

John 10:22-42

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[0:00] Your Bibles with you this morning, feel free to open up to John chapter 10 verses 22 to 42 as I read it this morning. At that time, the feast of dedication took place in 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.

Jesus answered them, I told you and you do not believe. The works that I do in my father's name bear 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. The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, I have shown you many good works from the father for which of them are you going to stone me?

[1:06] The Jews answered him, it is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy because you, because you being a man, make yourself God. Jesus answered them, is it not written in your law?

I said you are gods. If he called them gods to whom the word of God came and scripture cannot be broken, do you say of him whom the father consecrated and sent into the world, you are blaspheming because I said I am the son of God?

If I am not doing the works of my father, then do not believe me. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works that you may know and understand that the father is in me and I am in the father.

Again, they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands. He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there he remained.

And many came to him and they said, John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true, and many believed in him there. Amen.

[2:11] This is the word of the Lord. Please play with me. Heavenly Father, we come before you, we come to your word, and you want to speak to us from this word.

God, we cannot understand this apart from your spirit, so I pray that you would illuminate your word to us by the power of your Holy Spirit, and God, that you would awaken faith in this place today. In Christ's name and for his glory we pray. Amen. Amen. Jason, you got the clicker thing. Good morning, church. My name is Mike. I'm one of the elders here at Shoreline, and I'm so glad that you're here this morning.

I just want to say welcome to the children. It's always so good to have you all in here. And just as I was praying, I mean, I believe, we believe, the elders believe, Shoreline believes, that God wants to speak to us.

God is real. He's alive. He speaks. He has spoken to us decisively in this word, and that's why we get up here week in, week out, and we preach the word.

[3:12] Because God, the living God, the living God speaks through this. So the kids that are here, God wants to say something to you too. This isn't just for the adults.

This is for all of mankind, right? God wants to speak to you, to me, to each one of us. And we pray that he will and change us. So today's passage would really make for a riveting movie.

There is a great holiday celebration, yet thick tension is in the midst of the party. There is drama and irony. There is thrilling suspense, and then a brilliant and unexpected plot twist.

There is a big climactic moment, and then this beautiful resolution. But this drama, it's not for our entertainment, right? Entertaining as it is.

And we'll see that it is entertaining. But this is a drama with a message that is a matter of life and death. So you won't want to fall asleep halfway through. We're going to walk through this story together in its five different stages.

[4:14] And we're going to seek to understand what's going on in this story. What is God communicating through this story? And then at the end, we're going to consider five specific applications of this story for us today.

So we're going to start by rereading verse 22 and 23. I can just indicate if the thing's not working, Jason. So if you go forward in the slides, we've got just verse 22.

Yeah, 22 and 23. So we see some amount of time has passed between the previous scene, which is the first half of John 10, and this one.

We don't know exactly how long. What we do know is that starting in John 7, John has been describing events that occurred during and after the Feast of Booths.

And that occurred about two months prior to the Feast of Dedication. And as we'll soon see, though, the conversation that happens here seems to pick up exactly where it left off on the one that ended in verse 21.

[5:24] So it's possible that not a lot of time has passed between these two scenes. The Feast of Dedication is more well-known today as Hanukkah or the Festival of Lights.

So it was an eight-day celebration, and it commemorated the rededication of the Jewish temple.

See, Judah Maccabee had led a revolt in 164 B.C.

against Antiochus Epiphanes, who had desecrated the temple. And so the temple was rededicated.

And so that's what the Jews are celebrating during this eight-day festival.

Now, as we've learned in walking through the book of John, and also just as students of God's Word, details are not included for no reason, right? Like, the fact that it's the Feast of Dedication, it matters.

And specifically, we've seen through the Gospel of John how Jesus has fulfilled and transcended the Jewish institutions and the Jewish feasts.

[6:19] So I want to just probe your mind here. Consider, like, as we walk through this passage, how is that happening? How is Jesus fulfilling and transcending this feast?

So during the Feast of Dedication, Jesus is walking through the temple, right? Specifically, the Colonnade of Solomon. Now, why do we care about that? Well, the Colonnade of Solomon was not actually considered to be the temple proper.

It was adjacent to the temple. At the end of chapter 8, we saw that Jesus, after the Jews pick up stones to kill him, he departs from the temple, right?

And he doesn't come back. He doesn't come back into the temple proper again. The temple, which is supposed to be the place where God's glory dwells, right? It's the place of God's presence.

