

The Guaranteed Life

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[0 : 00] Let us turn our mic to the passage of God's Word which we read in the Gospel of John chapter 9 and let's only begin, I'd like to speak at the most important time, and just read in verses 9 to 11. Gospel of John chapter 10 at verse 9. Jesus is speaking, and he says, I am the Lord. By me, if any man is in him, he shall be saved. And shall go in and and fight by the man. The thief can not but for his speed, but to kill, but to be strong. I am come that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. At one and the same time, these words are very challenging, and at the same time, very encouraging. To fully grasp what is being said here, to get the significance of it, it's helpful to understand shepherding in Bible times because it was quite different in some respects to what we are used to in our country in the 21st century. Sheep folds. Almost every village had its community sheep fold. And that sheep fold had a 12 foot high wall. Not a fence. A 12 foot high wall. And on its four sides, there was one door. There was a porter guarding that door. And in the morning, you see, in the evening, when the shepherd would come for his sheep, he would speak to the porter who would open the door and let the sheep in through that one door.

And in the morning, when the shepherd would come back, the porter, of course, would recognize him and open the door. And you see how often we read here about the hireling, the thief, the robber.

The robber. He climbs up. He climbs up. He comes at night. He climbs up over the 12 foot high wall. And then drops down into the fold and opens the door from the inside.

The subject then here is the genuine authenticity of the true shepherd. How often did we read here, the hireling careth not for the sheep. But Jesus is saying, look, I am the good shepherd. I care for my sheep.

You see, in these days, when this was being written, there were many false shepherds, false prophets going around. And as we indicated in the morning in the previous chapter, the context is, how can you recognize a false prophet from a genuine one?

[4 : 09] Well, he changes the picture from a false prophet to false shepherds. And he says, I am the true shepherd. So let's see what he says, how we can see the authenticity of a genuine shepherd.

Our text is, how we can see the truth.

By good behavior. It takes us a long time to grasp that. God is an absolute God.

And therefore, he requires absolute perfection. And for us all, it's far too late. We're already imperfect.

You cannot get into the kingdom of heaven any other way but through the door who is Christ Jesus.

[5 : 39] Through faith in Christ Jesus. God has ordained Christ to be the door, to be the substitute, to be the savior.

And by faith in Christ, we mean believing that Christ is perfectly qualified to pardon our sin.

Because he has paid God for it at the cross. Do you want to know if you're a believer? Do you want to know if you're a Christian?

Do you understand that? The only way is if Christ has paid for your sins at the cross.

That is what you have to specifically believe. To have faith in Christ. To have faith in Christ. It means to realize that Christ has been appointed by God the Father as the one mediator between God and men.

[6 : 51] There's only one. But that one mediator commands all men and women, boys and girls everywhere to come to him.

They talk about Christianity being exclusive. I can't think of anything more inclusive than Christ commanding all men, all human beings everywhere to come and be saved.

That's not exclusive. You can't get anything broader. Do you grasp that? Do you understand that? Is that your hope?

Do you believe? Do you trust? Do you depend upon Christ giving you his righteousness? Our righteousness doesn't reach the standard.

Christ, you see, before he came to earth was perfectly righteous. But that righteousness which he had in heaven before he came to earth was what we would call a non-transferable righteousness.

[8 : 13] It could not be given to human beings. So one of the reasons why Christ had to become a human being was not simply that he would die to pay for our sins.

That is true. God can't die. But if he becomes a human being, his human nature can die. That was one reason. But the other reason is what we have to be speaking about now.

He had to work out on earth, in his life on earth, a perfect righteousness. Absolutely perfect and faultless.

That could legitimately be transferred to human beings as their own. Christ is saying that when he says to us tonight, I am the door.

Are you a Christian? Are you looking at your life and saying, am I good enough to be a Christian? You're asking the wrong question.

[9 : 20] Ask. Is Christ my hope? Has Christ paid for my sins? Is it the righteousness of Christ I have?

And if you depend upon him, you are a Christian. Because Christ is the door.

