

BOMBPROOF SURE
JOHN 10:22-42

INTRODUCTION:

- A. *Dear Mrs. Smith,*
I'm writing in response to this morning's request for forgiveness. I'm sorry to inform you that you have reached your quota of sins. Our records show that, since employing our services, you have erred seven times in the area of greed, and your prayer life is substandard when compared to others of like age and circumstance.
Further review reveals that your understanding of doctrine is in the lower 20 percentile and you have excessive tendencies to gossip. Because of your sins you are a high-risk candidate for heaven. You understand that grace has its limits. Jesus sends his regrets and kindest regards and hopes that you will find some other form of coverage.¹
- B. Knowing, knowing for sure, whether you're going to heaven or hell is the most important issue of life. One certainly ought to know for sure, but how? And can one really know for sure? Can one be sure and then through some failure, lose that assurance?
- C. On what grounds can the spiritual sheep of the Lord Jesus Christ confidently relax in the flock?
- D. **BIG IDEA: HEAVEN IS SO IMPORTANT YOU WANT TO BE BOMBPROOF SURE.**

I. **BEING SURE COMES FROM BELIEVING**

NOTE: Jesus is in Jerusalem for the eight-day Feast of Dedication (vv.22), what the Jews today call the Feast of Lights or Hanukkah, the Jewish celebration commemorating the purification of the Temple by Judas Maccabeus in 165 BC from the defilements of Antiochus Ephiphanies. This had been *the last great deliverance the Jews had known.*²

It is November/December (verse 23, "it was winter) and Jesus is walking in the Portico of Solomon, a colonnaded porch on the east side of the temple, a place where scribes normally taught.

It has been two months since Jesus' confrontation with the Jews at the Feast of Tabernacles (7:1-10:21)

Now the Jews surround Jesus and belligerently demand a straightforward admission of His Messiahship so as to have a stronger ground to accuse Him of blasphemy.

- **Verse 24**, *The Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."*

As verses 31-33 clearly show, these Jews were not serious inquirers, they were hostile inquisitors. They were just seeking condemning evidence, a "smoking gun."

- Not ethnic Jews, but the religious bureaucrats.
- Calling them "the Jews" is a NT code-word for the Priests, the Scribes, the Pharisees.

What have we learned about them so far in the Gospel of John?

- 3:19—They loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.
- 3:20--They hated the spiritual light because it exposed their sin.
- 5:16—They persecuted Jesus as a Sabbath-breaker.
- 5:18—They wanted to kill Jesus because he made himself equal with God.
- 5:41—They did not have the love of God in their hearts.

¹ Max Lucado, *In the Grip of Grace*, Nashville: Word, 1996. 70.

² Leon Morris

- 5:44—They were glory seekers.
- 5:45—They rejected the teachings of Moses.
- 7:1—They wanted to kill Jesus.
- 7:19—They did not keep the Law.
- 7:48—They were all about trying to impress each other.
- 8:15—They judged by human standards.
- 8:43—They were unable to hear spiritual truth.
- 8:44—They were children of the Devil—a murderer and a liar.
- 8:47—They did not belong to God and therefore could not really hear Jesus.
- 8:48—They called Jesus a Samaritan (an ethnic slur) and demon-possessed.
- 8:59—They tried to stone Jesus to death.
- 10:20—They called Jesus demon-possessed and raving mad.
- Christ had already taught, claimed and evidenced by miracles His deity and Messiahship - sufficiently for many to have already believed in Him.
- Note verse 25:
- No lack of evidence, “The works that I do”
- No lack of plain-ness, “I told you”
- Cf. I Corinthians 2:14, “*A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.*”

Here in **Chapter 10** we come to the close of Jesus’ public ministry. For three-and-a-half years Jesus has been teaching, doing works of compassion, conducting personal interviews, training disciples, and demonstrating his divine credentials with stunning miracles. The **rest of the book** covers the last week of Jesus’ life and the post-resurrection appearances.

