

Pet Doctrines #10

PERSONAL SALVATION VS CORPORATE SALVATION

Focus Verse: 1 Corinthians 12:26 “When one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. Or when one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.”

One of the great deceptions and tricks of the devil is the concept of salvation being a purely personal experience. The selfish outlook and inward focus of this ideology is an exaltation of self against the work of Jesus to create a body of believers. This “Pet Doctrine” is not so much a declared doctrine; it is more of an implied understanding and focus, a subtle piece of leaven in the bread of the heart of the church. We will set out to dismantle this failed understanding and show that you are saved into the church to build up the church, not to be a church of one all alone. That what you do with your walk and life matters and has an effect upon the entire Body Of Christ.

The Truth About The Parable Of The Lost Sheep

Let's Read The Parable And Discuss The Finer Points Presented To Us. All Is Not As It Appears Or Is Presented To The Church With This Parable.

“Which of you men, if you had one hundred sheep, and lost one of them, wouldn't leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one that was lost, until he found it? (5) When he has found it, he carries it on his shoulders, rejoicing. (6) When he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' (7) I tell you that even so there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.

➡ Key Points

- The Lost Sheep Forces The Good Shepherd To Leave The Sheepfold.
- When The Shepherd Is Gone, He Expects The Sheep To Stay Together And Take Care Of Each Other.
- When The Lost Sheep Is Found, The Shepherd Does Not Dust The Sheep Off And Leave It To Remain By Itself. He Is Brought Back To Be A Part Of The Fold.
- When Once Again With The Sheepfold, The Lost Sheep Must Remain In The Fold, And Follow The Direction Of The Shepherd.
- It Takes Repentance In This Story To Be Found.

Now when Jesus gave this parable, He gave it to the Jews to help them understand what His mission was. So let's use Jesus' own words to fully understand this parable and what it means in context.

➡ **Who Are The Lost Sheep?**

Matthew 15:24 “But he answered, “I wasn’t sent to anyone but the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

Matthew 10:6 “Rather, go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

We Find That Jesus Was Increasing The Sheepfold, But His Ministry Had To Be Completed First. So The Sheepfold, While On Earth, Was The Jewish Nation.

Romans 1:16-17 “For I am not ashamed of the Good News of Christ, because it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes; for the Jew first, and also for the Greek. (17) For in it is revealed God’s righteousness from faith to faith. As it is written, “But the righteous shall live by faith.”

But He Knew The Fold Was Going To Increase.

John 10:16 “I have other sheep, which are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will hear my voice. They will become one flock with one shepherd.”

Then After Jesus Died On The Cross And Rose Again, The Sheepfold Increased.

Galatians 3:6-9 “Even as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.” (7) Know therefore that those who are of faith, the same are children of Abraham. (8) The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Good News beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you all the nations will be blessed.” (9) So then, those who are of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham.”

Ephesians 3:4-7 “by which, when you read, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ; (5) which in other generations was not made known to the children of men, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; (6) that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of his promise in Christ Jesus through the Good News, (7) of which I was made a servant, according to the gift of that grace of God which was given me according to the working of his power.”

As We Can See, The Lost Sheep Of Israel Were Being Called Back To The Abrahamic Agreement To Be Children Of God Once More. So He Can Transform All Into The New Covenant By Himself, Being Children Of God As Family Through His Sacrifice.

Galatians 3:26-29 “For you are all children of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. (27) For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (29) If you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring and heirs according to promise.”

John 1:12-13 “But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become God’s children, to those who believe in his name: (13) who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

The lost sheep are those called to be part of the sheepfold, found in the good shepherd Jesus Our Christ. They are meant to be part of the whole. Their wondering away from the whole has made them lost, or they have never joined the whole and are sought to do so. It is in the whole of the sheepfold we find our salvation in and through Jesus.

John 14:6-7 "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me. (7) If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on, you know him, and have seen him."

Let Us Compare John 10 & Hebrews 10

In These Two Sections Of Verses, We Find A Most Amazing Parallel. When Understood Correctly, We Can See In The Spirit The Unity In These Statements.

John 10:1-8 "Most certainly, I tell you, one who doesn't enter by the door into the sheep fold, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. (2) But one who enters in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. (3) The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out. (4) Whenever he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. (5) They will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him; for they don't know the voice of strangers." (6) Jesus spoke this parable to them, but they didn't understand what he was telling them." (7) Jesus therefore said to them again, "Most certainly, I tell you, I am the sheep's door. (8) All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep didn't listen to them.

John 10:(9) "I am the door. If anyone enters in by me, he will be saved, and will go in and go out, and will find pasture."

Hebrews 10:(19) "Having therefore, brothers, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus,"

John 10:(10) "The thief only comes to steal, kill, and destroy. I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."

