

More from the Good Shepherd (John 10:22-30)

Expository Lessons from the Gospel of John

I. Background

- a. **John chapters 9 and 10** are the story of Jesus healing a man born blind, and the discussions and teaching that ensued after the miracle.
- b. Jesus tells the parable of the Good Shepherd to the young man who was healed of blindness (who then believes in Jesus and recognizes Him as the Son of God), and to the antagonistic Pharisees who were aware of the miracle.
- c. In the last lesson we looked at the significance of Jesus saying He is "the Good Shepherd" (**John 10:11**).
 - i. He embodied the best characteristics of all the good shepherds from Israel's past (we looked at Abel, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and David).
 - ii. He fulfilled multiple prophecies that spoke of the one who would come to *shepherd* God's people.
 1. He would protect and take care of God's flock, even "in the valley of the shadow of death" as foretold in **Psalm 23**.
 2. He would be born in Bethlehem, with origins from eternity as prophesied in **Micah 5:1-4**.
 3. He would shepherd the nations with a rod of iron, as David prophesied in **Psalm 2:8-9**.
 4. When this shepherd was "struck", his sheep would be scattered, as Jesus told Peter and the other disciples in **Matthew 26:31**, in fulfillment of the prophecy in **Zechariah 13:7**.
 5. He would be the one Shepherd who will be "raised up", who will rule over all of Gods flock, forever as prophesied in **Ezekiel 34** and **Ezekiel 37:24-28**.

6. Jesus fulfilled *four strands* of Old Testament prophecy, fulfilling four different roles that revealed different aspects of His mission. He came as:
- a. **Prophet** - one who *proclaims the Word of God* to people; calling them to repent and to obey the commands of the Lord.
 - b. **Priest** - one who *offers sacrifices on behalf of the people* to God.
 - c. **King** - one who *rules over* the people, on behalf of God.
 - d. **Shepherd** - one who loves and *protects the sheep*, even to the point of laying down his life for them.

II. We Need More Good Shepherds (Re-read John 10:11-16)

- a. Jesus, as the Good Shepherd, provides the pattern for all other spiritual leaders to follow. They (we) are all called to be good shepherds, as well. Those called to be shepherds for others certainly include:
 - i. Parents, especially fathers;
 - ii. Husbands; and
 - iii. Leaders in the church.
- b. The men responsible for leading the church are referred to in the New Testament by the following terms, which apply to the same role:
 - i. Bishops/overseers (the term meaning one who “looks over” or “looks out for” the church)
 - ii. Elders (the term meaning someone who is older and spiritually mature); and
 - iii. Shepherds (the term alluding to a protective kind of leadership).
- c. A danger in any age: to copy the world around us, *instead of following the Bible*. Regarding leadership, consider what the institutions of the world offer us as examples.
 - i. The Roman Empire at the time of Jesus had Caesar as king, with a leadership hierarchy reporting to him.
 - ii. **Question:** What are some of the leadership structures we see *in the world* today?
 1. Corporate style. Board of directors of a corporation (distant hands-off managers who just set strategy and policies; they

- delegate day-to-day operations to one person, the CEO or president).
2. Military style. General in charge of army (all those under them expected to obey orders without questioning anything).
 3. Government or political style. Various government models used by the nations
 - a. One-man leader/dictator, or king.
 - b. Democracy/majority-rule (Let's all vote on what we think we should do, even regarding what the Bible means!)
- iii. **Challenge for us:** Forget what the world is doing with their various forms of leadership. Instead, embrace what the Bible teaches and do that, *regardless what the world around us is doing!*
- d. Let us consider the Biblical arrangement in the New Testament, where *shepherds/ bishops/ elders* lead the church.
- i. Consider the apostle Paul's "farewell address" to the *elders* of the church in Ephesus (**Acts 20:17**). There, he admonishes them:
 1. "And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch; and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears." (**Acts 20:25-31**, NKJV)
 - a. Note that Paul was preaching the message of the kingdom of God. He was not just focusing on *personal salvation*, as many Christian preachers do today.
 - b. In **Acts 20:17-31** we see the terms "elder", "bishop/overseer" and "shepherd" being applied to the same people, so seems clear to me that all three titles apply to the same role in the church.

