



Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

Bible Reading: John 10:14-18; 22-30

1. Jesus' "Other Sheep" and CIT (10:16)

- a. "I have other sheep that do not belong to this I must bring them also, & they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd." (10:16)
- b. "Although in its original setting ... [10:16] probably referred to 'the calling of the Gentiles'... our present 21st-century context requires that we expand this image beyond the parameters of the historical setting... The 'other sheep' of today [whom Jesus 'must bring'] must be determined by the setting in which the Word is preached & Who are the 'other [sheep]' for us? ... The key point is that these 'others' are Christ's sheep [cf. 10:26]." [David L. Bartlett (ed.) *Feasting on the Word*, (2008) p. 450]

2. The Good Shepherd Metaphor—Is it Realistic? What's the Revelation?

a. The Overall Scenario

b. The Shepherd 'Laying Down his life for the Sheep' (10:11, 15, 17, 18)

a. Overall realism draws attention to the key revelatory point

- "This little 'parable' is largely realistic by 1st-century Jewish standards, while setting the stage for a more surprising or uncommon metaphorical statement in 10:11 – a shepherd sacrificing his life for his sheep (cf. 1 Sam. 17:33-37 David, the shepherd-king). The rest of the details of the passage should not be allegorized." [Craig Blomberg, *Historical Reliability of John's Gospel*, p. 158]

b. 'Unrealistic,' departures from everyday norms

c. The 'intensity' of the Shepherd-sheep relationship (10:14-15)

- a. "I am the good I know my own & my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me & I know the Father" (10:14-15)
- b. **Note:** Although shepherd & sheep know & recognize one another, this statement "just as..." takes it to a whole new level!

d. The Shepherd 'laying down his life for the sheep' (10:11, 15, 17, 18)

a. "I am the good shepherd... And I lay down my life for the " (10:14-15)

- a. "While Jesus' [figure of speech] largely reflects the workaday experience of shepherds in & around Palestine in the 1st century, the *intentional laying down of the shepherd's life* as a normative expectation *would have been... unrealistic & unreasonable*. The laying down of the shepherd's life in John 10 is primarily about the imminent reality of Jesus' death... This

lone affirmation of the Good Shepherd discourse represents a *departure from the everyday norms* depicted throughout the story and cannot be regarded as verisimilar. Instead, it is the singular element of this [figure of speech] intended to advance the... [revelation of Christ in] this " [Chris. W. Skinner, "Good Shepherd Lays Down His Life," CBQ, Vol. 80 p. 113]

- b. Not merely *risking* his life (1 17:34-37), but voluntarily, intentionally 'laying it down'
- c. Foreshadowing Jesus' coming arrest & death (Jn. 18:1-14)
- d. The implications
 - a. "That Jesus speaks of the authority...he has over his own life in 10:18 is not inconsistent with the commandment he has received from his Father to lay it down. The Son willingly submits to the Father's will & lays down his life. In declaring... [this], Jesus' point is that *the cross is not a tragic accident of fate or merely a scheme concocted by wicked men—it is the Father's plan*...While the perpetrators are morally culpable, what...happen[s] is directed by [God's] divine sovereignty." [Christopher Cowan, "Father & Son in the 4th Gospel," JETS, Vol. 49/1 (2006) p. 128]

