

September 4th, 2016

INVINCIBLE GOD, INVINCIBLE GOSPEL

John 10:22-42

What turns average men into fire-breathing missionaries? What turns stay at home moms into the women their children will remember as the most influential evangelist/discipler they ever met? What transforms drug addicts and prostitutes into pastors and school teachers? The gospel of Jesus Christ. Men and women who have absorbed Jesus' words in this passage have transformed nations: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand." (John 10:27-28) Invincible everlasting life, with an invincible ever-expanding mission.

Andoniram Judson—missionary to Burma in the 19th century was fueled by this gospel. During his time in Burma, he suffered such personal loss, that the only thing that explained his perseverance through affliction are the words that Jesus gives "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." When Adoniram met his future wife—Ann Hasseltine—he knew what lay ahead. He sent a letter to her father to ask for her hand in marriage.

"I have now to ask, whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next spring, to see her no more in this world; whether you can consent to her departure, and her subjection to the hardships and sufferings of missionary life; whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean, to the fatal influence of the southern climate of India; to every kind of want and distress; to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death. Can you consent to all this, for the sake of him who left his heavenly home, and died for her and for you; for the sake of perishing, immortal souls; for the sake of Zion, and the glory of God?¹

¹ John Piper, *Filling up the Afflictions of Christ*, (Wheaton, IL.: Crossway, 2009), pg. 92

What kind of men write such things? Moreover, what kind of woman would consent to such a proposal? Men and women who have tasted the invincible gospel that Christ promises us in our passage this morning.

The Big Idea...

Jesus calls His sheep to an invincible Gospel, and this is what brings us all the way home

- ☆ The Invincible Gospel (v.22-30)
- ☆ The Unstoppable Gospel (v.31-42)

I. The Invincible Gospel

The Feast of Dedication

We don't know exactly how much time has elapsed between v.21 and v.22. At the beginning of chapter seven, Jesus came up to Jerusalem at the Feast of Booths. But here in 10:22, the setting is the Feast of Dedication² during the winter. From feast to feast is about two months, but we don't know how long the events of 7:1-10:21 took. At any rate, between v.21-22, some time lapse that has taken place.

² This feast wasn't one of the prescribed feasts in the OT law. It was established to commemorate the Jews' victory over the despotic ruler Antiochus Epiphanies. Antiochus was a Syrian King who brutalized the Jews and did everything he could to erase Judaism from the planet. In 167 b.c., Antiochus desecrated the temple by sacrificing a pig on the altar and setting up a statue of Zeus in the holy of holies. The Jews, led by Mattathias (priest) and Maccabeus (military commander) recaptured Jerusalem in 164 b.c. They rededicated the temple and established this festival to be celebrated annually, known today as Hanukkah. This is the occasion for Jesus being at Jerusalem. John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: John 1-11*, (Chicago, IL.,: Moody Publishers, 2006), pg. 439

The theology of chapter 10

However there is still a cohesive flow of the whole chapter. Jesus spent the first 21 verses of chapter ten teaching theology through a figure of speech (v. 6).³ In v.1-6, Jesus is gathering a flock of sheep from the Jewish fold; in v.7-10 He tells us *why* He is gathering those sheep—namely to give them abundant life; in v.11-21, He tells us *how* He gathers His sheep, namely through His death. “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” (v. 11) But He also adds that He has other sheep, that is, Gentile sheep in v.16, and “...must bring them also, and they will listen to [His] voice.” And so there will be one flock forever enjoying eternal life, under the safety and satisfaction of the good Shepherd.

This figure of speech (v.6) that Jesus gave in v.1-21 is **the gospel**. Granted it was in the form of a figure of speech, but it was clear enough to provoke a serious response. Hearing Jesus speak of His own resurrection some Jews responded “He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?” (v.19)

Tell us plainly...

