

**Sermon Series: “The Good News for Life”**  
***The Only True Security***  
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**Sunday, August 30, 2020**

Where is your personal security? What makes you feel safest in life? There are probably a lot of answers to that question— people, houses, health, the success of our favorite political party— but probably one of them is Social Security. But as of late in our nation’s history, Social Security can be a cause of concern. E.g., I recall a few years ago I went to a planning for retirement seminar and the issue of Social Security came up with the question-- will it be there for us when we retire? The gentleman addressed this question with confidence. He said that although the way Social Security is now it will run out of funds in the 2030s, this can be solved by charging more taxes and/or increasing the highest income level that can be charged the Social Security tax. He assuringly said there was no way the government would allow this benefit to run out of money. I recall feeling great relief at his confidence that whenever I retire, all the money I am paying into Social Security now will be there for me in my twilight years. But then it also made me start to do some self-examination. Would I feel secure and safe in life if it were not there? Is Social Security the basis for my security in life? Or is there something more as a Christian? Jesus seems to answer that in today’s text.

READ John 10:22-30 (p. 104)

**CONTEXT:** Jesus has just shared that He is the Good Shepherd who willingly lays down His life for His sheep. He is now interrogated by the Jewish religious leaders on exactly who He is claiming to be.

Our passage begins with Jesus at the Temple in Jerusalem at the time of the festival of Dedication. READ vv 22-23. Now if you have kept up with the Old Testament festivals, you will recall Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, and thus the festival of Dedication is not among them, and the sole mention in the New Testament of this festival of Dedication (ἐγκαίνια) is here. The other names for this festival are the Feast of Lights and, that which we are more familiar, Hanukkah. The story of Hanukkah takes place in 1 Maccabees, part of the Catholic Church's Deutercanonical books and Protestant's Old Testament Apochrypha. 1 Maccabees is a historically respected work which tells of a time of crisis for the Jews in Judea around 165 BC. Alexander the Great's kingdom has been broken up and the Seleucid king Antiochus Epihanes began to rule over the Jews. He wanted a united kingdom on the principles of Greek culture, Hellenism, and he ordered a statue of a pagan god (according to 2 Maccabees 6:1-2 it was Zeus) to be placed on the altar in the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, and any who followed the Jewish way of life under the covenant would be put to death. This aroused the wrath of the Jews, and under Judas Maccabaeus the Jews were victorious in battle over the Seleucids and for the first time since before the Babylonian exile the Jews lived as a free and sovereign nation, and this continued for about 100 years. The date which celebrates this victory is the 25th of Chislev (1 Maccabees 4:52-59)— which approximates to our December— when the new altar was dedicated. It is around this time that Jesus is in Jerusalem walking on the east side of the Temple on Solomon's portico or colonnade.

READ vv 24-26. "The skeptical Jewish leaders again interrogate Jesus and they want Him to talk "turkey"! But Jesus is rightly skeptical of their intent. Cf. Jeremiah 42:1-6; 43:1-5." The Jews are not interested in Jesus' answer so they

can follow Him, but rather so they can be further antagonistic toward Him. Thus the question is more of an attempt at entrapment than an inquiry. It is like asking a husband, “Have you stopped beating your wife?” A yes or no question will get the husband in trouble! Politicians use these types of questions and get these types of questions all the time. E.g., when Brett Kavanaugh was being vetted by the U.S. Senate before he became U.S. Supreme Court justice, he was asked this by Kamala Harris: “Can you think of any laws that give the government the power to make decisions about the male body?” (from *Time*, August 31-September 7, 2020; p. 31). Sometimes teenagers can ask their parents such questions. E.g., why can’t I go out with my friends tonight? The question is not a sincere one, really wanting to learn from the parents why they cannot go. And the Jewish people have a history of being skeptical of God’s leading and asking questions they don’t really want an answer. In Jeremiah 42 the Jews come to Jeremiah to ask him whether God wants them to stay in Judea under Babylonian rule or flee to Egypt and they promise whatever he senses the Lord telling him they will obey; Jeremiah tells them God wants them to stay in Judea under Babylonian rule, and the Jews don’t believe him and they flee to Egypt! A guy named Azariah tells Jeremiah, “You are telling a lie” (Jeremiah 43:2). The Jewish leaders are similarly insincere in their question to Jesus. Jesus answers them that He has told them plainly— and His words about being the Good Shepherd echo the messianic expectations of Ezekiel 34— and His works testify to Him— but not just because He works miracles. But because the miracles point to the work of God in the age to come, like opening the eyes of the blind in John 9; cf. Isaiah 42:6-9, READ.

READ vv 28-30. “Jesus asserts that those who know the answer to the Jews’ question are His sheep, and they are thus in the safest place they could ever be. Jesus and the Father are in such agreement on this that they are one! Cf. John 1:1; 5:19-23; 6:39-40. ‘So responsive is the Son to the Father that he is one in mind, one in purpose, one in action with him. Where the eternal well-being of

true believers is concerned, the Son's determination and pledge to guard them from harm is endorsed by the Father's word and confirmed by the Father's all-powerful act' (F.F. Bruce, *John*, p. 233). ' . . . the oneness of Father and Son is a oneness of love and obedience even while it is a oneness of essence' (C.K. Barrett, *John*, p. 382)." We have a better view of how the Trinity works here, how it exists, as New Testament scholars F.F. Bruce and C.K. Barrett explain. Where is the most important security and safest place for the follower of Jesus? It is in God's hands—the Son and the Father. In their hands eternal life can never be lost; they will never perish. E.g., I recall talking to a 99 year old woman in the hospital once and I shared these words with her on Jesus securing for us eternal life, and she said to me that that is what has been keeping her going in life. E.g., I think also of Mrs. Biddy Chambers, the wife of Oswald Chambers, who lost her husband Oswald when he was 42; she loved him dearly, and clung to the truth of the resurrection and one day being reunited with him; she furthered the legacy of Oswald by piecing together notes from his talks she made in shorthand and she produced the book *My Utmost for His Highest*; her story can be found in *Mrs. Oswald Chambers: The Woman Behind the World's Bestselling DEvotional* by Michelle Ule. We long to know that this life is not all there is, and there is something inside us that simply *cannot* and *will not* believe that this is all there is. E.g., on the idea of longings, C.S. Lewis made an argument that goes like this— if we long for food, that is a desire that can be satisfied; the same with romance; and the same goes for our longing for meaning and purpose and existence beyond this life— it is a yearning meant to be satisfied. E.g., I recall once C.S. Lewis telling some Christian friends goodbye at Victoria Station in London and he did not know if he would ever see them again, and after he walked away a little distance he turned back to his friends and shouted out, "Christians *never* say goodbye!" Indeed, he was right. We say, as the French say, *au revoir!*

“Where is your and my security?” Is it in social security? Or is it in eternal security?