

Mission Impossible

(John 10:22-42)

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Introduction

Childhood can be difficult.

Not only are you smaller than everyone else, you also have very little authority..

One of the great frustrations of childhood is to be innocent of a charge against you, but have a parent who is convinced that you are guilty.

As a kid, my grandmother had a subscription to TV Guide.

If you dont know that that is, be thankful that you are younger than me.

If you do know what that is, you also know that the best part of the TV Guide was the crossword puzzle.

It wasn't particularly difficult and maybe that is why my grandmother loved to do it so much..

However, one day, she sat down in her seat to begin her crossword and someone had taken a pen and marked all over it..

Just pure scribble.

Well, her attention immediately turned to me and my friend Chad.

Well, I was innocent.

Now, I had done some terrible things, but this time it wasn't me.

However, Chad was pleading his innocence as well, so we both had to lay down for a nap an hour earlier and neither of us got to go outside the next day.

I was so frustrated by it.

I simply couldn't make her believe me.

So what do you do when you are telling the truth but no one believes you?

Well, I googled it and I found an article entitled...

How to prove to someone that you are telling the truth.

#1 - Remain Calm and take deep breaths.

#2 - Stand firm with a feet right below your shoulders. Roll your shoulders back and lift your chest.

#3 - Make eye contact and tell your accuser, “I am sorry you don’t believe me. I didn’t do this, and I am sorry that you can’t see that.”

According to experts, if that doesn’t work, simply state your case one more time and walk away peacefully.

I didn’t have that advice when trying to defend myself with my grandma, but I don’t think it would have worked with her anyway..

She was the boss and the verdict was already in.

Which brings us back to John chapter 10..

For months now, Jesus has been telling the truth to his enemies..

He has been calling them to believe in Him as the Son of God.

He has been giving them the truth about who He is as the Son of God, yet very few are believing his claims...

Most are not only refusing to believe his words, they are also actively seeking to kill him.

And that brings us today to what the internet says is the last step when someone refuses to believe you are telling the truth..

Jesus is simply going to state his case one more time and he is going to leave peacefully..

And that is exactly what we are going to find in John 10:22-42 today...

We will look at these verses in 4 parts beginning in verses 22-26 with...

I. The Impossibility of Being Saved (22-26)

Verse 22 and 23..

22 At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, 23 and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon.

A month or tow have passed since verse 21 from last week..

It is now December by our calendar and Jesus is back in Jerusalem for what the Jews call the Feast of Dedication..

This is a simply a late November or early December festival celebrating a Jewish military victory in the the 2nd century BC.

Jews still celebrate this feast today.

They call it Hanukkah or the festival of lights..

It was not a festival commanded by God in the OT, but Jesus was there in Jerusalem for a couple reasons.

#1 - He saw it as one more last chance to preach to the Jews calling them to salvation.

#2 - The crowds of a festival offered some protection for him from the Jewish leaders who were seeking to kill him.

So Jesus is here in the temple among 1000s of Jews in town for this feast looking for an opportunity to preach one last time before his execution..

And he isn't there long before the Jews find him..

Verse 24..

24 So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

If you have been following along in John's gospel, you understand the ridiculous nature of this question...

Jesus has told them over and over who He was.

He has declared that he is the Messiah.

His disciples have confessed him as the Christ.

He has not kept it in a secret, so the question here is not an honest one.

It is simply another tactic of the Jewish leaders to get the crowds to turn on Jesus..

They need support in order to kill Him, and they are hoping for that support by having Jesus testify publicly about Himself.

Again, this is outrageous.

Jesus has identified Himself publicly to the masses who would listen..

In fact, that is what Jesus says in verse 25..

25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me.

Not only had Jesus declared that he was God, Jesus had demonstrated that reality through his miracles..

Talk about someone who did everything he could to convince others that he was telling the truth...

That was certainly true of Jesus..

Yet, the Jews didn't believe in Him...

And we may ask ourselves why wouldn't they believe?

You may ask that about people you know.

Why won't they believe?

Why won't they come to their senses and believe the gospel?

Well, I got your answer.

In fact, Jesus explains it perfectly in verse 26..

26 but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep.

The great truth and paradox of salvation is that a person need to believe in order to be saved but they can't believe unless gives them the gift of faith..

And this is why the Jews remained in their unbelief.

Their ears and eyes and hearts were clogged up by their sin to the point that even the truth made no sense to them..

It is truly impossible to believe unless God opens your ears and eyes and heart to the truth of the gospel...

