

## I and the Father Are One, Part 2

Scripture: John 10:25–42

Code: 43-55

The following sermon transcript does not match the *video* version of the sermon—it matches only the audio version. Here's a brief explanation why.

John MacArthur routinely preaches a sermon more than once on the same date, during different worship services at Grace Community Church. Normally, for a given sermon title, our website features the audio and video that were recorded during the same worship service. Very occasionally, though, we will post the audio from one service and the video from another. Such was the case for the sermon titled "I and the Father Are One, Part 2," the transcript of which follows below. The transcript is of the audio version.

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Turn to the tenth chapter of the gospel of John. John chapter 10. It's very interesting to be going through the Book of John in the morning and Acts at night because in the account of the early chapters of Acts, Peter is the preacher. And with the gospel of John, John is the writer. And of course, they were buddies. They are together in the early chapters of Acts, so it's a special treat to be hearing from John as he finally gets to say something many, many, many years after Peter preached on Pentecost, and how parallel the writing of John concerning the person of Christ and the preaching of Peter concerning the person of Christ are. So we're sort of doubling down on Peter and John in these days, and presenting the glories of the Savior that they loved and proclaimed.

Tenth chapter of John is a turning point as you know in John's history. This is the chapter that records the last account that John gives of the public ministry of Jesus. At the end of this tenth chapter, Jesus goes away for about three months, and He spends the time with His disciples. He comes back in the 11th chapter and raises Lazarus from the dead, does a triumphal entry in the 12th chapter, and then John records chapters 13 through 16 one night, one night in the upper room, the promises the Lord gave to His disciples and all who would come after them, including us. The 17th chapter then is that incredible entry into the holy of holies, the sanctuary of the private prayer and communion of Christ with His Father, that great high priestly prayer that He prayed before His death. Chapter 18 is His arrest followed by His death and resurrection. And then the restitution of Peter and the commissioning of the disciples ends it all in the final chapter.

So, chapter 10 is critical because John wants to make sure nothing is left unclear in terms of the claims of Christ. This is, in a sense, a summation of what his purpose was as he states it in chapter 20 and verse 31. "These have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that believing, you may have life in His name." John is amassing evidence that you might believe, in order that you might have eternal life. Eternal life, as we have been learning, comes only through faith in Christ.

So, his purpose is culminating here in this tenth chapter. And he wants to leave no mistake as to the

claim Christ made, and what is necessary to believe about Him to receive eternal life. That is why you have the words in verse 30. Look at chapter 10 verse 30. "I and the Father are one." I and the Father are one. "The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him." Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God." Literally.

They knew exactly what He was claiming. In verse 36, "You are blaspheming." Are you accusing Me of that? "Because I said I am the Son of God? If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me." Here again, we have the summation of John's whole purpose: to make clear the claim of Jesus to be God, to possess the very nature and essence of God, and therefore legitimately call Himself the Son of God, one who bears the same nature, and to prove it by His works. There's no mistaking this. No mistaking it all through the gospel of John. And certainly here, it's impossible to twist this around. When He said, "I and the Father are one," He was not claiming unity of purpose, unity of mission, unity of attitude. He was claiming unity of essence, unity of nature. That's why they called Him a blasphemer who was a man telling them He was God.

This is the great claim of the gospel, that Jesus, while fully man, was also fully God. Took the title, God the Son, the Son of God. That is the uniqueness of His personhood as God in the Trinity. There is one nature, one essence, but three distinct persons. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

In chapter 19 of John, as you come down to the very time when the populous of Jerusalem and the spiritual leaders are pressing the Romans to crucify Jesus; verse 7 of John 19. The Jews say this: "We have a law," Mosaic law, "and by that law, He ought to die because He made Himself out the Son of God." He didn't just claim it. He proved it. Verse 37, "As I read, if I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me." The leaders of religious Judaism and the people who followed them were the real blasphemers. They were the real blasphemers. Just as the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah had predicted. Who has believed our report? To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? The prophet predicts that when the Messiah comes, they won't believe. Isaiah goes on to say we esteemed Him not. We gave Him no honor. We did not see Him as our Messiah.