AMAZING BREVITY—CF. TODAY’S BIOS

A. How Does One Come to Believe? (v.26)

1. By God’s grace
 - a. Not, “Because you do not believe, you are not...”
But, “You do not believe, **because...**”
Man likes to think that he is intellectually free and competent to objectively evaluate the evidence for Christ and make a responsible decision. Nothing could be further from the truth.
Man believes in Christ when and only when God chooses to open his spiritual eyes to see the truth... And He has eternally chosen who those people are:
John 6:37, “All that the Father gives me shall come to me.”
John 6:44, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.”
John 10:16, “And I have other sheep which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they shall hear my voice and they shall become one flock with one shepherd.”
 - b. “Here Christ is not only charging these Jews with unbelief, but He also explains why faith had not been granted to them - they were not ‘of his sheep’: they were not from among the favored number of God’s elect. A man does not have to believe to become one of Christ’s ‘Sheep’: he ‘believes’ because he is one of His sheep.” (Pink, 141)
This does not mean that some unbelievers get to heaven, having never believed. It means that God’s election so insures that they will believe, that Jesus futuristically calls them His sheep.

- c. All of this seems contradictory to the biblical teaching concerning man's moral responsibility to choose. **Cf. Romans 1:18-21.**
 - d. Blending these two truths together, we discover that there are two human attitudes that are forbidden by the Word of God:
 - 1) Man cannot congratulate himself for his wisdom in believing in Christ. It is not a result of man's wisdom; it is God's gift of faith.
 - 2) Man cannot blame God for his lostness. Cf. John 3:18-19.
 - e. **Charles Spurgeon** did a beautiful job of expressing the need for God's electing grace: "I believe the doctrine of election, because I am quite sure that if God had not chosen me I should never have chosen Him; and I am sure he chose me before I was born, or else He never would have chosen me afterwards; and He must have elected me for reasons unknown to me, for I never could find any reason in myself why He should have looked upon me with special love. So I am forced to accept that doctrine." (Lectures to My Student, p.227)
2. By the convincing of the Holy Spirit, **John 16:7-11**
John 16:7-12 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; ¹⁰ in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹ and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. ¹² "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear.

B. What Does One Believe?

1. "In the only begotten Son of God" (3:16)
 Biblical belief is intellectual conviction of truth **PLUS** active reliance, dependence, trust (Kittel VI, 203., 208, 211-12).
ILLUS: When our family goes rock climbing, we use a special climbing rope. It is manufactured to rigid specifications. The factories publish the figures showing how much weight the rope can hold. They have done tests in which heavy weights are tied to the ropes and are dropped from platforms. After reading the reports I am absolutely convinced intellectually that the rope can hold me. But when I begin to back over the edge of a cliff in a rappel, I always feel a moment of nervousness, because I am crossing the line of intellectual conviction and stepping into the territory of personal trust. Will it hold **me**. That's what John 3:16 means by "believe."

What Does One Believe?

The claims of Jesus:

- He is perfectly united with God the Father.
 - **Verse 30, I and the Father are one.**
 - **John 1:1, The Word was with God and was God.**
 - **John 1:18. Is God**
 - **Verse 38, The Father is in me and I am in the Father**

What Does One Believe?

The claims of Jesus:

- He is the Son of God.
 - **Verse 36, Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son'?**
- He does the works of His Father
 - **Verse 37, Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does.**

What evidence is there to substantiate Jesus' amazing claims?

- Verbal testimony
 - Jesus:
 - **John 10:24-25**, *If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.*" ²⁵ Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe.
 - **John 10:36**, *Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son'?*
 - John the Baptist
 - **John 10:41**, *and many people came to him. They said, "Though John never performed a miraculous sign, all that John said about this man was true."*
 - **John 1:29**, *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"*

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- Miracle Testimony: ³
 - **John 10:25**, *The miracles [ergon] I do in my Father's name speak for me,*
 - **John 20:30-31**, *Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

There are four words used for the miraculous deeds Jesus did:

- Works: That is the words used here in our passage several times.
- Signs: This is John's signature term for Jesus' miracles—used 11 times. The Synoptics never use this word to refer to Jesus' miracles.
- Wonders
- Miracles: The Synoptics' favorite word. It is literally "a power." (*dunamis*), but is usually translated "miracle."

What evidence is there to substantiate Jesus' amazing claims?

- Scripture Testimony:
 - **John 5:39-40**, *You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me to have life.*
 - **John 5:46**, *If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.*

4. Fundamental truths of the Gospel as recorded in I Corinthians 15:1-11
-Substitutionary death of Christ ("Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.")

