

Secure with Our Shepherd
John 10:19-30
March 15th, 2026

1. Setting the stage: division, confusion, evasion (10:19-25)

2. What characterizes Jesus' sheep? (10:26-30)
 - a. They _____ in Jesus.
 - b. They _____ His voice.
 - c. He _____ them.
 - d. They _____ Him.
 - e. He gives _____ life to them.
 - f. They will never _____.
 - g. No one will _____ them out of His Hand.

3. Applying the Word
 - a. Those who are truly saved cannot _____ their salvation.
 - b. Those who are truly saved will _____ Jesus.

Questions for Discussion/Reflection on John 10:19-30

1. Have you ever struggled with fear that you can lose your salvation? What leads to that fear?

2. Why does Jesus answer them the way He does when they ask Him to plainly tell them if He is the Messiah?

3. How does verse 26 explain the various responses to Jesus? How does that lead into the descriptions in verses 27-28?

4. If God knows all things in His divine knowledge, what does it mean when He says that He "knows" some people and "does not know" others? See John 10:14, 27; 2 Tim. 2:19; Psalm 139:1-3; Jer. 1:5; Matt. 7:20-23
 - a. How should it affect you to know that you are known by God?

5. Using the description of sheep and shepherds in John 10, how would you respond to someone who says they are a Christian but when asked about an area of sin in their life replied, "I don't care what God's Word says, I'm going to do this anyways"?

6. What security does this passage provide for someone who worries that they can lose their salvation? What is emphasized by repetition?

7. What does it mean for Jesus to be one with the Father in v. 30? Based on their response in the following verse, what did His opponents think He was saying about Himself?

Secure with Our Shepherd

John 10:19-30

March 15th, 2026

Big idea: Jesus' people know Him, follow Him, and are held secure.

Intro

Jesus described Himself last week as the Good Shepherd and as the door to the sheep pen. We are the sheep. We're helpless, needy, vulnerable but loved, known, and called.

But pressing the analogy can cause concern. Are we insecure as His sheep? If a sheep can die simply by getting flipped over on its back and stuck, what does that say about us? Will we wander away from our shepherd? Will someone take us away? Will the wolf or the thief come in and steal us away?

We might not use that language, but it is common for Christians to ask:

Can I lose my salvation?

If I am holding on to God and if I let go, am I lost?

If I sin "too big" or "too much" will God no longer accept me?

Will I be deceived by a false message and pulled away from the truth?

My first three years as a Christian were full of fears like that. If I didn't "feel" close to God or was embarrassed or frustrated by some type of sin that I was having a hard time shaking, I was convinced that I had lost my salvation and needed a tearful prayer to regain it. There was a persistent spiritual instability and insecurity in my life.

This passage was one of the key passages that changed things for me. Jesus' words are so crisp, so clear, so thorough, so memorable that they became the stability that my soul needed.

1. Setting the stage: division, confusion, evasion (10:19-25)
 - a. Ongoing division (vv. 19-21)
 - i. What words?
 1. The door, the good shepherd, authority and initiative to lay down His life
 - ii. Nothing new for John's gospel – the people were divided and debating who this guy really is – crazy, demon-possessed, or a legit miracle worker from God
 - b. Feast of Dedication (v. 22)
 - i. Two months have passed between vv. 21 and 22 and it's another great feast.
 - ii. The Jews were celebrating the Feast of Dedication, also called the Feast of Lights or Hanukkah.
 - iii. This is an extra-Biblical feast celebrating the recovery, cleansing, and rededication of the temple by Judas Maccabaeus in 164 B.C. after it was defiled by Antiochus Epiphanes when he sacrificed a pig on the altar (New Bible Dictionary 376).
 - iv. While the timing may only be circumstantial, one commentator observes that this "was the last great deliverance that the Jews had known and therefore it must have been in men's minds a symbol of their hope that God would again deliver His people" (Morris 516).
 - v. Jesus may have chosen this festival to stage His final public appeal to the Jews for faith in Him.
 - vi. Ironically, while they celebrated Israel's last great deliverance, they rejected their ultimate Deliverer.

