

Safe and Secure: Our Eternal Security in Christ

Session 1

July 13, 2025

Can I Lose My Salvation?

The Point: God keeps His children securely in His hands.

Session Passage: John 10:7-11,14-18,27-30

John 10:7-11

Connection to the Point. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who gives us abundant life.

Context. John 10 contains “The Good Shepherd Discourse” and has in it two of Jesus’s “I am” sayings (vv. 7,9 and vv. 11,14). Verse 21 indicates the context of John 10 arose to contrast the good shepherd with the petty legalistic Pharisees who in their spiritual blindness (9:40-41) rejected the only person in history who opened the eyes of a person born blind (vv. 1-2,7; Ananias restored Saul’s sight but that was a case of temporary blindness, Acts 9:8-18). This miraculous event which sparked that controversy occurred just after the end of the Festival of Shelters (the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths, called Sukkoth) which was celebrated in October (see John 7:2).

The gate (vv. 7,9) was located at the entrance of a sheep pen. Sometimes a physical barrier would be placed at the entrance, but often a shepherd would lie down across the entrance to sleep. Anyone or anything attempting to come into the sheepfold from the front could not get past him during the night and attack the sleeping sheep. Anyone who tried to enter the sheep pen by climbing in over the wall was up to no good. Jesus used *the gate* twice as a metaphor for Himself (vv. 7,9). The emphatic use of the pronoun in “I am” indicates “I and no other.” Jesus is the only means of access into the sheepfold, the only way sheep may enter. He equated this gate with salvation (vv. 9-10) and emphasized this when He elsewhere declared, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (14:6). At the same time, Jesus is the blockade. He controls access to His sheep and thus is the One who protects them from those who desire to harm them (10:10).

Shepherd (vv. 11,14). The *shepherd* was essential for the well-being of the sheep. He led them to pasture and water (Ps. 23:2). He kept them safe, protecting and defending them against predatory animals and thieves (1 Sam. 17:34-36). He tended to, cared for, and carried the newborn lambs (Gen. 33:13; Isa. 40:11; Luke 15:4-7). He bound and healed their wounds (Ezek. 34:16).

All shepherds carried two important instruments of their trade—a rod and a staff (Ps. 23:4). The rod basically was a club that the shepherd used as a weapon. The staff had a crook (a curve or hook) at one end and was used to rescue sheep that wandered away or needed to be lifted out of a tight spot into which they had fallen.

A shepherd knew each of his sheep, and the sheep knew his voice and followed him when he called them (John 10:14-16). Even in a sheep pen containing several flocks belonging to different shepherds, each shepherd could call out his sheep, and only they would respond to his voice. Shepherding was often

lonely and dangerous (Gen. 31:38-40; 1 Sam. 17:34-36). To stay warm at night the shepherd wore a woolen or fleece garment. Shepherds were both responsible and accountable for their sheep. If any sheep were lost, the shepherd was required to pay restitution to the owner (Gen. 31:39; Ex. 22:10-13). The shepherd was used as a metaphor for political and religious leaders of Israel in the Old Testament (2 Sam. 7:7; Ps. 78:71-72; Ezek. 34:2-10). Unfortunately, often these shepherds only cared about themselves and not for the people for whom they were responsible. Zechariah wrote, “Woe to the worthless shepherd who deserts the flock!” (Zech. 11:17). Such wicked shepherds plundered their sheep (Ezek. 34:2-10). In contrast to these faithless shepherds, God is the faithful and loving Shepherd who gathers and cares for His people (Gen. 49:24; Ezek. 34:2-16). Both David and Isaiah pictured the Lord as their Shepherd (Ps. 23; Isa. 40:11).

In the New Testament, Jesus is identified as God’s shepherd (Matt. 2:6). Jesus spoke of Himself in the role of shepherd in regards to His mission (Matt. 15:24; John 10:1-30) and in parables (Luke 15:3-7). He spoke of the people as “sheep without a shepherd” (Matt. 9:36; see also Mark 6:34) and “lost sheep” (Matt. 15:24). When Jesus restored Peter after His resurrection, the Lord commanded the apostle to feed and shepherd His sheep and lambs (John 21:15-17). And Peter did, even instructing those church leaders who came after him how to shepherd God’s flock (1 Pet. 5:2-4). Paul similarly told the elders of the church at Ephesus to shepherd God’s flock (Acts 20:28-29). One of the Lord’s spiritual gifts to His church is that of “pastors” (Eph. 4:11)—the Greek term literally means “shepherds.”

