



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

John 10: 22-31

Fall 2022

"Eternal Life"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Chris, and good morning. It's a joy to be with you on this sunny Sunday morning with the air that has got a nice, crisp, coolness to it, and to be in this text, this great passage of Scripture; John, chapter 10. We're moving through it and we're in verse 22 this morning through verse 31. And the temperature was cool when our Lord is walking through the temple, as we read in verse 22,

²² At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; ²³ it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon. ²⁴ The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

[I want to stop and just make a comment here. I was with a number of you in the adult class this morning where Mark was teaching Luke chapter 9, and there the question was put by the Lord, "Who do the people say that I am?" (vs18). And then, "But who do you say that I am?" (vs20). The "people" gave different answers; then Peter gave the right answer, You're "The Christ of God." (vs20b).

Now we have the Jewish leaders putting the question to our Lord; basically, 'Who do you say that you are? Are you the Christ?' Now there's a great difference between those two passages because Peter answered out of faith—and the others, (the apostles), believe that, too.

And the Lord went on to say in Luke 9, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the leaders, and be killed and be raised on the third day." (vs22).

Well here we have the leaders asking that question. But they're not asking it out of faith—they have rejected Him. The Lord knows that, as we see in a moment, and they are asking for a pretext to put Him to death. What a difference!

Mark made the point that the way one answers that question is crucial. Those who believe have eternal life. Those who don't have the opposite—have death. And what we see here is the determining factor—and all of that ultimately is the LORD's sovereign grace. So they ask the question, and they say,]

^{24b} ...If You are the Christ, tell us plainly. ²⁵ Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. *(Well right there He's given them the answer.)* ²⁶ But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. ²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ I and the Father are one."

(And here we see the real heart of these men in verse 31,)

³¹ The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.

John 10: 22-31

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word and bless our time of studying it together. May it be a rich, enjoyable, sanctifying time. Let's pray.

LORD, that's what we want from You: We want to know You better. We follow You, but we recognize that our obedience is not as it should be, our faith is weak. But we're here to change that—and this is how it's changed, through Your Word, through the study of it, through the fellowship of the saints which is around the Word of God and around the elements, the LORD's Supper that we'll take shortly after. It is all of this that You use to change us and to strengthen us, that we might follow You well.

And so we ask for that, Father. We rejoice; we, who have put our faith in Your Son, rejoice in Your sovereign grace because that's the cause of it all, ultimately. And we praise You and thank You for that.

It's good to remember that we are spiritually unable in and of ourselves—because in knowing that we look to You as, really, helpless saints who can only grow and advance through You and Your power. And that's humbling—and it ought to be for it causes us to look to You. And that's what we do this morning, LORD. We're looking to You to bless us. Help us to think clearly as we go through this text. Help us to understand what You said, what You said through Your Son, what the Triune God says—and may we rejoice in it; and may it stimulate us to a life of obedience and godliness.

We thank You, LORD, that we are 'in Your hand', as Jesus says. And we're in Your hand and can never be lost. But 'in Your hand' means we also are provided for in the material things of life. You not only give us eternal life but all that comes with that—life with Christ. And it's life in which You supply all the needs that we have every day; spiritually and materially.

So, we look to You to bless. We mention names, but there's so many of us, LORD, who need prayer. We all need Your constant attention. And for all who are dealing with difficulties of one kind or another, we pray that You'd bless, and encourage, and strengthen, and bring all of us through the difficulties, the storms of life, safely. And may we glorify You in it.

May we glorify You now, Father, as we sing our next hymn. May we worship You in it and may You be glorified in the way we attend to Your Word, and respond to it. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

(Message) Well we come in our studies of John's Gospel, to one of the great texts of Scripture, and one that one Christian writer called, "One of the grandest thoughts in the Bible." It's the subject of *eternal life*.

It's not the first time Jesus has talked about eternal life. In John chapter 3, verse 16, it is the promise given to all of those who believe in Him: Those who

"...believe in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." It's unending life, and life that can never be lost by us. That's indicated in the term itself. It is *eternal*—not temporal.

But that great truth is explained more fully in this passage when Jesus said, "I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish." (vs28). Never means never...that is one of the grandest thoughts. The believer in Jesus Christ is absolutely secure—now and forever. That fact is the basis of our assurance as Christians. It's a very important doctrine to understand. And without that, I think our spiritual growth is stunted. Without that it's very difficult to advance in the Christian faith.