3. The Trinity (Father & Son) as Good Shepherd

- a. The LORD (YHWH) as Shepherd
 - a. Psalm 23 "The LORD (YHWH) is my shepherd..." (Ps. 23:1)
- b. The Lord GOD Ezekiel 34
 - a. The Lord GOD is against Israel's human Shepherds (Ezek. 34:1-2, 10)
 - b. The Lord GOD will Shepherd them himself (Ezek. 34:11-14)
 - c. The Lord GOD promises a Davidic Shepherd (Ezek. 34:23-24)
- c. The Trinity (Father & Son) in Jesus' Good Shepherding
 - a. "*The Good Shepherd*... refers to Jesus and also to God [the Father] because, with regard to the shepherd's holding the sheep in his hands, Jesus says, 'I & the Father are one' [10:30]." [Lamar Williamson, *Preaching...John*, 128]
 - b. In Jesus' discourse, "He's not just saying, 'I'm one first-rate pastor [shepherd], unlike some of the shoddy types you have had before.' He's not just saying He is saying, rather, that he's the promised [End-time] Shepherd, & for those with ears to hear, he's saying something even more. God himself has promised to come. Yahweh has promised to come. Has he not already said in John 8, "Before Abraham was I am"? It is the I Am, it is Yahweh himself who is the Good Shepherd."—D. A. Carson, "Jesus the Shepherd of God (Part 6) Jn. 10:1-21," TGC]
- d. Jesus' Gift of eternal life is based on his laying down his life (10:11, 28)
 - a. "I am the good The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." (10:11)
 - b. 28 I give ['my sheep'] eternal life, & they will never " (10:28)
 - c. Jesus' "obedient-yet-willing death...is the basis for the 'eternal life' given by Jesus to the sheep gifted to him by the And this is a life they cannot lose, forfeit, or have snatched forcibly...from them because of the double, invincible grip of the Son & the Father."—James McGahey
- e. God's Initiative & Sovereignty
 - a. God's Initiative:
 - a. In John's Gospel "God is the one who initiates a relationship with God seeks us out long before we seek God. Christ makes us his sheep; we do not make him our shepherd. The initiative & sovereignty of God...has ancient roots in the [OT] 'The LORD is my shepherd...He makes me lie down...' (Ps. 23) & "Know that the LORD is God. It is he that made us, & we are his; we are his people, & the sheep of his pasture." (Ps. 100:3) ... John is affirming the divine initiative & sovereignty that ... find ... expression in the incarnation." [David L. Bartlett (ed.) *Feasting on the Word*, (2009) p. 449]
 - b. Three Impossibilities
 - a. "On several occasions...John's Gospel [talks of] God the Father giving certain persons to God the Son (6:37, 39; 10:29; [etc.]. In each...case the giving of men to Christ precedes... their receiving eternal life... [There are] three impossibilities:
 - a. [1.] Jesus says that it is... *impossible* for a person to come to Christ apart from the 'drawing' of that person by God the Father (6:44: 'No one can come to me *unless* the Father who sent me draws him...')
 - b. [2.] Jesus also says that it's *impossible* for someone whom the Father draws *not* to come to him (6:37a: 'Everyone the Father gives me *will come* to me...') ...
 - c. [3.] [Jesus] also said it's *impossible* for him to be cast out: 'the one who comes to me I'll never cast out.' (6:37b) ...The point is...those whom the Father gives to the Son, who therefore come to the Son, will be received by the Son & shall never " [Sam Storms, *Tough Topics*, pp. 201-12]
- c. God's initiative/sovereignty & human responsibility
 - a. "There's a tension between God's initiative & human responsibility that's not resolved in John's Gospel...It is only with the eyes of faith that one can see the truth concerning Jesus. Those who belong to Jesus, who hear & recognize his voice & follow him, have been given to him by the Father (10:29). Everything depends on God's initiative. God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him (3:16-17). At the same time, the result of Jesus' coming into the world is that those who do not believe are subject to judgment (3:18-19). The preacher cannot resolve this tension. Neither can the preacher argue people into faith with convincing (Even Jesus could not do that!) But the preacher can declare the promise that creates & sustains faith — the promise of the Good Shepherd to give us eternal life, the promise

that no one will be able to snatch us out of his hand (10:28)." [Elisabeth Johnson, "Commentary on Jn 10:22-30," *Working Preacher*, (April 2016)]

4. The Believer's Eternal Security— "...by no means perish... not ever" (10:28)

a. The Issues

- a. "All across America today...there are actually a lot of Christians...who are experiencing high levels of anxiety ... worrying about their personal salvation ...when they should be rejoicing" — Robert Latimer, *God Loves You Maybe...*
- b. "Can a person who has trusted Jesus Christ as personal Savior, once saved, be lost again?"
- c. "Can a born-again Christ-Believer at any time lose their salvation?"

b. What is 'Eternal Security'?

- a. "God's born-again children 'possess eternal life at the instant they place their trust in Jesus. Eternal life began at the moment of saving faith & continues forever throughout eternity." —Ankerberg & Weldon
- b. "Eternal security is that work of God which guarantees that the gift of salvation, once received, is possessed forever & cannot be" —Charles C. Ryrie

c. Eternal Security in John's Gospel (10:27-30)

- a. "The text most commonly introduced in support of the so-called 'security of the believer' ...is John 10:28-30" — R. Michaels
- b. "I give them eternal life, and they will never No one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. 30 The Father and I are one'." (10:28-30 NRSV)
- c. Eternal security—introduced
 - a. "That Jesus gives eternal life to his sheep (believers) has been a theme throughout the 4th *An important new dimension is added here: 'no one will snatch them out of my hand' (10:28) or 'out of my Father's hand' (10:29). God's election [& eternal security] of the sheep is good news.*" [Lamar Williamson, *Preaching... John*, pp. 125-6]

d. Double Negative— "never perish—ever!" (10:28)

