

An Unbreakable Relationship

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[0 : 00] Good morning. Our scripture reading comes from St. John chapter 10, 1 through to 30.

! And it reads thus. Truly, truly, I say to you, He who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber.

But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. To him the gate owner opens, the sheep hears voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

When he has brought out all of his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.

This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

[1 : 19] All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father.

And I laid on my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice.

[2 : 35] So there will be one flock and one shepherd. For this reason, the Father loves me because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.

I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father. There was again a division among the Jews because of these words.

Many of them said, he has a demon and is insane. Why listen to him? Others said, these are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon.

Can a demon open the eyes of the blind? At that time, the feast of the dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the colonnade of Solomon.

So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.

[3 : 44] Jesus answered them, I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name be a witness about me. But you do not believe because you are not among my sheep.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. And no one will snatch them out of my hand.

My Father who has given them to me is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one.

This is the Word of God. Good morning. Thank you, Brother Kelly. Thank you, Pastor.

Let's open a little word of prayer. Oh, Lord, how we need you in this moment.

[4 : 53] We consider your Word, which is food for our souls. Without you, Lord, this would be a moment spent in vain.

Without you, Lord, this would be a futile exercise. Lord, we ask that you would speak to us through your Word today. We ask that you would cause it to come alive.

We ask for clarity. We ask for potency. We ask, oh, Lord, that you would cause us to see your goodness, your grace in the lives of those whom you have called, whom you have chosen, whose eyes you have opened.

In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen. Brothers and sisters, for just a brief moment, I hope to share with you just two points, two simple points, which will be sandwiched between perhaps an unusually long introduction and a brief conclusion.

But overall, I promise you that the message is going to be very, very short, I think. I think. But just two points.

[6 : 30] I think we would all agree that context matters. That context matters.

What I mean by that, you can see two people engaged in a certain way, and if you don't know what prompted the engagement, if you just happen to come by, you can very well misinterpret what you hear or even what you see.

Context matters. Someone says something to you, or you hear someone saying something to someone else, but you don't know what preceded it, then perhaps you can possibly get it all wrong. Context matters. As we consider the words that were read today in the book of John, I think it's important for us to have an understanding of context here.

And as we do, I think we ought to consider this book of St. John. Book of St. John, as you all know, by the way, I was trying to recall whether for BJC, did we take, did we study the book of St. John, or was it another of the gospel?

[7 : 59] It's Luke. Okay. I could not remember. I just simply couldn't remember. I see. Okay. So it might've been St. John. Might've been.

Okay. Okay. But the book of St. John is one of the four gospels. I think we all know that. St. John, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

I believe all the children will know that as well. But St. John is interesting. It's distinct from the other three gospels. The other three gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke are different in that they are basically, they're similar to one another.

They have basically the same parables, the same accounts of Jesus. Very, very, very, very similar in nature.

And they're regarded as the synoptic gospels. But John is different. John is very rich theologically.

[9 : 09] In John, we find some very, very often hard to understand teachings. In fact, as one of the brothers here reminded me, John is regarded as a theologian.

John, John, this book of John, he deals with subjects.

In fact, at the very beginning, at the very outside of the book of John, those of you who remember several months ago, we covered the memory verse in John chapter one, verse one.

And I'm pretty certain you all remember it. In the beginning was the word. And the word was with God.

And the word was God. And then in John chapter one, in verse 14, John says, And the word became flesh and dwelt among us.

[10 : 19] And we beheld his glory. That's deep stuff. I mean, it tells me, you know, as I considered the way John opened the book of St.

John, it reminds me of some of my favorite movies. I'm the kind of guy, when I watch a movie, I like the action at the very beginning. I don't like the stuff to start slowly and then it just goes down like that.

I want to see action at the very beginning, get my attention, and just keep it like that. Whether it's a cowboy movie or a karate movie, it doesn't matter.

Same thing. But John deals with very profound subject matters. And he starts the book that way.