And this eternal life that He speaks of here is free. It's given to us by Christ. It's given. It's a gift. It is not inherited; it isn't earned. It isn't in any way something that we deserve. It is a free gift, bought for us by Christ—and received by us through faith...and faith alone.

Now that's the promise and the lesson that the Lord gave one day when He was in the temple. 'It happened in wintertime'; that's how the passage begins in verse 22. The Lord was in Jerusalem. It was the time of the Feast of Dedication—which is Hanukkah. *Hanukkah* is Hebrew for *dedication*. It celebrates the cleansing of the temple after the Syrian king, Antiochus Epiphanes set up a statue of Zeus in the sanctuary and sacrificed a pig on the altar.

He had conquered Jerusalem in 167 BC, and he wanted to Hellenize the country and the people—turn them into Greeks. The Jews revolted under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus, 'Judah the Hammer.' They defeated Antiochus, recaptured the temple, and rededicated it to God on December 14, 164 BC. The Jews celebrated for eight days and from that time on the Jewish people have celebrated the deliverance during the month of December.

By the time of our Lord, that was the last great deliverance the Jews had known. And it became, in the minds of many, a symbol of the hope that God would again deliver His people. Josephus gave an account of the institution of Hanukkah in which he said it

came to be known as 'the Festival of Lights' because it symbolized hope. Today, of course, the Jewish people celebrate it by lighting a candle on each of the eight days.

Now John tells us that Jesus was in Jerusalem and walking in the temple at that time, (during the Feast of the Dedication). It was no accident that He was there then: During the Festival of Lights, the 'Light of the World' was walking in His Father's house. As I say, that was no coincidence. And at that time, when the hope of deliverance was on the minds of the people, the Lord offered the people deliverance. He promised to give eternal life to His sheep, to those who follow Him. He'd recently called Himself the good shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep.

But the Jews wanted to know more. They wanted to know if He was the Messiah. It was winter, John tells us, mid-December when they found Him walking in the Portico of Solomon. Now that may be nothing more than a time note for the benefit of Gentiles who were reading this and weren't familiar with the time of the Feast of Dedication.

But then it may be something more than that. It may be something like Shakespeare's opening line of *Richard III*, "Now is the winter of our discontent." Richard wasn't talking about the weather; he was talking about his family's troubles. And John was describing more than the season of the year. It was not only the time of cold weather, it was a time of winter in the hearts of God's people. It was a time of winter in the relationship between the LORD and the Jewish people—their hearts were cold. And when they circled Jesus and asked Him to end the suspense and tell them plainly if He were Christ, if He were the Messiah, they weren't asking a friendly question. It was hostile.

The Lord knew their hearts; He knew their intentions. He knew that they had no real interest in the truth at all. That if He spoke plainly, as they were asking Him to do, they would not believe because they weren't believing in Him.

So He answered that, 'He had told them this'. He'd given them many indications of this and they hadn't believed. "The works that I do in My Father's name...", He said, "...these testify of Me." (vs25). In other words, everything that He had said and done,

much of which they'd witnessed, much of which they'd heard, all of that without declaring explicitly, "I am the Christ," was ample evidence of who He was—ample evidence that He was the Messiah. They'd already seen and heard all that they needed in order to believe.

But in spite of all the miracles that had taken place, all of the healings that He had done, and all of the clear instruction that He had given ... (you'll remember from chapter 7, when the temple police come back to the Sanhedrin, having been sent out to arrest Him, that they came back empty handed and the priests asking, "Where is He?" They said, "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks." (vs47). 'We've never heard teaching like this.' And these priests had not either.) ...and yet, they'd not believed. All of that and they'd not believed.

The Lord then explains the reason for their unbelief. He explains it in verse 26 and how they did not belong to His flock; "You do not believe because you are not of My sheep." Earlier in verse 14, He said 'His sheep, know Him'. In verse 27 He says, "My sheep hear My voice...and they follow Me."