- a. "I give them eternal life, and they will *never perish—ever!* No one will snatch them out of My " (10:28 HCSB)
- b. "Jesus says, "they'll by *no means perish ... not ever!*"... The double negative with the subjunctive mood here is a "subjunctive of emphatic negation;" what is denied isn't simply the fact of something, but its very possibility of ever happening. Thus... Jesus plainly asserts...the...doctrine of the...preservation of the saints commonly referred to as 'eternal security'."—James McGahey

e. Never perish— "throughout the ages (to all eternity)"

- a. "I give them eternal life, & they will *never, ever perish*; and no one will ever snatch them out of My " (10:28 AMP)
- b. "I give them eternal life, & they shall never perish *throughout the ages. (To all eternity ...)* & no one is able to snatch them out of My hand." (10:28 AMP Classic)

f. Securely Protected by the "double, invincible grip of the Son & the Father" (10:28-29)

- a. "The 'eternal life' [is] given by Jesus to the sheep...*And this is a life they cannot lose, forfeit, or have snatched forcibly...from them because of the double, invincible grip of the Son & the Father...*"—James McGahey
- b. "Adversaries pose a threat to the security of his flock, but [Jesus] pronounces [the sheep] safe...[He] exercises the right to grant them eternal Jesus asserts his authority & focuses attention on himself through...'I' & 'my' [10:28] ... Yet Jesus immediately glorifies the Father...In 10:28...Jesus...protects the sheep...in 10:29, the Father. *Coequality & deference are in equilibrium...*The protecting hand of the Son is one with the protecting hand of the Father." [Royce G. Gruener, *Trinity in... John*, p. 75]
- c. "God as Shepherd in John's Although John presents Jesus as the shepherd of the flock, he does not forget ...that the OT... *refer[s] to God the Father as the sole proprietor [owner] of the flock...This perspective is retained in 10:29...*The central point is clear: the Father is the actual owner of the sheep & he 'gave' them to Jesus in order that he might accomplish his saving work in them." [Nicholas Cachia, *Image of the Good Shepherd*, p. 115]

d. Eternal life makes us children of God, 'born again/from above' (1:12; 3:3-6)

a. Once you're "born again," you can't be "unborn"/ "de-born"!

- a. "To all who...receive [Jesus], he gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in his name" (1:12)
- b. "I'm the earthly son of my mother & father. I'm their child... forever. Just like we can't cease being the child of our earthy parents once we're born, so too *we can't cease being children of God once we're born again. We can no more be 'unborn' spiritually than we can go back & be 'unborn' spiritually...*When we trust in Christ for salvation... we become members of God's forever family." [Glen E. Clifton, *Being in Christ*, p. 66]
- c. "We're not talking about "unborn" where a child never reaches birth or isn't born, but "de-born" where a child that has been born goes back to the womb...That's impossible" [Nate Saint, *Christian's Confidence*, 77]

b. Do you identify as a Child (son) of God or a Slave (servant)? (8:35)

- a. "A slave does not remain in the household forever, but a son does remain " (8:35)