That Jewish rejection, by the way, that Jewish hostility toward the Lord Jesus Christ exists today, this very day among Jewish people. I've been reading for a number of months, a horrifying book called "Blood Lands." Blood Lands is a history book, a profound book giving the chronicle of the massacre of 14 million people in the blood lands between Stalin and Hitler. This is where the pogroms begin that end up in the massacring of millions of Jews. The suffering of this people is beyond imagination, beyond comprehension. The tragedy of it all is that they knew the truth about the true and living God, the one God, the God who was creator, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of Moses and Abraham, and David. They knew about that God. But when He sent His Savior to redeem them, they rejected Him. And they go on doing that.

Through all of this history of national rejection, of course, there is a remnant of Jews who believe. And they are all one in Christ with all Gentiles who believe, Scripture tells us. But as this chapter closes out, John's short history of Jesus' public ministry, it culminates in the same kind of anger and hostility against Jesus that we have seen all the way through His ministry. In fact, for the fourth time, they try to take Him and kill Him. The more He says, the more He makes His claim, the more He demonstrates that it's a true claim. The harder their hearts become. So, this is the culmination for

John. And then Jesus disappears. Is it all bad? No. Because at the end of the chapter, when He goes away beyond the Jordan, verse 42 says, this is how the chapter ends, “Many believed in Him there.” It was as if He had to get out of Jerusalem. He had to get over by the Jordan River where John once baptized. Somewhere else out from under the power and influence of the religious establishment.

There are five scenes here we’re kind of looking at. Five scenes. We’ve started into them. Scene number one is confrontation, just briefly. Go back to verse 22. “At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem.” You remember that’s what Jews today call Hanukkah, or the Feast of Lights, because the way they celebrated it, an eight day celebration, 25 of Kislev, which puts it in November and December every year. The way they celebrate it is by lighting lamps and candles in their homes, and they do that for eight days, so it’s called the Feast of Lights, or Hanukkah. It was basically established during the intertestamental period when Judas Maccabeus threw out the invaders, the pagan invaders, Antiochus Epiphanes and his people, and resecured the temple, and reestablished worship. In order to celebrate that, this feast was put in place. Not a biblical feast, but it is a historical one. This is another of the feasts that have been going on in John’s gospel from chapter 5 on. Jesus keeps appearing in Jerusalem at feasts, and the same things happen: He speaks, they deny Him, they want to kill Him, He escapes, and so here we go again with the same kind of cycle.

Now, at this feast. Jesus is walking in the temple of the portico of Solomon, remember now, that’s what was left of the massive retaining wall that was part of the Solomonic temple that was destroyed in 586 BC. That wall was not destroyed; it was then redeveloped into a colonnade or a porch, a popular place to get out of the sun or out of the weather. This is winter. Jesus is walking there, a place where we find the apostles in the Book of Acts teaching. The Jews, that would be the religious leaders, John usually refers to them when he uses that term, and their followers, gathered around Jesus and were saying to Him, and there’s just such hypocrisy in this because He’s answered this so many times. “How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Messiah, tell us plainly.” That kind of confrontation has only one goal in mind, and it isn’t to get information. They can incite the crowd that can result ultimately in the death of Jesus.

That’s the confrontation. Then we saw the claim. We came to the claim. Let’s go back to that. In verse 25. Jesus answered them, “I told you.” I told you, I told you. “And you do not believe.” How many times have I told you? In just the feast section, chapter 5, repeatedly in chapter 7, repeatedly in chapter 8, I told you many, many times. Clearly, they understand His claim. They simply want to justify a seizing of Him, and elimination. And then He validates the claim in the same way He’s done it all the way along in verse 25. “I told you, and you do not believe.” That’s the problem. “The works that I do in My Father’s name, these testify of Me.”