Well now we fast forward to the Feast of Dedication, and some of these same Jews surround Him in v.24 and say “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.” In other words, ‘all this talk of sheep and shepherds, and flocks and folds, isn’t clear enough. Just tell us plainly. Are you the Messiah or no?’

Where we’re going...

The way that Jesus answers touches of a theological atom bomb. He tells them plainly alright. So plainly, that they pick up stones to stone Him for blasphemy. But Jesus presses back and shows them their hypocrisy of unbelief in two stunning ways. And then He offers them one more invitation to believe

³ “This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.”

the gospel. Upon their rejection, we see Jesus end this chapter by traveling to the Jordan River where He finds sheep all too eager to believe.

Our challenge...

So as we begin this passage, I want to challenge all of us as we hear Jesus speak. These words, like no other words on planet earth change eternal destinies. *Not only* do Jesus' words have the power to grant men and women everlasting life, but Jesus' words have the power to overcome alcoholism and addiction, depression and despair. The gospel changes everything. Not just your eternity, but your life right now. The gospel changes everything. Jesus promises three things for those who will believe on Him: 1) He promises everlasting life; 2) He promises that you *will* follow Him and 3) He promises that He will never let you go.

Jesus's answer ("If you are the Christ, tell us plainly")

How does Jesus answer their question? He says in v.25-26

"I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep.

Jesus contradicts them. 'My words have been clear. And even if *you* didn't think my words have been clear, then certainly my works have been clear. Every miracle I have performed bears the unmistakable stamp of my Father.' In other words, Jesus is saying that these Jews had more than enough evidence to believe in Christ. Evidence is *never* the ultimate issue. Jesus says "...you do not believe *because* you are not among my sheep." In other words, your wicked rebellious heart can not be overcome unless God does a work of grace first. Believing in Jesus Christ is a gift that must come from God, otherwise you will never believe. **Philippians 1:29** "For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should...believe in him."

He doesn't give them an opportunity to respond. He's not done answering their question yet. v.26-30

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, 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. I and the Father are one.”

Let's take note of three things. First in v.27, Jesus's sheep invincibly hear His voice, and this results in their invincibly following Jesus. That's a promise that we'll see in our application section.

Secondly notice, in v.28-29 Jesus *promises* that his sheep will never fall away and lose their salvation. Jesus' sheep can never be lost. Believers can never go to hell. Ever. And this promise *does not rest* on our ability to keep ourselves in His hand. Jesus promises that He is the one who holds on to us. It is impossible that anyone could overpower Jesus and remove us from His hand. But Jesus so wants us to understand how secure we are in Him, that He adds a second promise. 'Not only will no one be able to snatch you out of My hand,' Jesus says 'but my nobody will be able to snatch you out of my Father's hand who is greater than all.'⁴

The invincible gospel

This invincible gospel is good news for men like Adoniram Judson. In 1824, 11 years and 2 children dead after he arrived in Burma, he was arrested as a spy. At night, they passed a long bamboo pole through his chained legs, making it so only his shoulders and head touched the ground while he slept. This went on for 17 months. His pregnant wife during that time, bore their third child and walked the 2 mile hike to his prison camp every day to plead for his life. Eventually Ann received some pity from one of the guards because her

⁴ Imagine a big stout father walking his three year old on the sidewalk during rush hour traffic. What is the best way this father would protect his son? Would he say "Son, grab ahold of my finger and don't let go otherwise you could be killed by the cars?" Or would this father take his son's his little fist and engulf it in His massive grip and say "Don't worry son, I won't let go of you?" As R.C. Sproul says "We are secure, not because we hold tightly to Jesus, but because He holds tightly to us." R.C. Sproul, *St. Andrew's Expository Commentary: John*, (Orlando, FL,,: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2009), pg. 196

milk dried up for her baby. The guard agreed to let Judson go to the village during the day in order to beg for other women to nurse his baby. Finally he was released. But the damage done to his wife was irrevocable. Ann died 11 months later fulfilling the prophetic letter that her father received by Judson. Adoniram was broken. And then his 2 year old Maria Elizabeth, followed her mother to the grave 6 months later. Everything came crashing down on Judson. He retreated into tiger infested jungle for forty days, nearly going mad. He began to question his calling⁵, his theology⁶, everything.⁷ He wrote a letter to Ann's relatives saying: "My tears flow at the same time over the forsaken grave of my dear love and over the loathsome sepulcher of my own heart. God to me is the Great Unknown. I believe in him, but I find him not."⁸

