

He Will Hold You Fast

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Date: 23 October 2022

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[0:00] Take your Bibles and please turn to John's Gospel, John chapter 10, if you're visiting with us or you forgot your phone at home. There's a Bible in the chair in front of you.

You can pull that out, go towards the back. They renumber the New Testament, so in that Bible, that black Bible, so you have to go to the back and find page 81, John chapter 10, page 81 in that black Bible, John 10, and today we're gonna, only study 22 to 30, excuse me, 22 to 30 of John 10. 22 to 30, and then we'll finish up the chapter, excuse me, finish up the chapter next week on October 30th, 31 through the end of the chapter.

But today, John 10, 22 to 30. Keep in mind, I mix Greek translation with New American standards. That's why it might sound a little off.

I do the translation, so I'm mixing that in as I read. So here we go, chapter 10, verse 22. Then the feast of dedication came in Jerusalem.

[1:14] It was winter. And Jesus was walking in the temple in a portico of Solomon. Therefore the Jews encircled him. And were saying to him, how long will you keep in suspense our souls?

If you are the Messiah, tell us clearly. And Jesus answered them, I said to you, and you do not believe.

The works that I myself do in the name of my Father do testify of me. But you do not believe because you're not my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give eternal life to them, and they'll never perish at all.

And no one shall snatch them out of my hand. That which my Father has given to me is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch that out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one.

November 27th, 2018. A day that would leave a huge imprint in the life of Chris Gursky.

[2:38] Because for two minutes and 14 seconds, he held on for dear life because the pilot of the hang glider forgot to strap Chris to the hang glider.

You can actually watch the video of the whole situation. Just Google hang glider holds on for dear life. Google that. You'll find it.

The whole thing is caught on film from behind. And you see Chris gripping the bar with his left hand, and he's trying to grab on to the controller of the hang glider with his right hand.

He keeps slipping off, tries to grab the strap, keeps slipping off. Finally, he ends up grabbing his leg, holding on for dear life, two minutes and 14 seconds. Finally, the driver of the hang glider makes an emergency landing, and I think he was going about 45 miles an hour, and I don't remember how far he was off the ground, but finally Chris let go.

The man only suffered a broken wrist and torn bicep. That's it. Talk about holding fast.

[3:57] He was holding fast. And yet, Jesus' grip upon his sheep is so much tighter.

Jesus' hold upon his sheep is so much tighter than that. The author of this gospel, John the Evangelist, he's writing and says, come receive Jesus.

Come know Jesus. Believe Jesus. Trust Jesus. And today we'll see, come know Jesus. Come trust Jesus, and he will hold you fast.

Come trust Jesus, and he will hold you fast. I didn't necessarily mean for that to be the title of the message in connection to the song.

I'd chosen the song on purpose four weeks ago, three weeks ago. And then as I was studying, I went, this is exactly what this passage is about. So why not title it this way?

[5:12] And he will hold you fast. When we trust and continue to trust Jesus, it proves we're one of his elect sheep.

And the Son's power will always hold us fast. Praise the Lord Jesus for his great, undeserving love for us, for his sheep, for his people.

When we trust him and continue to trust Jesus, it proves one of his elect sheep. And his power will hold us fast. Another way to put it, because of the Son's life-giving authority and power, which was given to him by the Father, he'll never let us go.

He will hold us fast. As the Father holds and empowers the Son, so the Son holds and empowers his sheep.

They go together. They coincide together. And because of this life-giving authority and this power that the Son has that was given to him from the Father, Jesus has said this from the very beginning of his ministry.

[6:40] I don't come to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. He'll never let us go. He'll hold us fast. So this means that the surety of the sheep's election is the surety of the union between the Father and the Son.

the surety of the sheep's election is the surety of the union between the Father and the Son. He holds us and is based upon the union between the Father and the Son. Jesus' life-giving authority and power sustains his sheep.

It protects his sheep. And it's this authority and it's this power that was given to him by the Father. Friends, this forever ensures the protection of Jesus' sheep.

Forever. There's no way this cannot ever not happen. There's no way. The day that it happens is the day that there's a break between the union and the, between the, a union between the Father and the Son.

