

Main Idea: According to Jesus' teaching in John 10:22-30, there are two categories of people in the world when it comes to eternal security.

- I. People who don't know the Good Shepherd are not secure (22-26).
 - A. The Jews seemed interested in Christ, but didn't know Him (22-24).
 - B. The Jews saw Christ's miracles, but refused to believe in Him (25-26).
 1. They wanted a different Christ.
 2. They weren't sheep.

Key: Profession of Christ does not guarantee possession of Christ.
- II. People who know the Good Shepherd are eternally secure (27-30).
 - A. What is true of a Christian (27)?
 1. He hears Jesus' words.
 2. He follows Jesus.
 - B. What is true of Jesus (28)?
 1. He knows His own.
 2. He gives eternal life to His own.
 3. He keeps His own secure.
 - C. What is true of the Father (29-30)?
 1. He has given a gift to His Son.
 2. He protects what He has given.

The Bottom Line: How can you know if you are eternally secure?

1. If I have eternal life, it's because God gave it to me.
2. If God gave me eternal life, then I will believe in Jesus.
3. If I believe in Jesus, I belong to Jesus.
4. If I belong to Jesus, I am secure.
5. If I am secure, I will follow Jesus.

I want to begin by making a statement that is quite controversial in our area, and then I want to go to the Scriptures to defend it. I'm not interested in controversy for controversy sake. It's God's glory I'm after, and your fullest joy. Here's the statement...

If you belong to Jesus Christ, you are eternally secure in the hands of the Good Shepherd. That's one of the most precious truths that a sinner could ever hear. Jesus said in John 6:39, “And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.”

Jesus doesn't lose things. It's as simple as that. He said that He will lose *none* of the individuals that the Father has given Him. Those who belong to Him are safe and secure, *eternally secure*, in His hands. Their security does not depend upon their own effort. It rests fully upon the sovereign, gracious, and effectual purposes of God. The Father has given a people to His Son, and the Son has given His life to save those people, and the Son says that He will save them and lose *not a one of them*.

Unfortunately, not everyone believes what the Savior has said. Years ago I was working as summer help at the Honda motorcycle plant in Marysville, Ohio, when during a break, a man told me he had not sinned for something like seven months. The fellow was about 35 years old, worked on the sub-assembly line, and wasn't joking about his claim. As I listened further, I understood why it was so important to him that there was no sin in his life. He told me he believed that if a Christian sinned, that person lost his salvation.

Frankly, I admired my co-worker's sincerity, but I couldn't help but ask, “So you haven't sinned in all this time, not even once?” To which he replied, “No, I haven't.” And then he added, “Well, I've made some mistakes, sure, but I haven't sinned.”

** Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is intended to prompt continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ This message grows out of a series on The Good Shepherd preached at WBC in 2003.

Obviously, this man would not agree with my statement, that *if you belong to Jesus Christ, then you are eternally secure in the hands of the Good Shepherd*. He believed his salvation lasted only until his next sin. And he's not alone.

Many people see eternal security as a dangerous doctrine, one that undermines holiness and the incentive for holy living. "Are you one of those 'once saved always saved' churches," they say, "that believes you can do whatever you want and still go to heaven?" That's the common and misguided perception of the doctrine of eternal security, and unfortunately, it's held both by those who *deny* the doctrine and by some who *affirm* it (or I should say, affirm an unbiblical and twisted view of it).

On the one hand, it seems so clear. "For God so loved the world," says the most familiar verse in the Bible, "that He gave His Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have *everlasting life*." That's clear, isn't it? God gives eternal life to the person who believes on His Son.

But is it really eternal? Does the Bible teach that once God saves a person that person will always be saved? Or can a person who has believed in Jesus Christ sin in such a way as to nullify his salvation? Is it really possible for a person to have true assurance, to know beyond doubt that when he dies, he will go to heaven to be with his Savior?

I know that human opinions abound on this subject, and I have no interest in adding more opinion to the discussion. What I want to know, and what I want you to know, is what the Savior Himself says about this subject. And nowhere does He speak more clearly about this subject than in today's text.

According to the Jesus' teaching in John 10:22-30, there are two categories of people in the world when it comes to eternal security. According to Jesus, people who don't know the Good Shepherd are *not* secure—we'll see that in verses 22-26. And people who do know the Good Shepherd are eternally secure—as we'll see in verses 27-30.

