

# SPECIAL FOCUS SAFE AND SECURE: OUR ETERNAL SECURITY IN CHRIST

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## INTRODUCTION

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A United Nations survey found that people's sense of safety and security is low throughout the world, even in the wealthiest countries.<sup>8</sup> Worldwide insecurity is matched by a lack of trust. With the instability and unrest in the world, we can understand why people would feel this way, but for many followers of Christ, they experience insecurity in their relationship with Christ. This insecurity is unnecessary because the Bible points us to the security we have in Christ.

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## Writer Bio

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### Jeff Lorg

wrote the special focus study. He is a husband, father, and grandfather who has been pursuing growth in his faith for more than fifty years. He is the president and CEO of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention. He has served in various roles from church planter to denominational executive—while on a lifelong search for the world's best barbecue restaurant.

### Courtney Lester

adapted the special focus study for the *YOU* audience. She is a Milwaukee native, with degrees from Fisk University and Washington University in St. Louis. As First Lady, she's committed to empowering others through Jesus's teachings. Above all, Courtney values her roles as a child of God, wife to Dr. Justin Lester and mother to Camden, considering these her greatest accomplishments.

# CAN I LOSE MY SALVATION?

Leader pages on pp. 128-131

**THE POINT:**  
GOD KEEPS HIS  
CHILDREN SECURELY  
IN HIS HANDS.

## JOHN 10:7-11, 14-18, 27-30

<sup>7</sup> Jesus said again, “Truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep.

<sup>8</sup> All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep didn’t listen to them.

<sup>9</sup> I am the gate. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture.

<sup>10</sup> A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.

<sup>11</sup> I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

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<sup>14</sup> **“I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me,**

<sup>15</sup> just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. I lay down my life for the sheep.

<sup>16</sup> But I have other sheep that are not from this sheep pen; I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. Then there will be one flock, one shepherd.

<sup>17</sup> This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life so that I may take it up again.

<sup>18</sup> No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

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<sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand.

<sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.

<sup>30</sup> I and the Father are one.”

### MEMORY VERSE

### KEYWORDS

#### **The good shepherd (vv. 11,14)–**

It identifies Jesus as the model shepherd in contrast to the hired hand (v. 12) who does not care for the sheep (v. 13).

**Other sheep (v. 16)–**These other sheep likely represent Gentiles who would believe in Him as their Savior and Lord.

**Eternal Life (v. 28)–**The sheep who enter by the gate and follow the good shepherd receive eternal life.

**Will never perish (v. 28)–***Will never.* The strongest negative in the Greek. It carries the sense of no possibility of any decay that would end in a total loss.

# WHAT MAKES OUR SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST SECURE?

When I was just a young one, maybe six years old, my Sunday School teacher did something that stuck with me for life. She took off her wedding ring, placed it in my little hands, and told me, "Hold onto this ring as tight as you can." Then, she wrapped her bigger hands around mine and asked, "Now, do you think anyone can take this ring from us?" Of course, I said, "No way!"

My teacher wanted me to understand something powerful about our salvation. Just like that ring, God holds us so tight in His hands that nothing—no one—can snatch us away. It's not about how

strong we hold on, but how strong He holds onto us. Salvation is a gift from God, and He is the one who keeps it safe, not us.

Now, we all have moments when life gets tough, and we might start doubting, wondering if our grip on faith is slipping. Let's discover how God sustains us, even in our weaknesses and doubts.

## We Enter by Christ // John 10:7-11

Jesus painted a picture for us—calling Himself the gate of the sheep pen and the good shepherd. Now, this isn't just some Bible talk. In our terms, Jesus is like the front door to our home and the one who watches over us once we're inside. He's the way to salvation and the one who makes sure we're safe once we're in.

Jesus used two metaphors to describe Himself as the Source and Sustainer of our salvation. He began by twice calling Himself the gate of the sheep pen and then twice describing Himself as a good shepherd. The gate symbolizes Jesus as the way of salvation. He contrasted those who use the gate with thieves and robbers who slip over the fence rather than enter the right way. Jesus is the true means of salvation—the gateway to a relationship with God.