But here, Jesus returns, not to the temple itself, because he's been rejected there, but he does come adjacent to it, right? And he gives the Jews yet another opportunity to receive him.

[7:21] So verse 24, Now, the word gathered, it could be translated as closed in on.

Maybe some of the Jews were gathering around Jesus just out of curiosity, but it's more likely, based on everything we've seen so far in John, that they're closing in on Jesus in an attempt to trap him, right?

They want to trap him in his words. And they're basically saying, like, look, Jesus, we're tired of all of your figures of speech, right? Bread of life, light of the world, door of the sheep, shepherd of the sheep.

Like, come on, just make it explicit. Are you the Messiah or are you not? It's basically what they're asking. And Jesus answered them, I told you, and you do not believe.

Has it not been extravagantly clear, he's saying, I already told you exactly who I am. I already told you exactly why I came.

[8:33] I have made it perfectly plain, and you don't believe. All right? So Jesus is saying, it's not a matter of my communication. It's a matter of your lack of faith.

That's the issue here. And then he says, the works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me. In other words, I have spoken clearly, and my works, done in the power of God the Father, have also spoken clearly, right?

My works, healing a man who was paralytic for 38 years. My works, feeding 5,000 people from five loaves and two fish. My works, healing a man born blind.

And they claim these are somehow demonic works, right? Those works are booming, unequivocal statements about who Jesus is, right? If they would just listen to the works, now no, like Jesus didn't stand in front of the class and say, good morning students, my name is Jesus, I am the Son of God, and oh also, I'm the Messiah, right?

Any questions? Like Jesus, he didn't do that. He didn't say it that explicitly, but he's basically saying here that I have made it so plain nonetheless. Through my words, through my works, it is abundantly plain.

[9:59] But he says in verse 26, but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. It's not a matter of my communication, it's a matter of your lack of faith, and you lack faith, he says, because you are not among my sheep.

I've already told you, I've already shown you, I've made it clear, I've offered myself to you, but you've rejected me, proving that you're not my sheep. So fellowship has already been offered. It's been offered over and over and over and over and over again, and it's been rejected. That's the first stage of this story, or fellowship's been offered and rejected. Now does anyone remember another time when God was walking in the cool of the day?

What Jesus is doing here? Does anyone remember a scene? The Garden of Eden. Now I don't know if John intends for us to think about that, I'll just be honest, but I thought about it as I read this. There in the Garden of Eden, right, God came in the cool of the day to Adam and Eve, he's offering fellowship, glorious, joyful fellowship, but Adam and Eve through their pride and their unbelief rejected that offer, right, just as the Jews have done here to Christ.

[11:20] So moving to the next stage, fellowship offered and rejected again. Amazingly, what does Jesus do next? He actually makes the offer again.

He offers it to them again, even though they've rejected him. He makes his identity even more explicit than he has up until this point. So he's giving the Jews one more chance, one more chance to believe.

Let's see how he does that. Well, first, he continues using this shepherd-sheep metaphor, basically repeating what he had said in last week's passage.

So as opposed to the Jews gathered around him who are currently not in Jesus' fold, he says in verse 27, my sheep, my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me, right?

And we talked all about that metaphor last week. But then he goes even further and he says, I give them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

[12:22] Jesus, he's reasserting his authority to grant life, right? And not just abundant life, that was in his metaphor previously, but eternal life.

And notice the emphasis here. It's eternal life, but then he says, they will never perish. Just to emphasize the certainty of it. And that's because, why? Because he will hold me fast, right? Because he keeps and guards his sheep from any attack. The sheep's security, it's not found in their helpless selves, thank the Lord.

Their helpless selves. It's found in his, his supreme power to defend and to preserve them. And then he goes even further.

He says, 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.

[13:20] So not only is he, the son, you know, guaranteeing the eternal abundant life of the sheep, but so too is his father who is greater than all.

Now this, this is a beautiful promise for the sheep. Both father and son are mutually upholding upholding the lives of those who belong to him. This is also a warning to those who oppose Christ. He's saying, look, if you're up against me, just realize something. You're also up against God. And God's the one from whom, you know, I derive my power.

He keeps going even further. And Christ says, I and the father are one. He's saying here, I and the father are one in purpose.

We both together preserve the lives of the sheep, right? Our mutual will is that we would secure eternal life for those who believe. But even more than being one in purpose, Jesus is saying, I and the father are one in nature, right?

[14:28] We are one entity, different persons, but together of one essence, one being. In the beginning was the word.

And the word was with God, right? Different persons. And the word was God, one essence, right? We saw that in John's prologue. And this here is another one of those mic drop moments we've talked about.