I. People who don't know the Good Shepherd are not secure (22-26).

We have come to our fourth message in our study of the Good Shepherd in John 10. What Jesus has to say about the subject of security builds on what He's been saying regarding His identity as the Good Shepherd.

The context of John 10 is one of controversy. Back in chapter 9, Jesus healed a blind beggar on the Sabbath and incensed the Jewish leaders. So in chapter 10, Jesus painted a word picture to contrast Himself with those who were supposed to be the shepherds of God's people. He called Himself *the Good Shepherd*, and said the religious leaders were thieves and hirelings. He also talked about His own intimate relationship with the sheep and how He had come to lay down His life for them.

"I am the good shepherd," He said in verse 14. "I know my sheep, and my sheep know me...and I lay down my life for the sheep." Then He said in verse 16, "I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen [speaking of Gentile sheep]. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd."

Notice the certainty in Jesus' words. *I have other sheep. I must bring them. They will listen*. Jesus made it clear that He knew who His sheep were, present and future, and promised that He would bring every one of them home safely to the fold of God's eternal presence.

So how did Jesus' listeners respond? According to verse 19, the reaction was mixed. Some said He was demon-possessed (20). Others were intrigued by Him (21).

There's actually a break in time between verse 21 and verse 22. You'll notice verse 22 says, "Then came the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter." The

event we're about to see took place in the winter, two months after the message Jesus gave in the first part of John 10 (which was delivered in the Fall during or shortly after the Feast of Tabernacles; see 7:2) . But because Jesus used the same shepherd theme, the gospel writer, John, put these two episodes together.

As it turned out, this was Jesus' last visit to Jerusalem before His final journey when He went to the Cross. It's December, AD 29, during the Jewish holiday we know today as Hanukkah, which, by the way, was a feast that commemorated what happened in 165 B.C. when Judas Maccabeus rescued and re-consecrated the Jewish Temple after pagan control. That detail will be significant in a moment.

John gives the location in verse 23, "And Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon's Colonnade." The KJV calls it "Solomon's porch." The winter is the rainy season in Israel, and Jesus was walking on the east side of Herod's temple under the protection of this long, covered walkway.

This was not a formal teaching time. Jesus was walking along when, as verse 24 indicates, "The Jews gathered around him."² The word means they "hemmed Him in." Undoubtedly, some in this crowd were the leaders Jesus had called thieves and hirelings two months earlier, and they're looking for a way to trap Jesus.

I said a moment ago that when it comes to eternal security, there are two categories of people. Here we meet some examples of the first category. John makes it clear that two things were true of these Jews that surrounded Jesus.

A. The Jews seemed interested in Christ, but didn't know Him (22-24).

Notice the question they raised in verse 24, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

At first glance, you might assume that these guys are genuine seekers, that they truly want to know if Jesus is the Christ. But that would be a faulty assumption. They're not genuine, and they're not seeking the truth. They're on a search and destroy mission.

Ironically, if you had asked these men, "Are you going to heaven when you die," they would have insisted, "Of course!" And that's because they had God's Book and they obeyed it with zeal. They were convinced they were God's people because of who they were by birth and what they were doing for God by merit. Put that together and they were sure that one day God would take them to paradise.

But as Jesus insisted, they were surely wrong. He told them in John 9:41, "Now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains." They were guilty before God, religious, zealous, sincere, and guilty.

You say, "But they came to Jesus. They listened to His teaching." Sure they did, but by their own admission, they *didn't know Him*. Just like lots of church-goers in our day. They seem interested in Christ, but they don't know Him. And if you don't know Him, you are not eternally secure no matter what you claim.

There's something else we're told about these men. Notice secondly...

B. The Jews saw Christ's miracles, but refused to believe in Him (25-26).

That's obvious from Jesus' answer in verse 25, "Jesus answered, 'I did tell you, but you do not believe [present tense; lit. 'you are not believing']. The miracles [KJV 'works'] I do in my Father's name speak for me [KJV 'they bear witness of Me']'"

They had seen the evidence. Jesus had given sight to the blind, cast demons out of people, restored maimed limbs, and even raised the dead. But they ignored the evidence. They saw Christ's miracles and yet refused to believe in Christ.

You may be wondering, "Why didn't Jesus answer their question? Why didn't He tell them plainly that He was the Christ, since they asked?" When the Samaritan woman

² The KJV renders it, "Then came the Jews round about him."

asked, He gave her a straightforward answer. When she asked Jesus about the Messiah, Jesus replied to her in John 4:26, "I who speak to you am He." So if He told her, why didn't Jesus tell the Jewish leaders? The simple answer is because...