People nowadays have all kinds of voices trying to lead them in different directions—some might even sound good, but only Jesus is the real deal. Just like how your grandmother might say, "Not everything that glitters is gold," not every spiritual path leads to God. Jesus is the only way, and His resurrection is the proof that He's the One to trust.

Many people believe all religions are valid and any expression of spirituality is sufficient to find salvation. The Bible does not teach this. Christians believe Jesus is the only way of salvation. Critics consider us narrow-minded and judgmental. We are neither. We simply follow Jesus and take Him at His word. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). When Jesus described



## THE POINT: GOD KEEPS HIS CHILDREN SECURELY IN HIS HANDS.

Himself as the gate of salvation, He communicated this reality with a powerful symbol. Jesus underscored, "If anyone enters by me, he will be saved." Clearly, Jesus wanted us to know He is the only way of salvation.

Jesus further underscored His saving work by contrasting which voice the sheep listen to and which they reject. He had earlier commented that His sheep hear His voice and follow Him (John 10:3). The thieves and robbers of the story tried calling sheep to follow them as well, but to no avail. Salvation comes to those who respond to the right voice—the voice of Jesus.

### HOW HAVE YOU SEEN THE ENEMY STEAL, KILL, AND DESTROY IN OUR CULTURE?

Many voices are calling for your attention today, ranging from people you know personally to the incessant noise from anonymous hordes on social media. Who are you listening to today? Make sure you listen to Jesus more than any other voice clamoring for your attention.

There are three different aspects of sheep herding mentioned in this passage: the sheep, the gate, and the shepherd. Jesus called Himself "the good shepherd" He shifted the metaphor from being a gate (the means by which sheep entered their pen) to the shepherd (the person who cared for the sheep). Jesus was using an extended metaphor, meaning He was drawing various themes from a common element of first-century culture: shepherding sheep. Jesus is the means of salvation and the sustainer of the saved. He is the way you enter salvation and the one who nurtures your growth as a believer. He is your Savior and Sustainer.

The same way you listen for your mama's voice in a crowd, we need to tune our ears to hear Jesus' voice above all the noise—whether it's from folks around us or the chaos of social media. He's the good shepherd, the one who looks out for us, who knows when we're hurting, who steps in when we're too tired to keep going. He's got our back, no matter what.

### We Are Known by Christ // John 10:14-18

Jesus and God have a unique, intimate relationship. They are not only Father and Son, but two co-equal parts of the Trinitarian Godhead. While that is a wondrous mystery, it is also awe-inspiring. God and Jesus enjoy unparalleled togetherness, intermingled in ways we cannot fully describe but appreciate as a perfect example of unified companionship.

Jesus knows us just as well. He doesn't see us as just a number in a crowd or some nameless face in the pews. He knows us, each by



### DIGGING DEEPER THE GOOD SHEPHERD'S PROMISE

In John 10:28, Jesus makes a profound promise: "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand." This assurance is not based on our ability to hold onto Him, but on His promise to hold onto us. The imagery of the shepherd emphasizes not just care, but the protective power that keeps us secure. Jesus' promise is a direct reflection of God's steadfast nature. In the New Testament, Jesus is identified as God's Shepherd (Matt. 2:6). Jesus spoke of Himself in the role of shepherd in regard to His mission (Matt. 15:24; John 10:1-30) and in parables (Luke 15:3-7). He spoke of the people as "sheep without a shepherd" (Matt. 9:36; Mark 6:34) and "lost sheep" (Matt. 15:24). Our salvation rests in the hands of the One who has overcome the world, ensuring that nothing can separate us from His love.

**How does knowing Jesus as the Good Shepherd change your perspective on your eternal security?**

name, just like your mama knows your voice or the way your granddaddy knows how you walk.