Just like in chapter 8 when Jesus said, you know, before Abraham was, I am. That mic drop moment. And it's this statement here, this statement, it's just as earth shattering as that one.

The Jews had asked Jesus to make it plain, right? Tell us plainly if you're the Messiah. Jesus goes far beyond that even. Okay, you want me to make it plain?

Well, let's see. My works proceed from God. I am the good shepherd, foreshadowed, foretold by the entire Old Testament, right? I have the power to grant my sheep eternal life.

[15:35] I have authority over all who would attempt to attack my sheep. I derive power from and I share it with God. and I am one with God.

How is that for plain? So here God in the flesh is, right? And he's inviting the Jews to be a part of his fold, right?

He's inviting the Jews who have already tried to stone him before. He's inviting them to fellowship with him, to receive eternal life. What will they decide to do?

And what does the next verse say? The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. The fellowship offered and rejected again, right?

Now, what do you think Jesus is going to do? Before you turn to the next, don't look at your Bibles. What's Jesus going to do? Anybody in this room who's got siblings, if all of your siblings were gathered around you and they all picked up blocks to throw at you, what are you going to do in that moment?

[16:43] Run? Yeah, that's a good thing to do. You realize you're outnumbered? Maybe fight? Yeah, Mitch would fight. Been there before with your two brothers? Right.

In general, now some of you might be diplomats, like, well, well, wait a minute here. No, you're either going to run or fight most of the time. Now, what happens here? And I'm calling this next section, I shamelessly pilfered the title from Piper.

He calls it Jesus Maneuver. I'm going to call it Jesus Maneuver. There's not a better word here. Jesus, next, answered. Just pause right there. Jesus answered. Okay, Jews are gathered around him with stones to kill him.

Jesus answered. It's as if Jesus renders their desire to kill him useless by simply speaking, right? Their threat to stone him is an empty threat because he had just said, no one takes his life from him.

He lays it down of his own accord. So, with divine poise, right, he simply speaks in response. Now, not only does his calm response demonstrate his poise, but it also demonstrates his divine patience.

[17:58] I mean, like, why does he even put up with these people? Right? Like, just be done with them. And he actually will. He will be done with them, but not yet.

That is the beautiful thing here. With all of the love and the patience of God, he gives them yet another opportunity to believe. This is amazing. So, what does Jesus say next?

Jesus answered them. I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of them are you going to stone me? God is the definition of good, right?

Nothing good exists outside of God. And the works that Jesus has been performing before their eyes, including his miracles, but not limited to those, they have been good works, right?

As one commentator writes, these are deeds that should have provoked awe and admiration and praise, not anger and hostility. Now, the Jews answer him, it is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.

[19:21] Okay, now this is like the height of irony and foolishness, both. The Jews, they just like, they don't know what to do with Jesus' works, so they just ignore them.

We're just going to push those aside. We're not, we're not charging you for your good works, we're just going to ignore those. They have decided they cannot accept his words, right? They cannot accept them, so they're just going to ignore the evidence of his works.

Now, that's the foolish part, and Jesus addresses that later, more directly. What's the irony here? Has a man made himself God? Anybody?

No. No, quite the opposite, right? God has made himself a man. The word was God. And then John said in his prologue, the word became flesh and dwelt among us.

What incredible irony. Now, the other thing, Jesus has been very intentional not to, not to himself say directly, like he hasn't said, I am God.

[20:30] He has not said that. He has been intentional to entrust himself to the Father. The Father has been the witness, right? And his works and John the Baptist, but more importantly, he is God and he made himself a man.

Irony is rich here. Now, Jesus' next response is the brilliant maneuver. That's, this is the maneuver that I was talking about, as we'll see. Jesus answered them, is it not written in your law, I said you are gods?

If he called them gods to whom the word of God came and scripture cannot be broken, do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, you are blaspheming because I said I am the Son of God?

Okay, like what is going on? What is Jesus doing here? Jesus is making a very clever move that stalls the crowd and at the same time reaffirms his identity.

Now, he's quoting here from Psalm 82 and just as a side note, whenever the Bible quotes itself, go to that other passage, right? Read that passage, see its context because the Holy Spirit is using that context to instruct us in the current passage that we're in.

[21:44] So, Psalm 82, it's a courtroom scene in which God takes his place in the divine council and he holds judgment. And the ones that God is presiding over are likely, well, it's not perfectly clear, it seems that they're the rulers of Israel in those days.