- b. "The closest the [4th] Gospel gets to referring to the believer as 'son' is 8:35, where, in contrast with 'slave,' Jesus says that 'the son' remains forever." [Urban C. von Wahlde, *John*, p. #287]
- c. "Whereas a master/slave relationship might be temporary, a father/son relationship is not. As Jesus told the Pharisees... 'A slave does not remain in the household forever, but a son does remain forever.' (8:35) ...Jesus was warning the Pharisees (who thought they God's children through Abraham) that they were, in reality, slaves... Martin Lloyd-Jones... wrote 'If God has adopted you into His family, if you are a child of God, *your destiny is secure, it is certain. It is a guarantee...* If God has taken me into the family... *nothing & no one can ever rob me of the inheritance.*' (D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Great Doctrines of the Bible*, p. 189)." [John F. MacArthur, *Slave: Hidden Truth About Your Identity in Christ*, pp. 169-70]
- d. "Can we be born into God's family one moment & repudiated from it the next? The Bible indicates that it is a permanent relationship." —John Stott
- a. The slave/servant's status in the household (family) *depends on performance*; the child/son's status does
- c. Are "dropout Christ-believers" still saved?
- a. Q: "I spent several years of my life away from God. I became a Christian as a youngster, but when I was a teenager, I quit going to Church & reading my Bible. I stopped praying to God & obeying Him. During that time, was I saved?"
- b. Here are ideas that make the most sense to me —Max Lucado
- a. *Jesus guarantees to protection of his sheep* (Jn. 10:28) ...
- b. *Salvation is not repeatable*. Salvation is not a repeated phenomenon. Scripture contains no example of a person who is saved, then lost, then re-saved, then lost again. On-&-off salvation never appears in the Bible.
- c. *Family ties sustain us*. Once we believe we're adopted into the family of 'We are children of God' (Rom. 8:16). After being placed in a family, we are always in the family. Communion (*relationship*) *between parent & child may suffer, but the [family] tie remains*. By sinning *we may step out of the will of God, but we will never step out of the family of God.*"
- d. *God disciplines disobedient children, but he does not disinherit them* (Heb. 12:5). The presence of sin does not imply loss of position. Paul claimed to be the chief of sinners: 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners'—& I'm the worst [chief] of them' (1 1:15). He did not say 'I was.' Paul still sinned, but never doubted his salvation. He taught the *difference between 'position' & 'practice.'* *We can be positionally secure while our practice reflects otherwise...*"
- e. "If salvation can be lost through sin, then all are at times lost because all sin. Salvation, then, becomes a matter of timing. We only hope God will snatch us into heaven during a saved season. If salvation can be forfeitable because of unbelief, aren't we all lost? Who has perfect belief? Worriers don't. The fearful don't. If perfect belief qualifies the saved, who qualifies?"
- a. "In the end, the great discovery is this: *what initially saved you, eternally saves you*. During your years away from God, you lost much: you lost joy, peace, & opportunities to glorify God. But you did not lose your [salvation]." [Max Lucado, *Max On Life: Answers and Insights to Your Most Important Questions*, 14-15]
- d. Being in God's Family is a matter of faith, not feelings
- a. "Suppose you woke up feeling You didn't want to read the Bible. You didn't want to pray. You were depressed. You had a headache. You didn't feel good about you walk with the Lord at all. You didn't even feel saved. ...[But,] you don't have to feel saved to be saved. By faith you received Him, according to Eph. 2:8-9, & feelings have nothing to do with it. *It's faith, not warm fuzzies, in the family of God.*" [Charles F. Stanley, *Handbook for Christian Living: Biblical Answers to Life's...*, p. 398]
- e. Sheep/Believers: The Father's Greatest Gift to the Son (10:29)
- a. John 10:29 Textual Issues— "Who" or "What"?
- a. "My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's " (10:29 CSB)
- b. "What my Father has given me is greater than all else, & no one can snatch *it* out of the Father's " (10:29 NRSV)
- c. R. Michaels challenges "The common... translation of 10:29, 'My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, & no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand'...Rather, the original text...pronounced, 'That which my Father has given me is greater than all, & no one can snatch *it out of my Father's hand*,' indicating the supreme greatness of Jesus' sheep & their collective identity as a most precious gift by the Father to the Son. Due both to the irrevocable nature of the Father's gift to the Son & [due] to the infinite worth of believers...in the Father's sight, the salvation of believers is forever secure." [Kirk R. MacGregor, *Perspectives on Eternal Security*, p. xxii]
- d. "In a number of the earliest & most reliable Greek manuscripts, Latin versions, [etc.] ... the word 'greater' & the pronoun that goes with it (o) are neuter, & therefore cannot refer to 'Father,' which is masculine. Thus, a literal translation of the Greek text would be, 'My Father, that which he has given me is greater than all...' The more common reading...by far the 'easier' ... became part of the KJV & most subsequent English versions. But a basic rule of textual criticism is that the more 'difficult' reading...is more likely to be " [J. Ramsey Michaels, "What My Father Has Given Me," in Kirk R. MacGregor (ed.) *Perspectives on Eternal Security*, pp. 26-27]
- e. "The point...is not simply that God the Father is 'greater than all,' but that... *the 'gift'* (i.e., 'what is given') *is greater* as well... The Father's gift consists of Jesus' 'sheep'...all who believe. They are secure in Jesus' hand because they are first of all secure in the Father's hand. The neuter signals...they are being viewed corporately, as 'that which'... The text...views them both individually (10:28) ...& corporately (10:29)." [JR. Michaels, "What My Father Has Given Me," KR. MacGregor (ed.) *Perspectives*, pp. 27-8]
- f. "All...*the Father gives me* will come to me, & the person who comes to me I will never cast out." (6:37) "All"... God decides who they are... They're God the Father's gift to Jesus & they prove it...by 'coming to him'. Jesus makes the same point negatively ... 'No one can come to me unless the Father...draws him' (6:44a) ...Here in John's Gospel, Jesus is referring... quite specifically to those the Father has 'given' or 'drawn' to him...coming to Jesus in faith is clear evidence that a person has been 'drawn' to him by the Father's The basis of... 'eternal security' is that those who are so 'drawn' are the Father's gift to the Son, & this gift, Jesus insists, is an irrevocable gift. It cannot be 'lost' or 'wasted...I'll 'lose none of those he's given me but ... raise them up on the last day' (6:39b)." [JR Michaels, "What My Father Has Given Me," KR MacGregor (ed.) *Perspectives on Eternal Security*, p. 29]