But Jesus promises in His gospel "...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. I and the Father are one."

Judson recovered. He didn't lose His faith. The gospel that Jesus gave to Judson was invincible. "Neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, [could] separate [Judson] from the love of God in Christ Jesus [His] Lord." (Romans 8:38-39) And neither will you ever be separated from

⁵ Piper records: "The psychological effect of these losses was devastating. Self-doubt overtook his mind, and he wondered if he had become a missionary for ambition and fame, not humility and self-denying love." John Piper, *Filling up the Afflictions of Christ*, (Wheaton, IL.: Crossway, 2009), pg. 99-100

⁶ Piper records: "He began to read Catholic mystics like Madame Guyon, Fenelon, and Thomas a Kempis who led him into solitary asceticism and various forms of self-mortification. He dropped his Old Testament translation work, the love of his life, and retreated more and more from people and from "anything that might conceivably support pride or promote his pleasure." *ibid*, pg. 100

⁷ Judson renounced his honorary Doctorate from Brown University. He gave away all his private wealth, asked that his salary be reduced by the missions board. He destroyed all letters of commendation that he had, and ordered that all letters back home in New England be destroyed. *ibid*, pg. 100

⁸ John Piper, *Filling up the Afflictions of Christ*, (Wheaton, IL.: Crossway, 2009), pg. 100

Christ if you are a believing sheep. You are invincible, in the hands of an invincible God.

“I and the Father are one”

The last thing we need to notice in this section is v.30. When Jesus spoke these last words, the Jews picked up stones to kill Him. Jesus said “I and the Father are one.” This has been a very controversial text throughout church history. The heretic Arius (4th century) tried to use this verse to show that Jesus was one with the Father *only* in the sense of His mission.⁹ In other words, the Father and Son agree in their thoughts, and in their works. But Arius, like modern J.W.’s and Mormons, go further here and deny that Jesus is claiming to be one with God in His essence.¹⁰

To the Arians, we have two answers. 1) The Jews knew exactly what Jesus was saying, which is why they tried to stone Him. When they were asked why, they respond in v.33 “for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.” Jesus offers no correction. They were right. He was making Himself out to be God. 2) That *Jesus is God* is the repeated message of the gospel of John.

John 1:1, 14 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and *the Word was God*...And *the Word became flesh* and dwelt among us”

John 5:18 “This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, *making himself equal with God*.”

⁹ This is reasoned because the immediate context is not talking about the “substance” or unity of the Godhead, but rather it is talking about the Father and Son “working” together to keep the salvation of believers secure.

¹⁰ “The Father and the Son jointly guarantee the eternal security of believers because, as Jesus declared, “I and the Father are one” (the Greek word “One” is neuter, not masculine; it speaks of “one substance,” not “one person”) Thus their unity of purpose and action in safeguarding believers is undergirded by their unity of nature and essence.” John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: John 1-11*, (Chicago, IL.; Moody Publishers, 2006), pg. 443

John 8:58 Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, *before Abraham was, I am.*”

John 10:18 “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and *I have authority to take it up again.*” Mere human beings do not have the authority to make themselves undead.

The only reason why our gospel is invincible is because the central actor in it is God. Make no mistake our gospel would not be worth the paper it is written on, if Jesus Christ is not God and Lord of this universe.

