

THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH

JOHN 10:27-28 • TV-007B

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John 10:27-28

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”

I want you to take your Bibles today and open them to **John 10 verses 27 and 28**.
Now my subject today is: **“THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH.”**

In **John 10:27-28** our Lord says *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish.”*

Now my friends, the subject that I’m dealing with has been argued and debated for many years. It has been called, “Eternal security,” it has been called, “Once in grace, always in grace. It has been called by the old-timers, “The perseverance of the saints.”

But I want to call it what the Lord Jesus called it; He says, *“They shall never perish. My sheep hear my voice. I know them, they follow me, and I give them eternal life and they shall never perish.”* And that’s our subject, just what Christ said, **“THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH.”**

Now, we have the message divided into three parts so that you might remember it.

First of all: What is this doctrine that we’re teaching?

THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH

JOHN 10:27-28 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Secondly: What does the Bible say about it?

Thirdly: Why is it important?

Now that's three good questions, wouldn't you say? What is the doctrine? That's the first question. What are we talking about, "*They shall never perish?*" And then secondly, let's go to the Scriptures; what does the Bible say about it? And then thirdly, why is it important?

Now, first of all, what is the doctrine, "*They shall never perish?*" And I want to make it perfectly clear because it's important that we make clear what we're teaching. I think much of the abuse which has been heaped upon this doctrine, this teaching, has risen because men do not understand it. It has been misrepresented.

Now, when I say, "*They shall never perish;*" this is what I mean; the Word of God teaches that true believers in Jesus Christ, those who have been quickened by the Holy Spirit, those who have been brought to repentance toward God, genuine, continual, repentance, those who have been brought to genuine faith in Jesus Christ shall continue in that repentance, shall continue in that faith of Christ, to the end of their lives. And then they shall be perfectly conformed to the image of God's Son.

They shall never perish, not on this earth, and not in the world to come. They shall never be lost. Once in Christ they shall always be in Christ. Once made children of God they shall always be children of God. Once quickened by the Holy Spirit and endued with the spirit of grace; they shall always be endued with the spirit of grace.

Once forgiven, pardoned, and justified; they shall always be pardoned and justified. As Paul said; "*Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God who justifieth. Who is He that condemneth? Christ has died, yea rather, is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God who maketh intercession for us.*"

Once joined to Christ, Jesus the Lord; that union shall never be broken. Now listen to me; the ungodly and the unbeliever have no part in this promise. Christ said, "*My sheep, hear my voice. I know them, and they shall never perish;* (my sheep shall never perish)."

The ungodly have no part in this. It doesn't belong to that vast multitude that has no interest in Christ, no interest in the Gospel, no interest in the things of God, and no faith in the Son of God; "*Except they repent they shall perish.*" That's what Christ said; "*Except they repent they shall perish.*" Except you repent ye shall all likewise perish.

And then again, this teaching, this promise, has nothing for church hypocrites. It has nothing for false-professors. These people have no part in this promise. It does not belong to those whose religion consists in talk and words.

THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH

JOHN 10:27-28 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Christ described them; He said, “*You call me Lord with your lips but your hearts are far from me.*” This does not belong to those, “*Who make clean the outside of the cup while the inside is full of extortion and excess.*”

This promise, “*They shall never perish*” does not belong to the man who appears beautiful to men, but on the inside they are like a grave; he’s full of dead men’s bones. It doesn’t belong to him.

It doesn’t belong to the aisle-walker or to the hand shaker. It doesn’t belong to the man who is just a member of the church in name, once in a while he graces the church with his presence and honors the Lord with a little of his substance. It’s not his.

When Christ said, “*They shall never perish;*” He was talking about His people. He was talking about those who have heard His voice and received His Word and believed His Gospel and been born of His Spirit.

“*They shall never perish*” is the privilege; it is the promise of the redeemed of the Lord, to the sheep of Christ who have heard His voice and followed Him. He says, “*They shall never perish.*”

To those who’ve been born of God, born from above, who have received Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King; “*They shall never perish.*” David said, “*To those who are of a broken heart and a contrite spirit, for, He saveth such that be of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.*” They shall never perish.

To the elect of God, who have heard the Gospel, Paul said, “*Not in word only, but in power in the Holy Ghost, in much assurance;*” they shall never perish. “*To those who have passed from death unto life, who love the brethren;*” they shall never perish.

