

Sermon outline and notes © Dr. Stephen Felker, Pastor
Swift Creek Baptist Church (swiftcreek.church)
18510 Branders Bridge Rd., Colonial Heights, VA 23834
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John 10:10 (read vv. 9-11 for context) “Abundant Life in Christ”

Intro. Last Sunday I shared with you the first part of chapter 10. There, Jesus describes Himself as the Good Shepherd. He leads us in the right way. He willingly sacrificed His life for the sheep. Furthermore, He likens Himself to the door of salvation. Through Him alone we can enter into eternal life. Yet we see in our text that He not only gives eternal life, but because He is the *Good Shepherd* He gives abundant life. Many can testify that Jesus is very good to them.

But Jesus contrasts Himself with others who are more like thieves and robbers. In v.10 He says that instead of giving abundantly, they come to steal, kill, and destroy. We learned last week that Jesus has in mind false religious leaders like the Pharisees who rejected Jesus Christ, and tried to prevent the people from following Christ and receiving life through Him. When such ministers lead people to trust in some other way of salvation, they are used of Satan to steal, kill, and destroy the souls of men. Do you believe Jesus, or do you believe the popular viewpoint that just about all religions are good, and will ultimately lead you to heaven? Well I believe Jesus.

There is a spiritual force behind false religious teachers, and that is the devil. He is a deceiver, and he is out to steal, kill, and destroy. I see the work of the enemy of the souls of man at every turn. Sometimes he steals, kills, and destroys quickly. With many others he does so slowly over time. Someone wrote:

Some men die by shrapnel
And some go down in flames,
But most men perish inch by inch
Who play at little games.

I want you to know that you don't have to suffer and perish at the hands of those who are determined to steal, kill, and destroy you. I want to call upon you to believe in Jesus and follow Him. He is different from others. He doesn't steal; He gives. He doesn't destroy; He builds up. He doesn't kill; He gives life, and life more abundantly. I want to tell you about this life that you can have in Jesus, and I want to share with you how you can have life more abundantly. If we will seek the Lord, and trust & obey Jesus, we will be able to experience this abundant life, and avoid so many self-destructive practices.

So let's look in detail at this message of Christ found in John 10:10. The first truth presented by Jesus is this:

I. YOU MAY HAVE LIFE IN JESUS CHRIST

Jesus says in the middle of v.10, “I have come that they may have life...” You may say, “I already have life. I am alive.” Well Jesus does not have in mind *physical* life. He is talking about spiritual life and eternal life. So what is involved in this provision of life? It begins with the fact that:

A. We Are Delivered from Death - In the first part of this verse, Jesus mentions those who kill & destroy. In the context the picture is that of wolves who attack the sheep, but the good shepherd delivers them from death. Even so, Jesus delivers us from the death that our sins deserve.

The Bible also says that “the wages of sin is death,” and “the soul that sins shall die.” He delivers us from the death that false teachers cannot deliver us from. Actually, Eph. 2:2 says that before we come to Christ for salvation, we are already dead in sin. We may be alive physically & mentally, but we are dead spiritually, separated from God. John 3:18 says, “...he who does not believe is condemned already...” We are like the person who has been convicted of a serious crime and is merely awaiting the execution of the sentence of death.

Are you willing to accept the verdict of Scripture, that until you turn to Jesus Christ by faith, you are spiritually dead in sin? You are already condemned to eternal death. This is serious! You need to be rescued from death.

B. We Can Receive Eternal Life Now! – The exact opposite of killing and destroying is making alive. This is what we need. And the kind of life that Jesus gives is eternal life. He says in v.28, “And I give them eternal life...” The good news is you don’t have to wait until death to begin to experience eternal life. When Jesus says, “I have come that they may have life,” the word “have” is a present tense. Repeatedly in the gospel of John we read that through Jesus we may *have* eternal life. It’s not that we *will have* eternal life after we die, but we have life as a present possession. It is a vital, living relationship with God that we begin now in this life, and continue into heaven after we die physically. This spiritual life is the same life that will be continued and perfected in heaven. We shall not, when we rise again from the grave, obtain a life that we do not possess on earth.