And he deals with other subjects. In John, in this book of John, we find Jesus using the term I am to refer to himself.

[11 : 21] And he used the term eight times referring to himself. And those of you who know the significance of that would know that God, in the Old Testament, Jehovah referred to himself in the same way.

This book of John was written by one of Jesus's apostles. With the same name, the brother of James.

He tells us who he is in chapter 21 of St. John. Says that he is the beloved disciple.

And then in chapter 20, verse 31 of St. John, he tells us why he wrote this book of St. John.

John, John, the apostle tells us that he wrote this book for a single reason.

[12 : 35] So that we might know that Jesus is the Christ, the Christos, the Messiah, the anointed one.

And in so knowing that we might believe in him. And in believing we might have eternal life. That's what he says. That's the purpose of this book. So John's purpose in writing this book is to point to Jesus Christ.

And that is why, brothers and sisters, you see the way he opens the book talking about Jesus Christ. And so we come to chapter 10 of St. John, where our text is found.

Here, John, John, in chapter 10, describes an encounter that Jesus had with the leaders, the Christian leaders, or the church leaders, or the religious leaders, one would rightly say, of the day.

[14 : 00] John had an encounter with the religious leaders of the day. When we read the verses of our text, it is clear that John is dealing with yet another profound doctrine.

And I really, this is what I want us to do. I want us to take another look at it. Now, all of during the month of May, we were reading and studying this verse, but these verses, 27 through 30, but I want us to take another look at them together, because I want us to arrive at some conclusions right away.

Let's take a look at them together. If you have your Bible, those of you who have not memorized them, that's okay. Let's take a look at John chapter 10, verse 27 to 30, one more time.

And this time, let's see if we can bite all of it together. If we can take it all in together, and arrive at some conclusions. This is what John says, my sheep hear my voice.

This is him quoting Jesus now. Jesus says, my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

[15 : 39] Then in verse 28, I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

My father who has given them to me is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the father's hand.

I and the father are one. Now, brothers and sisters, take your theological hat off for a moment, and just consider those words simply.

Those words are real clear. John is saying real simply that Jesus has done two things.

Jesus has done two things. Those verses, John is telling us that believers are brought into an unbreakable relationship with Jesus.

[17 : 03] believers believers are brought into an unbreakable relationship with Jesus through divine election sustained by the power of God.

Do you see it? John is telling us that believers are brought into an unbreakable relationship with Jesus through divine election sustained by the power of God.

God has elected some people to come into an unbreakable relationship with him.

Unconditional election. of those whom he elects he causes them to persevere until the end.

That's what it says. The plain reading of Scripture. the plain reading of Scripture.

[18 : 50] Can I say a couple things before we proceed? I think it's important. I am aware that some people present who are believers perhaps have come here with a different view on this subject.

And maybe even now you see things differently. And maybe you will leave here seeing things differently. Well, that doesn't mean that we're not in fellowship or we can't be in fellowship.

I think it just simply means that you got to do a little bit more reading and you got to ask the Lord to open your eyes to the truth of his word.

That's what I believe. I think that this is clear. John, the other thing that I want to share with you is this.

You notice that Jesus, despite this subject matter being very, very challenging, very hard to understand perhaps, difficult to grasp.

[20 : 26] And despite the fact that not everyone present accepted it and he knew it, he did not hesitate to share this message.

the message of election, he did not hesitate to share it. What's my point? My point is that sometimes we think that maybe we ought to, you know, let's talk about this amongst ourselves.

Let's keep this truth or these truths to ourselves. Well, that's not the example we find here in Scripture.

But some may wonder, perhaps you're wondering, I've heard this message or something like it before. Why are we preaching about election?

Why are we preaching about God's elect? Why are we preaching about the perseverance of the saints again? I heard this last year and perhaps the year before.

[21 : 46] But can I tell you why we're doing it? We're doing it firstly for an obvious reason. It is biblical to do so. It's in the Scriptures and it's throughout the pages of the Scriptures.