- c. Paul says they were put in that role by the Holy Spirit; and calls them to be good shepherds of the flock.
- d. Paul expresses his concerns using the same kind of terminology Jesus used in **John 10**. He expresses his concern about God's "flock", in the context of overseeing "shepherds" and "wolves" who will come to devour the sheep.
- e. He warns that savage wolves are coming.
 - i. As good shepherds, they can't run away when the wolves come. They must not be cowardly "hirelings"; they need to lay their lives down for the flock, as Jesus did.
- f. Consider this: Paul warns them that among their own number, wicked men will rise up. They should not be surprised when they see it happen; and they must be willing to confront it.
 - i. **Question:** How many churches teach this, warning their members that *some will rise up within our own present church leadership* to lead us (members of the congregation) astray?
 - 1. **Answer:** I can't think of any churches who warn their members about *that!*
 - ii. Many churches ignore the significance of this warning. They assume that because they are a favored part of "the Lord's church" or "God's special movement" that the Holy Spirit will be automatically guiding their leaders and keeping them out of serious error.
 - iii. People today naively believe, "*It can't happen here* not in *our church!*"
- g. Paul knew it *would* happen, even in a church where he had invested years in teaching and building a spiritual foundation (**Acts 19**). He reminds them that he had warned them *for three years*, "day and night, with tears" (**Acts 20:31**).
 - i. He told them that some *even from their own number* would rise up and pull people away from the Lord (**Acts 20:30**).

- ii. Paul did *NOT* teach that if we just “trust our leaders” and don’t question anything; then everything will turn out okay.
- h. Paul is warning the other shepherds to be prepared to confront and deal with their fellow shepherds when this happens.
- ii. Peter likewise addresses the churches in his first letter, speaking to the elders as well as to those they lead (explaining the vital role of the shepherds/elders/overseers).
 - 1. “The *elders* who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as *overseers*, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. Likewise, you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:1–7, NKJV)
 - a. Again, we see the terms “elder”, “overseer/bishop” and “shepherd” being applied to the same people (one role, but different facets).
 - b. The elders must not be “lording it over” the flock, as worldly leaders do.
 - i. Yes, elders certainly are called to exhort and discipline the church as needed.
 - ii. But they are called first and foremost to lead by example, not as “bosses” who order people around. Like Jesus, they should set great examples with their own lives and urge others to follow that example, as one who loves and follows Christ.
 - c. The younger members are called to be submissive to their elders.

- i. All are reminded of **Proverbs 3:34** regarding God opposing the proud but giving grace (His favor) to the humble.
 - ii. Everyone is called to be humble, including the leaders of the church.
 - d. Jesus is *the Chief Shepherd*, to whom all the other shepherds will have to give account!
 - e. Jesus is the ultimate shepherd, the example for all other shepherds to follow. The church needs many good shepherds, who follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Some take-aways I see in that regard:
 - i. The primary responsibility of any shepherd is to please the Chief Shepherd, and to take care of the sheep.
 - 1. The shepherd's primary responsibility is not to please the other shepherds!
 - a. Joseph didn't; when his brother shepherds were behaving wickedly, he did not look the other way and pretend nothing was wrong, to keep the peace. He courageously "brought a bad report of them to his father". (**Genesis 37:2**)
 - i. He was the favorite of his father; but was *hated by his brother-shepherds* and ended up getting sold into slavery by them!
 - ii. Joseph was more concerned about pleasing his father than about pleasing his brothers.
 - b. Jesus didn't, and was crucified by the other leaders or "shepherds".
 - c. What do you think *might happen to you*, if you follow the example of Joseph and Jesus? How do you think you are likely to be treated if you firmly address the sins of other shepherds, and directly confront those involved in false teaching? (I suspect you know the answer.)
 - 2. It is not to "stay with the pack" and look the other way when the other shepherds are in sin, or when they are bringing false teaching into the church.
 - a. In some churches, one of the most important things in picking elders is finding men who will go along with the group and not "rock the boat". Find "company men"

who will not step out of line, in a desire to maintain unity.