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- Wonders: *teras*.
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W. E. Vine: *A sign is intended to appeal to the understanding, a wonder appeals to the imagination, a power (dunamis) indicates its source as supernatural.* (228)

- Burial
 - Resurrection
 - Appearances
3. Christ is Lord. Romans 10:9, “If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.”

II. BEING SURE COMES FROM HEARING (v.27)

A. The Gift of Hearing

- **John 10:27**, *My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.*
1. There’s another surprise here in the words of Christ. I would expect v.27 to read, “My sheep hear my voice, and **they** know **me**.” But it actually says, “My sheep hear my voice and **I** know **them**.”
 2. It is important that I know Jesus and I am so glad that I do. But it is infinitely more important that He know me. It is because He knows me, that He speaks to me and I am able to hear and know His voice. Cf. 8:43, “Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My Word.”

B. The Test of Hearing

- **John 8:43**, *Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say.*
- Though the world be insensible to the voice of Christ, you and I, as the sheep of the Lord, hear:
- Mrs. Job said, “Curse God and die.” Job said, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.”
- The king said, “God hasn’t spoken to you!” Jeremiah said, “In my heart [God’s Word] becomes like burning fire shut up in my bones.” (20:9)
- Agrippa said, “Paul, you are out of your mind! (Acts 26:24). Paul said, “The Lord Jesus said to me, ‘I have appointed you a minister and a witness.’” (Acts 26:16)
- The skeptic says, “The Bible is just a book of myths.” You say, “It is living and active....and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)
- The tempter says, “You are only a Christian because your parents indoctrinated you, or someone brainwashed you, or you’re just gullible and superstitious.” The Holy Spirit speaks to your heart and says, “You are a child of God.” (Romans 8:16, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”) ILLUS.: A little boy was flying a kite. The kite was so high that it had disappeared into the clouds. A man came by and asked, ‘Why are you holding on to that string?’ The boy said, ‘I’ve got as kite up there.’ The man looked up and said, ‘I don’t see it.’ The boy replied, ‘Well, I know it’s there because I can feel the tug.’” You, as a Christian, can feel the tug of the Holy Spirit. You know you have a life and a hope up there. I John 2:20, “You have an anointing from the Holy Spirit and you all know.” As Leon Morris says “There is a direct operation of the Holy Spirit on our spirit.” (Romans, p.317)

III. BEING SURE COMES FROM FOLLOWING (v.27)

A. Following Is Evidence

- **John 10:27**, *they follow me.*
1. If I wanted to prove to someone that I was alive, I could produce my birth certificate. To provide further evidence, I could invite that person to check my pulse and my breathing. Spiritually, my claim to having trusted Jesus as my savior is my “birth certificate.” The demonstration of good works is analogous to checking my pulse and breathing. When Paul describes salvation as the gracious gift of God, incapable of being earned by man’s works (Eph. 2:8-9), he is emphasizing the birth certificate. When James asks, “What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save

him?" (James 2:14), he is checking for pulse! He concludes, "faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself." (2:17). Paul and James express not contradictory, but complementary truths. People who are genuinely born again display vital spiritual life signs. One who professes spiritual birth but is devoid of spiritual life-signs is either a liar or self-deceived. Immediately on the heels of Ephesians 2:8-9 comes the declaration that in God's grace-gift of salvation is included the life-demonstration power of good works: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (2:10). Jesus said, "you will know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:20). The fact that churches may contain empty professors of faith is clearly indicated in I John 2:19, "They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us." The danger of false assurance is evident in II Corinthians 13:5, "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!" Good works do not gain or retain salvation, but they do evidence the presence of salvation.

B. Following Is Obedience

- **John 15:14**, *You are my friends if you do what I command.*
- 1. To follow Christ means to emulate Christ, to do His will, to embrace His way of life and His truth. It is described in the motto of our church, "LEARNING TOGETHER TO LIVE LIKE CHRIST IN ALL OF LIFE'S RELATIONSHIPS."
- 2. It is bound up in the meaning of the word "disciple," a word which mean 'a follower.' To His disciples Jesus said, "You are my friends, if you do what I command you." (John 15:14)

IV. BEING SURE COMES FROM RESTING (Verses 28-30)

A. Security Is a Matter of Initiative

- **John 6:44**, *"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.*
- **John 6:65**, *He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him."*

B. Security Is a Matter of Power

- **John 10:29** *My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.*
- 1. God's power, not mine. Imagine a saint clinging fiercely to one of God's fingers while safely enclosed in His fist. Is the Christian kept safe through his clinging or through the grasp of God?
- 2. God doesn't intend for us to waste our energy trying to hand on to our salvation. Our energy is to be put into service, not security.

