The Sheep's Divine Shepherd.*** Christian, your Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus, he is none other than truly God, as divine as God as the Father is God equal in deity, equal in power, equal in goodness.

From the first three phrases of this book in John 1:1, this has been the message. It says, "In the beginning was the Word." That is Jesus always existed. He existed before he was born. He had no beginning. He's eternal. Second, it says, "The Word was with God." That is Jesus was with the Father as a separate person from all eternity, but with him closely in fellowship, intimately as an equal face-to-face. Third phrase of the book of John is, "The Word was God." He's not a God or an angel or the highest angel or some demigod or some divine consciousness He is God.

As he proclaimed himself in John 8:58 saying, "Before Abraham was I am." Taking the divine name I am and using it for him himself. After he's raised from the dead, one of his disciples, Thomas sees him and proclaims about him in John 20:28, "My Lord and my God." Interestingly, after that declaration, Jesus didn't reject it. He didn't confront it. He didn't correct it. He didn't clarify it. He accepted it completely because that is who he is, the Lord of all creation and God over all.

Colossians 2:9, "In Jesus, the whole fullness of deity dwells in bodily form." He is the Godman, God in every way that God is and human in every way that we are, yet without sin. "He's our great God and the Savior," Titus 2:13. In Hebrews 1:8, the Father himself calls Jesus God. He says to Jesus, "Your throne O God is forever." 1 John 5:20, "Jesus is the true God in eternal life." In fact, look at verse 28. It says, "I give them eternal life." No one but God has the ability to say and mean that he can give somebody eternal life. Only God can do that, and Jesus takes that and says, "I can do that."

Christian, this is your Good Shepherd. When God gave you to Jesus, he gave you to one that Hebrews 1:2 says, "He created the world through." One who, Hebrews 1:3 says, is the radiance of his glory, one who is the exact imprint of his nature, one who upholds the universe by the word of his power. That is your Good Shepherd. He's been with you from the moment you heard his voice and believed. You've been following him through the good and easy and carefree times, and through many dangers, toils and snares when following him seemed like it couldn't get any harder.

Your Good Shepherd is your Divine Shepherd who can be with you always and can even be in you. Why? Because he's omnipresent. He can understand everything about you and understand everything you're going through, and he can use all of it for your good because he knows what is good for you because he's omniscient and he can defend you without the slightest hint that he'll be anything but victorious because he's omnipotent. This is your Good Shepherd. Your Good Shepherd is God. This is the truth that this text exposes about those who believe in Jesus.

What do we know about God being our shepherd? Verse 23 says we know that when he is our shepherd, we don't suffer any lack. We have everything we need. We know from there that he takes perfect care for us. Even when the path of our life takes us to the valley of the shadow of death, we have nothing to fear. He protects us perfectly, so perfectly in fact that we will dwell in his house forever. Christian, if this is your Good Shepherd, truly what do you have to fear?

If this is your Good Shepherd, how can you rethink the hard times that you may be enduring right now in light of him leading your life as your Good Shepherd? If this is your Good Shepherd, you do not ever need to doubt that when your life is over and you're taking your final breath, he will be there. In the words of 2 Timothy 4:18, "He will be there to take you safely home to his heavenly kingdom." Why? Because nothing can snatch you out of his hands. Why? Because nothing can separate you from the love of God and Christ Jesus our Lord. As the team comes back up to sing. Let's pray.

Jesus, these are wonderful encouraging truths, but these truths are deep and profound, far more worthy of 30 minutes, worthy of a lifetime of study and contemplation and application as we seek to live in light of these incredible truths. These words bring life. They bring help. They bring joy. They bring tears to eyes that don't often cry. We hear about your love, but to hear it from your lips as this deep and this powerful and this profound, please help us, each one of us to understand these truths. Do this for our good and for your glory. Amen.