II. The Unstoppable Gospel

When the Jews pick up stones to kill Jesus, Jesus does not flee. He could have walked right through the midst of them, like He did at other times. But this time He stays to show them their hypocrisy in not believing. He asks them in v.32

“I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?” 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.”¹¹

Jesus gives two answers to the Jews here, both aimed at showing their hypocrisy in not believing Him.

1st Hypocrisy of Unbelief

The first answer is in v.34-36

¹¹ Sproul says here “How ironic it is that exactly the opposite had happened...The eternal second person of the Trinity, who from all eternity was very God of very God, became man. He took upon Himself a human nature. God *made himself* man. But the Jewish authorities accused Jesus of being a man who *made himself* God (or represented Himself as God). They got it completely backward.” R.C. Sproul, *St. Andrew’s Expository Commentary: John*, (Orlando, FL,.: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2009), pg. 197

[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’?”

Now these words can become more difficult than necessary if we press them beyond what Jesus intended. First the Scripture that Jesus is referring to is Psalm 82:6. There the Psalmist calls the judges¹² of the land “gods” [lower case “g”].¹³ Jesus’ argument is very modest. He is not attempting to jump through some sort of Jewish legal technical loophole in order to avoid being stoned. He could have just walked away and they couldn’t have stopped him. What Jesus is doing is arguing from the lesser to the greater. He’s showing them to be hypocrites because in condemning Him, they are condemning the Scripture. If the Scripture, which they believe, uses the term “gods” in a way to refer to earthly judges, then how can they indict Him when He claims to be the Son of God? The very one whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world?

Imagine being there. At that moment. Their heads are starting to compute what He’s saying. That’s what He was aiming at. For them to stall out with the stones so that He had one more opportunity to present Himself as the Christ. This was a maneuver for Jesus. He was using Biblical language to buy Him more time to preach more gospel.

2nd Hypocrisy of Unbelief

And so Jesus gives His second answer which is another invitation to believe in Him. v.37-39

If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may

¹² Others understand the verse to be meaning all of Israel, since they were the possessors of the law to the exclusion of Gentile nations. Whatever the Psalmist or Jesus exactly meant is not germane to the point.

¹³ I understand this to be judges primarily because of the context of Psalm 82. Verses 2-4 are rebuking those in authority who have power to make things right but are not doing so.

know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.” Again they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands.

Jesus is calling them to believe the gospel.¹⁴ Listen to how reasonably Jesus is making His appeal. He is not asking them to believe *based* on His own naked claims.¹⁵ He’s appealing to His works. ‘Are not these the kind of works My Father does? Go ahead and reject Me ‘if you cannot see the very fingerprints of my Father in my works.’¹⁶

The chief miracle of Jesus

These works of Jesus are visible today. He wasn’t primarily talking about his ordinary miracles. **His chief miracle was setting people free through the gospel.**

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim **liberty** to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” (Luke 4:18-19)

Jesus sets souls free. Jesus gives eyesight to spiritually blind people. Jesus breaks the bondage of sin and shame and guilt and oppression. He does this all over the world. This work of Jesus is so unmistakably Divine.

This work of Christ was on display in Adoniram Judson’s life. He labored for 38 years in Burma, burying two wives, seven of his thirteen children, and

¹⁴ Calvin here “If anyone murmur at this, arguing that the cause of unbelief dwells in God, because he alone has power to make sheep; I reply, he is free from all blame, for it is only by their voluntary malice that men reject his grace. God does all that is necessary to induce them to believe, but who shall tame wild beasts?” John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries Vol. XVII*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 414

¹⁵ “He does not expect to be believed on the basis of his own naked claims.” D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), pg. 399

¹⁶ “You may safely reject me, if God has not openly given testimony to me.” John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries Vol. XVII*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 421

colleague after colleague in those gospel fields.¹⁷ When He arrived in Burma, it was utterly hostile to the gospel and completely unreached. The great missionary William Carey told Judson not to go. But a gospel work had been done on Judson's heart that could not be undone. What were his fruits? Not a single convert for 6 years. No significant breakthrough for 19 years. But today there are nearly 4,000 congregations and 3/4 of a million church members all traceable to Judson's labors. How? Because Christ set him free to lose His life for the gospel.