- b. This is not what we see in Joseph, Paul, or Jesus! They were willing to speak the truth and to address sin and false teaching, even at the risk of their very lives.
- ii. The good shepherd is more concerned about the safety of the sheep than about his own personal safety and comfort.
 1. This wonderful character was exemplified by David who told King Saul, “Your servant used to keep his father’s sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it.” (1 Samuel 17:34–35, NKJV)
 2. This is the picture of a good shepherd/elder/overseer.
 - iii. I have watched with horror and fascination at the corruption being exposed in the Roman Catholic church recently. (I was raised Roman Catholic.)
 1. A few courageous bishops, more concerned with the Chief Shepherd and the flock, have “blown the whistle” on homosexual abuse of boys or young men, financial corruption and related cover-ups by their fellow bishops at the highest levels.
 2. This is terrible, but I can understand how these things happen. There are wicked people in this world; some of them get into churches and use that as an opportunity to abuse innocent people.
 3. Fortunately, there have been a few courageous bishops who were willing to expose this sin, at great personal cost. In some cases, the ones who spoke out even had to go into hiding afterward, for fear of their lives. They understood that they were accountable to Jesus, the Good Shepherd.
 4. Sadly, too many other bishops were unwilling to “rock the boat”, to expose corruption among their fellow shepherds. Instead they remained silent and allowed terrible sin and cover-ups to go on unchecked within the church.
 - a. How is it that so many bishops, when they realized that one of the priests under them has been abusing children or young men, could look the other way? How could they cover up and just shuffle these perpetrators from

- one church to the next, without exposing the sin and removing these predators?
- b. It has become clear that many leaders within the church, *going to the very top*, knew about these things and covered them up.
- iv. I have seen the same kind of things happen in Protestant and other non-Catholic churches with corrupt leaders (sexual sin, stealing money from the weak and helpless, abusive and controlling leadership, etc.)
1. Bad shepherds are not just in the Roman Catholic church. They can be found in all kinds of churches.
 2. I have seen corrupt church leaders get moved from place to place; rather than being disciplined, publicly rebuked and permanently removed from the ministry.
 - a. Why aren't these corrupt leaders dealt with?
 - b. The other shepherds/ overseers/ ministers/ elders are generally more concerned with their fellow-shepherds than with the Chief Shepherd, or with the sheep.
 - c. Church leaders often *more closely identify with the other leaders* than they relate to the sheep entrusted to their care.
 - d. Often, church leaders do not want to lose the services of other leaders under them, who (though in serious sin), for a variety of reasons.
 - i. The leader in sin may otherwise be popular and charismatic.
 - ii. He may be exceptionally talented at fundraising, or well-connected with the wealthy and influential.
 - iii. Some bishops or other leaders may feel that they have "invested a lot" in time or money in training and raising up a particular leader; and fear the "loss" to them and the organization that would result.
 - e. Often, church leaders more concerned with the *outward reputation* or public image of the church, than in true righteousness.

- f. However, Paul's instructions are clear.
 - i. "Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear." (**1 Timothy 5:19-20**, NKJV)
 - ii. We are to rebuke elders in serious sin publicly, so that other leaders will fear the consequences of getting involved in the same sins. It must be clear that there is no favoritism in the church.
 - iii. This is strong medicine. How many churches today are willing do *that* when one of their leaders is discovered to be in serious sin?
- v. Peter warned that just as there were false prophets among God's people in the past, there will be false teachers and corrupt leaders in the church. (**2 Peter 2**) He and Jude warn, "the blackness of darkness" has been reserved for them, forever. (**2 Peter 2:17, Jude 13**)
 - 1. Similarly, **Ezekiel 34** makes it clear that there were many bad shepherds (spiritual leaders) in the past, and God would call them to account. We should be prepared for the same, today.
- f. To summarize, here are some key principles for those who want to become good shepherds. (There is a great need in the church for many to become good shepherds. This is something worthy for men to strive for, as Paul said in **1 Timothy 3:1**.)
 - i. Be more concerned about pleasing the Chief Shepherd on the Day of Judgment than on pleasing the other shepherds today.
 - 1. Be like Joseph and Jesus in dealing with sin in the lives of other shepherds.
 - 2. Address false teachers and serious sin in the church the way Jesus would want you to, with love and courage.
 - ii. Be on the lookout.
 - 1. *When* (not "if") you see the wolf coming (Satan, false teachers or wicked leaders), step up and do battle.
 - 2. Be prepared to lay down your life for the sheep; like David and Jesus did. The *hireling* runs away.
 - iii. Know the condition of your flock.