That's why we're doing it. But there are other reasons we're doing it, brothers and sisters. We're doing it because it brings great joy and comfort.

We're doing it because it's truly an anchor to our souls. We're doing it because as Charles Spurgeon says, I know that if God did not choose me, I would not have chosen him.

If he didn't choose me, I'm quite certain I would not have chosen him.

Brothers and sisters, John the theologian, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote these words so that we might have hope in our eternal salvation.

[23 : 12] that we might have joy in our Savior and that we might rest in God our Father.

Now let's talk about my first point. My first point. Point number one. Point number one.

Characteristics of our relationships.

We're talking about relationship today. And everybody is in a relationship of one kind or the other. Whether it's a relationship with your spouse, a relationship with your children, a relationship with your employer, or your relationship with your employee, or your neighbor, everyone is in relationship.

Now what we are talking about is the unbroken relationship with Jesus Christ. And now this first point is what does it look like?

What does this relationship look like? And John tells us what it looks like. In John chapter 10 verse 27, the first thing John says about this relationship relationship.

[24 : 40] He says it's a sheep and a shepherd relationship. He says, you see that? He says, my sheep, Jesus writes.

Jesus says, my sheep hear my voice. Brothers sisters and sisters, sisters, can I tell you, can I tell you this?

The truth is that no matter who you are, no matter where you have been, you don't know everything. And that's true about all of us. and the truth is that every human being is a sheep.

All of us are sheep. We don't know everything. We don't know our head from our tail. We think we do. We don't know the future. Some of us think we do. But here's what Jesus does.

[25 : 48] Jesus says, my sheep. Jesus distinguishes He distinguishes the sheep. He says, there are some other sheep. There's some sheep over here, but I'm talking about my sheep.

He says, my sheep. My sheep, He says. My sheep, they do what? They hear whose voice?

My voice. Jesus says, my sheep hear. my voice.

Brothers and sisters, I want us to really park here for a moment. Because this is a big deal that Jesus says, my sheep hear my voice.

Listen to what He says to these people who were questioning Him. Jesus was making the point that I am the good shepherd, He says.

[26 : 55] I am the good shepherd. And my sheep hear my voice. And the point that Jesus was making to them is that the reason why you're having problems with me is because you're not my sheep, so you can't hear my voice.

That's why you can't come in and out. You know, and as I considered this, as I considered this, I thought about the fact that around us there is so much evidence of the existence of God, yet we can see but not see.

we can hear but not hear. How many times we wonder how it is that someone can see all of these things and they all clearly point to the evidence of a creator, but they just don't get it.

It's because they can see but not see. It's because they're not a part of the fold. not chosen, not a part of the fold, not one of the elect.

Jesus, John, this John records in John chapter six, verse 36. Jesus says, Jesus, but I said to you, you have seen me, yet you do not believe.

[28 : 40] You've seen me, and yet do not believe. Jesus says, listen, at least believe for the things that you have seen me do. Isn't it amazing that Jesus performed miracles after miracle.

He raised ladders from the dead. John records that. He turned water into wine. Indeed, in John chapter three, Nicodemus, one of the leaders, Nicodemus came to Jesus, and he says, Jesus, we have seen the works that you have done.

Surely you must be the son of God. But still they did not believe. Now, you know something, I thought about this, and I said, you know, if we saw some things on the internet, internet, now, we're in a different situation.

It's a different day, because they can make up all kinds of things. You know, you could cause things to happen that are unreal. But they didn't have the internet back then.

They walked with Jesus. They heard Jesus. They were in his presence. Jesus says, they did not hear because they were not his sheep.

[30 : 06] The elect hear because Jesus calls, they respond.

My sheep hear my voice. then Jesus further characterizes the elect. Jesus says about them, he says, I know them.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus says, I know them. it cannot be that Jesus is simply saying that he knows about them.

