



SERMON TITLE: Safe and Secure

DATE: March 15, 2020

SCRIPTURE: John 10:22-42

PASTOR: Charlie Boyd

"These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ" (John 20:31). This is how John concludes his own biography of Jesus. He wanted the young, the old, the sick, the well, the despairing, the hopeful, the skeptics, the faithful, and whoever reads his account of Jesus to believe and trust him more fully. But what did John want them to believe? He wanted them to believe that Jesus alone brought eternal life into the present, broken world. And for all who enter this eternal life with God right now, we—like John—are exiles. For all who enter a relationship with Jesus, we will very likely be marginalized and dismissed because we follow him. So, what does it mean to believe? And how do we mature in believing? What does it mean to remain faithful to God when the pressure is on? These are the things that John will help us explore by showing us the glory and beauty of Jesus.

From time to time, I run into people who have trusted Christ for salvation, but they're not sure they are truly saved. If I ask them, *Are you a Christian?* —they'll say, "I think so." Sometimes I'll ask, *Do you know for sure that when you die you're going to heaven?*" and they'll say, "I hope so." And if I then ask, *Why don't you know so? Why are you unsure?*" They'll say, "Well, I've done this and I've done that. I'm not perfect. I've made mistakes. I have regrets." *Or maybe they'll say, "I heard this preacher who said you can lose your salvation" so they're not sure.* Here's another way the question comes up. You've heard the question or maybe you've asked the question regarding a son or daughter or a loved one—a question something like this: "I raised my son in the church, he made a profession of faith and was baptized, but he's not walking with the Lord today." And maybe that concerned parent says something like, "He's gotten into drugs and he's living with someone. God is just not a part of his life." Or maybe they say, *"After taking a religion class at college, he's totally rejected the faith and wants nothing to do with God."* And that parent wants to know if I think that their son is "saved" or not. *What would you say?* The question is: *Can a Christian lose his/her salvation? Can you really know for sure that you will go to heaven when you die? If so, what is the foundation for the assurance of your salvation? Is there such a thing as "eternal security" or as some say, "once-saved-always saved?"* The Bible teaches very plainly that you *can know for sure* that "once saved, you're always saved." You can know for sure that your eternal destiny is secure. And the passage we are studying today is one of the Bible's best anchor texts for the doctrine of eternal security.

READ John 10:22-42

OVERVIEW: First of all, let me give you an overview of what this passage teaches and then we will come back and focus on the verses that provide the secure foundation for the assurance of salvation. John has been showing us how the Jewish people are divided over who Jesus is. And here, we see that the Jewish religious leadership is divided as well (see 10:19). Jesus has come to Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication or what we know as Hanukkah (mid-December). As Jesus is walking in the Temple area, the religious leaders confront him with the question: "If you really are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus replies that he has already told them and the miracles he's done also confirm that he is the Messiah. He says, "You've heard me and seen the miraculous works I've done, but still you don't believe." Then, he goes on to say that they don't believe because they are not a part of his flock. "My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they will never perish and no one can take them out of my hand. My Father has given them to me and he is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one" (vv27-30). It's that last statement—"I and the Father are one" that infuriates the religious leaders. Here is yet another time that Jesus declares that he is God in the flesh. Basically, he's saying, "As God is, I am." Lots of people say Jesus never claimed to be God, but the religious leaders had no question about it. According to the OT law, to make a claim like that was blasphemy and it carried the death penalty. So they picked up rocks to stone him to death. Jesus asked them for what good work were they putting him to death and they said, "We're not going to stone you for doing good, but because you, being a man, make yourself out to be God." There it is. And notice Jesus didn't deny it. In fact,

Fellowship Greenville 3161 S Highway 14, Greenville, SC 29615-5906

864.234.7033 | fellowshipgreenville.org

he refers to Psalm 82:6 to show that in the OT, God referred to judges who were to be God's representatives as "gods" so what's the big deal about his claim to be God? He again points them to the miraculous things he's done as proof of who he claimed to be, but it fell on deaf ears. They were determined to arrest him, but Jesus escaped and retreated out into the wilderness of Jordan. And many people continued to believe in him. *Now, that's the overview of the passage. But tucked away in this heated argument is one of the most direct statements regarding the eternal security of the believer found anywhere in the Bible.*

ETERNAL SECURITY: According to vv27-30, eternal security rests on two things: first, the sovereignty of God in salvation; second, the certainty of Jesus' promises.

(1) The Sovereignty of God in salvation (v29). Verse29 *assures* us that those whom God has given to Christ in salvation, he also guards and keeps and protects. The Father guarantees that all those he's given to Jesus are safe and secure. No one and nothing can snatch them out of his hand. If God gave you to Jesus to be one of his sheep then he has pledged himself to you to keep you eternally safe and secure. So the question is not: *Can Christians lose their salvation?* The question is: *Can God lose one of his children?* Of course, the answer is "no." There is no power in heaven or earth that can break God's grip of grace on you (cf Rom 8:1; 29-30; 35-39). Charles Ryrie in his book "Eternal Security" gives us this definition. [Eternal security] is "the work of God which guarantees that the gift of salvation, once received, is forever and cannot be lost." The doctrine of eternal security emphasizes *God's work* in guaranteeing that all who have received eternal life will not lose it.