1. Make sure they are spiritually healthy and well fed with the Word of God (personal study as well as solid Scriptural preaching and teaching).
- iv. Meditate on **Ezekiel 34**, to get a clear picture of the good and bad shepherds. This provides a wonderful picture of what God is calling us to (including especially **Ezekiel 34:1-10** and **34:15-16**)

III. No One Can Snatch Them Out of My Hand (Read John 10:22-30)

- a. Elements of the story
 - i. This part of the story happens at Feast of the Dedication, in Jerusalem.
 - ii. People want Jesus to say plainly if He is the Christ.
 1. Jesus says He already told them, plus the miraculous signs He was doing bear witness.
 2. Jesus says all the evidence is there; the reason they do not believe is *their* problem: *they are not His sheep*.
 - iii. Jesus says of His sheep:
 1. They hear (heed) his voice.
 2. He knows them, and they follow Him.
 3. He gives them eternal life.
 - a. They shall “never perish”
 - b. No one can snatch them out of His hand.
 - c. The sheep were given to Him by His Father.
 - d. No one can snatch the sheep out of His Father’s hand.
 - e. Jesus concludes, “I and my Father are one.”
- b. **Question:** What is the “*Feast of Dedication*”? Note that it is in the winter, and Jesus is observing this feast in the temple area.
 - i. **Answer:** This is a special feast commemorating the dedication (or re-dedication) of the temple, in Jerusalem.
 - ii. **Question:** Does it talk about the origin of the Feast of Dedication anywhere in the Bible?
 1. **Answer:** That depends on what kind of Bible you have!

2. The story is discussed in **1 Maccabees chapters 1-4**. For most of those listening to this message, you probably won't find this book in your (Protestant) Old Testament.
3. This past week my wife Alison and I were staying at my sister's house, watching her two children while she and her husband were away. In her house were two old family Bibles: one from the Catholic side of the family and the other from a Protestant side.
 - a. The Catholic Bible had the book of **1 Maccabees** in it.
 - b. The Protestant Bible, a very large King James Version Bible from the 1870's, also had **1 Maccabees** in it! It was in a section of the Bible after the Old Testament and before the New Testament, called "the Apocrypha".
 - i. The original version of the King James Bible (1611) had the books of the Apocrypha (like **1 Maccabees**) in it. And it was still in there over 250 years later! Clearly, it seems to me that these books were taken out sometime within the past 150 years.
 - ii. The original meaning of the word "apocryphal" is "hidden". Over the years the term "apocryphal" has taken on a negative meaning in popular use, so the Catholics and Orthodox will prefer to use the term "Deuterocanonical" (meaning "second canon").
 - iii. There are two opposing arguments regarding whether these books should be considered inspired part of the Scriptures. That is beyond the scope of this lesson.
 - iv. Whether you consider **1 Maccabees** inspired Scripture or just a good historical account, it tells the story of the Feast of Dedication (which Jesus was celebrating here in **John 10**). This book is very graphic and very action packed!
- iii. The Story of the Feast of Dedication (from **1 Maccabees 1-4**)
 1. Alexander the Great, of Macedonia, conquered Egypt and the Persian empire, on the way to rapidly conquering an empire that stretched from Greece eastward through India and Pakistan.

