



SERIES – Believe: The Book of John

SPEAKER: Nat Crawford

Thursday, February 16, 2023

Scripture: John 10:27-30

TITLE: Words of Assurance

Do you feel loved today? But lost tomorrow? Do you wonder, am I secure in my faith? Listen to this from John 10:27-30

“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.”

Often the only effective way of quieting the fearful heart of a small child is simply by repeating over and over the words of assurance. Not new information. Not extended explanation. Just simply patient repetition. So here again Jesus assures He cares for us with “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”

The first word of assurance is the very voice of the Good Shepherd:

- His voice brings peace because it reveals His presence—“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I do not fear because you are with me.” (Psalm 23:4)
- His voice brings peace because His care is personal—“I know them...I call them by name.” (John 10:1-18)
- His voice brings peace because of His purpose—Everything He does to His flock is for the good and prosperity of His own sheep. His motives are totally unselfish!
- His voice brings peace because of his promises—“I give them eternal life” (John 10:28). Literally true, full life that never ends. It is an unending gift, not a merited award. In John 3:16 Jesus stated, “God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son so that anyone who would believe in his name would not perish but have everlasting life.”

The Good Shepherd desires that those whom He has chosen and called will never fear separation under His loving care.

So to reinforce His promise, Jesus gives a graphic illustration, a word picture: “No one will snatch them out of my hand...” To snatch is to snag quickly when totally unexpected. To catch the holder in a moment of distraction or relaxed awareness. It speaks both of His alertness to potential danger and also to the uncompromising strength of His commitment. The strength of his right hand is unconquerable.

“You have given me the shield of your salvation, and your right hand upholds me. Your gentleness makes me great.”—Psalm 18:35

“You have a strong arm; your hand is mighty; your right hand is exalted.”—Psalm 89:13

More than 20 times in Paul’s letter of encouragement to the infant church in Ephesus, the apostle uses this word picture when he reminds them that they are, “in Christ,” and, “in Him.” We are forever secure, not because of the tenacity with which we grasp onto Him but because of the strength of His hand in holding onto us. It’s His loving grip that keeps us secure.

Have you ever seen a portrait of Jesus as the Good Shepherd painted from the image of Isaiah 40:11?

“He will tend his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arms, he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those who are with young.”

Our Good Shepherd is both strong and tender. In His arms we are forever secure!

But then Jesus doubles down on the word picture when he adds: “My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father’s hand!” So picture yourself resting in the cupped palm of the Lord Jesus, holding you firmly yet gently. And then a great large hand comes down over His hand and gently but firmly securing all that is there. In His hand under His Father’s hand we find safety forever and ever! Those He calls by name He makes doubly secure.

And then, like striking a match into flame, Jesus who has spoken of “The Father” and “My Father” now boldly and unapologetically declares, “I and the Father are one!”

Join us again tomorrow to see how His bold statement fuels the hatred of the gathered false shepherds of the Jews! Until then, like the shepherd-king David declared, “The Lord is my shepherd...no wants!”