1. *They wanted a different Christ.* It was a loaded question. Had Jesus given a straight answer, He would have been misunderstood. They said, "If you are the Christ, tell us." But what they meant by "Christ" and what Jesus meant were two different things. When they asked if He was the "Christ," what they meant was, "Are you the political king who is going to overthrow the Romans? Are you going to get rid of the pagans, like Judas Maccabeus did, and establish the Kingdom in Israel? Are you THAT kind of Christ?"

Do you see the confusion? They wanted a different Christ. That's why they didn't believe in this Christ, the true Christ.

Which leads to another question. Why didn't the Jewish leaders believe in Christ? They saw the evidence. So why then didn't they accept Christ? Because it takes more than evidence to enable a sinner to believe in Christ.

Jesus actually told them why they didn't believe in verse 26, "But you do not believe because you are not my sheep." There's the answer...

2. *They weren't sheep.* Jesus didn't say, "You aren't my sheep because you do not believe." He said, "You do not believe because you are not my sheep." Don't miss that. In order to believe in Jesus, He says you must be His sheep.

Many think that God is the responder in salvation, that you must choose God first, and then He will choose you. If you believe in Jesus, then you will become one of His sheep.

But Jesus says it's the other way around. He says if you're not one of His sheep, you won't believe in Him. In other words, God's election must precede the sinner's belief or the sinner will never believe.

Some say that if you believe in the doctrine of election, then you won't do evangelism. And some say that if you believe in election you should keep that to yourself, and most certainly never talk about it with non-Christians. But Jesus did.

Why is He saying this to these religious leaders? Why is He insisting that the reason they don't believe in Him is because they're not His sheep? It's because they've bought into a man-centered system that says you can make yourself right with God by *doing something*.

But Jesus says no. Jesus makes it clear that if you, the sinner, are ever going to be right with God, God must do something for you. In fact, He must do it all for you, from choosing you (Eph 1:4), to opening up your eyes to your sin (Eph 1:18), to granting you repentance and the desire to change (Acts 11:18), to giving you the necessary faith (Eph 2:8), to justifying you (Rom 3:24), all the way to glorifying you (Rom 8:30).

In its entirety, salvation is all of God and it's all of grace. The fact is, these Jewish leaders didn't have the capacity to believe in Him because they weren't His sheep.³

You say, "How does a person become a sheep?" Jesus gives the answer in verse 29, "My Father, who has *given them to me*." Who's He talking about? According to verse 27, He's talking about His sheep. "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life." How did these sheep become the everlasting possession of the Good Shepherd? Jesus says, "My Father gave them to me."

³ Robert Gromacki, in his excellent book on eternal security entitled, *Salvation Is Forever*, observes this about verse 26, "They did not believe BECAUSE they were not His sheep. Most would read it this way: 'They were not His sheep because they did not believe.' But that is not what it says. These are elected or called sheep, the gift of the Father to the Son." Gromacki, p. 76.

That's how a person becomes a sheep. God the Father gave him to His Son. When? In eternity past. Jesus prayed in John 17:6, "I have revealed you [God the Father] to *those whom you gave me* out of the world."

The truth is, sinners don't have the interest nor the capacity to believe in the Good Shepherd. They willfully want to go their own way even though it leads to destruction (Isa 53:6). And left to his own way, every sinner would perish eternally.

But in His grace, God has chosen to save some rebels. In eternity past God elected an undeserving people and gave them as love gift to His Son. And His Son showed His Father unconditional love by choosing to come and die for those sheep.

So if a sinner is ever going to believe and receive eternal life, it takes divine intervention—intervention from God the Father (He chooses the sheep), from God the Son (He dies for the sheep), and even from God the Holy Spirit (He regenerates and seals and keeps the sheep).

Jesus actually made the same point by using a different metaphor in John 3. In John 10, it's sheep. In John 3, it's wind. In John 3, we meet Nicodemus, a well-known Pharisee and leader of the Jews who came to Jesus at night. Like the men in John 10, he too had seen Jesus' miracles (2:23), and he too approached Christ to have a conversation.

But what did Jesus tell him? He said in John 3:3, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." You were born the first time as the result of someone else's action, namely your parents. That needs to happen again. You need someone else to do something for your benefit. You need to be *born again*.