C. Security Is a Matter of Definition

- **John 10:28** *I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.*
- 1. "I give **eternal** life."
- 2. If it is not forever, then it's not eternal.
- 3. If Christian can lose salvation, then they don't have eternal life, they have contingent life.
- **Stu Weber** did a little theology on the town, *"One day recently, as I wandered through a used car lot, a thought struck me. I'm glad my heavenly Father doesn't deal with his kids like this car dealer does with these cars. Remember those stickers on the windows of the cars in the used-car lot - "As Is/No Warranty"? That gives me the creeps. Makes me feel every one of those cars is a lemon. It says, in effect, 'When this thing blows up, don't come see me.' Our Father is quite different. Unlike the used car*

dealer, God gives us a life and in great love says, 'If you ever have trouble with this thing, if it ever blows up in your face, please come see Me. I'll make it right.' Across the forehead of each of His children, His eyes read, 'As Is/Full Warranty!'" (Locking Arms, p,170)

- D. Security Is a Matter of Ownership
- **John 10:29**, My Father, who has given them to me...
 - There are twin truths in this passage:
 - We **have** a gift
 - We **are** a gift
1. This is not a gift that I can choose to relinquish. No, I am a gift from the Father to His Son. There is nothing I can do to “ungive” myself.”
 2. Which comes first: Belief or Sheepness?
 - Sheepness comes first. Before we are ever called TO Christ, we are chosen and foreknown.
 - Cf. Jesus:
 - **John 10:16**, *I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.*
 - Jesus calls them sheep before they even hear the Gospel message and have a chance to believe!
 - They are already “sheep” in the mind and plan of God because He knows them and has poicked them out. Getting them in the flock is just a matter of time.
 - **SIDEBAR ON CHRISTIAN WITNESS:**
 - This is like mining for gold on a rich claim. You know the gold is there, you just need to find it.
 - It also is so encouraging to know that witness is not a matter of my brilliant performance. Bottom line, it is God who does the persuading. So as we faithful seek opportunities to share the Gospel, we pray for the work of the Holy Spirit to open people’s eyes to the truth. Without that, our witness doesn’t have a prayer of a chance.

CONCLUSION:

- A. A fellow wandering through an old cemetery found a crooked old tombstone which read,

Remember, friends, as you pass by
As you are now, so once was I
As I am now, you soon shall be
Prepare for death and follow me.

Someone had scratched this reply into the face of the old tombstone,

To follow you, I'm not content
Until I know which way you went.

- B. *In 1937 the famous Golden Gate bridge was completed. At that time it was the world's longest suspension bridge. The entire project cost the United States Government \$77,000,000. During the process of constructing the first section of the bridge, very few safety devices were used, resulting in twenty-three accidental deaths as workers fell helplessly into the waters below.*

The toll was so significant, something had to be done before the second section was built. An ingenious plan was arranged. The largest safety net in the world (it alone cost \$100,000!) was made out of stout manila cordage and stretched out beneath the work crews. It proved to be an excellent investment in view of the fact that it saved the

lives of at least ten men who fell into it without injury. Furthermore, the work went twenty-five percent faster, since the workers were relieved from the fear of falling to their deaths.

B. But be sure of this...all the other safety nets of the world are woven of rotten cords. They cannot save you. Your security is in Christ alone.

C. And be sure of this...it is urgent that you come to Christ.

In the House Rules Committee Chambers in Washington DC, someone put up a hand-lettered sign,

“Due to the lack of experienced trumpeters, the end of the world has been postponed for three weeks.”

But when God tells the angel to blow, the trumpet will sound, and there will be no delay. Will you be ready? When your game is over, when God calls time, will you be ready? Will you fall into His safety net...His sheep security system?

Timothy G. Walton
Alderwood Community Church
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