2. In connection with this, he conquered Jerusalem and Judah c. 332 BC. Alexander died in June of 323 BC, at the age of 32. His empire was divided into four parts, each of which was given to one of his four generals.
3. That a Greek empire would succeed the Persian empire had been foretold in the **Book of Daniel**, in several places:
 - a. The 4-part statue prophecy in **Daniel 2** (the third kingdom, represented by the copper or bronze part of the statue),
 - b. In **Daniel 7** (the 4-headed, 4-winged leopard),
 - c. In **Daniel 8** (the speedy male goat whose large horn is broken off and replaced by 4 horns), and
 - d. In the message from the angel, in **Daniel 10**.
4. From one of the four lines of generals came Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who led a Syrian-based part of the Greek empire. This king enforced Greek customs on the Jews. He was a madman.
 - a. He forbade circumcision, desecrated the temple in Jerusalem with idol worship, and butchered those who opposed him.
 - b. If a Jewish mother circumcised her infant son, this evil king would have both the mother and the child killed, then hang the child around the mother's neck and have them both put on public display.
5. In **1 Maccabees 1-4** we find the story of a patriotic group of Jews led by Mattathias and his sons, who rose up and fought against the Syrian/Greek rulers. They succeeded in driving out the despots (and a much larger army) and re-dedicated the temple to the Lord.
 - a. (Read **1 Maccabees 4:52-59**.)
 - b. At the time of this rededication of the temple, the Jews celebrated for 8 days. Legend has it that they only had one container of oil for the temple lights, but it somehow lasted the entire 8 days.
 - c. This event has been commemorated by the Jews ever since by the Feast of Dedication, better known today as *Hanukkah* (sometimes spelled *Chanukah*).

- iv. Whether you consider **1 Maccabees** to be inspired Scripture (as some Christians do), or merely an un-inspired historical account (as other Christians do), I believe it is worthwhile to read.
 1. It provides background to help us understand what was going on during the period right before the New Testament.
 2. It also shows how some of the prophecies in Daniel (regarding the Greek empire under Alexander the Great and the four successors) are fulfilled.
 3. It shows us the origin of the Feast of Dedication, which Jesus was observing in **John 10**, and which Jews today continue to celebrate as Hanukkah.
- c. Jesus said, "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish."
 - i. This statement (**John 10:28**) is popularly used to support the claim that after "being saved", a Christian can never lose their salvation. Also known as "once saved/ always saved". This false teaching is one of the five pillars of Calvinism. We hear it taught on the radio, in the books of popular Protestant authors, etc.
 - ii. **Question:** Is Jesus giving an unconditional guarantee here? Will His sheep be saved regardless of how they live after coming to faith in Him?
 1. First let us look at what Jesus actually said, in context. People tend to focus on the second part of Jesus' statement (they shall never perish). Let's look at the *entire* statement.
 2. This is discussing the relationship between three parties: the good shepherd (Jesus), his sheep (Christians), and a powerful enemy (Satan and those with him).
 3. **Question:** Who are *the sheep* of the shepherd? How does Jesus describe them?
 - a. **Answer:** They are the ones who hear the voice of the shepherd, *and who follow Him*. (**John 10:27**)
 - b. **Question:** What if someone begins to follow this shepherd, but later changes its mind and stops following the shepherd? Is that person still one of the shepherd's sheep?
 - i. **Answer:** No. The sheep *follow the shepherd*. If someone stops following the shepherd, that person *ceases to be one of His sheep*.

- ii. There is a condition to being one of Jesus' sheep: you must follow Him. This is not a one-time decision, but a way of life that must continue to the end. This continues until we are dead or until Jesus returns!
 - iii. If you stop following the shepherd, you are no longer one of His sheep. *Only His sheep* receive eternal life; *they* are protected, and the enemy cannot snatch them from His hands.
- iii. **Question:** Did Jesus and the apostles teach that perseverance, continuing to follow Jesus to the end, was necessary for us to be saved on the Last Day?
1. "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved." (Matthew 24:9-13, NKJV)
 - a. **Question:** Jesus, but what will happen if a Christian *does not* persevere in faith to the end?
 - b. **Obvious Answer Implied by Jesus:** That person will not be saved.
 2. "But Jesus said to him, 'No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'" (Luke 9:62, NKJV)
 - a. After we first put our hand to the plow, we must keep plowing *until the job is done*.
 3. Jesus explains the meaning of the Parable of the Sower, in **Luke 8**. "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away." (Luke 8:11-13, NKJV)
 - a. Proponents of "once saved, always saved" claim that a Christian cannot fall away from the faith. If someone backslides, they claim that the person never really became a Christian in the first place.