To the fruit bearing branches who know in whom they have believed; they shall never perish. To those who can say with Job; “*Though He slay me, I trust Him;*” they shall never perish. Now that’s what we mean. That’s what we mean when we say, “*They shall never perish.*”

Now I do not say that they shall never fall into sin. I do not say that. I do not say that the sheep of Christ shall never fall into sin. Sometimes believers do sadly, shamefully, and to their own bitter grief and sorrow, fall into sin.

Noah did. After he came off the Ark he behaved very shamefully before his family and before his God. Abraham, “*The friend of God*” twice lied about Sarah being his wife, not once, but twice.

Lot, you know the story of Lot. He took up his abode in Sodom and even after God delivered him out of Sodom he behaved shamefully. Jacob, the one of whom God said, “*Jacob have I loved;*” he deceived his own father Isaac and stole the birthright.

THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH

JOHN 10:27-28 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Moses spoke harshly with his lips, that meekest of all men. He lost his temper one day and smote the rock and God said, "*Moses; you didn't sanctify me in front of the people and for that you're not going to enter the Promise Land.*" Moses displeased the Lord.

David hid his sin and killed one of his best friends. Solomon permitted his wives to practice idolatry, believe it or not. Peter, not once, not twice, but three times, denied that he knew the Lord. He denied Christ. Paul and Barnabas argued so strongly that they broke fellowship. Paul went one way and Barnabas went the other way.

True believers may sadly and shamefully fail and they may fall into sin but they'll never, never, totally, finally, completely, fall away from Christ. For they say with the apostles, "*Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life*" and though weak and infirmed and though afflicted, "*To whom shall we go?*"

Now, they shall always rise from their fall and they shall always renew their walk with their Lord. They may lose the comfort of grace but they'll never lose the being of grace. The believer may be like the tree in the winter. There may be no fruit visible and no leaves visible but life is in the root.

Let me tell you a story: There was a young man who was born in 1820 in Dublin, Ireland. And he attended the University there in Dublin, Ireland, a school that I visited a few years ago. And he graduated as an engineer. He graduated when he was about 20 years of age.

He was engaged to be married just shortly after his graduation. And the day before he was to be married his fiancé was found drowned in the lake. She was in a boat with some people or alone some way. But they found her in the lake drowned.

And it so disturbed this young man that he never, never, fell in love again. He never married. When he was 25 years of age he even left his home country. He never got over this tragedy, this sorrow.

He left Ireland and came to Canada. And in Canada, though a graduate engineer, though a brilliant young man; he never took a fulltime job. He lived in a little cabin in a little town in Canada.

And he spent his time just helping people. He would go to some widow's house and fix her yard or fix the house or do something around the house. And in the fields he'd work with people but that's the way he lived, alone, and just trying to serve the people of his community.

In fact, after he died, they erected a monument to the memory of this gracious, kind, good, neighbor, Joseph Scriven; that was his name.

Well, one day he was sick (in 1855); that would make him about 35 years of age. And one of the neighbors brought him a bowl of soup. The lady came in with the soup. He was lying there in

THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH

JOHN 10:27-28 • HENRY T. MAHAN

the bed in his little cabin. And she found a piece of paper on the table and she picked it up and she began to read:

**“What a friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer
Oh what peace we often forfeit
Oh because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer.”**

You know the song. She said, “Joseph; who wrote this?” He said, “I did.” Why, she said, “This is beautiful.” He didn’t set it to music. It wasn’t put to music until 1868.

But Joseph Scriven wrote those words. When he was 66 years of age, through a life of sorrow and heartache, they found him drowned in the lake down below his home. They all felt that Joseph Scriven had committed suicide.

“What a Friend We Have in Jesus.” Don’t you wish you had written that? I wish I could have written that song: “We have in Jesus all our sins and griefs to bear.” And yet standing on the bank of that lake they’re pulling a body in of a man who has taken all he could take and drowned himself, just like his sweetheart of 46 years earlier.

“Don’t judge another Indian until you’ve walked in his moccasins.” That’s what one old man used to say. And I’m not saying that God’s people will not fall into sin. I’m not saying that God’s people will never go through and suffer emotional problems and nerve problems and mental problems and distress. But I am saying they’ll never leave the Master.

And I’m not saying that God’s people shall have no doubts and fears about their interest in Christ. Actually, let’s face it; all of us, if we’re honest and no man’s saved unless he’s honest; all of us see so much weakness in our own hearts and we find our practice so far short of our desire and God’s requirements; aren’t you strongly tempted to doubt your interest in Christ? Don’t you sometimes?

When you have to say, “I’m not what I ought to be, I’m not what I want to be, and I’m not what I expect to be; about all we can say is this: By God’s grace I’m not what I used to be.”