Hearing is important. Later, for example, at the empty tomb in chapter 20, Mary Magdalene saw Jesus standing behind her as she turned. And when she saw Him, she thought she was looking at the gardener. She's looking right at Him, and she doesn't recognize Him. It wasn't until she heard Him *say* her name that she recognized Him. And then in the next chapter, in chapter 21 when Simon Peter is out on the Sea of Galilee fishing, and they're close to the shore, they see Him on the shore but Peter didn't recognize Him. But when he heard that "It is the Lord", (vs7), he knew who He was.

Hearing is emphasized here in this text, and in all of the Gospel of John—and all of the Scriptures, all of the Bible. Paul wrote, for example in Romans 10, verse 17, "Faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." It's supernatural.

We have ears to hear by grace; and we understand the meaning of Scripture by grace. But, that comes through Scripture. We need to study the Word of God. We need

to listen to it because we hear the Lord's voice in it. It is the Lord's voice—and as we hear it, it changes us.

Well these men didn't hear. These men didn't know Him. They didn't hear Him or follow Him because, as He explains, 'they're not His sheep'. The word order here is very important. It's something perhaps we can just skim over in our minds, but the word order is very important. You'll notice, the Lord didn't say, 'You are not My sheep because you do not believe', but, "You do not believe because you are not of My sheep." (vs26). Later He says in verse 29, 'His sheep are those whom His Father has "*given*" to Him.' His Father did not give these men to Him and therefore they were not able to hear and believe.

They wanted straight talk from the Lord. And He speaks very plainly to them; more plainly than they wanted to hear. Perhaps more plainly than many Christians want to hear for He speaks very clearly to us, in these words, with words that tell us of our complete dependence on the Lord for all that we are and have. In themselves, men and women are unable to come to Christ; men and women are unable to believe. Those who believe do so only because God acts in grace to elect them and give them to Christ.

Now, we're halfway through the Gospel of John and I hope you've noticed, as we've been going through this great Fourth Gospel, that you just can't get away from sovereign grace. And why would you want to?! What's more encouraging than that?! The Bible is all about God's free *gift* to people; God's free gift to mankind. Only He can save; only He can thaw a cold heart and bring warmth and summer to life that is spiritually dead. —And these men were; they were spiritually dead.

Now that doesn't excuse anyone of their responsibility to believe. The Bible never does that; it affirms human responsibility—it affirms it as much as it affirms divine sovereignty. We are all responsible for the things we choose to do, and think, and believe.

And the Lord had given clear and overwhelming evidence of who He is. The evidence for Him, I say, is overwhelming: The invitation to ‘come to Him’, to ‘believe in Him’ is freely offered to all. And all who desire to come may come; He holds no one back.

This notion, perhaps, that people might have that, ‘There are people out there; they really want to come, but the Lord said, “No, no, you can't come.” ’, is not the case at all. All who desire to come may come—He holds no one back. And those who do come, by His grace, come willingly and gladly because they see their great need; their great need of the Savior. And they respond to Him, so they “follow”. (vs27).

And that statement, that description of following is in the present tense. It means, ‘They continually follow in faith; their faith continues.’ They persevere in that faith and the obedience that comes from faith. Back in Luke chapter 9, where the Lord says, ‘Who do men say that I am?’ And Peter confesses that He is “The Christ of God.” (vs20). Jesus then speaks of those, ‘who come after Him’, (those who believe), that they must deny themselves and take up their cross, and they follow Him.’ (vs23).

And that's what we do. We realize ‘I'm not sufficient’ and then they deny themselves’, it's not perfect—and we struggle with that. And then we grow in denying ourselves, and in following Him; but that's what we do. And it is a consistent thing; it is in “the present tense”, as I said here. It characterizes the sheep, the Lord's people.

But they follow because they see it and they receive it only by sovereign grace. That response of “following” is the product of God's work within them. It is all a gift. The Lord says that plainly in the next verse. It's all a gift—and those who receive it are never disappointed. How could they be? He promised to give His sheep “*eternal life*.” What greater gift can anyone receive than that? He gives life without end. But not just life, it is the life that was lost through sin; the greatest possession that one could have, that Adam possessed and lost through sin. It's spiritual life—like God's life. It comes from Him, and it is a *present* blessing.

At the moment of faith in Christ we become new creatures. We have new hearts. We have new natures. We have a new relationship with God. We know God. And later Jesus defines in chapter 17, verse 3, eternal life as 'knowing God and Christ', 'knowing Him', 'knowing the Triune God'. And so what a privilege.