We saw last time that the issue was: you do not believe. That is all through John’s gospel. The issue from the human viewpoint. You do not believe. You can go all the way back, start in chapter 1, and then every chapter except chapter 2, up to this very point, there is a call for people to believe, and a warning that if they don’t believe, they will not receive eternal life. All through the story, they are commanded to believe. They are called to believe. They are warned to believe. That is the human side. We have seen that. Salvation comes by believing. In fact, go back to chapter 8 just a minute. I can’t get caught up in all of those because I know you remember them.

In chapter 8 verse 21, He is saying to them, “I go away, and you will seek me, and will die in your

sins. Where I am going, you can't come." You're not going to heaven. Why? Verse 24. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins for unless you believe that I am He, I am who I claim to be, I am the I Am, you will die in your sins. That's simply an illustration of something that is repeated again, and again, and again, starting in chapter 1 verse 12. As many as receive Him, to them He gave the authority to become the children of God, even those who believe on His name. That is the human side. You must believe that I am who I claim to be.

Now, of course, Matthew helps us to get an insight into what they did believe. In chapter 12 of Matthew, one of the most terrifying comments the Pharisees and the religious leaders of Israel ever made, Matthew 12:24, this is what they did believe. "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons." He's satanic. That's what they believed. They believed He did what He did by the power of Satan. Verse 31. Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven, people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. If you look at what the Holy Spirit has done through Me, and you conclude after all the evidence is in that that is Satan, you could never be forgiven because you have made that 180 degree wrong conclusion at the end of all the evidence. You are the blasphemers.

What did they believe about Jesus? Their mantra was: He's satanic. They did everything they could to convince the people of that. Now mark that, and we covered that last time. Salvation comes to those who believe. But I want you to go back to verse 26. And let's pick that up for a few moments. "But you do not believe." That's where we ended. "But you do not believe." Then verse 26 says this: "Because you are not of My sheep." What a statement. That's the divine side. You don't believe, and you're fully culpable for that unbelief, and you will be held responsible eternally for that unbelief. You will receive a just punishment for that unbelief. But the divine side is: you don't believe because you are not of My sheep. Really, a stunning statement. You don't belong to me.

Back up into chapter 10 to verse 4. Remember the *paroimia*, the analogy, the metaphor, simile, word picture of the shepherd? Verse 4. "When he puts forth all his own," his own sheep, "he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice." Well, that's true of shepherds. We saw that when a shepherd goes into a fold in the morning, the sheep have been held there, the village sheep, there are many shepherds who have put all of their sheep together collectively in one fold overnight, and in the morning come and get their own sheep and each sheep knows the voice of his own master. That was something they were familiar with.

But to what does that refer? Go down to verse 14. "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own, and My own know Me." Hmmm. I know My own, and My own know Me, and you're not of My sheep. How do we know they are not His sheep? Because back in chapter 8 and verse 43, Jesus says, "Why do you not understand what I am saying? It's because you cannot hear My word." You can't hear Me. You don't know My voice. Why? Because you're of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, does not stand in the truth because there's no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he's a liar, and the father of lies. But because I speak the truth, you do not believe me?

Verse 47: "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God." Another way to say, "You're not my sheep." That's a stunning statement. You're not my sheep. We started to see this sovereign purpose of God in salvation very early in the gospel of John. Back in chapter 3, when Jesus is talking to Nicodemus and Nicodemus has this question about eternal life and how that's going to happen, and Jesus explains to him that it's a

supernatural, heavenly miracle. Heaven has to come down and make that happen. It's like a birth. It's a creation, and nobody can create himself. So, the question arises: well, how does that happen? And Jesus says this: the Holy Spirit comes and goes as He wills. It's not at your discretion. It's at His discretion.

I watched an evangelist last night on the television telling people to make a decision for Christ, and pleading with them and pleading with them, and music playing, and constant pleading. That's something a sinner cannot do. A sinner can't make a decision for Christ; Christ has to make the decision for the sinner.