It can't be that. It can't be that Jesus is saying, I just have heard knowledge of the elect and not the others.

It can't be that alone. Brothers and sisters, I want you to consider what Jesus means here.

[31 : 19] Jesus says, I know them. Jesus says, I know them. You are an elect of God.

Jesus is saying, I know you. In Romans chapter 8 and verse 29, Paul writes these words, for whom the Lord foreknew, he also, for whom the Lord foreknew, for whom the Lord foreknew, he predestined to be conformed to the image of his son.

God foreknew. Paul writes that whom God foreknew before the foundation of the world.

Jesus says in these verses, I know them. For those whom he foreknew, he predest die, to be conformed to the image of his son, Archie Sproul, been chosen by God.

This is what he says. I'm going to ask you to really, really focus in on this a bit. in trying to pull these two passages together so that we might have a better grasp of what Jesus is saying here.

[33 : 02] Listen to this. R.C. writes, foreknowledge is not foresight.

foreknowledge it is foreordination of a people for relationship. He said that again.

Foreknowledge is not foresight. It is foreordination of a people for relationship. In other words, what he is saying is when God says he foreknew it doesn't mean that he had foresight of what people would become.

That's not what he meant when he says I foreknew. What he's saying is that he foreordained, he caused to happen.

He caused to happen. He caused, he elected a people for a relationship. And so when Jesus talks about this knowing, Jesus is talking about a deep intimacy.

[34 : 23] Sinclair Ferguson said when Jesus says I know them, he is speaking of those whom the father gave him in eternity.

those he foreknew. It is knowledge born in the eternal counsel of God that manifests in the call, the hearing, and the following.

therefore, I know them in John, is the unfolding of what the foreknew is in Romans chapter 8.

I hope that's not too much of a mouthful. but basically what he is saying here in summary is that the knowing that Jesus is talking about here is the end result of the foreknowing that Romans chapter 8 speaks speaks about brothers and sisters.

Can I tell you though, it's one thing for you and I to know about Jesus. It's quite another thing to be known by him.

[36 : 21] this is not a casual acquaintance but it's a deep divine knowing a deep divine knowing he knows you as a child would be known by his mother indeed even more deeply.

Here's what the Bible tells us about how much he knows us. Luke chapter 12 verse 7 the scripture tells us that he knows us so well that he knows the number of fear on our head and perhaps for Tim that's not so difficult.

what he said in context is he knows you well enough that you don't have to worry about anything.

He says I know everything about you. Then in Psalm 56 the scripture the psalmist tells us that he knows us so well brothers and sisters that he knows our every tossing.

What he's saying to us there is I know the tossings that you have at night when you are struggling when you are going through deep deep trouble I know the tossing I count the tossings and indeed I collect the tears that you cry in a cup.

[37 : 59] That's how well our Lord knows us. He has numbered the hairs on our hair and he has kept count of our tossings and put our tears in a bottle.

He knows my name. And then further characterizing this relationship Jesus says not only do they do my sheep hear me not only do I know them but they follow me.

Jesus says of his sheep that they follow him. Brothers and sisters Jesus says that we ought to follow him his sheep follow him.

And here Jesus is speaking about our obedience to his word our righteousness. We ought to follow him.

Obedience marks the life of Christ sheep. Now brothers I want to move quickly to point number two.

[39 : 29] Point number two. The permanence of our relationship. The permanence of our relationship. Can I tell you about this?

The permanence of our relationship. you look at these verses these short verses in John written by the great theologian and what you find is that he is repetitive he is redundant he says the same thing over and over and over again in these verses.