[7:54] Well, that's never gonna happen. So the context, remember, Jesus had just said he's the door.

He's the access to the Father. He's the only access to the Father. He's the good shepherd. He's the caregiver of the sheep. He cares for his sheep. He gives his life for the sheep in opposition to the religious leaders, remember.

They were the bad leaders, the robbers, the thieves, the bad shepherds. Jesus is who they were. So Jesus begins to bring this down to a close, this dialogue, intense dialogue that he's having between the religious leaders and himself, which it continues here in verse 22 all the way to the end of the chapter.

Let's walk our way through this now. And let's walk our way through this beginning with this first point and then we'll end with he will hold us fast.

Point number one, one must be and elect sheep to believe. A person must be and elect sheep to believe.

[9:07] There's no way around that. verse 22. Then the feast of dedication came in Jerusalem.

This feast is not delineated in the Old Testament. It commemorated the rededication of the temple by Judas Maccabeus in 165 BC. The Syrian king, Antiochus Epiphanes, if you're a history buff, you'll like this, he desecrated the temple.

He sacrificed a pig. So the Jews, under the leadership of Maccabeus, overthrew Syria and recaptured the temple, recaptured their land.

So it was a celebration of Judas Maccabeus and the family that was called the Maccabean Revolt of him being the hero. And that time coincided with this revolt with December, which is known today as Hanukkah.

It's why they celebrate Hanukkah. It goes back to this time. So this festival commemorated national deliverance and political victory over pagan forces that challenged God, challenged his people.

[10:23] It was kind of almost like a second exodus to Jews. So they celebrated God's faithfulness in the past to his people and to his temple and that he restored his people, restored his temple by using his heroes to accomplish this redemptive restoration.

And you're gonna see the ramifications of this feast in connection to Jesus next week, more next week. But this is what's, this is the time period, this is what's happening. Verse 22 into verse 23, it was winter.

He was walking in the temple, shielded Jesus from the wintry cold was the portico of Solomon. It's kind of ironic. Here's the fulfillment of Israel's national and religious hopes.

He's walking among them. God was with them walking in the temple, the very temple of God. verse 24, therefore the Jews, now it seems that this refers to the religious leaders, the Jews from chapter 10 verses 7 through 21, actually verse 19, the Jews there included the crowd.

Here it seems to just be the religious leaders. Notice, New American Standard says gathered around him, that does not give the nuance of the verb, the verb means encircled in a hostile way. [11:48] in an antagonistic attacking way. Kind of think of it as like a mob coming around him like that, encircled him. In fulfillment of Psalm 118 verse 11, actually, they're fulfilling prophecy and they didn't even know it.

And then this first question, it's kind of hard to translate because it's actually an idiom. Idioms are always hard to translate. You know, so you try to define idioms for people.

It's really hard to do. It takes a long time to try to define just an idiom that we have for today. You know, it's hard to define those. So even here, there's an idiom that's translated here.

So the best way we can do is, how long will you keep in suspense our souls? But however you translate it, the fact is their question was meant to be hostile towards Jesus.

Maybe they're angry, vexed, annoyed. So, view this question as a way for them to obtain information in order to attack Jesus.

[13:03] They didn't gather around and say, hey Jesus, so are you really the Christ? Come on. It wasn't like that. They were really mad. they encircled them and then, okay, come on.

And then, the second question, they wanted clarification. If you're the Messiah, tell us clearly. They wanted clarification because Jesus spoke with metaphors.

Bread, light, door, shepherd. So, tell us clearly and their question really was more like this, do you think you are the Christ?

It's more of the nuance of their question. And that's a loaded question. I mean, to ask that in the first century, that's a big deal. If you went around the first century and said, I'm the Messiah, I mean, that's, you're kind of dumb.

They had a huge political ramifications to saying something like that. And yet, they wanted him to speak plainly or clearly. Don't give us any more metaphors, just say it.

[14:24] Now, understand this. In these two questions, you can kind of read between the lines and see what they really wanted. A, what did he plan to do with this claim of being Messiah?