And there's only one door into the kingdom. Listen to the credentials he gives as the genuine, authentic, good shepherd.

I give my life for the sheep. Ask the cults who knock on your door.

Ask them, what is their prophet or their guru or whatever? What has he done for them? Ask them, whoever's name they come into, ask them now, what has your guru, your equivalent of a saviour, what has he done for you?

[10 : 28] All these false prophets and cults, they're leaders, they're prophets. They tell you what you have to do. Christ is so different. Christ died in our place.

I give my life for the sheep. I laid it down. I gave it. I wasn't.

It was no pressure put in me. You know, I don't know if I've said it before, but Christ loves his people and was keen. And I've heard the illustration saying, so keen to be the substitute of sinners.

You see, when in a past eternity, when the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit discussed salvation, they quickly came to the conclusion, obviously, reverently speaking, nothing but the death of the second person of the Godhead will suffice to pay for the innumerable sins of an innumerable number of people.

But the question is, is he willing? Is he willing to lay down his life? And we must never, ever think that God the Father or God the Spirit twisted the arm of the second person of the Godhead to come, go on, take it.

[11 : 55] No, no. He loved his people with an everlasting love. And he willingly lay down his life for the sheep.

And as someone has said, at the sound of the crunching of the apple in the Garden of Eden, Christ began to come.

Isn't that lovely? At the sound of the first sin, Adam crunching the apple. He began to come. Such was his love.

Such was his determination to save sinners. He lays it down.

No man takes it from me. He laid down his human life that you and I might have eternal life.

[12 : 57] I give my life for the sheep. Something else he says, showing his credentials to be the genuine, authentic, good shepherd.

I know my sheep. I know my sheep. Isn't there a solemn illustration in Matthew 7, 21?

It's from the Saviour as well. 7, 21. Not everyone who says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

But he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?

And in thy name have cast out devils. And in thy name done many wonderful works. Then, and then, will I profess unto them, I never knew you.

[14 : 17] I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity. It's not, do we know him? It's, does he know us?

Jesus made us. He knows everything about us. He knows us as a doctor knows his patients.

You see, there's a different levels of knowledge. I can live in Harley Street and I can live next door to a Harley Street physician.

We mow our gardens together and they say, hello, hello. I know him at that level. But then, that afternoon, I get a pain in my chest and I'm gasping for breath.

They say, oh, get a doctor. Go to your neighbor. My wife goes to the neighbor and says, oh, but he says, he's not my patient. I don't know if his records, his medical records.

[15 : 35] Does Christ have your medical records? Do you immediately go to him when something's wrong? When you discover malpractice in your life?

When you discover you've sinned? Do you go immediately to Christ and explain to him what you've done and ask him to forgive it?

That's what he means when he says, I know my sheep. They come to my surgery. They make appointments with me.

They tell me their complaints. What do you do? Let me ask you, what do you do when you sin? Do you get depressed? Do you get hopeless? Do you say, there's nothing to do.

I can't stop this. Or do you go to the doctor? Do you know what it is to go into Christ's surgery? To tell him what you've done wrong and to tell him, I can't stop it.

[16 : 36] Heal me, cure me, forgive me, deliver me. I know my patience, he's saying. I know my patience.

We know people because they're famous. Do these famous people know us? We all know the Queen at a certain level.

does the Queen know you, me, personally? We have to have that relationship with Christ. Does he know us as a doctor knows his patient?

And the thing is, Jesus knows all our complaints. He knows every detail of our dark times. and he still loves us.

He still loves us. Maybe you've got a guru of some kind, somebody you admire, and then you hear something about him.

[17 : 42] You've just lost all respect for them. Not Jesus. Not Christ. He knows his sheep and he still loves them.

But he says also, of course, they know me. They recognize his, verse 4, they know his voice.

They recognize his voice. They've heard it before. Don't leave it to eternity. to hear his voice for the first time.

The good shepherd, we are told in verses 3 and 4, leads out his people. They're not driven out.

