

TITLE: "Security"

Text: John 10:1-10 (NT p. 103)

'Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. <sup>2</sup>The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup>The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup>They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.' <sup>6</sup>Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

<sup>7</sup> So again Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup>All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup>I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundant.

Introduction – "Security"

Earlier this summer, on July 15<sup>th</sup>, Carol came to the church office and found that my laptop computer had been stolen. On it was my sermon and service for Sunday, a funeral service I was to conduct on Saturday at Annabel Taylor Hall and LOTS of other stuff. Joni Mitchell wrote, "Don't it always seem to go that you don't know what you've got till it's gone." My computer was gone, and I really DIDN'T know how much I depended upon it until it WAS gone.

You've heard the expression, "Once burned, twice shy." That's how I was. If someone could get into the church and steal my computer, was anything in the church safe? Was anything at home safe? Just the THOUGHT that someone would intentionally enter a CHURCH and steal something valuable made me wonder what the world was coming to. I had HAD a sense of security, or at least the ILLUSION of security, and now it was gone.

In our text for this morning, Jesus says: "I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and [they] will come in and go out and find pasture." ...E. Stanley Jones writes:

“When Jesus says, ‘will come in’ he means you’ll find SECURITY” (*In Christ* p.41). Each of us needs a sense of security in order to be able to function well and enjoy life, and I will be preaching on security this morning.

However, our world has changed. Our country is not as safe as it used to be. Our finances are not as secure as they used to be. Our property is not as secure as it used to be. The question IS, how CAN we find the sense of security that Jesus promises?

### 1. National security

Prior to September 11, 2001, Americans felt pretty well protected from attack by hostile groups. Afterward, that sense of security evaporated, especially in New York City and Boston. There always HAS been something to worry about: Fascism in the 1930s and 40s, Communism in the 1950s, 60s, 70s and 80s. But they were “out there.” After 9-11 there is a looming sense that our country is not a perfectly safe place to live. Then how can we feel secure? Let me read from Psalm 46:

God is our REFUGE and strength,  
 a very present help in trouble.  
 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,  
 though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;  
 though its waters roar and foam,  
 though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;  
 [God] utters his voice, the earth melts.  
 The LORD of hosts is with us;  
 the God of Jacob is our refuge.

‘Be still, and know that I am God!  
 I am exalted among the nations,  
 I am exalted in the earth.’  
 The LORD of hosts is with us;  
 the God of Jacob is our refuge.

GOD is our refuge, our strength and our security. We really DON’T know what the future holds, so, ultimately, we need to find our security in God, not in the impossible task of keeping America perfectly safe.

## 2. Financial security

In the 50s and early 60s, one of my friends had dad's worked for Pepsi Cola. No one was allowed to say "Coke a Cola" or even "Coke" in their home. He started working for Pepsi after high school and he worked for Pepsi until he retired. My other friends' dad started working for the phone company when he graduated high school and he worked for the phone company until he retired.

College counselors now tell graduates to plan on 2-3 years at a company and to always be looking for a new opportunity because if the company is sold, or downsized, they will let you go without a second thought.

In a recent publication I received in the mail from an investment firm, it was recommended that people anticipate only 70% of the Social Security benefits they were originally scheduled to receive because the Social Security system may not have the funds to pay the full amount.

Last week I quoted from I Timothy where God warns us not to put our hope in "the uncertainty of riches. Those with retirement accounts and investments in stocks know how uncertain the stock market can be. How then CAN we be secure?"

Jesus says: "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!" (Mt 7).

Do we need money? Yes, of course. Should we make the best use of our money? Yes. But if we want to be secure, we must build our hope on the Rock, which is our faith in Jesus Christ, rather than on our financial resources.

## 3. Property security

Many people who lived in Dryden from the 1930s through the 1960s have told me that they never locked the doors to their homes. When I came in 1986, we even used to keep the church unlocked and we did so until our sanctuary sound system was stolen. Our property is not as safe as it used to be, as I found out earlier this summer.

But here's the REST of my story about the computer. A couple weeks before the robbery, I bought a new back up drive. The evening before it was stolen, Frank Brackin, our church computer expert, was working on the church office computer and Carol asked if he would mind hooking up this new drive. He did and left it downloading the data from my computer.

For some AMAZING reason, the thieves did not steal the new drive. So, the next day, I was able to buy a new laptop and Frank was able to download the service and sermon for Sunday, the funeral on Saturday and most of the other data from my stolen computer. Someone, I assume in the church, must have heard about it and I received an anonymous check that covered almost half of my new computer.

In Romans 8:28 God tells us: "...all things work together for good for those who love God, who are call according to [God's] purpose." That does NOT mean that everything that happens to us in life is good. Bad things DO happen to even to faithful Christians. After all, our Lord Jesus was perfect and he died on a cross. However, God brought our salvation out of Jesus' pain and agony. And God promises to bring good out of the good AND the bad things that happen to us.