That's really what they wanted to know. But then, really B, they had no intention of believing in him. They're asking him, tell us clearly if you're the Messiah, we're not going to believe in you, though.

I mean, go on. They had no intention of believing in him. And look at how Jesus responds. Verse 25, Jesus answered to them, I said to you, I retold you, but you did not believe.

The problem was not that he didn't speak clearly. The problem was they did not listen. The problem was not his words. The problem was their heart.

that was the disconnection. Whoa, but wait. Did Jesus actually say, I am the Messiah?

[15:38] No and yes. No, and that he never actually used the term himself in that way because of the huge ramifications overtones with that word.

The Jews thought nationally, politically, militarily, when he said Messiah. When he said Messiah, it's like, okay, kill Romans and kill all Gentiles and Jews are awesome.

Yay, that's how, that's what, you said Messiah, that's what they thought. So did Jesus actually say that? Well, no, but then, yes. In that his works, even his words, attested to his identity.

And that his claim was true. I mean, that's why he says, the works that I myself do in the name of my father, these testify of me. I mean, for crying out loud, I just healed a paralyzed man who was paralyzed for 38 years.

I just healed a blind man who was blind from birth. Who does stuff like that? Don't you read Isaiah? When the branch comes, the lame will walk, the blind will see, the dead will be raised.

[17:01] That's why he says, I, the works that I myself do in my father's name, they testify who I am. They pointed to his true identity.

So he wasn't the problem, they were. To what extent? How deep was their problem?

Look at verse 26. But you do not believe, because you're not my sheep. Friends, this is huge.

They totally deny Jesus because they were not his sheep. This is the strongest defense for the doctrine of election in the whole Bible.

This verse. You either believe this or you reject it. You can't get around this. I really don't know how people can get around this. The reason people do not trust Jesus is because they're not his sheep.

[18:09] Flip that around. The reason why people do trust Jesus is because they're his elect sheep. It's not the other way around. The reason people are not Jesus' sheep is because they don't believe.

No. The reason why people don't believe these guys are not his sheep. Ultimately, true belief is rooted and grounded in the doctrine of election.

What is the doctrine of election? Wayne Grudem. God the Father before creation chooses some people to be saved not on account of any foreseen merits in them but only because of his sovereign good pleasure.

That's a great way to define it. Now, mind you, this does not mean that election saves you. Election does not save us.

Jesus saves us through the means of faith alone in Christ alone. So a person must choose to trust Christ as Lord and Savior yet the truth is election makes salvation and faith certain and sure.

[19:32] And this means that election is not based on God's foreknowledge of our faith because if it is then election would be based on merit from us.

Not on God's free will. This notion that we have free will is a concoction of humans. God's the one who has the free will.

Again, people believe because they are elect, not the other way around. People trust Christ because they're elect. As I said, the point, what is it?

One must be and elect sheep to believe. This is an amazing truth because it shows the total grace and mercy of God.

We did nothing to deserve this. Nothing. I mean, God, out of his own, very own volition, his free will decided to save us based on his grace.

[20:42] that's election. And this truth, this gives us reason to give praise and thanks to God.

We should praise and thank God all the time. Realizing that he's shown us grace by electing us that we even know can know him and know Jesus. This does not come from us.

It comes from him. And it also brings us such great comfort because we have the confidence that God will always act for the good of those who belong to him.

You can take comfort in the fact that God will always act for the good of those who belong to him.

Always. For his sheep. He cares for his sheep. If he elected you, don't you think he'll keep you?

And of course, of course this gives us such boldness and encouragement in our evangelism. It's not up to you. It's up to God. God determined the end but also the means to that end.

[21:50] And the means that he determined to bring about the end is you and I preaching the gospel. So we have a boldness and encouragement in our evangelism, even if it means we must embrace or endure suffering.

we can endure suffering. God's elect people are out there. They're out there so we give the gospel to all people and let God deal with the results.

Let God deal with the rest. We don't get people to believe. That's not our job. That's not your job.

God calls us, call people to repent, trust Christ.