This clearly implies something about the nature of salvation. Eternal life is not something we gain *after* a life of good works. It is a new life that God imparts now in this life. Yet those who believe in salvation by works must also believe that it is not until the end of your life that it can be determined if you have done enough to earn eternal life. The promise of the present possession of eternal life argues for salvation by faith and not by works.

Another truth about eternal life is this:

C. Only Jesus Gives Life – Who is it that can give you eternal life that begins now? False teachers cannot give life. Jesus says they do just the opposite. They kill and destroy. In contrast to others, Jesus is the only one who can give you life. When Jesus says in v.10, “I [*ego*] have come that they may have life,” the word “I” is emphatic.¹ The kind of life that I have described is only to be had in Jesus. He said in v.9, “I [*ego*] am the door. If anyone enters by *Me*, he will be saved...” Salvation is like coming to the right door, and that door is Jesus. You must look away from yourself and to the Lord Jesus Christ. You must rely upon what *He* has done and not upon what you can do. Furthermore, you must rely upon what only He can do. The dead cannot rise to spiritual life except by a miracle of the Spirit of life.

There is another hint concerning why Jesus Christ was absolutely necessary for salvation. Notice He said in v.10, “I have come that they may have life.” Christ came from heaven on a mission. If we could have obtained life without His coming, then His coming & death was unnecessary.² But the fact is, His coming was absolutely necessary. And how would His coming accomplish the giving of life to those who are condemned and dead in sin? In v.11 Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.” He suffered and died in our place. He paid the penalty of our sin, for He had no sin. Our sin and much-deserved death was transferred to Him, and as a result, His righteous and life can be transferred to us.

And so Jesus promises life here in our text. However, we see in the last of v.10 the verse the

¹ In Greek the pronoun “I” is in the verb of being (*eimi*). *Ego* is stated for emphasis.

² Paul said in Gal. 2:21, “... if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”

second truth:

II. YOU MAY HAVE ABUNDANT LIFE IN JESUS

Jesus said that He has come “that they may have [life] more abundantly.” The life that I have described is already wonderful. Just to know for sure that I am saved from hell, and saved unto an eternal life in heaven would be great enough. And that is about all the salvation too many Christians seem to have. But there is more! As we have seen, salvation also deals with the present as well. You see, life is a matter of degrees. Some have life, but it flickers like a dying candle. Others are full of light, and full of life. Jesus came to make it possible to have life more abundantly. You see, the word “abundantly” (*perissos*) literally means, “to overflowing.” Here it can mean that we can have an extraordinary life, a life that surpasses what is ordinary. We can have a life that overflows with the life of God in the soul. In the 23rd Psalm David said that his cup “runs over” (v.5). God wants to fill your life with everything that is good.

Would you like to have life that overflows with all that is good? You can! Jesus not only offers a great duration of life, but also a great quality of life. So to help you see the kind of life Jesus offers, let’s see first of all:

A. Illustrations of the Abundant Life – The abundant life that Jesus promises can be illustrated from the physical realm to the spiritual realm. For example, we can compare the life Jesus gives to:

1. Health - When you are sick, you have physical life, but certainly not abundantly in the physical realm. But when you recover, you experience more vitality and fullness of life. When Jesus came to earth, He healed many from their physical diseases, and helped them live life more abundantly. But the greatest healing he brought to us was spiritual healing. The Lord Jesus offers spiritual health and vitality here. You can have strength and stamina instead of weakness. Paul wrote in Eph. 6 that we can be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might! Even when the body of such a saint is ill, the abundant life can still present in the mind, soul and spirit.

Buck Hatcher’s wife Lolly was a great example of this. She had a chronic illness for many years before she died, and yet she had such fullness of joy.

What about you today? Do you have this abundant life? I am afraid that too many Christians are spiritually sick! They do not have abundant life in Christ because of their spiritual sickness. Let us therefore pray, “Lord, heal us, and restore us.”