- c. It was winter, which explains why he was walking in the portico of Solomon, a large covered porch traditionally thought to have stood since the time of Solomon—probably because “it was winter” and this was a shelter against the wind and the cold. It had massive 45-foot-tall white pillars and a cedar ceiling and blocked the wind on one side by the temple wall.
 - d. A loaded request with a partly evasive answer (vv. 24-25)
 - i. If you are the Christ, tell us plainly
 - e. Apparently, the Jews initiated the discussion by gathering around Him and pressing Jesus for an answer.
 - i. Their posture seems confrontational, as if they were hedging Jesus in, determined to get a clear answer from Him.
 - ii. Their question shows that they felt Jesus was evading the issue of His messiahship.
 - 1. They demanded to know the very issue that John is writing to show: is Jesus the Christ?
 - iii. **Why doesn't Jesus just say “Yes, I am”**
 - 1. Could have been a trap
 - a. They keep attempting to kill him. They could be looking for one more reason to accuse him of blasphemy and pick up stones.
 - 2. It was a loaded question because they had an incorrect view of the Messiah.
 - a. Jewish leaders' idea of the Messiah as a conquering hero who would come and deliver Israel from Roman domination (Lu. 24:21; Acts 1:6). The background of the feast of dedication really brings that to the forefront – be the next Maccabeus!
 - b. Couldn't say “yes” because He didn't fit their view of the Messiah.
 - c. Like if I ask someone, “Have you stopped stealing money from work yet?”
 - i. He can't answer simply “yes” or “no.”
 - d. Similar to why you can't just ask someone if they “believe in Jesus.”
 - i. Need to define your terms: what do you mean by believe? Who do you think Jesus is?
 - 3. Answering “yes” would be useless
 - a. They have consistently chosen to ignore His clear teaching and signs, responding with hostility and rejection of the truth that has been revealed.
- f. His response (v. 25 and beyond)
 - i. His response in v 25 indicates that he has clearly told them
 - ii. While Jesus did clearly tell the Samaritan woman and formally blind man (John 4:25-26; 9:35-37) that He is the Messiah, He had not explicitly told the Jewish leaders.
 - 1. **Matthew 16:16-17** Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.
 - iii. His works are sufficiently clear for those with eyes to see and ears to hear.
 - 1. Jesus can say His works are done in His Father's name because they are consistent with the Father's revealed character and give glory to the Father.
 - 2. His works include

- a. turning water to wine and kicking people out of the temple complex for making God's house into a place of business, consistent with OT prophets (ch 2)
 - b. healing the nobleman's son (John 4:46ff)
 - c. healing the lame man (John 5:1ff)
 - d. multiplying food to feed 5,000 (John 6:11-13),
 - e. and healing the blind man (John 9)
 - 3. All of these works should have been clear signs of Jesus' messiahship. They have not been done in private or in secret.
- 2. What characterizes Jesus' sheep? (10:26-30)
 - a. They **believe** in Jesus.
 - i. Human responsibility and God's sovereignty once again in John.
 - 1. They are guilty and morally responsible for rejecting the clear evidence.
 - 2. They need to believe in order to be saved
 - a. **John 3:15b** whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.
 - b. **John 3:36a** "He who believes in the Son has eternal life;
 - c. **John 5:24** "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.
 - 3. If they believe, it's evidence that they are "God's sheep" – they don't believe because they are not His sheep, if they believe it's because they are His sheep.
 - 4. Don't over-press the metaphor. His sheep respond in belief but it doesn't mean they were saved before they believe.
 - b. They **hear** His voice.
 - i. Shepherds in the Ancient Near East would call and lead their sheep by their voices. The sheep would learn to trust the shepherd and respond to the sound of his voice.
 - ii. It doesn't mean that you will hear an audible voice or have some feeling and if you don't have that feeling or hear an audible voice then you aren't His sheep. It's not something subjective.
 - iii. Jesus' "sheep" respond to His message and trust Him.
- c. He **knows** them.
 - i. Herds were usually small enough that the shepherd would have names for each sheep. He would know if a stray sheep joined up with his herd.
 - ii. **2 Timothy 2:19a** Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His,"
 - iii. **Psalms 139:1-3** O LORD, You have searched me and known *me*. ² You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. ³ You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways.
 - iv. **Jeremiah 1:5** "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."

v. Jesus knows which people are His and which follow a different leader.

vi. Contrast with

1. **Matthew 7:23** "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

d. They **follow** Him.

i. A person who truly believes in Christ will obey Christ, not perfectly – the Bible doesn't teach that we become sinless in our lives – but just as a sheep follows the shepherd, so we follow Christ.

ii. Love for Christ is shown by keeping His commandments, just as a sheep will follow his shepherd.

1. **John 14:15** "If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

iii. Boris Kornfeld is an example of this. This story is told in "Loving God" by Chuck Colson.