g. "The 'security' of the believer is clear...What's surprising in the 2nd [translation] is...[the] strong accent on the immense value or worth of Christian believers. The doctrines of grace...[tell us] we are worthless sinners...'in ourselves' this is But...Christ... sees believers as a treasured gift 'greater than all' because it comes from the Father...[& so has] great value in the Father's eyes." [JR. Michaels, "What My Father Has Given Me," in KR. MacGregor (ed.) *Perspectives on Eternal Security*, pp. 29-30]

h. The "security of the believer" does not emerge in a vacuum in... John, it's a corollary of the...claim that *believers are God the Father's gift to Jesus the Son*. They belonged to the Father before they belonged to Jesus...God has taken the initiative in human salvation...Coming to Jesus...reveals 'the works of God' in a person's life (3:21). A prime example...is the man born blind... Second, ...those so drawn & so given to Jesus are of *immeasurable worth & value* ('greater than all' 10:29) in the eyes of the Father who loved them & made them his own, & in the eyes of the Son who received them as his greatest treasure..." [J. Ramsey Michaels, "What My Father Has Given Me," in Kirk R. MacGregor (ed.) *Perspectives on Eternal Security*, p. 31]

a. "In John's Gospel the 'security' of Christian believers rests on their *profound value in God's sight*, & on the *Father's work in their lives long before they ever came consciously & willingly to the Son in faith*." –J. Ramsey Michaels

f. Based on the Oneness of the Son & the Father (10:30)

a. "I and the Father are one" (Jn. 10:30)

b. "*The Good Shepherd*—This term refers to Jesus and also to God [the Father] because, with regard to the shepherd's holding the sheep in his hands, Jesus says, 'I and the Father are one' [10:30]." [Lamar Williamson, *Preaching...John*, 128]

c. "In his Good Shepherd discourse in 10...Jesus asserted that the security of his sheep is grounded in their being kept by both himself & the Father (10:28-29) ...This coordinated keeping of his & the Father's part is based on the essential oneness of 'the Father' & 'the Son': 'I & the Father are one,' he declared (10:30) ..." [Robert L. Reymond, *New Systematic Theology...*, p.]

a. Jesus, God's Son, included (with God the Father) in the identity of the One God

d. "When Jesus utters his climactic statement, 'I & the Father are one' (10:30), his opponents fully comprehend the audaciousness of this claim; they pick up stones to kill him for blasphemy, for 'making himself God' (10:33). The significance of this declaration can hardly be understated: the author invokes the word 'one' a key word in the Shema, explicitly locating *Jesus' identity within the divine [oneness (of the Godhead)]*...When Jesus uses the word 'one' here: 'Jesus is not saying that he and the Father are a single person, but that together they are one God' (Bauckham)...The 4th Evangelist...uses the neuter ['one'], which expresses the idea of one entity...Jn 10:10 would...be better translated: 'I and the Father are one *thing*, *one entity*. Some modern translations render 10:30: 'The Father and I are one' (NRSV; NET; NJB) ...deemphasizing what the Evangelist has put in bold: by placing *ego* ['I'] in front, the Evangelist stresses Jesus' place within the unity, as if to say, 'I and the Father are one. I— a human being who walks the earth —and the Father are one entity.'" [Lori A. Baron, *Shema in John's Gospel*, p. 179]

g. Jesus & the Father do one work

a. "The commonality of work [by the Son & the Father] forms the basis of the [statements]:

b. *If*: "no one will snatch them out of my hand" (10:28)

c. *And* "no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand" (10:29)

d. *Then*: "I and the Father are one" (10:30)

e. "Jesus & the Father are 'one' because *they do the same work & stand in the same relation to the sheep*. This is not... saying merely that Jesus imitates or obeys the Father...*They actually do the same work*, e., the Father accomplishes his work in the world uniquely through Jesus his Son." [J. Ramsey Michaels, *John (Understanding the Bible...)*, p.]

f. "Jesus is *not* saying that he & the Father are a *single Person*, but that *together they are one God*." –Richard Bauckham

g. "Jesus & the Father are not the same person(s), but they belong to the same category of identity—i.e., the divine identity of God... [In 10:30, John] is 'deftly coordinating Jesus with God in such a way that *they share the divine identity* without one absorbing the other' (Byers)." [Brury E. Saputra, *Shema & John's Gospel*, p.]