

## More Than We Asked

At this point in Jesus' ministry, He is about four months away from the cross. It is winter, and He is teaching in Solomon's colonnade in the temple, and the religious leaders are pressing Him, "if you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus' answer is one of the most precious gifts of doctrine He ever gave the Church.

### John 10:22-30

**22** At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, **23** and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. **24** 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." **25** 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, **26** but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. **27** My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. **28** I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. **29** 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. **30** I and the Father are one."

In His answer, Jesus settled two vital questions: 1) who is truly saved? And 2) can the saved be sure of their ultimate salvation?

#### I. **Who is truly saved? (vv. 22-27)**

Jesus first of all tells us who is not saved, before He tells us who is saved.

##### a. Who is not saved (vv. 25-26)

Jesus teaches twice in verses 25 and 26 that is those who "do not believe" either His words or His works who are not saved. Even though Jesus has taught His messianic identity in many ways, they had no ears to hear; and although He displayed many works of miraculous compassion, they had no eyes to see. The reason they did not believe is that they were not part of His flock. The quintessential attribute of the saved person is that he/she believes.

##### b. Who *is* saved? (v. 27)

Jesus describes three unmistakable markers for those who are saved.

###### 1. They hear His voice (v. 27a)

The saved sheep do not listen to other shepherds, other voices for direction and satisfaction, but only to the voice of the Great Shepherd.

###### 2. They relate intimately to the shepherd (v. 27b)

Jesus says He knows them. This, of course, means that He cherishes them. JC Ryle puts it this way: "By the world around [God's people] they are comparatively unknown, uncared for, or despised. But they are never forgotten or overlooked by Christ...The world may see no beauty in the ways of a godly man, and may often pour contempt on him. But he who knows he is one of Christ's sheep has no cause to be ashamed."

###### 3. They follow Him (v. 27c)

To follow Jesus is to imitate Him. Notice, for example, that in John 13:34-35, He describes how we are to love one another: the way He has loved us!

#### II. **How can the saved be sure they will be saved? (vv. 28-30)**

We Presbyterians are aware of the doctrine of perseverance, taught in our Westminster Confession of Faith (Ch. XVII): "They, whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved." Here, however, Jesus is speaking not of our perseverance, but of His! He will hold us to the very end. Jesus gives us three reasons why we can be sure of this promise:

a. By the nature of the gift (v. 28a)

If we do not make it to eternal dwellings, can it honestly be said that He has given them “eternal life”? By the very nature of the gift, we can be assured of our eternal life. Paul says that the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable (Romans 11:29).

b. By the clarity of Jesus’ promise (v. 28b)

He did not say that we will never be distressed or discouraged, nor that we will never fail in obedience, but rather that we will never perish. Many may lie to us about various things, but it is impossible for the Son of God to lie. Praise the Lord!

c. By the power of the hands that keep us (vv. 28c-30)

It is one thing to have God say “Hang on to me and I will get you home,” and another thing for Him to say, “Put your hand in my hand and I will never let you go.”

Eric Alexander has said this, “The hands that were wounded to save us can never be doubted for their love; and the hands that created the universe can never be doubted for their power.”

### Discussion Questions

1. What is the unmistakable characteristic of the unsaved person? Why are they in that condition? (vv. 25-26)
  
2. What are the marks of a saved person in verse 27?
  - a. What does Jesus mean by “hear my voice”;
  - b. What does Jesus mean by “know them”;
  - c. What does Jesus mean by “follow me”?
  
3. Why do we know that the saved will never be lost? How do you explain the instance of a person who claims to have eternal life but is living an ungodly life?
  
4. If a person believes verses 28-30, how do the truths there change his/her life?

### Going Deeper

1. Do you clearly bear the marks of a saved person — marks that are found in verse 27? Describe.
  
2. How can you increase your confidence in the Lord’s keeping you in His hands for eternity?