Thank you Wayne Grudem for those great reasons why we can give praise to God, have such comfort and have such boldness and evangelism. That comes from Wayne Grudem.

He says that in his systematic theology. So one must be and elect sheep to believe. Notice the progression now. Number two, elect sheep always believe.

[22:54] Verse 27, my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. It's not my sheep might hear and might know. My sheep possibly will know.

What's the result of being one of Jesus elect sheep? My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. Those sheep will hear Jesus voice when he calls him or her to salvation and will follow Jesus enduring to the end.

true Christians will hear Christ will run into the arms of Jesus and follow Jesus. They'll love him, worship him, live for him with godly living, with holy living.

That's going to be a true Christian, a true follower, a true sheep. Those who are not Jesus' sheep do not hear his voice and will reject Jesus.

And since these Jews have rejected Jesus, they were really rejecting God. And then they thought they followed God. And notice Jesus says, hear my voice and I know them.

[24:21] They're known already by Jesus. How? An election. I mean, Paul says this, those whom he foreknew, he predestined.

He knew us, so he predestined us. Not knowing in terms of knowing your faith. He knew you. He decided to know you and love you and then he predestines us.

Or another way to put it how John's gospel puts it. Here's this gift from the Father of all these chosen ones. The gift from the Father, he gives it to the Son. He says, here. And the Son takes that and he dies for that gift. John 6, 37 and John 6, 39. That's what Jesus does. That's what the Father does.

The fact of the matter was these religious leaders did not belong to Jesus, so they would never believe in Jesus. Jesus. They're not elect. They're not his sheep.

[25 : 19] They won't hear his voice. They won't follow him. Some people say, I need to find out if I'm elect in order to believe in Jesus.

What? I have to find out if I'm elect in order to believe in Jesus. No. That's absurd. No, you don't. How do you know if you're elect?

You trust Jesus. You embrace Jesus. You love Jesus. Trust him. If you're here, you don't know Jesus, trust him. Come to Jesus. Be saved. Jesus died for sinners, rose from the dead.

Repent. Turn from your sin and trust Jesus and he'll save you. You know, I have to figure out if I'm elect in order to believe. No, just believe. Trust Christ. That's what he calls us to do.

To respond. One must be an elect sheep to believe. They'll elect sheep. They'll trust Christ. As you put it, they'll always believe. And notice the progression, number three, about these elect sheep.

[26 : 22] Oops. These elect sheep have eternal life. Verse 28. And I give eternal life to them and they shall never perish at all. It's to these elect ones known by Jesus and who thus trust in Jesus that eternal life is given.

Oh, it's not the first time Jesus has said this. Chapter 3, verse 16. John 3, 16. Chapter 5, verse 21. Chapter 5, verse 25.

Chapter 6, verse 27. Verse 40. Chapter 10, verse 10. I came that they might have life and might have it over and above. We looked at that last week. He is true bread, true water, true light, true pasture.

And it's invincible because they'll never ever perish at all. If a sheep has been elect by Jesus and they hear his voice, he knows them and they'll follow them, they'll follow Jesus, they can never lose their salvation.

that's impossible. Completely and totally impossible. One must be an elect sheep to believe, elect sheep always believe, elect sheep have eternal life.

[27 : 43] Boom. Number four. The son holds fast his elect sheep. Verse 28. And no one shall snatch them out of my hand. He's got them.

How strong is this truth of eternal life? How strong? It's so strong that no one, nothing is able to snatch them out of the hand of the good shepherd.

It belongs to Jesus and his sheep to whom he gives this eternal life. So they'll never be lost. He will hold me fast.

The ultimate security, as Don Carson says, of Jesus' sheep rests with Jesus. And when Jesus says, no one shall snatch them out of my hand, that even means a person who has that salvation. You can't snatch your own salvation out of his hand. You can't take it out of his hand either. It includes you, buddy. You can't.

[28 : 47] What amazing love and grace. There is absolutely no way that a true follower, true believer, true sheep will ever lose their salvation.

Jesus holds fast his chosen sheep. Period. They'll never lose their salvation.

It's completely and totally impossible. It'll never happen because, as we sang, he will hold us fast. So one must be like sheep to believe.