Hebrews 10:(20) "by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;"

John 10:(11) "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. (12) He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who doesn't own the sheep, sees the wolf coming, leaves the sheep, and flees. The wolf snatches the sheep, and scatters them. (13) The hired hand flees because he is a hired hand, and doesn't care for the sheep."

Hebrews 10:(21) "and having a great priest over God's house,"

John 10:(14) “I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and I’m known by my own;
Hebrews 10:(22-23) “let’s draw near with a true heart in fullness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and having our body washed with pure water, let’s hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering; for he who promised is faithful.”

John 10:(15) “even as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. I lay down my life for the sheep.”

Hebrews 10:(24) “Let’s consider how to provoke one another to love and good works,”

John 10:(16) “I have other sheep, which are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will hear my voice. They will become one flock with one shepherd.”

Hebrews 10:(25) “not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as you see the Day approaching.”

John 10:(17-18) “Therefore the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one takes it away from me, but I lay it down by myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. I received this commandment from my Father.”

As we can clearly see and understand, Salvation and a relationship with God is not a private, individual experience. While yes, we have our personal connection with God, God intends for us to be part of the Sheepfold, under the direction of the Good Shepherd. We are called to keep our walk with God strong and be able to help the sheepfold be strong.

Galatians 6:1-2 “Brothers, even if a man is caught in some fault, you who are spiritual must restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to yourself so that you also aren’t tempted. (2) **Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.**”

To what are we restoring a person back to? The Body Of Christ, The Church. Not to be an island unto themselves, indifferent to the needs of the whole, or in favor of the needs of self.

Ephesians 2:13-22 “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off are made near in the blood of Christ. (14) For he is our peace, **who made both one**, and broke down the middle wall of partition, (15) having abolished in his flesh the hostility, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, that he might **create in himself one new man of the two**, making peace; (16) and **might reconcile them both in one body to God** through the cross, having killed the hostility thereby. (17) He came and preached peace to you who were far off and to those who were near. (18) For through him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. (19) **So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,** (20) being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone; (21) **in whom the whole building, fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord;** (22) **in whom you also are built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.**”

As we just read, every person in the Body of Christ is a brick within the church-building up the Body, or Building of God, for The Holy Spirit to dwell. There is no solo brick building. If you are saved by God's grace through the sacrifice of Christ, you are then called to join the rest of the sheep and bricks and make for Him a holy dwelling. This takes unity of purpose, not Singleness of self determination.

This Is How The Church (New Sheepfold) Was Started.

Acts 1:14 "All these with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer and supplication, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers."

This Is How The Church Must Remain.

Romans 15:5-7 "Now the God of perseverance and of encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, (6) that with one accord you may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (7) Therefore accept one another, even as Christ also accepted you, to the glory of God."

Failure To Keep This As The Focus Is Rebellion And Rivalry Against Your Fellow Sheep.

Philippians 2:1-3 "If therefore there is any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassion, (2) make my joy full, by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; (3) doing nothing through rivalry or through conceit, but in humility, each counting others better than himself;"

It Is Impossible For You To Obey This Command If You're Trying To Be A Lone Sheep.

Philippians 2:4 "each of you not just looking to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others."

The Idea That Salvation Is A Purely Personal Experience, And That This Experience Doesn't Have A Major Impact Upon The Body of Christ As A Whole, Is A Lie.

1 Corinthians 12:26 "When one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. Or when one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it."

Everything an Individual does has a major impact upon the Body of Christ. The sheepfold is affected, if not physically, certainly spiritually, by every wayward lone sheep. We are not called to seek our own gains and ends, but the purpose of the One who called us.

Romans 8:28 "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose."

We are not saved by God's grace to become free agent sheep. We lose all free agency once we are brought into the sheepfold. We must take care of the sheepfold and obey the shepherd.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 "Or don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, (20) for you were bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

As we clearly see, there is no going off into Christian retirement of selfish isolation. It is imperative we get to the work made manifested through the life of Jesus. We must do the same for our fellow sheep.

Ephesians 2:8-10 “for by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, (9) not of works, that no one would boast. (10) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before that we would walk in them.”

2 Timothy 1:8-10 “Therefore don’t be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but endure hardship for the Good News according to the power of God, (9) who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before times eternal, (10) but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Good News.”

Let Us Review the Master Plan Of God On These Works And Calling To Support The Sheepfold. This Building Up Of The Body Cannot Be Done Living On A Spiritual Island Of Isolation.

Ephesians 4:11-12 “He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, shepherds and teachers; (12) for the perfecting of the saints, to the work of serving, to the building up of the body of Christ;”

Therefore, What Is The Goal Of God In This Work For His Sheepfold?

Ephesians 4:13-15 “until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a full grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; (14) that we may no longer be children, tossed back and forth and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; (15) but speaking truth in love, we may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, Christ;”

When Every Part Is Playing Its Role, This Is The Amazing Result.