The good shepherd (vv. 11,14). Twice Jesus stated, “I am the good shepherd.” The pronoun is emphatic, indicating “I and no other.” The definite article *the* further means He is the one and only good shepherd. The word *good* means “true,” “ideal,” or “genuine.” It identifies Jesus as the model shepherd in contrast to the hired hand (v. 12). Unlike the hired hand who does not care for the sheep (v. 13), the relationship between Jesus and His sheep (believers) is personal. Jesus knows each of His sheep by name (v. 3), and they know His voice and follow Him (vv. 3-5,14). He protects them from thieves and wolves who seek to do harm to them, whereas the hired hand abandons the sheep when trouble arises (vv. 10-12). The depth of Jesus’s love for His sheep is seen in the fact that He lays down His life for His sheep—stated five times in four verses (vv. 11,15,17,18). In doing so, Jesus gives His sheep abundant life—eternal life, in contrast to the thief who comes to steal, kill, and destroy (v. 10). The Greek term for **abundance** (v. 10) means going way beyond what is necessary. Jesus provides His sheep with life to the fullest; “the gift of Jesus is life beyond our wildest dreams.”¹

John 10:14-18

Connection to the Point. Jesus knows His sheep and gave His life for them.

I know . . . know me (v. 14). John used two different Greek words in chapter 10 for *know* (*eido*, vv. 4,5; and *ginosko*, vv. 14,15,27,38). *Eido* refers to being in close relationship with a person, to be intimately acquainted with someone. It also has the senses of recognition and to experience. The term *ginosko* is similar, having the meaning of coming to know someone.

When Jesus spoke of His knowledge of His own and their knowledge of Him (vv. 14,27) and when He spoke of the Father knowing Him and His knowing the Father (v. 15), the emphasis is on the mutual, reciprocal knowledge, intimacy, and the interconnectedness of those relationships. Regarding His relationship with God the Father, Jesus said, “No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son desires to reveal him” (Matt. 11:27). The relationship between God the Father and God the Son is one of perfect knowledge. While they are separate Persons, they are one in essence (John 1:1-2). So perfect is this union that to know the Son is to know the Father (14:6-11).

For believers, to be known by Jesus and to know Jesus is to be in a saving relationship with Him. While His knowledge of us is perfect and complete, our knowledge of Him, while never complete, develops and grows over time as we walk (live) in fellowship with Him.

Other sheep (v. 16) referred to sheep that were not of Jesus’s sheep pen that He had to bring into His sheepfold so that there would be one flock and one shepherd. These other sheep likely represent Gentiles who would believe in Him as their Savior and Lord. This promise goes back to the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:1-3) and looks forward to the worldwide spread of the gospel (Matt. 28:19-20). Jesus stated that bringing in these *other sheep* is something He must do. **Must** indicates necessity and urgency. The response of these *other sheep* is they would listen to His voice, just as the present sheep (Jewish believers) had done (10:3,4,27). And when both groups of sheep (Jewish and Gentile believers) are brought together the result would be one united flock. The reason for this unity is the atoning work of Jesus, the one shepherd (see Ezek. 37:24; Eph. 2:11-22).

Lay down my life . . . take it up again (vv. 15,17,18). Jesus’s references to laying down His life are a euphemism for dying. In verse 11 He spoke in the third person, “The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” While shepherds did many things for their sheep, rarely was it necessary for them to die for their sheep. Yet, for Jesus, this was the first thing He mentioned about Himself as the good shepherd because this was His purpose in coming into the world (Matt. 20:28; Mark 8:31; 10:45; Luke 24:7) and how the sheep (believers) find life (John 10:10). In verses 15,17,18 Jesus used the first person, “I lay down my life” and “I lay it down.” He made it clear that His sacrifice was for the sheep (v. 15). Jesus’s laying down His life is the manifestation of God’s love (3:16). Jesus was fulfilling His Father’s command and thus doing his Father’s will (10:18).