Now, verses 6 and 7 of that psalm say this, I said you are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you. Nevertheless, like men you shall die and fall like any prince.

So, see how these rulers, these mere men, are being referred to by the scriptures, by the Holy Spirit, right, as gods. So, Jesus takes that and he's arguing here from the lesser to the greater, very common argument and technique.

He's invoking the authority and the inerrancy of scripture as he does and he's saying here, look, if these mere men are referred to by scripture as God, sons of the Most High, how could the Jews consider it blasphemy for Jesus to call himself the Son of God?

After all, Jesus is the one whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world. Right, the Jews are there, they're celebrating, remember, they're celebrating the rededication of the temple or the reconsecration of the temple.

[23:10] Jesus is saying, no, I'm the one who has been consecrated. I'm the one who has been set apart by the Father and he's been sent on mission in the Father's authority to the world, right?

If that's true, how much more should he be referred to as a or as the Son of God? Now, another thing Jesus is doing here in quoting Psalm 82, he's flipping the script on the Jews.

And this hits on one of the major themes we see in John's gospel is the Jews think that they're the ones presiding in judgment over Jesus, right? They think that Jesus is on trial and Jesus is like, no, I don't think so.

I don't think so. The reality is, like Psalm 82 pictures here, I'm presiding in judgment over you, right? Authoritatively, I am the judge even though the Jews are the ones gathered around him, right? He's in the midst of the divine council just like in Psalm 82. So this is, this is a brilliant maneuver. And, you know, the Jews are, they're probably still holding on to their stones but now they're kind of like back on their heels like, huh, that's interesting.

[24:23] And, and Jesus takes that opportunity to drive home his point. Have you ever done something like this, like the Jews did, where you pick a fight with somebody that you know instantly, that was probably not a good idea.

This person's far superior to me. Fighting your older brother who's a lot stronger than you. Now that's, that's kind of the Jews here except not because they don't realize it for one, like they don't realize he's far superior to them.

And two, the superior one in, in, in this picture, Christ, the superior one with power over the whole cosmos, right, he's also the one who, as we sang before, is love itself, right?

Now, Jesus doesn't just pull some brilliant maneuver to shame the Jews here but, because it allows him to hold out his offer of fellowship one more time. How much love is that?

How much patience is that? So that moves us into the fourth section of this text here. Fellowship offered and rejected again.

[25:38] Now, Jesus says, if I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works.

Believe the works. Jesus is just using some basic logic here, right? Engineers in the room, an if-then statement, you know, we like stuff like that. It's just two if-then statements.

It's basic logic. His point is, you cannot separate my works from my word, right? Through Jesus' word, he has made his identity plain.

And through his works, he has demonstrated in power the truth of his word, right? They go together. Without the words, the message is unclear, right?

Without the works, the message lacks authority. But Jesus' words, you see his words and his works, they work together and they paint this plain and powerful picture of who he is and why he came to earth.

[26:42] But the Jews here, the Jews, they're categorically rejecting his words. And then they're completely ignoring his works. And Jesus is entreating them to consider, like, just stop and consider.

Just think about what I've done and listen, listen to that. Was it the blind man said, has anything ever been done since the beginning of this world?

Pharisees kind of just ignore that and then kick him out, right? No, the answer was no. It's another rhetorical question. Lots of great rhetorical questions in the Gospel of John. You know you guys have been learning about rhetorical questions in the Wilkins family, right?

Stop and consider the witness of my works. It's like, look, if the works aren't legit, then just cancel me out, right? I give you the ability to do that.

If they're not legit, then cancel me out. Don't listen to me. But if they are, then listen to the message being declared through the works. And to what end, right?

[27:47] And Jesus says here in verse 38, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father. There it is again.

Another claim to deity. Believe the powerful witness of my works so that you will know that I and the Father are one.

That I am everything everything that I say that I am, right? And he's not just saying that so they would know something intellectually. That's not what he's after here. He wants them to know it experientially.

That in so knowing, they would come to believe in Jesus. They would come to become part of his fold to be his sheep and receive all the glorious benefits of being in the fold of God.

That's what Jesus wants for them. Will they turn to Jesus? Will they join in this divine fellowship that's offered to them? When we already know the answer, what does it say next?

[28:50] Again, they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands. No, the answer is no, right? They won't. Jesus' offer of fellowship is rejected again.

He's offering them eternal life and they reject it again. The Jews are unwilling to stop and consider the witness of his works. They're unwilling to receive the witness of Jesus' words.