I had some picture come upon my computer screen that was a picture taken by the James Webb satellite, the camera that's out there that looks into deep space, (and we're seeing things we've never seen before). And on my screen there are all these disks of light out there, hundreds of them, (I didn't count them up, but hundreds of them). They're galaxies—and that's just a sliver of the universe that we're looking at. And I thought, "I've got this on my screen, and it's all there to just to look at—but the reality is, it's vast—Vast!" These are not our galaxy, but beyond it; other galaxies in this vast universe.

And yet, to the Lord God, it's just little speck. It's as nothing to Him. That's the Lord God—and we know Him; we have a relationship with Him. We're joined to His Son; we're joined to the Triune God—and we have peace with Him. 'Justice has been satisfied', as the song put it. We're forgiven by Him, we're adopted into His family, so that we have all of the rights and privileges of the Sons of God.

We know God, and we have power. It is life that gives power to enable us to live a life of obedience, to resist and overcome the sinful desires that are still there that we struggle with. So it is a powerful life, it is a pure life, it is a holy life, a clean life. That's the gift that God gives, and there's no greater gift than that. And it goes on forever. That's the real emphasis here. It is eternal; it does not end—ever.

"...and they will never perish", He says. (vs28). In the Greek text, it is stated as a double negative, to put emphasis on the point. It can be translated, "They shall by no means ever perish." That is security, what's sometimes referred to as "eternal security". And often described in the simple phrase, "Once saved, always saved."

Again, it's what Edwin Palmer called, "One of the grandest thoughts in the Bible." I agree with that. What can give more comfort and encouragement than to know that we are always secure—that Christ has settled the issues of sin and judgment once and

for all? We have eternal life, meaning we have eternal security. And we have it at the moment of faith. That is a grand thought.

And it's a great tragedy when people don't believe it, (and I'm speaking of Christian people). They live, as a result of that, frustrated and stunted lives from the fear of losing their salvation and wondering if they truly are saved. They know that they believed but, 'Are they still believing?', and struggling with that thought. I think we all go through that to some degree but it leads to frustration in the Christian life.

Well, the idea of losing the salvation that we have obtained through faith in Christ is completely impossible. The simplest proof for eternal security is in the very words of our Lord: What does He call it? He calls it "eternal life". It's eternal, not temporal. It is not life for a year, it's not life for 10 years, and it's not life for 100 years—but life forever. And if words mean anything, then these words mean that the life He gives to the believer is life without end.

But if that's not enough, the Lord piles up the proof and assurance with the next words. He calls His gift "eternal life", and promises that "none will perish"; then He says, "No one will snatch them out of My hand."(vs28c). Who won't snatch them out of His hand? "No one!"

Can it be any more comprehensive and absolute than that? The devil can't snatch the believer from Christ's hand. Bad teachers and bad friends can't do that. You can't even snatch yourself from the hand of our Lord. And we can't accidentally slip through His fingers. Now that truly is one of the grandest thoughts in the Bible, especially when we find ourselves helpless, as many believers have, and some of us likely will.

Alzheimer's has been called "the scourge of the century." The first person diagnosed with it in 1901 told Dr. Alzheimer, "I have lost myself." That's scary. It happens to Christians; we're not exempt from that or dementia. We're not exempt from any of the problems of life. When that happens, a person is no longer able to be self-aware,

to know who they are; no longer able to believe or understand the things that they believed and the hope that they have. They have lost themselves.

But the good news is, we can never lose our salvation. And why is that? Because the Lord cannot lose us. It's an impossibility. We are in His hand—and His hand is not weak. In the Bible, the hand is the place of power, it's the place of care. And Christ's hand was always that. Whenever He stretched out His hand, He did so with power and for blessing. He placed His hand on the sick; He touched lepers; He touched the eyes of the blind—and He healed them all. He touched the son of the widow of Nain and restored his life.

That's the hand of our Lord. It is life giving. It is a human hand because He became a man; but it is a human hand with divine power in it because He's the eternal Son of God. And it's secure; it's fail-safe. Nothing can overcome it or frustrate it. It is impossible to slip from the Lord's hand or be snatched out of it.

But to make that impossibility absolutely clear, the Lord adds another statement in verse 29, "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."