The hireling, the fraudster, the thief, the robber, drives them out. The good shepherd leads them out and they follow him.

[18 : 47] My sheep, hear my voice and follow me. Very important principle there. Christianity is voluntary.

You see, we can be made to go through the routine of religion. We can be made to go to church regularly. Children are. We can be made to say our prayers.

We can be made to read the Bible. What's the test? Do you do it voluntarily? Do you do it freely?

Tell me, do you do it because you enjoy it? We're back to catechism number one. Our man's chief end.

The main purpose for human beings being on earth is that they glorify God and enjoy him.

[19 : 51] Do you want to know if you're a Christian? Tell me, can you enjoy God? A man's religion actually ought to be the happiest thing in his life.

Do you enjoy God? God, they go in and out and find pasture.

Christ's sheep get food from Christ. From his word, his word is milk and meat.

It's described that way in the Bible. Strong meat, milk for babes, strong meat for mature people. And from his word, they get guidance.

From his word, they get strength. From his guidance, they get hope. Are you like me, never very sure exactly what you're meant to do and you need guidance?

[20 : 56] Where do you go? Sometimes we know what we're to do, but oh, haven't got the courage. haven't got the courage, haven't got the strength.

And often in this world, am I right? Often in this world, you can't see any way out. You get into situations and you just can't see any way out.

Where do you go for hope? Hope is post-faith. hope is being not sure of yourself.

I always replace hope with the word certainty. But there's one thing we're not sure about. If there's one thing Christians are not sure about, it's themselves.

But their hope is in Christ. Their certainties are in Christ. they're not sure of themselves.

[22 : 04] Christian assurance has not been sure of yourself. Christian assurance has been sure of Christ. And whatever situation Christians get into, there is always, always hope because there is always, always Christ.

our hope is Christ. Our security is Christ. They know me.

But he also says in verse 9, verse 28, I give them eternal life. I give them eternal life.

Always remember a man on his deathbed. I wasn't there but heard about it. And at the end they were trying to reassure him, trying to point him into the only hope before he entered eternity.

And at last he got it. And he said, all my life I've been trying to find out what I have to do to be saved.

[23 : 18] I did not realise I have to receive something. It's not something I have to do, it's something I have to receive. Receive the eternal life which Christ is offering to all men everywhere.

I give eternal life. I give it as something that cannot be earned. It's not a reward in that sense.

It can only be received. A sheer gift. And the amazing thing is it's a gift you can ask for. We're told in the Bible Christ procured gifts for men even for the rebellious.

Are you rebellious? You're not excluded from the invitation. You're excluded as long as you deny the invitation and say it's not for me.

You're excluded as long as you say I don't want it. Christ's gifts are pressed even upon rebels, rebelling, angry with God.

[24 : 39] He procured gifts for sinners. It's a gift you can ask for eternal life. Eternal life.

It's a contradiction in terms to speak about losing eternal life. It's a contradiction in terms. If you can lose eternal life it's not eternal.

It's just a nonsense. It's not logical. Eternal life is life that lasts forever. But do understand this about eternal life.

It's not so much life that will never end because my friend I have to tell you eternal death never ends either.

It's not just eternal life that goes on forever. Eternal death goes on forever because death and the Bible actually means separation. Separation of soul from body.

[25 : 48] Separation. Life separate from God's law. Life separate from the comfortable presence of God. Eternal life is a quality of life.

Yes it lasts forever but it's a quality. It's the quality. It's the peace. sense of love.

It's the tremendous presence of joy. We've never experienced it. I trust we've tasted it.

Just a taste. All we'll get in this world is a taste but in heaven it's an experience. experience. We can't describe it.

Love. Joy. Peace. Down here we've to live by faith. Up there you live by sight.

[26 : 52] It's amazing. By experience. You enjoy it. You're seeing it. Thoroughly enjoying it. eternal life. It's a quality of life.

But it begins down here. You have to have a taste of it. All you'll get down here is a taste of it. The love, joy, peace of having your sins forgiven.