So, what good came out of this? The police caught the group of three guys, 19 and 20-year-olds, who were also responsible for 15 or 20 other thefts in the area, and they will use my deposition to help convict them. There are times when God DOES use us to confront evil in the world, and I believe this was one of the times God did this.

By the way, here is some more information about the robbery. My old computer is gone. They couldn't get into it because it was password protected, so they threw it in a dumpster. How did they get in the church? Someone who worked here years ago, who was not connected in any way with the church, gave them the combination of the outside lock.

What other good came out of this? I learned that no matter how INsecure my things are, God is in charge and God will take care of me. Imagine the PERFECT timing of Carol speaking to Frank, Frank connecting the backup system, the system having time to copy most of my data and later that same night the thieves broke in and forgot to steal the new drive system. God and ONLY God could have worked all THAT out.

## Conclusion – “It Is Well with My Soul”

Billy Graham's Daughter, Anne Graham Lotz, recites this in her "Just Give Me Jesus" retreats (9-14-09 email Bryon Newbury).

[Jesus] is the First and Last, The Beginning and the End!  
 He is the keeper of Creation and the Creator of all!  
 He is the Architect of the universe and the Manager of all times.  
 He always was, He always is, and He always will be ...  
 Unmoved, Unchanged, Undefeated, and never Undone!

[Jesus] was bruised and brought healing!  
 He was pierced and eased pain!  
 He was persecuted and brought freedom!  
 He was dead and brought life!  
 He is risen and brings power!  
 He reigns and brings Peace!

The world can't understand him, The armies can't defeat Him, The schools can't explain Him, and The leaders can't ignore Him. Herod couldn't kill Him, The Pharisees couldn't confuse Him, and The people couldn't hold Him! Nero couldn't crush Him, Hitler couldn't silence Him, The New Age can't replace Him, and "Oprah" can't explain Him away!

[Jesus] is light, love, longevity, and Lord.  
 He is goodness, Kindness, Gentleness, and God.  
 He is Holy, Righteous, mighty, powerful, and pure.  
 His ways are right, His word is eternal, His will is unchanging, and His mind is on me.  
 He is my Savior, He is my guide, and He is my peace!  
 He is my Joy, He is my comfort, He is my Lord, and He rules my life!

I serve Him because His bond is love, His burden is light, and His goal for me is abundant life. I follow Him because He is the wisdom of the wise, the power of the powerful, the ancient of days, the ruler of rulers, the leader of leaders, the overseer of the overcomers, and is to come. And if that seems impressive to you, try this for size. His goal is a relationship with ME!

He will never leave me, never forsake me, never mislead me, never forget me, never overlook me and never cancel my appointment in His appointment book!

When I fall, [Jesus] lifts me up!  
 When I fail, He forgives!  
 When I am weak, He is strong!  
 When I am lost, He is the way!  
 When I am afraid, He is my courage!  
 When I stumble, He steadies me!

When I am hurt, He heals me!  
 When I am broken, He mends me!  
 When I am blind, He leads me!  
 When I am hungry, He feeds me!  
 When I face trials, He is with me!  
 When I face persecution, He shields me!  
 When I face problems, He comforts me!  
 When I face loss, He provides for me!  
 When I face Death, He carries me Home!

[Jesus] is everything for everybody everywhere, every time, and every way.  
 He is God, He is faithful. I am His, and He is mine!  
 My Father in heaven can whip the father of this world.

So, if you're wondering why I feel so secure, understand this...  
 [Jesus] said it, I believe it and that settles it.  
 God is in control, I am on His side, and that means all is well with my soul.

Amen!

Let us now sing #493 "It IS Well with My Soul"

#### MAY OR MAY NOT USE

This is an excerpt from a Romanian Newspaper by Cornel Nistorescu, which was written, I believe, just after 9-11. It's titled "An Ode to America."

Why are Americans so united? They would not resemble one another even if you painted them all one color! They speak all the languages of the world and form an astonishing mixture of civilizations and religious beliefs. Still, the American tragedy turned three hundred million people into a hand put on the heart.

Nobody rushed to accuse the White House, the army, or the secret service that they are only a bunch of losers. Nobody rushed to empty their bank accounts. Nobody rushed out onto the streets nearby to gape about. Instead the Americans volunteered to donate blood and to give a helping hand.

After the first moments of panic, they raised their flag over the smoking ruins, putting on T-shirts, caps and ties in the colors of the national flag. They placed flags on buildings and cars as if in every place and on every car a government official or the president was passing. On every occasion, they started singing: "God Bless America!"

I watched the live broadcast and rerun after rerun for hours listening to the story of the guy who went down one hundred floors with a woman in a wheel chair without knowing who she was, or of the Californian hockey player, who gave his life fighting the terrorists and prevented the plane from hitting a target that could have killed other hundreds or thousands of people.

How on earth were they able to respond united as one human being? ...What on earth can unite the Americans in such a way? Their land? Their history? Their economic Power? Money? I tried for hours to find an answer, humming songs and murmuring phrases with the risk of sounding commonplace, I thought things over, I reached but only one conclusion... Only freedom can work such miracles.