Look at where he starts out saying he says I give them eternal life he says my sheep I give to my sheep eternal life that's what he says I give them eternal life notice eternal life first of all is a gift I give them eternal life it is not earned it is eternal so therefore it ought to evoke gratitude is eternal life forever gotta be or is it for as long as you can keep it or is it something else now it seems clear to me that eternal is forever but let's let's suppose for a moment that eternal is not forever and in fact you can lose your salvation well if you were able to lose your salvation then certainly Jesus should not have used the word eternal here not like this he should have said he should have just said and I have given you life for as long as you can keep it would not have been the better way to say it that's what he would have said I have given you life for as long as you can hold on to it I have given you life if you decide not to lose it but that's not what he says he says I give them eternal life if you can lose it it can't possibly be eternal if it is eternal it is eternal and there is no end to it but brothers and sisters when does eternal life begin take a look at what

Jesus says here it's interesting that Jesus and sister Demetri is going to help me here but or brother Clarence but Jesus says what does he say here he doesn't say I will give you or I will give them eternal life does he say that he says what does he say I give them eternal life in the present tense I give them eternal!

[43 : 25] eternal life it's interesting isn't it what does that tell me that tells me that our that the eternal life about which Jesus speaks begins right away it begins right away and you say what are you talking about Lyndon what are you talking about listen I told you this is John is the author of this book and he stands with in the beginning he was the word the word was with God and he doesn't come down he just goes all the way up but let's answer that question as we explore this truth here in

John chapter 17 in John chapter 17 verses 1 to 3 John chapter 17 verses 1 to 3 we see Jesus begins to pray for his disciples Jesus prays for them and Jesus says father I pray that you will give to them eternal life in fact let's take a look at it I pray that you give them eternal life to give eternal life to all whom you have given to me that was Jesus prayer give eternal life to all whom you have given to me and then he says and this is eternal life that they know you the only true

God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent so Jesus says I pray Lord that you will give to them whom you have chosen eternal life and this is eternal life that they will know you and know me notice how Jesus defines in this instance eternal life not merely not only as living forever but as knowing God brothers and sisters this is not just an intellectual knowing that

Jesus writes here that Jesus is speaking about this is just not us having knowledge of who God is but a deep and personal relationship with him Jesus says father I pray that they will not just know of you but that they will know you deeply that they will know you intimately that they will come to trust you that they will come to believe in you they will come to know you in a way a child knows a father or a bride her groom eternal life begins not when we die but when we come into saving relationship with

God through Jesus Christ great theologian said you have made us for yourself oh God our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you and what Jesus prays here is that we will find our rest in

God even before we die that we will have a relationship with God the one who is self existing brothers and sisters if you can imagine there is no words there is no imagery that one can really come up with to really explain what to perfectly explain what

[49 : 16] Jesus is saying here but imagine for a moment that you have a child and you and that child are so connected that you are completely one that he knows you that he is a part of you and what is yours is his and he knows you and you being the king of the hill so to speak he ties into you he comes to know you he is a part of you he trusts your every word he relies on you Jesus prays oh Lord it is my prayer that for these that they will have eternal life that they will be so connected this is a gift Jesus offers to us not just an ending time brothers and sisters but unbroken fellowship with the living

God starting now and continuing forever that is eternal life that is our hope this is a present possession not only a future possession not only a future promise it's a present possession eternal life begins now how do we respond brothers and sisters how do we respond to these truths we respond not with pride not with arrogance but with gratitude with worship and with holiness oh brothers and sisters we respond when we see the world for what it is transient and incomparable to what you and

I are a part of and what awaits us Jesus says in these verses that we have read Jesus says they will never perish do you see that he says they will never perish he says I give them eternal life then he says they will never perish this is the security and assurance of every believer brothers and sisters I told you that there was a lot of redundancy here and Jesus says I give them eternal life and he says they will never perish now perhaps you believe that when he says they will never perish that Jesus is saying that they will not suffer that there will be no difficulties that's not what he means and that's not scriptures teach us how do

I know this let's go to one scripture that we all know so well John 3 16 God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life will not perish but have eternal life will not perish so will the opposite of will not perish is to have eternal life so what Jesus is saying is basically the same thing right here Jesus is saying listen they will not perish so he's being redundant they will have eternal life they will not perish perish he's reiterating the point then Jesus says no one will snatch them out of my hands brothers and sisters Jesus writes about the sheep my sheep he says no one will snatch them out of the good shepherd's hand we are held by