In John 6, and we saw this. In John 6:37, all that the Father gives Me will come to Me. The Father knows the sheep. The Father has chosen the sheep, identified the sheep, written their names down. The Father will give the sheep to Me in His own time and they will come to Me. And the one who comes to Me, I will certainly not reject because I've come down from heaven not to do My own will, as if I had a different will than the Father, but the will of Him who sent me. And this is the will of Him who sent Me that of all that He has given Me, I lose none but raise it up on the last day. And no one, verse 44, can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise Him on the last day. And in His high priestly prayer, He prays about those the Father has given Him.

These are profound realities. And look, I believe fully in the sinner's responsibility to repent and believe. But I believe as well, fully, in the sovereign purpose of God who has chosen His sheep, knows His sheep, calls His sheep. They hear Him, they come, Christ receives them, and keeps them, and raises them. I confess that I have never been able to comfortably harmonize those two realities. But I will not destroy either by coming up with some bizarre, humanly-devised middle-ground. The people who crucified Jesus were fully responsible for doing that. They were judged for doing that, condemned for doing that.

And yet, Peter in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost said that whole act was done by the predetermined counsel and foreknowledge of God. He repeats it again in chapter 4, that You only did on earth what heaven had already declared would be done. Someday, we'll know God's thoughts. Someday. But for now, we plead with sinners as Jesus did to believe and believe, and we back up to a place of comfort in the sovereign purpose of God.

You know, it's a crushing thing when you look more intently at the person of Christ. I told you this back in the sixth chapter when the disciples left. Many who had followed Him for a while left Him, abandoned Him, walked away from Him with finality. The Greek language is finality. Heartbreaking, heartwrenching. How can they walk away from Him? Inconceivable to me.

And where does He go for comfort when the disciples have abandoned Him? You remember this. He does this. He says, "Everyone who has heard and been taught by the Father comes to Me." Jesus found His comfort in peoples' rejection in the sovereign purposes of God. And again, I don't know how all that works together. It seems to me to have elements of contradiction, but God is not contradictory to Himself. That's an impossibility. So, I chalk it up to my feeble mind.

Verse 27. He says, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me, and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 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." That is so airtight and absolute that there's just no escaping the reality of that chain of sovereign purpose and divine intention. "My sheep hear My voice." You don't hear Me because you're not My sheep.

This is for the comfort of the redeemer. Amazing. This is the end of the line for Him. He's done. Virtually three years of ministry. This is where it ends. You do what you do by the power of hell, not heaven. He says you don't believe, you don't believe, you don't believe. You'll die in your sins because you don't believe. And then He backs into His own place of comfort by saying, but, you're not My sheep because My sheep hear My voice, and I know them. And as we saw earlier in chapter 10, they will not follow a stranger. They follow Me, and I give them eternal life, and it is eternal. They will never perish. And no one will ever take them out of My hand or My Father's hand.

This is essentially the grand overview of divine sovereign salvation. God chooses, draws, holds, raises, and nobody's lost in the process. My sheep hear My voice. True sheep are eager to hear the master's voice.

Go back for a moment to verse 3. To the shepherd, the doorkeeper opens, the porter, the guy who kind of watched the flock at night. And the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. Verse 4, as we read, they follow him. Verse 5, "A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers." How much comfort I wanted to give to our missionaries a couple of weeks ago who are out there all over the planet battling false religion to remind them that they're going to have to find their comfort in the fact that the sheep who belong to God will never follow a stranger. They'll never follow a false teacher. They'll follow the voice of their master. You be faithful.

This is where our Lord found His encouragement. If one is chosen to be a sheep; if one is designed to be a love gift from the Father to the Son, to love and serve Him forever in eternal glory, he is secure in that, listen, choice. He is secured in that choice, which is then worked out in redemptive history. Eternal life is eternal. Does that seem like a stretch?