1. Boris was a Jewish communist in Russia in the early 1950's. He was also a doctor and a convinced communist. Still he ended up in the gulag, likely a false accusation of disloyalty.
2. Behind bars, Boris began to think as he saw the brutality of the system. He began to reevaluate beliefs he had held since childhood. While in prison, Boris came into contact with a well-educated and kind prisoner who spoke of a Jewish Messiah who had come to keep the promises the Lord had made to Israel. This other prisoner would often pray the Lord's prayer out loud. Boris began to think about it but with his Jewish background it seemed a betrayal for him to become one of those who had always persecuted his people. Boris' resistance to Christ began to weaken during one surgery.
3. The surgery was on a guard that Boris hated. The man had been knifed and an artery cut. While suturing the blood vessel, he considered tying the thread in such a way that it would reopen shortly after surgery. The guard would die quickly and no one would know.
4. It was a thought of vengeance and how much he hated the guards. He could gladly slaughter them all. At that point, Boris became appalled by the hatred and violence he saw in his own heart.
5. He was a victim of hatred but the hatred had entered his heart also. He realized that he could know no freedom because the whole world would be a concentration camp. As he retied the sutures properly, he found himself repeating the words he had heard his fellow prisoner say "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." He prayed this to Jesus, the God who had suffered as he had and he described that as the moment he became a Christian.
6. After that, Boris began to change. He refused to sign orders that he knew would be bad for patients. He even turned in an orderly who was stealing food from hungry prisoners, knowing the orderly would probably take revenge on him. It kept him up at night knowing the guy might kill him if he slept.
7. He ended up talking with a cancer patient long into the night about his new faith in Christ. When the patient awoke the next day, Boris was dead – presumably killed by the orderly he had turned in. But God had used him to stir up faith in that prisoner – Alexander Solzhenitzen.

- a. Solzhenitzen would go on to write fiction and nonfiction about his experiences in the gulags and won the Nobel prize in literature in 1970.
 - 8. Boris knew that belief in Christ had to lead to obedience. He knew that faith in Christ must lead to following Christ. Obedience doesn't save, but saving faith always results in a growing obedience.
- e. He gives **eternal** life to them.
 - i. Notice the repetition: *I give eternal life, they will never perish, no one will snatch them out of My hand, no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.*
 - ii. Eternal life is a gift, not earned.
 - iii. As a follower of Christ, we do follow in obedience. Does that mean that if we sin "big enough" we will lose our salvation?
 - iv. This passage makes it abundantly clear that we can't.
- f. They will never **perish**.
 - i. Besides Jesus' assurance that He gives eternal life (which by its definition is unending) he says they will never perish.
 - ii. If one did perish – what would that make Christ? A liar and a poor shepherd.
 - iii. The English is clear, the Greek is even more clear. It uses a double negative – *ou me* – which magnifies the statement – no, never perish – no way.
- g. No one will **snatch** them out of His Hand.
 - i. A wolf might come and violently snatch a sheep away from the fold. But Jesus is the good shepherd and no one or nothing will snatch us from him.
 - ii. We are held in the double grip of the Father and the Son.
 - 1. If you want to get a good hold on something, you grab it with two hands. Where I grew up, there was a rope swing by the river. You could grab on, swing out over the rocks, and drop into the river. I held on with both hands!
 - iii. The Father is greater than all – who can steal from the Father?
 - iv. And the Father is the one who gave the people to the Son as well.
 - v. Jesus and the Father are one
 - 1. With the repetition of no one can snatch them out of my hand/my Father's hand – there is an association of identity and equality of power.
 - 2. Not merely one in purpose, as if Jesus is merely united in the same purpose as the Father, because they would not try to stone Him for that.

3. Applying the Word

- a. Those who are truly saved cannot **lose** their salvation.
- b. Those who are truly saved will **follow** Jesus.
 - i. Someone might say, "If salvation can't be lost, does that mean someone can just say they believe in Jesus and then live totally contrary to that the rest of their life but since they prayed to receive Jesus, it doesn't matter"? No! The same passage that says they will never perish also says they will follow Him.



1. Setting the stage: division, confusion, evasion (10:19-25)

Matthew 16:16-17 Simon Peter answered, "**You are the Christ**, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

2. What characterizes Jesus' sheep? (10:26-30)

a. They believe in Jesus.

John 3:15b whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.

John 3:36a "He who believes in the Son has eternal life;

John 5:24 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

b. They hear His voice.

c. He knows them.

2 Timothy 2:19a Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His,"

Psalm 139:1-3 O LORD, You have searched me and known *me*.² You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar.³ You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways.

Jeremiah 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."

Matthew 7:23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

d. They *follow* Him.

John 14:15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

e. He gives *eternal* life to them.

f. They will never perish.

g. No one will snatch them out of His Hand.

3. Applying the Word

a. Those who are truly saved cannot lose their salvation.

b. Those who are truly saved will follow Jesus.