Like sheep always believe. Like sheep have eternal life. The son holds fast his elect sheep. Now, notice this, why is the son able to hold us fast?

Why? This is where verse 29 to 30 comes into play. Because the father-son union ensures the election of Jesus' sheep.

[29 : 47] This is the crux. This is huge. Jesus connects his work with the father and the father's authority.

Now, you noticed, I changed the translation for you as I read from verse 29. New American Standard, if you have New American Standard, even King James, New King James, New International, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, reads like this.

My father, who has given, and notice them is not in the text, who has given to me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch, there is no them, no one is able to snatch out of the father's hand.

That's one way to translate that. I should put that number two. First way to translate it is like this. That which my father has given to me is greater than all and no one is able to take it, that which the father gave, out of my father's hand.

That's the first way to translate it or second how you have there in your Bibles, New American Standard, King James, International, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. So in the first, which I, what I did for you, that which my father has given to me is greater than all and no one is able to take it, that which the father gave to me, out of my father's hand.

[31 : 10] What this means, if translated this way is this, the sheep dwell firmly and securely under the son's authority, under the son's judgment, and under the son's life.

That which the father has given to the son is greater than all. He's given life, giving authority and power, and that sustains the sheep.

Now, if you translate it the second way, the sheep are firmly secure in the father's hand is like the son's hand. But in the first way, it means this, it's even stronger.

Klink says this, quote, the son's hand holds and empowers the sheep, just as the father's hand holds and empowers the son. So the focus, if we take it the first way, how I translate it for you, is upon the shepherd and his authority, not what we have received.

The focus is upon the son and the father, not upon the sheep, not upon us. Jesus' life given authority and power sustains and protects his sheep, and it's this authority and power that was given to him by the father, this forever ensures the protection of the sheep.

[32 : 27] Jesus had already said this, go up to verse 15, excuse me, verse 14, I am the good shepherd and I know my own and my own know me. Notice he says, just as the father knows me and I know the father and I lay down my life for the sheep.

What's the relationship like between the shepherd and the sheep? The kind of relationship between the father and the son. The father holds and empowers the son and as he does this, so the son holds and empowers the sheep.

sheep. So the surety of the sheep's election is the surety of the union between the father and the son. The whole basis of this is the relationship between Jesus and the father.

That's what Jesus is saying here in verse 29. So the focus is upon the son. The focus is upon the son and his great power, not the sheep. It's on the greatness of the son, not your worth.

Not the worth of the sheep, but the worthiness of the son. See? And then notice, Jesus drives this home farther.

[33 : 44] He pushes this home farther from verse 30. In verse 30, I and the father are one. What does he mean? It means this.

One, this speaks of the ontological and functional unity between the father and the son. So here's the logic of the passage.

Klink is very good at this. I have authority to protect my sheep, says Jesus. This authority was given to me from the father, says Jesus. So the father and I, we're doing the same work.

We're one. Ontological means the being of God. So the triune God is equal in being, but subordinate in role.

In their being, they're one, and though they have different functions, they're one in accomplishing their work. So that's why Jesus says, what I do, the father does. What Jesus does, the father does.

[34 : 43] Jesus has said this many times. Two examples, chapter 5, verse 17. The father's working, I'm working. Chapter 5, verse 19. I don't do things on my own, I do what the father tells me.

They're one. They can't be nothing but one. God the father works, and thus the son also works.

They do not do things contrary to each other, no. It was the father who sent Jesus the son and gave him all authority. Jesus the son obeys the father in all things, accomplishing the plan from the father, and it was the father's plan to have a sheep for whom Jesus would die.

These sheep are the gift, the father to the son. Given to the son this gift from the father to accomplish the work of redemption for Jesus to die for his sheep.

Again, Jesus' life-given authority and power sustains and protects his sheep, so this forever ensures the protection of the sheep. sheep. The surety of the sheep's election is the surety of the union between the father and the son.

[35 : 57] This is what Jesus is trying to communicate to these religious leaders. Because of the son's life-giving authority and power, which was given to him by the father, he'll never let us go.