Of course, Nicodemus didn't get it. "How can a man be born when he is old?" he asked. Jesus told him he needed God the Holy Spirit to give him a new birth, a spiritual birth, and then offered this explanation in verse 8, "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

The Spirit's work is like wind. You don't control the wind. You don't tell it where to blow. But when it blows, you see its effect.

And what's the visible effect that God the Holy Spirit produces once He regenerates a sinner? That's the very next subject Jesus addressed with Nicodemus. He says the sinner *believes*. Verse 12—"I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not *believe*." Verse 15—"Everyone who *believes* in him may have eternal life." Verse 16—"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever *believes* in him..."

It's the same truth. Wind blowing. Choosing sheep. The same God-centered truth. Unless the wind of the Spirit blows, you will remain dead in your unbelief; but should God choose to blow and regenerate your soul, you will believe, and you will forever praise the God who enabled you to do what you were powerless to do.

You say, "This is humbling truth. I am totally dependent upon God for my salvation, aren't I?" Yes, and that's precisely what a proud sinner needs to know if he's ever going to be saved. *You do not believe because you are not my sheep*. You can't do anything to reach God. He must do it all, and He will, if only you will humble yourself before Him and just ask.

So when it comes to eternal security, there's the first category of people. People who don't know the Good Shepherd are not secure. They may think they're secure because they live a good life, or even a religious life. But the truth is, they have no security because they don't believe in Christ, and they don't believe because they aren't His sheep.

And let me add this. *Profession* of Christ does not guarantee *possession* of Christ. Just because a person says the words, "I believe in Jesus," does not necessarily mean he

does. The human heart is deceitful and wicked, so much so that a person can profess Christ but not truly possess Christ. Case in point, Judas.

So when I'm asked, "What about the Christian who walks away from Christ? He lost his salvation, didn't he?" The biblical answer is *no*. A person can't lose what he never possessed to begin with.

That brings us to the second category...

II. People who know the Good Shepherd are eternally secure (27-30).

Listen to Jesus in verses 27-30: "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

In verses 25-26, Jesus confronted the Jews. Now, in verses 27-30 He commends His followers and explains their condition, and in so doing, He answers three questions related to the issue of security.

A. What is true of a Christian (27)? Jesus highlights two characteristics of a true Christian.

1. *He hears Jesus' words.* "My sheep listen to [KJV 'hear'] My voice." This paragraph is full of present tense verbs which signify continual activity. Literally Jesus says, "My sheep are hearing." He's not talking about somebody who *one* time listened and heard His words, went forward, and made some emotional decision. No, true sheep hear and continue to hear Jesus' words. What He says is priority to them.

Speaking frankly, if spending time in the Bible is a grind to you, and if hearing a sermon from God's Word seems irrelevant to you, then you have no right to call yourself a sheep. Jesus says that true sheep love to hear the Shepherd's voice.

But he doesn't just hear what Jesus says. Secondly...

2. *He follows Jesus.* "I know them and they follow Me," says Jesus. Again, this is a present tense verb indicating that the normal pattern in a Christian's life is to follow Jesus. To follow in His steps, as 1 Peter 2:21 puts it. Or as the old hymn says, "Trust and obey, for there's no other way, to be happy in Jesus."

So if I'm a Christian, and I choose *not* to hear and follow Jesus, then I won't feel very secure. It's that simple. More than a few Christians don't feel secure in Christ because they are not following Christ. They don't need to get saved again. They need to repent of their sin and forsake it and get in tune once again with the voice of their Shepherd.

On the other hand, just because I feeling secure doesn't guarantee I am. There is such a thing as false security.

Several years ago I took our car to the shop for repairs. The mechanic was working on the radiator and while fixing it, encountered another problem. While the engine was running, the car, which was sitting on an incline, started to sputter, and eventually died. I looked at the gas gauge, and it registered one-eighth of a tank. But as it turned out, the mechanic had been testing the car for so long with the engine running that it had run out of gas. Yet the gauge said there was gas in the car. The gauge was wrong. Believing the car had gas didn't make it so.

Believing I'm saved doesn't make it so either. Belonging to Christ does. If you belong to Christ, you are eternally secure in the hands of the Good Shepherd.

Let's go back to our previous question. What if a person claims to be a Christian, but stops following Jesus? Is the person saved and secure or not? Only God knows hearts, but there are two possibilities. One, which we just mentioned, is that the person made a profession but lacks true possession of a relationship with Christ. He didn't stop

being a sheep for he never was one to begin with. Jesus warned about such individuals when He said in Matthew 7:21, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven.”