People say, can you lose your salvation? What kind of life is it? Temporary life? Temporal life? It's eternal life. And just in case that's confusing, Jesus says, "And they will never perish." So you have positive. I give them eternal life. And a negative: and they will never perish. Never. To perish is to be separated from eternal life into eternal death. No one will be separated from eternal life who possesses it. No one. All that the Father gives to Me will come to Me. All who come to Me, I receive. I don't turn any away. I raise them all to glory.

Your eternal salvation rests in God's eternal decree. You will live forever because God chose you to live forever. You will never perish because God designed salvation that way. To give to you a salvation that is eternal that is literally born along by a faith that cannot die.

Somebody will say, well, okay, it's eternal life. Okay. They will never perish. But, somebody might come along, somebody might come along and grab them. Oh really? No one will snatch them out of My hand. No one. My Father, who has given them to Me.

I don't have time to go back over all of that. Do you understand that every saved person is a love gift from the Father to the Son? Every single one? And that the reason you're a believer is because

God chose you before the foundation of the world, wrote your name down in a book to be a love gift to His Son, a part of the composite bride that the Father sought in this world to redeem and give to His Son, to bring Him to glory for a wedding, and a wedding feast, and a bridal city, to live forever, to honor and glorify the bridegroom.

The whole of redemptive history is God gathering a bride for His Son. My Father, who has given them to Me is greater than all. Who's going to snatch them? Who's it going to be? There's no one greater than God. No one.

So, no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. My hand, in verse 28, becomes My Father's hand in verse 29. If you question My ability to hold My sheep, then you question My Father's ability to hold His sheep. Sacrilegious violence may nail My hands to a cross. The sword will smite the shepherd, but none can outwit, surprise, or conquer My Father. And so, none can affect the security of the sheep.

In John 17, Jesus prays that while He goes through the horrors of separation from God, that the Father would keep the sheep. Keep them, He says.

There is no stronger passage in the Word of God guaranteeing the absolute security of every true child of God. If we just kind of spread it out a little bit, we're secure because we are chosen by God for His flock. We are God's sheep. Christ is our shepherd, and His duty is to receive us, to care for us, to protect us, to feed us. And to suggest that He can't fulfill that is to blaspheme the good shepherd, and to blaspheme the ultimate shepherd, who is God Himself, because they do this together.

We are secure because we follow Christ. No exceptions. We don't follow strangers. When you see somebody who was around for a while then they disappear, it's 1 John 2:19. They went out from us because they were not of us. If they had been of us, they would've continued with us, but they went out from us that it might be made manifest they never were of us. We are secure because we've been given eternal life. To say it has an end is a contradiction in terms, and makes nonsense out of the promise.

We are secure because eternal life is given. It's given. I give eternal life. We didn't merit it. We can't forfeit it. We didn't do anything to receive it. We can't do anything to forfeit it. The Lord Himself declares they will never perish. No one who is a sheep of His will ever go to hell. And if they do, Christ is a liar. And if Christ is a liar, then we're all on our way to hell.

We're secure because we're doubly held by the Father's hand and the Son's hand, and no one approaches their power.

I mean, that's the whole point of Romans 8 isn't it? Who shall separate us from the love of God and Christ? Nothing. No one. Christ and God hold us together. If one soul who belongs to Christ should be missing in heaven; if there's one vacant room in the Father's house; if there's one unused crown, then God is not God.

It is this very statement that He and the Father are in perfect harmony, in agreement, in power, in purpose, in securing His sheep, that gives Jesus another opportunity to declare who He is. And in

verse 30, the claim comes with strength. “I and the Father are one.” He transitions from just showing how they are one in the securing of the redeemed, the elect; and now He makes the statement in an unmistakable fashion.

We have equal sovereignty, equal love, equal divine power to secure the sheep because we are equal, because we are one in essence. In the 17th chapter, verse 10, Jesus, speaking to the Father in that prayer said, “All things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine.” All the sheep that belong to the Father belong to the Son. We share it all.

Verse 20, “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one.”