So see what happens here. He leaves. It's not his time. He's the one who lays down his life. He's gone, right? God in the flesh, the one who was consecrated and sent into the world to be the fulfillment and replacement of the Jewish temple.

He leaves the temple area. He leaves Jerusalem. That brings us to the final section of the text and this here, three verses of gold right here.

It doesn't seem it at first. It seems like a pretty normal scene, but it's not and we'll see how it's not. He went away, again, across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first and there he remained and many came to him and they said, John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true and many believed in him there.

[30:25] Fellowship offered and received. It's this fifth section of the text. The apostle John wants us to see the stark contrast between the Jews in Jerusalem and these Jews now across the Jordan River.

The religious leaders in Jerusalem, they had witnessed an abundance of miraculous signs from Jesus, but they ignored the signs and they rejected his words, right?

Their focus was on themselves, right? Their focus was on maintaining their religious power and their control. That's what they wanted and that obstructed them from believing and Jordan talked about it a lot about the pride that was there keeping them blinded.

But here, what do we see here? The common Jews across the Jordan River, they had previously heard the testimony of John the Baptist about Christ and though they witnessed no signs, they see Jesus and believe.

That's what happens here. their focus is on him. It's on Jesus, not on themselves. And that was the whole point of John the Baptist's ministry, right? John's ministry was basically to say, look at Jesus, not me.

[31:41] Like, look at him. Don't look at me. John had said, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, after me comes a man who ranks before me because he was before me.

John had said, and I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God. John had said, he must increase, right?

But I must decrease. The ministry of John the Baptist was to point people to Jesus. And now, after John's death, he's been decapitated by Herod, after John's death, his ministry continues to bear fruit as people see Jesus and believe in him.

How beautiful is that? And something else here, it says that there he remained, verse 40. There he remained. That word remained, it's also translated in the present tense as abide or dwell.

The Jewish leaders, they're in Jerusalem, they're busy celebrating the rededication rededication of the temple, right? The place where God's presence was to dwell. And tragically, they don't realize that they have actually desecrated the temple by rejecting God's presence.

[33:05] God's presence was there in their midst and they rejected it. In stark contrast, these Jews, right, these common Jews across the Jordan, because of their faith in Jesus, they're the ones who get to enjoy the true celebration, God's abiding presence in their midst.

That's amazing. So that's the passage. And there is so much here. And I hope you've already seen some application.

Hopefully the Holy Spirit's already been speaking to you what this means for you. You know, that's actually, that's something that I pray for this church, right? Like we want, for myself, for the leaders of this church, for you all, as you read and study God's word, the Holy Spirit takes the word and he puts it down into your heart and he shows you why it matters.

And he can do that without me telling you what the application is. But even still, I want to draw our attention to five particular points of application as we draw this thing to a close here.

Here's the first one. If Jesus' identity seems unclear, it's not. You can hit it one more time. God has made it plain. If Jesus' identity seems unclear, it's not.

[34:24] God has made it plain. The Jews said to Jesus, if you are the Christ, tell us plainly, right? And Jesus responded, I told you. I told you.

I already told you with my words. I already showed you with my works. Now we have the words and works of Jesus written down for us in John's gospel, right?

And in all four gospels. And we have the whole canon of scripture, 66 books, all exalting the person and the work of Christ.

God has made Jesus' identity plain. And what has he told us about Christ? He's the son of God. Right? He is the I am who pre-exists all things through whom, by whom, and for whom all things were created.

This word shows us that he is the promised Messiah who took on flesh and bone so that he could, by his death on the cross, rescue sinners from death.

[35:32] And he is the one who took his life back up again. And now he grants and guarantees eternal, abundant life and fellowship with God for all who would believe in him.

Look at Jesus. Look at him. Look at Jesus. Look at him. See how God has made his identity plain. The second thing if Jesus' offer seems unending, it's not.

God's patience will cease. This here is a word of warning. Now don't get me wrong. God's patience with mankind is vast.

It is vast. Just consider in John how many opportunities he has been giving over and over again to the Jewish leaders, the ones who want him dead. And he's still there holding out the offer of fellowship.

But when Jesus leaves Jerusalem here in John 10, he's not going to come back until the triumphal entry leading to the last week of his life and his death on the cross. Right? Paul says in Romans that God's kindness is meant to lead us to repentance.

[36:52] Right? Do not presume on the kindness and the patience of God. A day will come when the Lord of hosts will take his place in the divine council and judge the hearts of men.

Psalms 82 shows. And that day be found among the sheep of God. Turn to Jesus today.