Christ himself brothers and sisters that's enough that is enough to guarantee eternal life that is enough to guarantee that we will not perish brothers and sisters Jesus is repeating himself to drive home the point I give them eternal life they will not perish no one will snatch them out of my hand then he goes on to say he goes on to say my father who has given them to me now brothers and sisters I want to suggest to you that he is further repeating himself because we know if the father gave them to him that no one can snatch them out of his hands either because Jesus is about to say that but

[54 : 48] I just want to make another point here I think this is a really important point Jesus says my father who has given them to me brothers and sisters we ought to let those words sink in for a moment Jesus says my father my father comma who has given them to me the father has given the sheep to Jesus Jesus is sheep were given to him by the father that is to say they were elected they were chosen by the father now let's imagine for a moment that any sheep could be could go into the fold you know you sheep you know you got your enclosure here and any sheep could walk in with the father not having chosen him or given him to

Jesus this verse would not be right the better way the better rendering of it would be that my father who allows or who permits any sheep to be a part of the fold but that's not what it says it says my father who has given them to me reinforces this statement reinforces divine election the father gave us to the son Jesus says my father is greater than all brothers and sisters no one can snatch us out of the father's hand our security is rooted not in ourselves brothers and sisters what a joy you and I have today oh what a joy we can leave here today knowing that our salvation is not rooted in what you do or in what you say but rather in the omnipotence of the father no one scripture tells us can snatch you and I out of the father's hand now you say this is hard to understand

I agree I'm right there with you I have questions I tell you this is hard to understand but this is what the bible says our security is not in ourselves if perseverance were not anchored in the father why make this statement why say this Jesus says brothers and sisters you are not condemned now can

I tell you this is not a license for us to sin not a license for us to sin as a matter of fact when rightly understood this is motivation for us to live holy lives that's what it is it's not a license for us to say oh well

I know because I've been chosen let me tell you something if you had that attitude chances are you probably aren't chosen chances are you aren't chosen brothers and sisters I pray in the name of Jesus that you and I having grasped the truth of these words will be so motivated so filled with assurance will be so delighted knowing that we have eternity already brothers and sisters that we will see this world for what it is and we will live holy lives bought with a price the righteous the precious blood of Jesus Christ as we conclude brothers and sisters

Jesus says I and the father are one this underlies both the unity of the Godhead and the certainty of our salvation if you're a believer today if you're a believer today take no pride in having been chosen this is grace this is grace be thankful be prayerful if you're not a believer hear the invitation of Christ the one who says I and the father are one he's the one who died for the sheep for his sheep you're not called to become righteous by your own efforts but to save yourself just come just come as you are come as you are if you hear his voice come friends the unbreakable relationship that those of us who are reluctant have brothers and sisters it's not built on our grip but rather it's built on

[61 : 44] Jesus' grip on us if today you hear his voice do not harden your heart come in a moment we're going to sing the song he holds me fast so the words of the song I ask praise come to come now to be prepared to pray when I fear my faith will fail Christ will hold me fast when the tempter would prevail he will hold me fast I could never keep my hold through life's fearful path for my love is often cold he must hold me fast father oh lord what a delight it is to feast at your table oh lord to know lord that you foreknew us oh before the foundation of the world chose us oh lord not for any good that we have done you made us your children you brought us in fellowship with you and with one another oh lord we praise you today father it is our prayer that we will grow in grace lord that we will grow in our appreciation for all that you have done lord it is our prayer that we will remind each other of these truths lord that we will speak these truths to the world we will do so boldly or we pray for the one who's going through difficulties today and we remind them oh lord that you know them let you know their tossings let you know every tear that falls let you and their father lord that no one can snatch them out of your hands in

Jesus name amen