The Father is omnipotent. The Father is all powerful. He is bigger and stronger than all of the creation—the entire universe. He is bigger and stronger than all of the people of this world and all the devils that fill the air put together.

Isaiah has a magnificent description of the Lord in chapter 40: There he sees Him sitting on His throne with the earth as the footstool of His feet. And Isaiah says, "All the inhabitants of the earth...", (and we can include all the inhabitants of the air, the demonic realm, and all of that), he says they "...are like grasshoppers" below Him. — They are as nothing.

And so to be placed in the hand of Christ, which is in the hand of the Father, (we're in Christ's hand, and He's in the Father's hand), that "Gives us double security.", (I think it was Dr. Johnson that first said this.) Being in the hand of Christ is sufficient;

but we're not only in His hand, we're in the Father's hand as well. That makes for the greatest spiritual fortress in the universe. —Nothing can shake it.

Now that doesn't mean that we can't be shaken or that we can't suffer loss. We can, and we do. We are tempted daily, moment by moment, in this life and we stumble and we fail frequently. Following Him doesn't mean we don't stumble as we follow Him. We do, frequently.

Someone has likened our progress through this world to that of a boy climbing a snowy hill. He frequently slips, but he does manage to get to the top. And I read that, and I thought, "Well, I can relate to that because I had a lot of experiences like that as a boy growing up in Kansas City. Every year it snows; and each year I'd bundle up and get my Red Arrow sled and climb the highest hill and go down." I see Phil smiling back there, because he grew up in Kansas City, too.

But frequently, on the way up I'd lose my footing, I'd slip, and I usually slipped down a ways before getting back up on my feet and getting to the top of the hill. And that's the Christian life. It's full of slips and setbacks. But we keep going forward. And while we fall in the Lord's hand, we never fall out of the Lord's hand. We are secure.

Howard Prior, one of the late fathers of this church, told me a story from his own experience that I've never forgotten, and I think it illustrates what the Lord is teaching here. Mr. Prior was, as some of you may know, a graduate of the Naval Academy and told me that after Japan surrendered in the Second World War, his ship docked in Tokyo Bay. One day the crew was given shore leave and they went to Yokohama, which was the industrial section of Tokyo. It was in ruins, complete ruins. The whole Tokyo area had been fire bombed repeatedly during the war. (Toward the end of the war the B-29s were flying over the country and flew so high that the Japanese could not defend themselves against them, so they suffered this constant bombing.)

And there in Yokohama, all the buildings and all the buildings in that whole area were just reduced to rubble; they were pulverized. And he said, "The only things they

saw left standing in the ashes and rubble were the iron vaults where the banks once stood. The banks were gone, but the vaults were there. They withstood the pounding.”

Well the hand of God is like an iron vault, (and that's really not saying enough). Nothing though, can destroy or overcome it. In it we are absolutely secure. Everything in this world can give way. We can suffer the loss of things. We can suffer difficulties. Times may come that take our health, take our savings, our friends, even our lives—but our souls are absolutely secure. So the saints persevere; the saints stay steadfast in their faith. But the reason we persevere, the reason for the perseverance of the saints is the perseverance of God with the saints—He never lets us go.

Charles Spurgeon illustrated that this way. He pointed out that every believer is a member of Christ. "He is our head. We are His body. Some of us are an eye. Some of us toe. We have different places within this body, different responsibilities, but we're all part of His body." And then he asks, "Will Christ lose His members? How could Christ be perfect if He lost even His little finger? Are Christ's members to rot off or to be cut off? Impossible!" he says.

"If you have faith in Christ, you are a partaker of Christ's life and cannot perish. If men were to drown me," he writes, "they could not drown my foot, as long as my head is above water. And as long as our head is above water, up yonder in the eternal sunshine, the least limb of His body can never be destroyed. He that believeth in Jesus is united to Him—and he must live because Jesus lives; and He always lives."

And as the author of Hebrews writes, “He always lives to make intercession for His people.” (Heb 7:25). He always prays for us; He's praying for you at this very moment. And He prays that we persevere. He knows the difficulties. He knows what you go through. He went through it Himself, far greater than you did or will. He knows where we are. He knows what we suffer. He knows how to pray for us, and prays that we will continue faithfully. And we will. Why? Because of us? No!—Because of Him. Because of who He is and what He's done—and because His prayers cannot fail.