Now my friends, to be saved is one thing; sometimes to feel saved is another thing. David knew that he’d been an anointed king. Don’t you imagine he knew that? He was there when Samuel anointed him and said, “This is the new king of Israel that will take Saul’s place.” He knew that.

And yet, how many times did he in the doubt and fear say this? *“I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul.”* He knew better than that but he said it and he meant it. *“I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul.”*

THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH

JOHN 10:27-28 • HENRY T. MAHAN

No David; you're going to be the king. "But I don't look like a king, do I? Here I am out here in the wilderness. Here I'm out here in the caves. Here I'm out here being chased and hounded and hunted." David thinks, "*I'll die by the hand of Saul.*" No you won't David. I've seen the last chapter of the Book. You're going to be king. And my friends, you and I know that.

But listen to what John Newton said. John Newton wrote:

**"Amazing grace
How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost
But now I'm found
Was blind but now I see."**

There's confidence; there's assurance. But now listen to another song he wrote that we don't sing very often:

**"Tis a point I long to know
Often it gives me anxious thought
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I His or am I not?"**

**Lord let me love thee more and more
If I love thee at all I pray
But if I have not loved thee before
Let me love you today."**

"They shall never perish." That's what our Lord says, *"They shall never perish."* But that doesn't free the believer from watching, praying, studying, clinging to God and using every means of grace at his disposal.

Listen to Paul in **Hebrews 3:14**; *"We're made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end."* Our Lord says, *"It is not the man that starts the race that gets the crown; it's the man who crosses the finish line."* *"He that endureth to the end the same shall be saved."*

And God's people will continue and they will endure and *"They shall never perish."* That's what we mean.

Secondly: What does the Bible say about this doctrine?

What does God's Word say? I don't need to tell you that the Bible is the only test of the truth of any doctrine. Let it be established by the Word of God.

THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH

JOHN 10:27-28 • HENRY T. MAHAN

You know, one man said one time, and this is on the front of a school down in the Deep South; this is down in the front of the school, Christian school; “God said it, I believe it, and that settles it.”

What is wrong with that? Now think about it; what’s wrong with that? “God said it, I believe it, and that settles it.” Well you say, “I don’t see anything wrong with it.” I do; God said it, and that settles it, whether I believe it or not. That’s right!

Now my believing it has nothing to do with settling it. My believing it or not believing it has nothing to do with establishing the Word of God. It’s true whether I believe it or not.

So, let’s see what God’s Word says about this, “*They shall never perish.*” I just read you the Scripture, “*My Sheep hear my voice. I know them. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish.*”

Now listen to **John 5:24**; “*He that heareth my Word and believeth on Him that sent me hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life.*”

Listen to **John 6:39**; “*This is the Father’s will which hath sent me that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing but raise it up again at the last day, I should lose nothing.*”

John 6:37; “*All that my Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*”

Romans 8:38-39; “*I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”

Philippians 1:6; “*Being confident of this very thing that He which hath begun a good work in you will finish it.*” Salvation is God’s work, He starts it, and He finishes it, He’s Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

“*He’s the author and finisher of our faith. We’re His workmanship created in Christ Jesus. And He that hath begun a good work in you shall finish it in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

1 Peter 1:5; “*We’re kept by the power of God through faith.*”

Jude 24; “*Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour; be glory, majesty, dominion, power, praise, honor, and glory, forevermore.*”

Now my friends, if you’ll study the attributes of God in the Scripture, God’s attributes, God’s characteristics, that which reveals His person, and His glory; if you’ll study His attributes, it strongly supports and assures the saints of persevering.

THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH

JOHN 10:27-28 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Listen to **Malachi 3:6**; *“I am the Lord; I change not.”* Isn’t that right, *“I change not?”* God is immutable. God is unchangeable. *“He’s the same yesterday, today, and forever. I change not. Therefore, you sons of Jacob are not consumed.”* That’s the reason you’re not consumed. That’s the reason you’re not destroyed. That’s the reason you’re not cast off because God does not change.