When Jesus described His relationship to you, He compared it to how closely He relates to His Father. He said, “I know my own, and my own know me, just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father” As our Good Shepherd, Jesus knows us intimately and cares for us passionately. We are not numbered livestock in a corporate holding pen. We are named followers who are individually known as part of God’s family.

There are times when we feel left out or like we don’t matter. Maybe folks have shunned you because of where you’re from or how you look. Jesus isn’t like that. He sees you, knows your struggles, and loves you enough to lay down His life for you. That’s love deeper than we can fully grasp. It’s not a temporary fix; it’s eternal, solid as a rock.

Jesus gave His life willingly, out of love for us. He didn’t have to, but He chose to because He wants us in His family forever. If He went through all that, there’s no way He’s gonna let us slip away now.

Think about the depth of His sacrifice and the cost He paid to secure your salvation! Since Jesus went to this extreme to assure your salvation, does it make any sense to assume it can easily be lost? Not at all. When Jesus paid the ultimate price for your salvation, it was for a permanent solution to your separation from God—not a temporary one based on the ups and downs of life.

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU THAT JESUS REALLY KNOWS YOU?

## We Are Kept by Christ //

**John 10:27-30**

In the ancient world, shepherds often gathered their flocks together for protection (of the sheep) and companionship (among shepherds often isolated from others by their work). The sheep would intermingle, but when it was time to reassemble as a particular flock and move to a new location, the sheep would respond only to the voice of their shepherd.



Shepherds would call their sheep by name, and even if the sheep were mixed up with others, they knew the voice of their shepherd. That’s how it is with Jesus. He referenced this earlier when He said a shepherd “calls his own sheep by name and leads them out” (John 10:3). Against this backdrop, Jesus then added, “My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me.” We know His voice, and He knows ours.

Jesus speaks today through the Bible and through people who communicate truth from the Bible. When you heard the gospel (the good news about Jesus), you responded positively. This is a good sign you are one of His sheep. You did not reject the message but embraced it, leading to your conversion. You heard Jesus’s voice and responded to Him. In terms of the biblical metaphor, you were part of a larger flock (all people), but you heard the voice of Jesus and followed Him (becoming part of His unique flock).

One of the marks of your salvation was hearing Jesus’s voice and responding to Him. Jesus speaks today through the Bible and through people who communicate truth from the Bible. When you heard the gospel (the good news about Jesus), you responded positively. This is a good sign you are one of His sheep. You did not reject the message but embraced it, leading to your conversion. You heard Jesus’s voice and responded to Him Jesus says that once we’re His, we’ve got eternal life, and that life doesn’t start when we die; it starts the moment we come to Him. We’re secure in His

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hands, just like that ring I held as a boy. Nothing can take us out of His hands, and His grip is tighter than anything we can imagine.

Jesus promised that, once He gives a person eternal life, “no one will snatch them out of my hand” and then added, “No one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.” God and Jesus have us in their hands! That’s powerful imagery of the security of our salvation since, as Jesus said, “My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all.” God is greater than all. That means we are secure from every threat, personal tragedy, sinful shortcoming, maiming accident, and even death. All means all. God holds us securely in their hands and nothing can violate their protection.

Life might throw some curveballs our way—health issues, family struggles, even our own mistakes—but none of that can separate us from God’s love. We’re sealed by the Holy Spirit, wrapped up in God’s eternal protection.

### HOW DOES KNOWING WE ARE SECURE IN CHRIST CHANGE THE WAY WE LIVE?

### DID YOU KNOW?

African American spirituals often conveyed profound truths about God’s protection and care. Songs like “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands” reflect a deep-seated belief in God’s sovereignty and security. These spirituals, born out of oppression and suffering, resonated with the assurance that God is in control, holding His people securely. This was not just about earthly survival, but a trust in eternal security through Christ. For generations, these songs reminded believers that, despite external circumstances, their souls were safe in God’s hands. The Bible provides many references to the power and provision of God’s hand.

