



4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter  
May 12, 2019  
John 10:22-30

**“Safe in Your Shepherd’s Arms!”**

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Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead! In the name of Jesus, your Good Shepherd, dear friends in Christ,

So what’s it like to feel secure? Do you know? It’s almost as if we spend our lives wanting to feel secure, but are we? It started when we were little children. All of my children were this way when they were young, if they were frightened or scared or hurt they will cry and cry and cry until I, dad, come and pick them up,...just kidding, that is until my wife picks them up ☺ then they feel secure. As we grow older we long for the security of our parents – to know they love us and will take care of us. You grow older and you long for the security of friends and friendships and people to hang out with. When you are dating someone you long for that security of being “in a relationship” so everyone knows your significant other is “hands off.” When you’re married you long for security- knowing your spouse supports you, loves you, cares about you. As you get older you long for other things like financial security- knowing you have a good nest egg built up, health security – knowing you are in good health, job security – knowing your job needs you and you’re valuable, family security- that you have good relationships with your family members, personal security- that you feel secure about who we are. We long for security.

But the problem is we long for it, but can we ever be completely secure? Isn’t it an illusive concept? I mean, were those students at that school in Highlands Ranch this past week secure? Or those people who were and are affected by flooding in Nebraska and Iowa? Our friends or family can easily disappoint, our health can easily fail, our investments could easily crash, and even things like social security that were meant to give us security are themselves unsecure. Wow! We long for security, don’t we?

Well, not much has changed. The people at Jesus’ time longed for security too. At the point where our text picks up Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication, it was their winter season. As Jesus was walking through one part of the temple called Solomon’s Colonnade a group of Jews surrounded him, really encircled him, and said, “**How long will you keep us in suspense?**” In other words they are trying to give the impression that their entire peace of mind rests on Jesus answer, they want to be relieved from their suspense, the doubt of their souls, they want a clear cut answer from Jesus as if he hasn’t been very clear or plain about who he is. The problem, though, was not that Jesus hadn’t been clear about who He was, but rather that Jesus didn’t measure up to their expectations of who the Messiah would be. They were hoping for a Messiah to bring security, but a security far less than what God wants to give, they were looking for an earthly Messiah who would make their earthly lives secure.

So, Jesus answered them, “**I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father’s name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep.**” Right in Jerusalem Jesus healed the paralyzed man, healed the man born blind, Jesus called Himself the Bread of Life, the Light of the World, the Living Fountain of Water, the Good Shepherd, but they refused to believe in Him. Why? “**Because you are not MY sheep.**” The Greek emphasizes the “my.” They don’t believe in Jesus, they aren’t part of His fold, they have put themselves in a different fold where there can be no true security.

But then Jesus goes on to tell them what they were missing the true security His sheep enjoy. “**My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.**” Jesus’ sheep are safe because they hear his voice and follow him. It is to Jesus’ sheep that he gives eternal life, they will never ever perish, and no one can snatch them from His hand.

Jesus’ definition of security is totally different from what we might expect or what the world might offer us. The security that the world can offer can only be fleeting, uncertain, and temporary at best. There’s always variables, isn’t there? How

much security could we have when there's a random act of violence? Like the ones we see again and again in our world. How much security can we really have when there's a sudden catastrophe? Or a sudden illness or accident? Or what about a sudden loss of property or money? Or a relationship that turns sour? Or a bad day at work that puts our job in jeopardy? Or when someone offends our personal security with biting or harsh words?

Yet, even though, we will never be able to achieve a temporal or earthly security, as if we could live in a bubble, what do we often find ourselves chasing after? Isn't it temporal or earthly security? Now there's nothing wrong with being wise and acting in the safest way we know how. But what often becomes all important to us? We look for our security in life in the things of the world, in building a financial nest egg, in having the best insurance, in trying to make everyone like us.

But the real trouble is, when we focus ourselves on finding security in the things of this world not only can they never give us real security, but we end up neglecting what is most important and what does give us true security. The devil wants nothing more than to lead you astray. He knows that he can't snatch you away from God, the devil can't rob you of your salvation. So, he'll devise all sorts of temptations along with the sinful world around us, in order to get US to turn away from our Savior. He wants us to focus all our attention on trying to get security from the things of this world, from material things, from relationships, from what other people think of us. And those things can become all-consuming and the sad reality is that we can reject our Savior, we can stop listening to His voice, we can walk away from him. We can choose to ignore His voice and go astray. We could rearrange our priorities and put God last. We could wander out of His fold and soon not recognize His voice just like these Jews in our text.