Ephesians 4:16 “from whom all the body, being fitted and knit together through that which every joint supplies, according to the working in measure of each individual part, makes the body increase to the building up of itself in love.”

Let’s Review The Grand Design Of God With The Body Of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14 “For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. (13) For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all given to drink into one Spirit. (14) For the body is not one member, but many.”

There Is No Such Thing As Personal Identity In Christ. You Are Either Part Of The Whole And This Is Your Identity, Or You Are Not His. Period!

1 Corinthians 12:12-27 “If the foot would say, “Because I’m not the hand, I’m not part of the body,” it is not therefore not part of the body. (16) If the ear would say, “Because I’m not the eye, I’m not part of the body,” it’s not therefore not part of the body. (17) If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the smelling be? (18) **But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body, just as he desired.** (19) If they were all one member, where would the body be? (20) But now they are many members, but one body. (21) **The eye can’t tell the hand, “I have no need for you,” or again the head to the feet, “I have no need for you.”**

Attempting To Separate From The Body, Ignoring The Body, And Thinking That Salvation Is All About Self, Is Sinful. This Is A High Form Of Rebellion And Hatred Of God And Your Fellow Man. You Are Not Called To Travel Alone. You Must Care For The Whole Over Self.

1 Corinthians 12:22-27 “No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. (23) Those parts of the body which we think to be less honorable, on those we bestow more abundant honor; and our unpresentable parts have more abundant propriety; (24) whereas our presentable parts have no such need. **But God composed the body together, giving more abundant honor to the inferior part,** (25) **that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.** (26) **When one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. Or when one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.** (27) Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.”

Your Identity Is In Christ, He Alone Is Your Identity, And In Him You Are Part of The Sheepfold, The Body, And The Vine That Has Spawned You.

John 15:1-7 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the farmer. (2) Every branch in me that doesn’t bear fruit, he takes away. Every branch that bears fruit, he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. (3) You are already pruned clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. (4) Remain in me, and I in you. As the branch can’t bear fruit by itself, unless it remains in the vine, so neither can you, unless you remain in me. **(5) I am the vine. You are the branches. He who remains in me, and I in him, the same bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.** **(6) If a man doesn’t remain in me, he is thrown out as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned.** (7) If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, you will ask whatever you desire, and it will be done for you.

How Do We Know That We Are In The Vine? What Are The Signs?

John 15:8-8 “In this is my Father glorified, that you **bear much fruit;** and so you will be my disciples. (9) Even as the Father has loved me, I also have loved you. **Remain in my love. (10) If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and remain in his love.**”

Allow me to give an example of the pruning of unfruitful vines, as stated by Jesus in John 15:1-2. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the farmer. (2) Every branch in me that doesn't bear fruit, he takes away. Every branch that bears fruit, he prunes, that it may bear more fruit." Imagine if you had 5 kids. One of these kids destroys everything, ruins the family, and starts killing the other children. You love this child, but in the effort to spare the life of the other children, you have to remove the destructive child from the family. As a Parent, this hurts, but for the love of the whole family, this must be done. So, your love for the individual cannot overpower your care for the entire family. In this example, we better understand personal salvation verses corporate salvation. There is no salvation outside of Christ Jesus, and there is no avenue but through His Body, His Vine, His Church, that we can find this. If we try to separate ourselves needlessly and try to be a lone wolf, we are offending God and His purposes. Jesus talks about this. Notice how it compares to my story example:

Matthew 5:29-30 "And if your right eye offends you, pluck it out and throw it from you. For it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish, and not that your whole body should be thrown into hell. (30) And if your right hand offends you, cut it off and throw it from you. For it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish, and not that your whole body should be thrown into hell."

In closing:

The Identity as members of the Body of Christ is Christ Himself. To be part of and support the Church of God as a building fit for the dwelling of the Holy Spirit. When we bud and bring forth fruit in the power of God, we are then flowering plants connected to the vine. Our identity and purpose is not individual, but corporately being part of the life-giving vine. The Rose does not make the bush a rose bush; it is the bush that is the source of life that creates the roses. If the rose is clipped and tries to leave and exist away from the bush, it will wither and die. As Jesus has said, it will burn in hellfire as unfruitful. The only way to bear fruit is to remain part of the whole, stay connected to the vine, and support the church. In this salvation, it is truly manifest as pure and holy. All those who think that salvation is purely preservation of self and not the Body have fallen short of Biblical understanding. You are saved to save and support others through the power of God and the Blood of Jesus in the Body.

Note: The Body of a Church is manifested in many ways and groups. This is not some Catholic doctrine of control. This is a declaration that you must take care of each other and support the Body in whatever way God has called and allowed you to do so. So, for as much as is up to you, support His Church, the Body Of Christ!

"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst." Matthew 18:20