- Exodus 15:6
- Isaiah 48:13
- Psalm 63:8
- Psalm 118:16

**Biblical Truth:** Nothing can snatch us out of the mighty hand of God.

**How can knowing the power in God’s hands give security in His eternal protection?**

## LIVE IT

### How does understanding that your salvation is secure in Jesus influence your daily decisions?

Recognizing that Jesus, our Good Shepherd, firmly holds our salvation transforms our daily experience of faith. It frees us from the crippling fear of losing our salvation due to failures or setbacks. This profound security invites us to live boldly, engage more deeply in our faith practices, and extend grace to others, knowing that our eternal state is not contingent on our perfect performance but on Christ’s perfect sacrifice.

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- **Trust Christ.** When doubt creeps in, remember that your security starts with trusting Christ. Talk to someone you trust, dive into the Word, and remind yourself of His promises.
- **Memorize Scripture.** Keep John 10:27-30 close to your heart. When doubt comes, hold onto something small and remind yourself that you’re more secure in God’s hands than that object is in yours.
- **Embrace God’s Truth.** Don’t let your feelings lead you astray. Base your decisions on what the Bible says, not just on how you feel in the moment.



# DAILY READINGS

## 1. THE GATE TO LIFE // JOHN 10:7-11

Gates have multiple purposes. Gates provide security to prevent unauthorized access, privacy, and protection. They also provide safety so that who or whatever is inside does not wander out. Reflect on Jesus as the gate to abundant life. Consider how entering through Him changes your perspective on security and abundance. Today, meditate on the ways Jesus provides more than just eternal salvation, but a rich, full life now. How can you more fully embrace this abundant life He offers? Think on the things that His gate has protected you from, kept you from wandering into, and shielded the world from knowing.

**Lord, I thank You for not only being the Good Shepherd but the Gatekeeper!**

## 2. KNOWN BY THE SHEPHERD // JOHN 10:14-18

"I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father" (John 10:14). Ponder the depth of being known by Christ, much like a shepherd knows his flock. Jesus's intimate knowledge of us assures that He cares deeply for our well-being. In our life we will get to know many people and they will come to know us. Some may even get the chance to meet someone they deem famous. Yet, none of these encounters come close to the encounter we will have with Christ. None are as precious as being known by Him. Not only does He know us but He willingly died for us in spite of what He knew. How does knowing that Jesus laid down His life for you personally affect your sense of security in Him?

**To be known is to be loved and there is no greater love than "to lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).**

## 3. SECURE IN HIS HANDS // JOHN 10:27-30

To be secure is to feel safe. To have the ability to live free from worry and doubt. Many people have security systems on their homes to secure it from

invasion. When they sleep or leave, they set the alarm, "securing" their home. They are able to sleep or leave their home trusting they are secure. While security systems do their best, they still may not prevent an intrusion. In contrast, Christ offers a divine security system. Focus on the promise that no one can snatch you from Jesus's hands. This powerful assurance highlights the eternal security we possess. Reflect on areas of your life where you need to trust in the security of His grip rather than your own strength.

**There is no greater place to be than in the will of God and no safer place than the hands of God.**

## 4. SEALED BY THE SPIRIT // EPHESIANS 1:13-14

When the United States Department of Agriculture seals a product it means the product has met the standards and customers have a guarantee the food item is authentic. In medieval times, kings would place their seal on a document to authenticate important documents and approval. Meditate on the role of the Holy Spirit as the seal, authenticator, of your salvation. The Spirit's presence in your life is a guarantee of your inheritance in Christ. How does the Spirit's seal influence your daily walk with God?

**"And don't grieve God's Holy Spirit. You were sealed by him for the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30).**

## 5. NOTHING CAN SEPARATE US // ROMANS 8:38-39

Contemplate the powerful love of God from which nothing can separate us. "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Identify ways you can demonstrate this unshakable confidence in God's love to others.

**Because we have access through the Son, we are eternally sealed by the Holy Spirit, never to be separated from the Father.**