- b. However, Jesus plainly says that this can and will happen. Christians can fall away.
 - c. This is the difference between the first soil (the person never believes, to be saved) and the second soil (the person believes for a time, but when tested they fall away.)
4. Read the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant, in **Matthew 18:21-35**.
- a. The servant has his debt *fully forgiven* by his master.
 - b. That same servant then refuses to forgive a smaller debt, that another servant owes him.
 - c. The master finds out, gets angry, and has the unmerciful servant delivered over to the torturers!
 - d. Jesus tells his followers that the Lord will treat them the same way, if they do not forgive others (*after they initially have been forgiven.*)
5. Read **Hebrews 10:26-31** and **10:35-39**
- a. Consider especially what it says in **Hebrews 10:26**
 - i. “For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins....” (**Hebrews 10:26**, NKJV)
 - b. The faith leading to salvation is faith that not only obeys, but also perseveres to the end.
6. Read **Jude v. 5**
- a. “But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.” (**Jude 5**, NKJV)
 - b. **Question:** Based on what this passage says, can a person be saved initially, yet be destroyed in the end?
 - i. **Answer:** Clearly, yes. That is the very point Jude is making here, in context.
 - c. Paul makes a very similar point, using the same Old Testament example, in **1 Corinthians 9:24-10:13**.
7. Peter speaks clearly about this matter as well.

- a. “For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: ‘A dog returns to his own vomit,’ and, ‘a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.’” (2 Peter 2:20–22, NKJV)
- iv. Addressing the critical importance of persevering to the end, Cyprian (bishop of the church from Carthage, North Africa who died c. 258 AD) wrote:
 1. “Yet I exhort you by our common faith, by the true and simple love of my heart towards you, that, having overcome the adversary in this first encounter, you should hold fast your glory with a brave and persevering virtue. We are still in the world; we are still placed in the battle-field; we fight daily for our lives. Care must be taken, that after such beginnings as these there should also come an increase, and that what you have begun to be with such a blessed commencement should be consummated in you.
 2. “It is a slight thing to have been able to attain anything; it is more to be able to keep what you have attained; even as faith itself and saving birth makes alive, not by being received, but by being preserved. Nor is it actually the attainment, but the perfecting, that keeps a man for God. The Lord taught this in His instruction when He said, ‘Behold, you are made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come to you.’
 3. “...Solomon also, and Saul, and many others, so long as they walked in the Lord’s ways, were able to keep the grace given to them. When the discipline of the Lord was forsaken by them, grace also forsook them.”
 - a. (Source: Cyprian, *The Epistles of Cyprian*, in ANF vol. 5, p. 284)
- v. **Question:** Does all of this mean we can have no security in our salvation at all?
 1. **Answer:** No! If we follow the Good Shepherd to the end, no one can snatch us out of His hand. He is like David, the good shepherd who does whatever it takes to protect his sheep from

the powerful enemy. If we remain his sheep, hearing his voice and following him to the end, we can be assured we will be saved. No one can pry us out of God's hand!

2. "Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: 'Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.'" (2 Chronicles 15:1-2, NKJV)
 - a. This principle, which has always been true, shows the heart of God. God loves us; but if we turn away and forsake Him, He will forsake us.

IV. Conclusions

- a. Seek to have the heart of a good shepherd.
 - i. First concern is to please and give a good account to the Chief Shepherd.
 - ii. Second concern is to put the life and safety of the sheep above your own.
 - iii. Pleasing the other shepherds and being liked by them does not fit into the top two priorities. Jesus and the apostles warned us of false teachers, bad shepherds and hired hands.
- b. Understand the wonderful promise of eternal life is to all those who are true sheep: who continue to follow the Good Shepherd, to the end.
 - i. Always be prepared to answer those who teach "once saved/ always saved" with the words of Jesus and the apostles.