But there’s a second possibility. He could be a wayward sheep, a true believer that has wandered from the fold. What happens to wayward sheep? The Bible says the Good Shepherd will discipline them in order to bring them back, as an expression of His love; and if they refuse, He’ll take them home to heaven prematurely (Heb 12:6; 1 Cor 11:30-32). As the Good Shepherd said in John 6:39, “I shall lose none of all that he has given me [including wayward sheep], but raise them up at the last day.”

That brings us to the second question Jesus addressed regarding security.

B. What is true of Jesus (28)? Jesus Himself highlights three characteristics.

1. *He knows His own.* “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them,” says Jesus in verse 27. Not, “I know *about* them,” but “I know them.” Jesus has a personal, intimate knowledge of and relationship with His people. I *know* them.

2. *He gives eternal life to His own.* Notice how Jesus begins verse 28, “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.” That’s a guarantee. Jesus promised a life that knows no end to all who know Him. And it’s not future, but present. “I *give* them eternal life.” If you are His sheep, you *have* eternal life. It’s your present possession. Which means you’ll never perish. How could you? If you *have* eternal life, then you can’t perish or what you had wasn’t eternal.

John, the writer of this gospel, also penned these inspired words in 1 John 5:11-13, “And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

“But wait,” says the objector. “Jesus may give us the gift of eternal life, but can’t we throw away a gift?” Not this gift. Why not? It’s not because of our strength or willpower. It’s because of *Him*. Notice the third characteristic that Jesus highlights.

3. *He keeps His own secure.* That’s the end of verse 28, “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; *no one can snatch* [KJV ‘pluck them’] *them out of my hand.*” The Savior didn’t say He’d save His sheep from sorrow, or from suffering, or even from death. What He said is, “They shall never perish.” The word ‘never’ means NEVER. In the Greek, it is extremely emphatic, “they will NOT ever perish.”⁴

The Good Shepherd takes care of His sheep. We are always secure in His care. True, we are inclined to wander, as the hymn writer confessed, “Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love.” But it’s also true that the Good Shepherd never lets go. He seeks us out when we go astray. He finds us, and brings us back to the fold.⁵

In his book, *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, Phillip Keller tells this story about one of his experiences as a shepherd:

One morning at dawn I found nine of my choicest ewes, all soon to lamb, lying dead in the field where a cougar had harried the flock during the night. It was a terrible shock to a young man like myself, just new to the business and unfamiliar with such attacks. From then on I slept with a .303 rifle and flashlight by my bed. At the least sound of the flock being disturbed I would leap from bed and calling my faithful collie, dash out into the night, rifle in hand, ready to protect my sheep.

⁴ Gromacki, p. 76.

⁵ Gromacki, p. 77.

"In the course of time I came to realize that nothing so quieted and reassured the sheep as to see me in the field. The presence of their master and owner and protector put them at ease as nothing else could do..."⁶

What a great line, and so true! *Nothing so quiets and reassures the sheep as to see the Shepherd in the field.* Beloved, our security is linked to our Shepherd. Which is why the closer we are to the Shepherd, the more secure we feel. Underscore FEEL. If we belong to Christ, we are secure regardless how we feel. But many do not enjoy security because they're not walking near the Shepherd.

Never forget this. The security of sheep depends not on the ability of the sheep but on the ability of the Shepherd.⁷ As believers we may sin and stumble, but the Shepherd will lose none of His sheep.

Peter is a great example. Remember what Jesus told him in Luke 22:31-32? "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." When Peter denied Jesus, did he lose his salvation? No. Jesus predicted Peter would sin. He also prayed that Peter's faith wouldn't fail. The Shepherd never lets go of His own.

As if that wasn't enough, Jesus next mentions another person who's committed to the eternal security of His sheep, His Father.

C. What is true of the Father (29-30)? He, too, is involved in our security. How so? Jesus mentions two activities of the Father.

1. *He has given a gift to His Son.* That's what Jesus says in verse 29, "My Father, who has given them to me." How do sheep become sheep? Jesus says His Father "has given them to me," and the perfect tense verb indicates this action took place in the past (Ephesians 1 says it was before the act of creation) with continuing results.