Turn to him today. Enter into fellowship with God. Now some of you might be sitting here thinking though that you're beyond the reach of God's grace.

And I want to say to you if your position seems unreachable it's not. It's not. God's offer is for you. Do you think the Jews across the Jordan ever wondered if the one that John the Baptist claimed to be the son of God would actually come to them?

some significant amount of time we don't know how much time but some significant amount of time has passed between John's testimony to these Jews across the Jordan and then Jesus actually arriving on their turf and showing himself to them.

[38:08] But Jesus he leaves the halls of the temple right? The central location of Jewish life and power and he goes to these Jewish commoners across the Jordan River and he offers to them fellowship with himself.

Throughout Jesus' ministry he goes to all kinds of people all kinds of people offering himself to them. He offers himself to the religious leaders like Nicodemus who pursued Jesus out of curiosity and to the Pharisees that are trying to stone him.

He offers himself to the commoners like the crowds who followed him and he fed or like these commoners across the Jordan River he offers himself to the oppressors like the Roman official right?

Occupying Israel and he heals he heals his son he offers himself to the outcasts right?

Like the Samaritan woman and the invalid and the man born blind and he offers himself to you he offers himself to you doesn't matter who you are doesn't matter what you've done doesn't matter where you've been you are not beyond the reach of God's boundless grace now maybe you don't struggle with that thought that you're beyond the reach of God's grace maybe you struggle with the thought that you're just not strong enough to stay in it and that brings me to this next point if your salvation seems unstable it's not God guarantees it forever and there are really no better words

than Christ's own words here 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

[40:17] Christian your salvation your ability to persevere and keep the faith is not based on you it's not based on you do you know who it's based on it's based on the one who is far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named that's who it's based on he will preserve and protect you to the end the hired hand sees the wolf coming and flees right and the wolf snatches the sheep and scatters them but not Jesus not Jesus he is the good shepherd not the good shepherd he's not going to flee he's not going to run and no one will snatch them out of his hand or the hand of his father God guarantees it he will hold us fast he will hold us fast the last point if your evangelism seems unfruitful it's not

God is gathering his sheep now what I'm not what I'm not saying is what this passage is not saying is that every single person you witness to is coming to faith in Christ we pray for that we pray for that but many people rejected Christ what this passage suggests is that your faithful witnessing about Christ may bear fruit in someone's life even long after you're dead God has ordained that through the evangelism of you of his sheep of the church through the evangelism of his people he would bring still more sheep into the fold that's why you and I are here today right isn't that how we arrived here because a follower or followers of Christ they bore witness to the gospel and there came a day when you finally saw with the eyes of faith you saw Jesus with the eyes of faith and you believed you realized that everything you had heard before from those witnesses!

was true and it made sense to you! So pray for that day to come in the lives of your unbelieving friends and families and co-workers and faithfully testify to them of the gospel of Jesus Christ! Lord willing They will finally see faith and be gathered into his fold! And we sang also before that one day we will no longer need to see with the eyes of faith!

Faith will give way to sight! God himself will dwell with us in our very midst but not for judgment! Right?

[43:25] For fellowship! For everlasting fellowship! And I saw no temple in the city! John writes of his heavenly vision! For its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb!

So let us see Jesus today! Let us believe in him! And he will see us through to that glorious day! And let us testify to the world of this great hope so that the world will know that they too can have everlasting fellowship with God if only they would look to Jesus!

Let's pray! Heavenly Father, you have made Christ known to us through your word.

You have made it plain faith in faith in our hearts.

God, we know that nobody comes to Christ apart from the Father drawing them to him. And you also call us to believe, to take hold of that life that you offer.

[45:01] So God, would you draw the hearts of those who don't know you in this room right now. Draw them to yourself. Gather them into your fold that they might fellowship with you and find life eternal.

And God, would you encourage the saints in this room that no matter what we're going through, no matter how we've failed, no matter what trial we're facing, that the work you began in us, you will see to completion at the day of Christ Jesus.

Nobody, nothing can snatch us out of your hand. And we thank you for that. And God, I do pray that we would testify, that we would testify to your gospel.

Lord, let more hearts yield to you. Let more people be gathered into your fold. Heavenly Father, you are gathering, you know, you're gathering your sheep into one flock under the perfect and loving leadership of one shepherd of yourself.

And would you come, Lord Jesus, that we might have perfect fellowship, uninhibited fellowship with you forevermore. In Christ's name we pray.

[46:19] Amen. Please stand with us.