We do not have a Savior who casts His people away. We don't have a God who leaves His children to perish. He promises to keep us—always. Time will run out on this world, but not on us. The millennium will come and pass into the new heavens and new earth. Eternity will roll on forever and ever, and we will never perish but only increase in the glory and the joy of eternal life. That is the promise of Christ—and He cannot fail to keep His promise because of who He is. And He reveals that in verse 30. 'Are you the Christ?' they're asking. Jesus says, "I and the Father are one."

British scholar F. F. Bruce called this a shattering statement. It was certainly a stunning revelation to those around Him because it was, in fact, a declaration of deity. He's already equated His hand with the Father's hand. He has said, in effect, that He is equal with Him in power as well as in purpose.

And so the word "*one*" is the oneness of essence; expressing the unity of the godhead while preserving the separate individuality of the two persons of the godhead, (two of the three). In other words, He was not saying that He is the Father but that He is united with the Father. That word, *one*, is actually neuter in the Greek text. It means '*one thing*'. The idea is: 'They are of the same essence in deity and equal in power and glory. But They are distinct as persons.'

So there is unity between God the Father, and God the Son, but not confusion. God is a Trinity. There's one God who subsists, or exists, in three persons. That is stressed throughout this Fourth Gospel. In the first verse of the prologue, the first verse of the book we read of Christ being "the Word", who "was in the beginning", "was with God" and "was God". He is not 'God the Father' but is God—the same essence as the Father.

At the end, in chapter 20, Thomas, 'doubting Thomas', comes to see the Lord and he confesses that He is 'Lord and God'. (vs28). Here Jesus said, "I and the Father are one." (vs30). —Now that's the answer to the Jews' question: He is Christ and He is God. He was telling them more than they were asking for.

He became one of us: and this is the amazing thing, He became one of us when He left the glory and the joy of heaven, took to Himself human nature and was born of a virgin—The Creator of all things became a creature. That is amazing.

And yet it was only in that way that we could be saved from our sins: If someone as great as that, infinitely great, and absolutely perfect would come and represent us in judgment, Christ only could do that.

And He came to the temple on Hanukkah when the Jewish nation had the hope of deliverance on its mind and He spoke of being the deliverer: 'He is the one who saves.' He turns winter into spring, brings those in death out into life. He gives eternal life—and He gives it freely. He can do that because He is the good shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep.

What do we do in all of this? The only thing a person can do, to have a gift like this, receive it! —simply receive it. Jesus speaks of His sheep hearing His voice and following Him. That's a way of saying, 'They believe in Him'.

And that's all that a person must do to be saved—simply trust in Christ. It's all that a person can do. And we can only do that by the sovereign grace of God. But in doing that, you will have the great gift—the gift of eternal life.

Now as I've said, I say again, that is sovereign grace. But people don't like to hear that. They respond angrily against it. They did here, "The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. " (vs31).

What about you? If there's anyone here who's not believed in Christ, listen for His voice. Centuries ago the hospice of St. Bernard was founded in the Swiss Alps in order to help pilgrims and travelers on their way. At the top of the hospice was a bell; and when storms came and the snow was falling, the monks would ring that great bell so that when the way could not be seen, travelers could hear the way to the house of refuge.

If you're here this morning without Christ, and you hear the sound of His voice, come to Him. Come to the refuge that we have in Him. Find refuge in Him. His sheep hear His voice and they follow. May God help you to do that and receive the greatest gift of all, the gift of eternal life.

And you who have it—and can never lose it, rejoice!

Father, that is a great truth, "One with Himself I cannot die." Not spiritually, even though we go through the valley of the shadow of death, and death does touch us. For the believer it's like a shadow. Death, the shadow can't hurt. And our death is only the means of entering into Your presence. We have nothing to fear from death. We have nothing to fear before death. Our life is secure in Christ. Help us to understand that. You'll never cast us off. We'll never die spiritually. We have eternal life and it's now; it's a present blessing. You're with us, You're guiding us, You're taking care of us through the storms of life—and we will enter into glory someday, and what a day that will be, all because of Your grace. Help us to understand that better and live joyfully in light of it. We thank You for Christ, and all that we have in Him.

The LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. In Christ's name, Amen.

(End of Audio)