Having the security that whatever happens down here your soul is safe. Christ is preparing a place for you in glory.

That is what he's doing. Eternal life is security. We talk about security today.

How hard it is to get. You see really only God only God can guarantee things. You know what it's like you get a new machine a new car and you've got the guarantee.

[28 : 03] My, how long, how many pages. You notice how small the type is. And I'm noticing it comes in grey ink, not black.

Discouraging to read it. And it's full of what? Exclusion clauses. Exceptions. Why?

Because we're terrified. Terrified to make guarantees. Rightly so. Because we can't. We can't guarantee tomorrow.

It's a difficult thing to get guarantees. But God can guarantee. God made everything. God has ordered everything.

God has foreordained whatsoever will come to pass. God has arranged it. And God's monitoring it. He alone can guarantee.

[29 : 08] Eternal life gives us this guarantee, this security. security, comfort, confidence.

It's obtained in knowing Christ. Knowing Him at that deep level where you can tell Him all you've done wrong.

And He'll still love you. He'll still forgive you. He'll still bless you. He'll still carry on preparing that place in glory for you because I am the good shepherd.

I lay down my life for the sheep. I'm the only door into the kingdom of heaven. And so finally in conclusion the summary of all that He's teaching here is He makes claims of divine authority.

divine authority. He makes guarantees of security. He makes promises of life to the full.

[30 : 25] We read it there. I have come that they might have life and that they might have it abundantly. Now that be our other version say that they might live life to the full.

What a challenge that is to known Christians. if you're listening to me in tape or whatever if you're being recorded you might say I don't I don't need Christ.

I've got everything I want in life and I'm enjoying it. I know what it is to live. No you don't. Christ is saying tonight you don't know what life's about until you come to me.

Until you depend on me. Until you give me your all to me. I have come that you might live life to the full.

What a challenge that is to non-Christians. He's challenging. He's saying what you're enjoying just now outside of me is not life at all.

[31 : 34] It's artificial, synthetic. I have come that you might have life. Now my last word is you cannot walk away from these truths that Christ has been spelling out here without being in foolish self-destruction.

self-destruction. If you can listen and hear that and say, I'm not interested. I'm not into religion. It's not my thing. That's foolish self-destruction.

You can't walk away from this, turn your back on this, without realising you're rejecting truth and reality and what life is all about.

You cannot listen to these truths and say not interested without being guilty of contempt. and you have to stand before Christ on the great day of judgment and it will come up probably an angel will switch on something like a recorder and say you said this, you said not interested, you said not my line, I'm not into these things and you'll have to say it to Christ who says I have come that you might have life and that you might live it to the full.

I lay down my life for people like you. I am the only door into heaven. Take him at his word because he really is the good shepherd of the sheep.

[33 : 33] May God the Holy Spirit make his word effective jaw to every one of us. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven be pleased to take the things of Christ and make them ours.

Empower us now. Open our eyes now to see Christ the good shepherd. Open our hearts to love him. Work on our natures that we run to him and rejoice in him.

Thank you for your son. Thank you for the gospel. Now hear, now forgive, now bless, as we pray only in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, we need to sing at the end Psalm 23. The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.
He makes me down to lie in pastures green. He leadeth me the quiet waters by. To the
last verse, goodness and mercy, all my life shall surely follow me, and in God's house
forevermore my dwelling place shall be.

[34 : 57] Psalm 23 to God's praise. The Lord shall hold I'll know on He made me down to lie in past
you see me here la g mi di ca year nuestro Restored Again I We
Will Wake Life In The Pass Of My Youuar Even for the woman's sake.
Yet though I look in that dark veil, yet will I see the light.
For thou art with me on thy rod, and stop me comfort still.
My kingdom hath furnished it, impressed.

[37 : 22] He has all my heart, my heaven and all.
Willow, anoint, am I, couple of wolves.
Goodness, I'm mad. See, all my life shall surely fall on me.
And in God's eyes forevermore.
My first place shall be. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the
fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and forevermore.

[38 : 52] Amen.