What it's saying is that the unity that Christ has with the Father is a unity of essence that is divine, supernatural, eternal, and holy. And we will, as glorified humans, not becoming God, but glorified humans share in that reality. That's what Scripture means when it says we'll be like Christ, for we'll see Him as He is. We'll be conformed to His image. So when our Lord says, “I and the Father are one,” He's talking about the essential nature. You have to understand. They're looking into the face of a Galilean carpenter. Pretty staggering claim. You'd have to have a ton of verification, and they had just had three years of it.

The apostle Paul in Colossians says, “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.” Don't be wrong about Christ. Don't let any professor or any writer or any pundit or any philosopher confuse you. All the fullness of deity dwells in Him in bodily form. All the fullness of deity dwells in Him in bodily form. He is God. This is the claim of Christianity, and that is why when He speaks, He speaks with such authority.

People in our world don't want to hear anybody speak with authority, especially the Lord Jesus Christ with the standards that He has. That was all they could take, verse 31. The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. Again. There they are at that lowest level of conflict.

There are several levels of conflict. We kind of looked at those some weeks ago, but this is the lowest level. So low you can't make an argument, you can't make a case, you don't even think about it. You just want to kill your opponent.

Chapter 5 verse 17, Jesus says, “My Father is working until now, and I Myself is working.” I do what the Father does when the Father does it. I don't pay any more attention to your Sabbath laws than God does. “For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.” That's all the way back months earlier. Months and months earlier, they knew exactly what He was saying. He was claiming to be God.

Chapter 7 verse 1. “After these things Jesus was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.”



Chapter 8 verse 59. He had just declared that, "Before Abraham was, I am. Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple." Now we have the fourth attempt to kill Him in verse 31. And there will be a subsequent effort down in verse 39.

By the way, the temple was always under construction, and so there were lots of rocks lying around. It is true that according to John 18:31, the Romans took away from the Jews the capital punishment. The Romans maintained the right to take a life. But this was not some form of jurisprudence. This was not some legal procedure. This was vengeance and anger by religious mob. And if they could've they would've killed Him on the spot.

Why such hostility? I think Jesus gave us the clue. Go back to John 7. His brothers. Not any of them were believing in Him. So Jesus said to them: "My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune. The world cannot hate you." Why? They're not believers. They're not believers.

This would've been true of the disciples as well, who did believe, but didn't yet really confront in preaching. But you're part of it. He says to His unbelieving brothers. "But it hates Me." Why? Because I offer heaven? Because I offer eternal life? Because I offer eternal joy? No. "Because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil." That is the direct path to persecution. I don't think anybody has ever been persecuted in the name of Christianity for offering people heaven. I don't think so. I don't think people get persecuted for telling people that Jesus loves them and wants to forgive their sins, which is what people say. I don't think anybody's ever been persecuted for saying God has a purpose for your life and why don't you find out what the purpose is? Any sentimental approach to preaching Jesus will avoid persecution. But when you tell sinners that their deeds are evil and damning, you will receive persecution.

So, the confrontation is a hypocritical inquiry. Why don't you tell us who you really are? The claim is an unmistakable, clear claim to deity. They react like a mob wanting to crush out His life. But He stops them because His time is not yet, and because He will not die that way. He confronts the real blasphemers, and we will look at that next week.

Lord, we thank You again this morning that we have been able to gather, and focus on the cross, and sing magnificent hymns that speak of the redemption purchased there for us. We thank You that You have chosen us to be Your sheep. You have called us by name. You have enabled us by the Holy Spirit to hear Your voice and follow You and never follow a stranger. We thank You that You lead us to green pastures and still waters. You provide for us. You protect us. You secure us. You bring us to the flourishing joys of the everlasting kingdom. We thank You that all of this is possible because the shepherd gave His life for the sheep. The good shepherd gave His life for the sheep. We thank You for the death of Christ. We thank You for the astonishing realities that belong to us forever because of His sacrifice and because of Your eternal choice. Fill our hearts with gratitude. Gratitude that translates into purity of thought, mind, action, to honor one who has so graced us. How could we be ungrateful? How could we entertain sin? In the face of this, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

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