Jesus indicated that this was a voluntary act on his part: **“No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own”** (v. 18). Furthermore, after laying down His life He would **“take it up again.”** This was a reference to and prediction of Jesus’s resurrection. The repetition of the word **right** emphasizes Jesus’s power and authority. Jesus stated that His laying down His life and His taking it up again were because He had **“received this command from my Father”** (v. 18). The Greek term for *command* refers to having the authority to take a specific action. Jesus’s words also indicate that His coming death would not be a defeat but would end in a victory over death, and that one cannot separate Jesus’s death from His resurrection. The crucified Lord is the risen Lord.

John 10:27-30

Connection to the Point. The sheep that belong to Jesus are secure in the hands of God.

Context. John 10:22-39 contains Jesus's remarks at the Festival of Dedication, which was also known as the Festival of Lights (modern day Hanukkah). The Festival of Lights was a seven-day festival celebrated in December that commemorated the rededication of the Jerusalem temple in 164 BC after the Maccabean revolt against the forces of Antiochus Epiphanies. This festival was not one prescribed in the Mosaic law, but was an important time for Jews to rededicate themselves to God, to His law, and to the temple.

On one of the feast days, "Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon's Colonnade" (v. 23). Solomon's Colonnade or Porch (see also Acts 3:11; 5:12) was a double cloister portico located on the eastern side of the outer wall of the temple. It was so named because it was believed the porch dated back to the time of Solomon. The Jewish leaders stopped Jesus and demanded, "If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly" (John 10:24). This led to a conversation in which Jesus again talked about His sheep, their eternal life, and their absolute security.

Hear (v. 27) indicates hearing an audible message. Often, however, it also indicates that the meaning of the message has been understood and responded to with obedience. When used in the gospel context, it means understanding in the sense that it leads to conversion (Acts 4:4; 10:44; 18:8; Eph. 1:13), for hearing, understanding, and acting on the gospel message are necessary for a person to believe (Rom. 10:14).

In this context, *hear* relates to the voice of Jesus, the good shepherd. He knows His sheep individually by name, and He leads them (John 10:3). Recognizing the voice of their shepherd, His sheep know and follow Him (obey, Luke 6:46-49; John 8:31-32; 10:3-4,27). These sheep refuse to heed the voices of strangers and even run from them (vv. 5,8). Hearing the voice of the shepherd also results in other sheep coming into His sheepfold (v. 16). Conversely, failing to hear—not heeding the message of salvation and acting upon it by repenting of one's sins and placing one's faith in Jesus as the Messiah—indicates such people are not part of Jesus's sheepfold. Their refusal to believe leads to spiritual ruin (Matt. 7:24-27).

Eternal Life (v. 28). The sheep who enter by the gate (vv. 7,9) and follow the good shepherd receive *eternal life* (vv. 9-10,28). *Life* is one of the key terms in John's Gospel. Most often it refers to *eternal life*. Jesus has this life in Himself (1:4; 5:26; 11:25; 14:6), and He gives it to whomever He wants (5:21). Jesus died to give those who repent and believe in Him this eternal life (3:16). This life cannot be earned; it comes as a gift (10:28; see Rom. 6:23) and is received by faith (Eph. 2:8-9). This life has both quantity (eternal life) and quality (abundant life, John 10:10). It begins in the present (3:36) and will never end.

Will never perish (v. 28). The form of the words translated *will never* is the strongest negative there is in the Greek language. The phrase carries the sense that there is no possibility of any decay that would end in a total loss.

Snatch (vv. 28,29). The term has the idea of a violent wrenching. Twice Jesus used the word to emphasize the security of believers (vv. 28,29). The reason for this double protection is that Jesus and the Father **are**

one (v. 30). Believers are protected by the hold both God the Father and God the Son have on them. The Father and the Son are doing the same thing—providing safety and security for the flock of believers. That “**no one will snatch them**” and “**no one is able to snatch them**” are similar to Paul’s emphasis in Romans 8:38-39. Believers can rest in the fact that their salvation is eternally secure—no one and nothing can cause the loss of their salvation. They will endure to the end of this life through faith by the omnipotent power of God (Phil. 1:6).

1. Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1–11*, vol. 25A, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 333.