But not only it is impossible to believe, it is also impossible to be lost again if you truly believe...

Let's look at verses 27-30..

II. The Impossibility of Being Lost (27-30)

While the lost refuse to believe the truth that Christ teaches, the saved refuse to leave the truth that Christ teaches...

Look at verse 27...

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

We have all had folks that simply won't leave us alone.

No matter where we go they follow.

No matter what we do, they continue to hang around.

This is the reality for those who believe the truth about Christ.

They follow Christ no matter what..

This is what the perseverance of the saints...

Those who are truly saved will continue to the very end.

They will persevere.

They will endure.

They will push forward and obey and stay and follow no matter the cost..

And why do they persevere?

Verse 28...

28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me,[a] is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

The truly saved press on because they are in the hand of God.

The truly saved endure because they are carried by the Lord.

This is doctrine of eternal security...

Believers press on until the end as God keeps them in his hand until the very end..

What a joyous truth to understand and embrace.

This doesn't teach that a prayer or a baptism or a church membership is the magic key to heaven..

This is not the doctrine of I said a prayer or I got baptized and therefore “once saved, always saved.”

In fact, the Bible never uses that phrase.

If you want to be faithful to what the Scriptures teaches, simply say...

Once I am truly saved, I am truly secure.

Now why is Jesus teaching this incredible truth to this group of Jews in his final message to them?

Well, I think Jesus is trying to help them see that belief in Him brings true security for them..

Understand this..

Every unbeliever struggles with security.

Even Jews who saw themselves as God’s chosen people struggled to trust that they would make it to heaven..

This is why they invented a religion of good works.

It was an effort to earn salvation.

This is why all false religions teach salvation by good works.

It is designed to give them security...

Do enough good deeds and your place in heaven is secure.

Yet Christianity says that salvation is secure not because of what you do but because of what Christ did.

This is why true belief in Christ saves and saves forever..

True belief puts you in Christ and there is total security in Him..

Look, if you are struggling to find security, the only security in this world is found by believing in Christ.

Every other religion offers zero security..

These Jews needed security and Christ is offering that eternal security if they will simply believe in Him...

Look, for the true believer, it is impossible to be lost again once you are saved...

A third impossibility is found in verses 30-39..

III. The Impossibility of Being Rational (30-39)

Once Jesus speaks of the security found in Him and the Father, he makes a statement in verse 30 that sets the Jews on edge...

30 I and the Father are one."

This is not the first time that Jesus has declared his equality with the Father, and this is also not the first time that we read this in verse 31..

31 The Jews picked up stones again to stone him."

The outrage of Jesus' claim to deity brings the predicted result...

The Jews prepare to stone Him..

This is the ultimate end of unbelief.

Unbelief leads people to violence.

This is why Cain killed Abel.

This is why the Jews stoned Stephen..

This is why Christians are martyred today.

Unbelief is irrational to the point that it is ready to destroy anything that it doesn't understand...

So they pick up stones to kill Jesus right here in the temple, but Jesus intervenes in verse 32..

32 Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?" 33 The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God."

Again, we see a non sense answer from the Jews....

They aren't going to kill Jesus for his good works.

They are going to kill him because he claims to be God.

Now the interesting part is this..

The works that he did proved that he was God..

Let me give you an example of this...

Let's say that I told you I was the best golfer on the planet..

And then let's say I go out to the golf course and do the impossible of making a hole in one on every hole..

So I get back in to the clubhouse, and I tell all the golfers there that I am the best golfer in the world..

And they get angry and ready to kill me...

And I say, "look, are you killing me because I just made a hole in one on every hole?"

And they say no, we aren't killing you for that.

We are killing you because you claim to be the best golfer in the world...

Now that is silly.

I am the best because I made the best score possible..

The proof of my claim is seen in the shots that I just made..

And they say, "we don't care what you did. we want you dead because of what you say."

That my friends is irrational..

It is non sensical..

It is illogical..

But there is more..

Verse 34...

34 Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your Law, ‘I said, you are gods’? 35 If he called them gods to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be broken— 36 do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’?”

We dont have time to turn to Psalm 82 but this is a direct quote from that psalm..

And in that psalm, God declares that earthly judges act like gods at times...

In fact, capital G God says that some men on earth act as little G gods at times...

And what Jesus is saying is this..

If God can call men gods and not be guilty of blasphemy, then Jesus who is truly God can call Himself God and not be guilty of blasphemy...

In other words, these Jews allowed some people in their society to call themselves gods but now they were ready to kill Jesus who was truly God..