2) The Certainty of Jesus' promises (vv27-28). Verses 27-28 *assure* us that those to whom Christ has given eternal life will never perish. Actually, there are four promises here. Promise #1—"I give them eternal life." #2—"They will never perish." #3—"They will never perish." #2 repeated b/c in the Greek this is a double negative, meaning, "They will *never, no never* perish." Two promises in one statement. #4—"No one will snatch them out of my hand."

These two truths—the sovereignty of God in salvation and the certainty of Jesus' promises are the two hands that hold us. No one can snatch you out of Jesus' hand and no one can snatch you out of the Father's hand. You are held safe and secure in the double grip of God's grace. Eternal security, the assurance of your salvation, is grounded in God's power and Christ's promises.

If you do not hold to the doctrine of eternal security there are other Bible truths that lose their meaning and power in your life. For example God's unconditional love, grace, forgiveness, "eternal" life, the nature of salvation itself, and intimacy with Christ. These great truths offer tremendous reassurance to believers, but they lose their power and meaning if they are conditioned on how good and faithful you are rather than on how good and faithful God is (cf 2Tim2:13).

I want to make this clear. Nowhere in Scripture does God promise eternal life to people who have done religious things. No raising a hand and coming forward in an evangelistic crusade. No signing a card, no walking in the aisle, no prayer, no church membership, no catechism class, no baptism, no sacrificial act of service, no giving your money saves you. None of those things make you a Christian. None of those things will ever take the place of your personally trusting Christ to forgive your sins and to give you eternal life. So, *If a person says they trusted Christ for salvation, but at some point, they fall away and they're no longer living for God, does that mean they were never saved to start with? Maybe.* The issue is "once saved"—that is, "Were they 'once saved?'" But the problem lies in what they first *believed*, not in how they *behave*. So, the question is: *What did they believe when they first believed? Were they just joining a church? Were they just accepting their parent's faith but it never became a personal faith? Did they just believe in a series of facts and statements about Jesus but never believe in Jesus? Did they get baptized b/c all their friends were getting baptized? Was their faith a "religious" faith?, meaning, Did they believe that salvation came by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone or did they believe in a Jesus plus live-a-good-life kind of salvation? Did they come to an inner conviction, a settled persuasion that Jesus was God's only answer to save them from their sins and they trusted Christ as their personal Savior?* If that was true of them, I have to allow for the possibility that true believers can fall away and come under the loving discipline of their Heavenly Father and even forfeit future rewards. True believers can wander away, be led astray, become dull in hearing, fall into terrible sin, become hard-hearted, and bring serious consequences on themselves and those around them—consequences that might be life-long consequences. As to the question: *Can you know for sure that God has forgiven all your sin past, present, and future and that you will go to heaven when you die?* According to Jesus, the answer is, "Yes. Absolutely. You can absolutely know for sure." You can know for sure b/c the assurance of

your salvation rests on God's power and on Jesus' promises, not your performance. And that should take a load off your mind—" *Sound theology has a way of doing that.*"

Discussion Starters: Read John 10:22-42

Ask: What is something that you learned or that stood out to you from this sermon or this passage? Why is it significant? What did you hear that resonated with you? What new thoughts and insights did you have?"When someone volunteers an "AHA," ask follow up questions to dig deeper into that "AHA" to keep the discussion going. Ask the group, " *Anyone else have this same thought or have other thoughts about that? Or ask: "What do you think about this insight?"* After you've exhausted that topic, throw the original question back out to the group, " *Who else had an "AHA?"* —Repeat the pattern above. If someone says, " *I didn't really have an "AHA," it's more that I don't understand...*" Then go that direction. Ask follow-up questions to help them clearly articulate the issue. " *Anybody else think about that/struggle with that?"* Ask the group for input, " *So, how would you answer that question?"* Whoever answers, ask follow up questions, ask for input from the group on that answer (*What do you think about that?*), etc. Then repeat the same conversation pattern by asking—*What's your "take-away" from the message and our discussion? What is one thing you can take-away and put into action?*

Additional Questions:

Icebreaker — If someone were to say to you, "I just don't believe "once-saved-always-saved." If I believed that I would live any way I want"—how would you answer them?

1. How does God's sovereignty in salvation assure you that "once saved, you are always saved?" (Read and mine out everything you can from v29. Look at every phrase to see how everything that Jesus says here gives you the full assurance of your salvation)
2. How does the certainty of Jesus' promises in v27-28 assure you that, having trusted Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, you cannot lose your salvation (you cannot be lost?)