If someone leaves the fold of the Good Shepherd, turns their back on Jesus, the fault and blame lies totally with that person. And that is why we need a Good Shepherd; that is why we need true security. What is incredibly comforting is that if someone remains in the fold, it is totally due to the grace of the Good Shepherd. **"My sheep listen to my voice, I know them, and they follow me."** The wonderful thing is that security is not achieved by us, but it is something given us by God through His voice, through His voice in His Word, through His voice in His sacraments. Through those means God gives true security for life. He assures you that Jesus died for your sins, Jesus rose from death, Jesus worked faith in your heart, Jesus promises to keep you in that faith.

Through those means your Shepherd has already given you eternal life right now. Your life goes from this point through all eternity! Through those means He assures you that you will never perish – you will never taste an ounce of hell! As you hear your Shepherd's voice in His Word and in His Sacraments your Shepherd grasps ever more firmly on to you and will never let you go. And just in case you missed it Jesus adds, **"My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand."** What protection! What security! It is self-evident that nothing will ever be powerful enough to snatch you out of the Father's hand. No one can arm wrestle you out of God's hand! No devil, no person, no catastrophe, no problem.

That's security, true security, lasting security for life. And it is having that security that helps you deal with all of the other stuff of life. If your savings account disappears, so be it, you're still safe in Jesus' hands! If you lose your job, so be it, you're still safe in Jesus' hands. If someone cuts you down with biting words, so be it, no one can rip you from your Savior's grasp! If a friend turns his/her back on you, so be it, Jesus remains your faithful Good Shepherd! If you're the victim of some violence or accident, so be it, you're still safe in Jesus and He's already given you eternal life!

So, make hearing or reading your Shepherd's Word a priority, a regular habit, the first thing you do, not because you have to or are commanded to, but because you WANT to, because it's your Shepherd's voice that gives you true security, the security you vitally need for life.

What amazing grace to know this! You rest securely in the loving hands of your all-powerful Lord and Shepherd and that is true security. Amen.

It was a celebration of an event that occurred about 200 years prior. What had happened was the Syrian commander had taken over Judah and a guy named Antiochus Epiphanes had desecrated and defiled the Temple- even sacrificing a pig on the altar to the false god Jupiter! 3 years later a Jew named Judas Maccabeus led a revolt that ended in a rededication and purification of the temple.

Have you ever felt really secure? You're at peace. You know everything is the way its supposed to be and you feel good about it. Things are great. But the problem is that we spend most of our lives in insecurity. You know what that's like, right?

Everyone wants to have security, everyone wants to feel secure, no one wants to be full of trouble, turmoil, doubt, and worry.

We like security in our lives. We like to know that we have job security, that we are needed, that we won't be begging for a job on the unemployment line. We like to know that we have financial security, that our investments are safe, that we have a solid savings account, that we'd be able to weather a financial trouble. The intention of the government's social security program was to ensure your financial and medical security when you retire. We like to feel secure about who we are as people. "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me."

But what about being secure about the most important thing ever?

It seems to be a constant worry among Christians that though they believe now, will they always? Will I remain in the faith until the end?

The attacks against our faith are many.

But our Good Shepherd will never give up on us, will never leave us, as we are into His Word and hearing His voice we rest securely in His hands and no one and nothing can snatch us from that position.

And it is having that security resting in our Shepherd's hand that gives us security in every other aspect of our lives. If you are resting securely in your Good Shepherd's hand, can anything someone says to you change that? If no one can pluck you out of Jesus' hand, could there ever be something that happens to you that will tear your faith away?

Jesus isn't going to give up on us, our Good Shepherd isn't going to abandon us, God isn't going to forget about us, but we can turn away from Him, we can abandon Him, we choose to ignore our Shepherd's voice and go astray. And we do that. We do that when we let our priorities get messed up

The devil wants nothing more than to lead you astray. The devil's main goal is to get you to fall away. He will try and try but what he cannot do is rob you of your salvation. The devil can't do it. He can use temptations in order to get you to turn from your Savior, but he can't turn you.

The most important security that we can have in life is the security given us by God, assuring us of His protection as our Shepherd, but we often concern ourselves more with the security of a temporal world, which has the danger of jeopardizing our eternal life if it causes us to turn from our Savior and the true security that he offers us.

Resting in the hands of Jesus you have true security for your life.