Again, what is this..

This is illogical and unfair and irrational..

Jesus is showing great patience with these men who are holding stones in their hands while aiming at him.

He is trying to get them to think about how irrational they are acting...

They are breaking their own rules of logic in order to stay in their unbelief..

However, Jesus continues to plead with them to be logical..

Verse 37..

37 If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; 38 but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.”

Again, a logical argument from Jesus..

Simply put, he tell the Jews..

“Look, if I am not doing the works of God, don’t believe in me.”

But if I am doing the works of God, believe in the works and believe that I am one with the Father...

So how does Jesus' logical argument work out?

Verse 39...

39 Again they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands.

In case you were wondering, even the best argument in the world is not enough to convince the unbeliever to believe...

Jesus is the greatest persuader in the history of the world but even He can't talk sense to the senseless...

And if not for his supernatural ability to escape, he would have been killed right there months before the cross...

Look, it is impossible to reason with unbelief..

Unbelief is not rational or logical unless God gives them a mind to understand the truth..

But that is not the last impossibility in this passage..

Verses 40 - 42 give us..

IV. The Impossibility of Being Wrong (40-42)

40 He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there he remained. 41 And many came to him. And they said, "John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true." 42 And many believed in him there.

You can't miss the sadness of verse 40..

Jesus leaves Jerusalem and heads east beyond the Jordan River.

In sense, Jesus' ministry to the Jews ends where it began.

It ends out in the wilderness.

Jesus will stay out of the spotlight of Jerusalem for the next few months.

He will be with his disciples teaching them much in the remote areas of Israel as he prepares to depart the world.

But as you can see here, many will still come to him in the wilderness and believe in the truth that He preaches to them..

And I want you to notice what those believing in Him said in verse 41..

41 And many came to him. And they said, “John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true.”

Let me sum up salvation...

It is the belief that everything the Bible says about Jesus is true..

For those who come to Christ, their minds are convinced that it is impossible for the Bible to be wrong about Jesus..

These people probably came to Jesus with doubts...

They weren't really sure that what John the Baptist said about Him was completely true..

Yet, after meeting Him and hearing the truth, they were convinced that everything John the Baptist said about Jesus was true...

This is the essence of true salvation..

It embraces and believes everything that the Scriptures say about Christ..

And many did that beyond the Jordan and they are in heaven today..

Won't you join them by believing what the Bible says about Christ?

It is impossible to be saved unless you believe in Christ.

And it is impossible for the word of God to be wrong in what it says about Christ.

Sadly, the Jews didn't believe that and they are now paying an eternal price for their unbelief...

Conclusion

So what can we conclude as Jesus concludes his ministry to the Jews?

#1 - Unbelievers will never find enough reasons to believe.

I preach the gospel in hopes of persuading people to believe in Christ.

But I also preach the gospel knowing that I am not clever enough to convince anyone of anything..

If Jesus can't lead these people to believe, Bud Moss certainly can't.

So what is my hope?

My hope is that God uses me to speak truth to a heart that he is opening up..

My hope is that God uses me to speak truth to ears that he is unclogging.

My hope is that God uses me to speak truth to eyes that are finally opening.

And that should be your hope too.

You will never be clever enough to outwit people to Christ.

You will never be smart enough to lecture people to Christ.

You will never be perfect for people to believe in Christ.

All you are called to do is pray for unbelievers and give them the truth in hopes that God has already given them the heart to believe..

#2 - Believers will never find enough reasons to stop believing.

My security is not in myself when it comes to my salvation..

My security is in Christ.

I follow Christ not because there is no one better to follow.

I follow Christ because there is no one else to follow.

When Jesus asked Peter if he and the disciples were leaving, Peter said...

“Where shall we go? You alone have the words of eternal life.”

This is the heart of the believer.

We may doubt at times.

We may sin at times.

But we aren't leaving because we are in the Father's hand until the very end.

He who began a good work in us will carry it to completion.

Amen?

#3 - Don't be someone who gives Jesus a reason to be leaving.

This is not the first time that I have said this because this is not the first time that we have seen this in the Bible..

But there comes a time when Jesus states his case to you a final time and then leaves in peace.

Jesus beg and pled and reasoned with the Jews once last time and then he left Jerusalem one last time.

Unbelief eventually gets what it wants, and that is a desire to be left alone by God.

Don't be that person today.

Come to Christ.

Believe what the Bible says about Him.

Put your trust in Him to save you and keep you.

And you will follow Him to the very end.

Let us pray.