

August 11, 2019 Faith Is Like The Canadian Shield Pt. 7 John 10:22-30

This morning we are concluding this series which has highlighted basic doctrines of the Christian Faith which form a foundation on which Christian understanding rests. It began with “we are lost in sin...no buts...no ands...no exceptions.” Pt. 2 was, “we are chosen by God for salvation.” Pts. 3, 4, and 5 were “we are saved through faith in Jesus, who died in our place on Calvary’s cross.” Pt. 6 was, “we are renewed and transformed by the Holy Spirit.” This morning in Pt. 7 we tend to this: “we are held safe in God’s care forever...no matter what appears to be happening...no matter our inability to understand why.”

The single verse for part 7 is from John’s Gospel chapter 10, verse 28. Jesus says of HIS sheep, His lambs, those who follow HIM, “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.” Jesus has just been challenged to declare plainly that HE is the Christ. Jesus says I have told you plainly. And you have seen the miracles that are part of my ministry. He states that he understands that those who are attacking HIM in this incident are not followers of His. He states three things about HIS followers. They listen to His voice. We do, you and I. Secondly Jesus knows us. He does. Thirdly, we follow HIM we do. It is interesting what Jesus does not say about us. HE does not say that we are perfect. We are not. HE does not say that we understand everything.

We do not. You do not. I do not. But such as we are...with our flaws and limitations, we follow HIM. We do.

And then Jesus says three more things about HIS followers, HIS disciples, HIS lambs. The first of these is “I give them eternal life.” What John is saying in this 10th chapter of his account of Jesus ministry, HIS arrest, His crucifixion and HIS resurrection on the 3rd day, the Sunday morning, is that Jesus made this declaration. HE made it about the 12, Peter, James and John; Andrew for whom this congregation is identified. I hope you remember one of the chief characteristics of Andrew. Andrew brought Peter to Jesus. That is our legacy: we bring people to meet Jesus. Andrew declared “we have found the Messiah!” Jesus makes a declaration about those who follow HIM. “I give them eternal life.”

It was not just the 12 to whom those words applied. They applied to the 120 that gathered in the upper room on Easter morning. They had followed Jesus in Galilee listening to his teaching. Watching the miracles unfold. They had a level of expectation that was faithful. They expected significant things to happen around Jesus and with HIM. Jesus said, “I give them eternal life.” He said it about the 3000 that came to faith at Pentecost. He said it about Saul who became Paul. He said it about the Gentiles who responded to Paul and Barnabas when they witnessed. He said it about you. You are followers of Jesus. Imperfect. Flawed. But still following. “I give them eternal life.”

There are moments when we do not take that all that seriously. But here we are. A church in Stirling. Forty to fifty seniors and our loved ones. This is what Jesus said about you when people were challenging Him. Preparing to harm HIM physically. Wanting to destroy HIM. The crucifixion looming. "I give them eternal life." Yogi Berra the great catcher for the New York Yankees, said, "It aint over till the fat lady sings." And another time he said, "It aint over till its over." Get used to the idea. Jesus said these things about you. HE said you are one of HIS lambs. A follower of HIS. Part of His flock. He said, "I give them (meaning you) eternal life."

We are held safe in God's care forever. That does not mean we will not suffer death of our physical bodies. We will in all probability. When it is time. But that will not be the end of living and life. Jesus said of His followers, the lambs, "I give them eternal life." It is not something you have to receive, HE gave it to you. Me too. It is ours to keep.

Secondly, Jesus said this about you and I. "And they shall not perish." He said, "I give them eternal life, and. That is a very small but a very significant word...and. It means, "in addition." I give them eternal life. In addition, they shall not perish. One of the things I do as a minister is I conduct funerals. Sometimes when our spirits are low we ministers say, "Nobody wants us until they need us. We hatch them. We match them and we dispatch them." We celebrate the birth of babies. Infant baptism. We celebrate weddings. We are trusted to bring

blessings from God at a wedding. And we are needed when people are mourning the loss of a loved one. We officiate at the burial of the dead. We hold those who are left behind as they weep. In light of the grave, death and dying. Remember that Jesus said this about you. It is to be treasured. "I give them eternal life and in addition, they shall not perish."

We are held safe in God's care. We, lost sinners who believe Jesus and follow HIM. We are held safe in God's care no matter what it is that appears to be happening. You know where I have been. And I tell you it is as solid as the pink granite of the Canadian shield. We are held safe in God's care no matter what it is that appears to be happening. It is a matter of time until I die. Jesus has given me eternal life. And I will not perish even though my body will become dust from which it was once created. We are held safe in God's care no matter what appears to be happening. Jesus said, I give them eternal life, and they shall not perish.

Jesus calmly looked into the eyes of those who wanted to destroy HIM. He told them basic facts about HIS followers. I give them eternal life. And they shall not perish. And thirdly: "no one can snatch them out of my hand." Death and disease cannot do it. Satan and all the evil of the world cannot do it. Sin cannot do it. Are you afraid that you are not good enough? Are you fearful that you will get caught for breaking the rules? It is not about keeping the rules. Or being good enough. It is about following Jesus. Listening to HIS

words. Celebrating HIS stories and experiences. Remembering the miracles. Water into wine at a wedding when the wine ran out. When the wine ran out. When the purchased wine had been drunk. The feeding of the 5,000. A tray of dinner rolls and a couple of small fish. A blessing prayer by Jesus. 5,000 men ate their fill, and their women and children...a lot more than 5,000. The grace of God. It was because they had followed Jesus they were hungry. They didn't know HE was going to teach all day. There were no super markets, no restaurants on that beach and they had little money. The twelve had little money and said so.

“No one can snatch them from my hand.” That is what Jesus said. The miracles were signs that HIS words were sound. People who question the miracles question that God is God. That Jesus is the God who is God. I stood at the tallest corner of the wall of the Temple in Jerusalem. The place where Satan tempted and tested Jesus begging HIM to bow down before the power of darkness. There is a lot of darkness in the world. Rank evil. Cancerous anger that wants to destroy. So far this year there have been over 275 mass shootings in the land of the free and the home of the brave alone. Darkness. Jesus dismissed Satan with a word from God's word. And Satan had no choice. He obeyed Jesus because he had to obey Jesus. “No one can snatch them out of my hand.” Those words are about you. The grace of God. Faith. Safety. John 10, verse 28. What it means is: we are held safe in God's care forever...no matter

what appears to be happening...no matter our inability to understand why.

Jesus gives you eternal life, and you shall not perish; no one can snatch you from HIS hand. Jesus Christ is Lord!

Let us pray;

I have enjoyed using some of my favourite hymns and some hymns I do not know as prayers this summer. This morning 2 verses from my favouritest hymn. It is not in our book although Beth Sharp included it in the little St. Andrew's volume from which we sing when we are in the upper room. I pray you will find it meaningful. Let us pray.

When peace like a river attendeth my way/
When sorrows like sea billows roll/
Whatever my lot thou hast taught me to say/
It is well...it is well, with my soul/
My sin,...O the joy of this glorious thought/
My sin, not in part...but the whole/
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more.
Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord,
O my soul...It is well...with my soul...it is well...with my soul.

Amen