2. Freedom - A person might have health, but if he is in prison, or if he is a slave, he has life, but he certainly is not living abundantly. Back in John 8:34 Jesus pointed out that many are slaves of sin. Many are in spiritual bondage, even if they think they are free. Many are enslaved by various passions and lusts. Many are slaves to alcohol and drugs. Their freedom has been stolen from them, and their lives are being destroyed. Also, the book of Hebrews (2:15) describes those who are in bondage to the fear of death. But Jesus said in John 8:36, “If the Son of God shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.” You can enjoy life abundantly when Jesus Christ makes you free. You can be free from the bondage of sin. You can be free from peer pressure. You can be free from the fear of death. The abundant life in Christ included freedom!

3. Wealth - Again, a person may have health and freedom, but if he is very poor, it is hardly recognized as a full, abundant life. Some poor people, especially in other countries, work from sun up to sun down, all for a mere pittance. Is this life in abundance? Certainly not. And spiritually speaking, many are spiritually poor. They exist rather than live life to the fullest. They

do not feed upon the rich promises of God. They know nothing of 2 Cor. 8:9 which says, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich." God does not promise physical riches in this life, but He does promise that we can have spiritual riches. Eph. 1:7-8 says that we have forgiveness "in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us..." Romans 10:12 says, "...for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him." Paul said in Rom. 5:20, "...where sin abounded, grace abounded much more." God is willing to bestow grace and forgiveness, and all spiritual blessings upon us richly and abundantly. What spiritual riches we have in Christ! In fact, Jesus wrote to the church in Smyrna, "I know your ... poverty (but you are rich)" (Rev. 2:9).

On the other hand, God can make us rich in the earthly blessings that really matter. Philippians 4:19 says, "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." If God meets all your needs, you are rich indeed. If you can say, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want," you are rich indeed. 1 Timothy 6:17 says that we are to "trust in ... the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy."

This life certainly does not exhaust the abundance of God's provision. Our future riches are great indeed. 1 Peter 1:4 says that God has promised us "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you." Romans 8:17 says that if we are children, then we are "heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ..." All that Christ has we jointly own. We are rich indeed!

So all of these illustrations picture the abundant life that we have in Jesus Christ. Yet there is more! Note with me also:

B. The Consistency of this Abundant Life - Again, Christ says in the last of v.10, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." I would like to point out that just as having life is a present, continuous tense, even so the present tense describes the abundant life that Christ wants us to have on a regular basis. Yet too many people live life as if they are on a roller coaster. They are up and down, up and down. We do not have to live with only an occasional thrill here and there. There may be pleasure in sin, but Hebrews 11:25 says that last only "for a season," only temporarily. In between the occasional pleasures of sin, there is frequent sadness, pain, and boredom. Instead of that kind of a life, we can have abundant life as an ongoing possession.

Have you ever met a Christian who almost always seems to be joyful, with a song in their heart? Jewel Bennet and Margaret Fontaine come to mind.

Even so, Christians should have such abundant life that their circumstances should not be able to overcome them; such an abundant life that in poverty they are rich, in sickness they are in spiritual health, in contempt they are full of triumph, and in death full of glory! Does this kind of consistent, abundant life describe you? If not, why not? Christ intends for you to have it!

Well if you do not experience the abundant life on a regular basis, perhaps you need to understand:

C. The Channel of Abundant Life - Jesus is the giver of abundant life, but that life flows through the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit gives an abundant life first of all by filling us. Eph. 5:18 says that we should not be drunk with wine. Don't let drunkenness be a cheap, temporary substitute for the abundant life you can have in Christ. Instead, Paul says in that verse that you should be filled with the Holy Spirit. And I can assure you that when you are filled with the Holy

Spirit, you will be full of life. Yet the filling of the Holy Spirit can only take place when we turn from known sin and yield to the control of the Spirit.

Another important role for the Holy Spirit in providing abundant life is the full development of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). This includes love, joy, peace, and self-control. Let's look at each of these fruits of the Spirit more in depth.