Listen to **Romans 11:29**; *“The gifts and calling of God are without change.”* Now salvation is the gift of God, the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. That’s what the Scripture says, *“The gift of God is eternal life.”*

The gifts of God and the calling of God and salvation is a divine calling; *“We are the called of Christ Jesus.”* The Scripture says in **Romans 11:29**; *“The gifts and calling of God are without repentance, without change.”*

God can’t give you salvation today and then take it back tomorrow. That means God changed His mind, God changed His purpose, God changed His plans, and God changed His intentions and when He changed them He ceases to be God. *“Known unto God are all His works from the beginning.”*

Then **Romans 8:29-30** says this; *“For whom He did foreknow He did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son that He might be the first born among many brethren. And whom He predestinated He called. And whom He called He justified. And whom He justified He glorified.”*

Those whom God started out to save in the covenant of grace and divine election; He will finally save and make them like His Son in eternity future. That’s the Word of God, that’s the character, that’s the plan, and that’s the purpose of God. It can’t change unless God changes. If He drops a few here and there He is changed.

Listen; the offices of Christ; do you know something about the offices of Christ? The offices of Christ assure every believer persevering and of continuing in the faith.

What kind of head is Jesus Christ? The Scripture says *“He’s the head and we are the body.”* What kind of head is it that loses half the body?

What kind of shepherd is it if the sheep perish? Now how long would you keep a shepherd over your flock in your pasture if every day he came in short one sheep or short two sheep or short three sheep? You’d get rid of him.

Well what kind of shepherd is Jesus Christ who says; *“I’m the chief shepherd and the great shepherd”* if His sheep perish one by one? What kind of priest is Jesus Christ if His atonement fails? What kind of physician is the Son of God if the patients die? What kind of King is the Son of God if the kingdom perishes?

THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH

JOHN 10:27-28 • HENRY T. MAHAN

You can't find an example in God's Word of one of His people perishing. David said, *"I have been young, now I'm old. I've never seen the seed of God begging bread."*

Now in the Bible you see Balaam and Lot's wife and the Judas, Ananias, Sapphira, and Simon Magus. But men like Moses and like Abraham and like David, Peter and Paul; they hold their way, they continue in the faith.

Do you know what John said of those who drop along the wayside, who depart from the faith, who turn their backs on the cross, who turn their backs on the Gospel, who go back out into the flesh in the world? Do you know what John says about them?

John says in **1 John 2:19**; *"They went out from us but they were not of us. For had they been of us they would no doubt have continued with us but that it might be made manifest they were not all of us."* Some have left the gospel of Christ.

Why is this doctrine so important? Let me give you three reasons in closing:

First of all: *"They shall never perish"* makes the Gospel good news.

That's what the word Gospel means. Isn't it, *"glad tidings and good news?"* It's good news that God loves sinners. It is good news that, *"Christ came into the world to save sinners."* Isn't that good news?

It's good news that Christ died for my sins. That's good news. It's good news that the Holy Spirit calls us into a saving relationship with Christ. It's good news that we're justified and pardoned.

It's good news that we have a Mediator at God's right hand. It's good news that the dead shall rise. But; think for a moment, where is the good news if this message goes on to say, in spite of all this, we might one day perish after all, beside the fact that God loves me, Christ died for me, Christ intercedes for me, and the Holy Spirit calls me, and endues me, and fills me, I still might perish?

There goes the good news. It's not good news anymore. In spite of all this I might still be lost. That's not good news. Once you admit that a God-called, Christ-redeemed, born-again believer, can finally be lost; you take all the good news out of the Gospel.

Secondly: It's an important doctrine because it makes the work of Christ certain.

The Bible says, *"He cannot fail."* The Word of God says *"He shall see the travail of His soul and be satisfied."* Travail is birth pains. He brought forth children by the suffering of His soul.

"I lay down my life for my sheep." When you admit that one sheep of Christ can perish, for whom He died, you put a question mark on the work of Christ for all of the sheep; for if one sheep of Christ could fall away, this poor, feeble, soul, would fall a thousand times a day.

THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH

JOHN 10:27-28 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Now lastly: This doctrine's important because it gives comfort to every believer.

The way to glory is not an easy road. God has not always promised skies always blue, flowers strewn, and pathways, all of life through. We have within us a heart that is weak when it ought to be strong.

It's cold when it ought to be warm. And it's a heart that's sinful when it ought to be holy. We're surrounded by a world that does not love Christ, by people who do not love His Gospel and His church.

It's an unfriendly world. We're surrounded by blasphemers but Christ said, "*I'm with you.*" Though my father and mother forsake me Christ will take me up.

And then my friend there are the cares of life and the cares of children, business, money, sickness, sorrow, temptation, and then the valley of death. Who can wonder that a child of God doesn't get depressed?

But the best antidote is the promise of God. "*They shall never perish.*" And Job wrote: "*The righteous shall hold his way and he that hath clean hands shall grow stronger and stronger!*"