Jesus referred to this love gift back in John 6:37, "All that the Father gives me will come to me." And He also mentioned that those the Father gives Him, the Father also brings to Him, in 6:44, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him." And in 6:65, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him."⁸

Yet there's more. Not only has the Father given a gift to His Son, but...

2. *He protects what He has given.* Notice verse 29, "My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all ; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand." When you ponder this, it is absolutely amazing and comforting. A Christian has double protection. He is in the hand of the Son. He is also in the hand of the Father.

And lest someone might think there could be a conflict of interests, Jesus makes it clear in verse 30, "I and the Father are one." The Father's purpose for the sheep and the Son's purpose for the sheep are one and the same, for they are one.

Now it's time to ask the bottom line question...

The Bottom Line: How can you know if you are eternally secure?

We need not drift along in uncertainty. Jesus words in John 10 give the final answer. There are five unchanging truths. Let's make the statements personal so we can take inventory.

1. *If I have eternal life, it's because God gave it to me.* Friends, don't miss this. Jesus made it clear that the doctrine of election is intricately linked to the doctrine of

⁶ Phillip Keller, p. 37.

⁷ Thought taken from the *Bible Knowledge Commentary*.

⁸ To His disciples Jesus said in John 15:16, "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you."

eternal security. Jesus said that God has chosen His sheep. He knows who they are. He's given them to His Son, and He will not lose even one of them.⁹

So if I have eternal life, here's the reason. God gave it to me.

2. *If God gave me eternal life, then I will believe in Jesus.* To the non-believing Jews Jesus said in verse 26, "You do not believe because you are not my sheep." If we take out the negative, we hear what would say to believers. "You do believe because you are my sheep, and if you are my sheep it's because My Father gave you to me." So if God has given me eternal life, then I will believe in His Son Jesus.

3. *If I believe in Jesus, I belong to Jesus.* "My sheep," says Jesus in John 10. If I believe in Jesus, then I belong to Him. He is my Shepherd and I am His sheep.

Back in 1943 Norman Clayton put this thought into the words of a song...

*Jesus my Lord will love me forever,
From Him no pow'r of evil can sever,
He gave His life to ransom my soul,
Now I belong to Him;
Now I belong to Jesus, Jesus belongs to me,
Not for the years of time alone, But for eternity.*

We're going to sing that song in a moment, but I want to ask you. Can you sing it? Is it true? If you believe in Jesus, it is. You belong to Him.

We are saved, not by our works, but by faith in His work. Jesus Christ died on the cross to bear the penalty of sin and then three days later He defeated death. If I believe that, if I believe in Him, then I belong to Him.

4. *If I belong to Jesus, I am secure.* He said, "I give them eternal life and they will never perish." Never perish. "No one can snatch them from my hand." "No one can snatch them from my Father's hand." No one. Never. "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Rom 10:13)."

So if I believe in Jesus, then I belong to Jesus. And if I belong to Jesus, I am secure. Okay, so does that mean I can live however I want? Actually, it does, and here's why. How do I *want* to live if I am secure in Jesus?

5. *If I am secure, I will follow Jesus.* That's what Jesus said, "My sheep listen to my voice and *follow Me.*" Which indicates that if I belong to Jesus, then I won't want to live how I used to live, and I won't want that because He's given me a new "want to." Now I want to *follow Him.*

The Puritans used to talk about the "perseverance of the saints," a good phrase. It works two ways. Jesus perseveres in behalf of His sheep—He will lose not one. But true sheep will persevere, too—they'll follow Jesus all the way to heaven. Oh, they'll stumble along the way, but by His grace they'll get up and keep walking in His steps.

A person who doesn't want to follow the Shepherd isn't His sheep, but the heart-cry of true sheep is, "Savior, like a Shepherd lead us." And "Where He leads me I will follow."

O friend, if your heart is resistant to the Shepherd, if it's a grind for you to come and hear His Word and if what you hear from the Scriptures is an irritant to what you want out of life, then do you really know the Shepherd, and more importantly, do you know for sure that *He knows you?*

On the other hand, if hearing the Shepherd and following Him is the passion of your heart, be encouraged. That's evidence that you belong to the Shepherd, and if you belong to Him, then you are secure, *eternally* secure in the hands of the Good Shepherd.

⁹ Warren Wiersbe puts it this way, "From the human standpoint, we become His sheep by believing; but from the divine standpoint, we believe because we are His sheep. There is a mystery here that we cannot fathom or explain, but we can accept it and rejoice." Warren Wiersbe, p. 332.