And this is still happening all over the world. The work of Jesus on people's lives is unmistakably Divine. The Jewish leaders witnessed this in the lives of the disciples. Acts 4:13

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.”

Jesus had changed them. That is His chief work. So unbelieving friend, when Jesus says in v.38 of our passage “...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.” Trace these unmistakable miracles back to God and believe the witness of Jesus Christ.

A tale of two endings

How does this story end? The Jews wouldn't believe. Their hearts were so hardened that they once again tried to arrest Jesus. But Jesus' gospel does not fail. When Jesus goes back over the river Jordan in v.40-42, sheep hear his voice. v.41-42 say “And many came to him. And they said, “John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true.” And many believed in him there.” Jesus' gospel is unstoppable. Sheep will believe. Do you?

¹⁷ John Piper, *Filling up the Afflictions of Christ*, (Wheaton, IL.: Crossway, 2009), pg. 95

Application

Our Duty: Persevere in this invincible gospel

Jesus did not speak these words in John 10 in a calm peaceful church setting. These words were spoken in the midst of a crowd picking up stones to kill him. In other words, this gospel message was born in absolute hostility. This is important for us to see. Jesus' words are not words designed to make us only feel good in prosperous times, they are words that will hold us up when all hell is breaking loose against us. There are wolves outside these doors. There are wolves in your homes. But the most dangerous wolf is the wolf in your own heart, and he will seek after another gospel to believe.

As the famous hymn goes...

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
 Prone to leave the God I love;
 Here's my hear, Lord, take and seal it;
 Seal it for thy courts above.¹⁸

As sheep we are all fence crawlers. We are prone to wander. We are like that sheep that we saw a couple weeks ago anxiously looking for a way out of the sheep pen. What this means theologically is that we are chasing after other gospels.

Our duty from this passage is an implied duty. v.27— “My sheep... follow me.” **We are to persevere as sheep.** Meaning, we are to continue in the gospel. When? When are we supposed believe the gospel? Only at church on Sunday morning? That's what fence crawlers *like us* do best. When the Shepherd is near, we stand at attention. But when we don't see him as clearly, the other six days, we head for the holes.

¹⁸ Robert Robertson, *Come Thou Fount*

Beloved, how do you struggle in believing this invincible gospel? You see all of us struggle to believe this gospel when we think that Christ is not enough for our problems in the “real world.” The world of taking care of small children, or going to work in an unfulfilling job, or dealing with our own broken hearts, or failing health

The gospels we prefer to turn to handle those problems come in two principle forms: legalism or antinomianism. We become Mr. Law or Mrs. License. These two gospels are seen perfectly in the story of the prodigal son. The younger son thought that the better gospel was living loosely in a foreign land. The older son thought that the better gospel was rule keeping. These two sons’ gospels are the gospels that we regularly go to when we are prone to wander.

How do we discover these false gospels? How do we discover when we are not following the Good Shepherd? Ask yourself: What do you need **in addition to Jesus** in order for your life to have meaning and fulfillment? Or what do you turn to **besides Jesus** when your life is not full of meaning and fulfillment?

I fluctuate between Mr. Law and Mr. License all the time. I very often look at my Bible reading as a means to please God. ‘Look God, I’m still reading the Bible for myself and not just for others.’ Now I’ve said some things about Bible reading lately that can be taken in the wrong way. We should read the Bible and hide it in our hearts. The Psalmist says “I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.” (Psalm 119:11). We ought to be the best students of the Word. But we shouldn’t read our Bibles in a way that betrays the gospel. If we think that we can twist God’s arm by how much Bible we read, we have turned to a different gospel. Conversely, I can easily become Mr. License. I become dissatisfied with my life, or worse, I become so discouraged that I want to escape reality. So I turn to the gospel of Netflix, gorging myself on digital good news, like the prodigal son gorged himself on the pods the pigs ate.

