

John 10:27–30 – The Security of Being Known

“My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand.” (John 10:27–28)

I. The Voice that Calls the Heart

The philosophical tradition—from Plato to Augustine—recognizes that **truth is not just an idea, but a Person**. In a world saturated with noise, Jesus says not, “My sheep hear a voice,” but “**My sheep hear my voice.**” He appeals not merely to intellect, but to identity and relationship.

This claim addresses one of the oldest questions in philosophy: *How do we know what is true?* Jesus provides not an abstract epistemology, but a **personal epistemology**: *You know truth by hearing the voice of the One who is Truth incarnate* (cf. John 14:6).

Jesus' words refute both relativism and skepticism:

- **Against relativism**, He asserts that there is one Shepherd and one flock—not multiple conflicting truths.
- **Against skepticism**, He offers certainty: *“I know them... they shall never perish.”* The human desire for permanence, for “eternal life,” is fulfilled not in self-reliance but in communion with the Logos.

Truth is not subjective; it is a Person who speaks.

II. Being Known: Healing the Wound of Isolation

In counseling, one of the deepest human wounds is **the fear of not being known or accepted**. Clients often express this in different ways: *“If people really knew me, they’d leave...”* or *“I’ve always felt invisible.”*

Jesus responds: “I know them.”

Not *I observe them*, or *I tolerate them*. He **knows** them—in Greek, *ginōskō*, a word implying deep, experiential, relational knowledge. This speaks directly to the modern epidemic of loneliness, shame, and rejection.

From a therapeutic standpoint:

- **Identity** is not something we construct by ourselves; it is *revealed* in relationship.
- Christ’s words counteract self-rejection and fear with divine affirmation.

For Catholic counselors, this passage invites us to help others experience the healing power of being *truly known and unconditionally loved by God*. It mirrors what every person yearns to hear: *“You matter. I see you. I will not abandon you.”*

III. Free Will and Eternal Security

Some may interpret this passage to imply “**once saved, always saved,**” as if the sheep cannot ever stray. However, a Catholic understanding respects both **divine sovereignty and human freedom.**

Jesus says, “*No one will snatch them out of my hand.*”

This affirms His **protective power**, but it does not imply we lose our free will. A sheep can still *choose* to wander. God will not let us go easily—but He will never override our freedom. As the Catechism teaches: “God created man a rational being, conferring on him the dignity of a person who can initiate and control his own actions” (CCC 1730).

Thus, the Catholic Church rejects both:

- **Fatalism** (you have no choice), and
- **Presumption** (you don’t need to respond).

Instead, we uphold **grace that calls, and freedom that must respond.**

IV. The Hand of God and Eternal Life (*Philosophy of Hope*)

Jesus says, “*They shall never perish... No one can take them out of my hand.*” This is more than a comforting image—it’s a metaphysical reality.

To be in Christ’s hand is to be:

- **Held in Being** (as Aquinas would say, “God is *ipsum esse subsistens*” – subsistent being itself),
- **Sustained by Love**, and
- **Destined for eternal communion.**

For a person wrestling with despair, doubt, or identity confusion, this passage is not just theology—it is *existential rescue*. It tells them:

“You are not falling into the void. You are held.”

In counseling, this combats the nihilism and despair that so many feel when they believe their life has no meaning or security. God does not just offer advice; **He holds us.**

V. The Unity of the Father and the Son (*Trinitarian Confidence*)

Finally, Jesus declares: “*The Father and I are one.*”

This is a cornerstone of Trinitarian theology and a direct affirmation of His divinity. This unity guarantees the reliability of His promise. If Jesus were not God, His promise to give eternal life would be empty.

Apologetically, this defends:

- The **divine authority** of Christ,
- The **foundation of the Trinity**, and

- The **sacramental power** of the Church, which acts in *persona Christi*.

Sheep with a Shepherd, Not Orphans in the Wilderness

This passage speaks to the philosopher, the seeker, the counselor, the doubter, and the wounded. It offers:

- Truth for the mind,
- Love for the heart,
- Hope for the despairing,
- And security for the soul.

To be Catholic is to walk through this world not as a lost sheep, but as **one known, held, and called** by the Good Shepherd—who doesn't just point the way to life, but **is** the way, and walks with us every step.