1. Love - Romans 5:5 says, "...the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." You can be filled with the love of God by the Holy Spirit. Then, out of the resources of His love, you can have great love for others. The Christian who knows and experiences abundant life is one who gives much love to others. And what is going to happen when you give love to others? That love is going to come back to you. What a joy it is to have a family that loves you. What a joy it is to experience love in your church family, and love from your friends. And above all, what a joy it is to experience the love of God. The abundant life is a life full of love. Isn't that what you want? You should, for one of the most basic psychological needs of man is to be loved. Surely fullness of love is one of the key aspects of what it is to have an abundant life.

Furthermore, the abundant life is a life where there is fullness of:

2. Joy - Jesus said in John 15:11, "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." And when the Holy Spirit sends true revival to a church, we will experience fullness of joy. There will be great, joyful singing. Paul says that when you are filled with the Spirit, you will be "singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord..." (Eph. 5:19). You will not go moping around, but there will be smiles on your faces, and a song in your hearts.

3. Peace - Philippians 4:7 tells us of "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding...." You can have *great* peace. In John 14:27 Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you...." You have peace when you know that ultimately everything will be alright because you have faith in God, who is in control. Such peace is characteristic of the abundant life Jesus promises. May your life overflow with an abundance of peace!

Another fruit of the Spirit that is a key aspect of the abundant life is:

4. Self-control – This is a fruit of the Spirit according to Gal. 5:23. Now let's tie that fruit of the Spirit with John 10:10. Based on this text, Jesus is saying, "I want you to be in control, not the slave of bad habits that will destroy you. I want you to have life and have it more abundantly." The devil will steal, kill, and destroy you with addictions like alcohol, drugs, gambling, pornography, and immorality. But Jesus will give you self-control from within, a fruit of His Spirit. By His Spirit we can have power to resist temptation.

So do you hear what He is saying? He is saying, "I want you to have love, not hate. I want you to have joy, not sadness. I want you to have peace, not anxiety. I want you to have freedom, not bondage."

Conclusion: Don't you want this kind of life? Surely you do! And that's what Jesus wants for you also! Yet it is not automatically bestowed. Christ says, "I have come that they *may* have life, and that they *may* have it more abundantly." I emphasized the word "may" because it translates the Greek subjunctive mood, which reflects a meaning of possibility and potentiality. Eternal life and an abundant life is possible, but only if you do what is required to obtain such a life.

So what then must you do to have abundant life? Well the first step is to obtain spiritual, eternal life by coming to Jesus. Believe in Jesus. Trust in Him. You cannot have an abundant life

without first obtaining the new life that Jesus can impart when you are born again.

But again, just because you are born again does not automatically mean that you will have abundant life. There are too many Christians who are not living & experiencing the abundant life. How abundant your Christian life is depends on the depth of your relationship to Jesus. So you must also grow in your Christian faith. So if you are already a Christian, but not experiencing abundant life, then you need to make a commitment to spiritual growth through prayer, Bible reading & study, obedience, Christian service, and through regular fellowship and participation in a good church. Jesus said in John 15:5, “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” I do not know anyone who is living the abundant life who isn’t also abiding in Christ *daily*, and yielded to Him.

Also, you must be filled with the Spirit. Yet you can’t be filled with the Spirit as long as you are living with unconfessed, unforsaken sin in your life. Perhaps you need to turn from that sin that is robbing you of the abundant life. Do it today!

Sources: Oliver B. Greene, *The Gospel According to John, Vol. 1* (Greenville, SC: The Gospel Hour, 1966); William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: John* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1955); Larry Pierce, *Online Bible* [Ver. 4:23] (Ontario: onlinebible.net, 2012); Frank Pollard (notes from his sermon on John 10:7-11); A.T. Robertson, *New Testament Word Pictures*, Vol. IV (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1931, accessed through *Online Bible*); Charles H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon’s Expository Encyclopedia*, Vol. 10 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House), 227-238; Merrill C. Tenney, *John: The Gospel of Belief* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948). Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982). Burge, McGee, Wiersbe, & Pink read, but not helpful. No sermon from Maclaren.

ABOUT THESE SERMON NOTES

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