Beloved what are the gospels you turn to? The gospel of food? “I feel discouraged, but instead of going to the Shepherd of my soul, I’ll just eat.” Or how about the gospel of alcohol? “Life isn’t exciting enough unless I’m buzzed.” Or the gospel of people pleasing? As long as people think well of me, then I’m doing ok. Or the the gospel of materialism. “I’ll just buy more stuff.” Or the gospel of vocation. “I’ll feel better if I achieve more at work.” Or the gospel of financial freedom. “If I can just get my bank account to read X amount, then all will be well with my soul.” Or the pornography gospel. “Just one more click, and then I’ll be satisfied.” Or the health gospel. “If only I could get past this sickness, or once I start my new exercise routine then I will be a more fulfilled person.” Or the house-in-order gospel. “As long as my kids and my home are in order, then all is well.” Or the education gospel. “Once I get such and such a degree, then I will have arrived.” Or the “the soul mate gospel.” “I just need that one special friend, then I won’t be so unhappy.” Or the gospel of moralism. “Personal discipline, and moral uprightness is the answer to my problems. I’ll try harder.”

Who is at the center of all these gospels? I. Not Christ. What will all of these gospels provide for you? False hope. Just like the prodigal son you will wake up in a pig’s pen, or like the self-righteous older brother you will realize your law-keeping has only alienated you from the Father.

Jesus did not speak these words in John 10 when life was going well. He spoke these words when men were trying to send Him to the grave. What a marvelous contrast! Jesus gave these precious gospel words, in the middle of one of the greatest trials of His life. It’s these words that enable us to follow Him.

Our Doctrine and Delight: Jesus gives the **promise** and the **power** to persevere.

The epicenter of this passage and where we will find our chief help in following the Good Shepherd is found in v.27-29

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, 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.

First, Jesus gives us the **promise** of our final perseverance—meaning we will never lose our salvation. If we have come Christ by faith, by simply believing on His blood to cleanse us from our sins, and His perfect obedience to cover us with righteousness, then He says that *we have* eternal life. We will never perish. And He makes a two-fold pledge of protection: “No one will snatch them out of my hand...and no one is able to snatch the out of the Father’s hand.” Adoniram Judson persevered in Burma for 38 years, and not the death of his family or his madness was strong enough to separate Him from Christ. Beloved, the afflictions that are waiting for you will never tear you away from the Omnipotent hand of Christ enclosed in the Sovereign hand of the Father.

Second, Jesus gives us the **promise** of our sanctification. Jesus says “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they will follow me.” They will follow me. Jesus is not restricting this to initial salvation. He means “they will follow Me all the way to glory.” Jesus bought your sanctification with His blood. You cannot fail. And oh the preciousness of this promise. It is so easy for my heart to despair. My heart can get discouraged at the smallest things. I don’t even need things to happen to feel discouraged. I can just wake up that way. But Christ says to my heart “You will follow me Josh, I’ve guaranteed it in my death.” Take hold of that promise dear congregation. You may feel like you aren’t improving at all. You may feel like you are a worse sinner now than you were a year ago. But Christ is saying “You will follow me, you won’t ultimately fail. That’s why I went to that cross. I’ve already bore your failures on my body, look to Me. Look to Me!”

So those are the promises of our perseverance. What about the **power** to persevere? We need power! Where does the power come from? **The power comes from the promise!** It’s by preaching this gospel to ourselves, that we find

all our power. “Nobody can snatch me from Christ’s hands. I may lose my family, or my sanity, or my health, but nobody can take Jesus away from me.”

“He who began a good work in [me] will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:6)

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?
As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:35-39)

This is the invincible gospel.