



Wednesdays @ 11am via Facebook Live

## Embracing Life!

OCTOBER 4TH (NO CLASS),  
11TH, 18TH, 25TH

*All are invited to join us!*

# EMBRACE YOUR LIFE

*Ministry of  
Biblical Studies*

• LIVE

**October 11, 2023**



## **METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH**

MINISTRY OF BIBLICAL STUDIES Handout

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### **Welcome to the Metropolitan Community Church Ministry of Biblical Study Classes Embracing Life!**

Wednesday, October 11th, 2023

Embracing life is the willingness to embrace our lot. Jesus is able to accept where he is and what he must do, as God's will for him, and in that he achieves a real freedom and peace. So this, also, is to choose life. It is to choose our lot.

October 11th - How Do We Learn Abundant Life?

October 18th - Courage to Choose Life.

Jesus said, "I have come that you may have life and have it abundantly." So, today let us again this day choose life that today God may bless us and we, one another.

October 25th - Yes I Can.



## The Abundant Life: Embracing God's Complete Grace by Faith

"...wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence..."  
Ephesians 1:8

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us." Ephesians 3:20

The abundant life, oh how can we truly put it into words? It's beyond explanation, yet its essence is found in the complete package of God's grace. In Ephesians 1:8, we glimpse the riches of His grace poured out upon us, leading to assurance of salvation, eternal security, and His constant presence.

Ephesians 1:3 reminds us that God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ, and Ephesians 1:18 opens our eyes to the hope of His calling and the glorious inheritance awaiting us. The abundant life doesn't always promise constant happiness, but the joy of the Lord remains steadfast.

In Ephesians 3:18, we are encouraged to grasp the vastness of Christ's love that surpasses all understanding, enabling us to experience the fullness of God. Our circumstances may not always be ideal, but the abundant life is living in the joy of our salvation and constant communion with our Heavenly Father.

Even in the midst of trials, as Paul demonstrated in Philippians (remember, Paul was in prison when he wrote Philippians and Ephesians), we can rejoice because "the abundant" life doesn't depend on material possessions. It is the assurance of our redemption, eternal life, and unhindered access to God's presence. The wisdom and prudence He grants freely through His word allow us to navigate life's challenges victoriously.

So, if you feel overwhelmed or burdened, remember that the abundant life is not about worldly possessions, or how we feel but it's the immeasurable richness of God's grace, the depth of His love, and the unshakable hope in Christ. Embrace His complete grace, and you will find strength, joy, and assurance in every step of your journey. Because His grace is sufficient.

Trust in Him, for the abundant life is a gift He longs for you to enjoy fully.

### **The Door to Abundant Life (John 10:7-10)**

The "American dream" is to pursue what is called "the good life." This usually means owning your own home, having a couple of late model cars in your garage, taking nice vacations, and retiring to a comfortable life of doing whatever you like. The rich and famous, who supposedly enjoy this good life, are splashed across the pages of magazines like People so that we all can vicariously enter their lives and dream about striking it rich ourselves.

But while many Americans who are financially comfortable may have achieved "the good life," most of them have missed the abundant life that Jesus promised to all who follow Him.

### **But what is the abundant life?**

Many who follow the "prosperity gospel" have just baptized the materialistic American dream with some Christian labels. Except for their outlandish hairdos and Christian jargon, the prosperity preachers look pretty much like unbelieving Americans in their pursuit of stuff.

But the abundant life that Jesus promised has nothing to do with collecting more stuff.

It has everything to do with being right with God through faith in Christ and having the hope of eternity spent in His presence.

The apostle Paul wasn't rich in this world's goods, but he enjoyed the abundant life that Christ offers. He was content with just food and covering (1 Tim. 6:8), but he was rich toward God (Luke 12:21; Eph. 2:7). He gained those riches by coming to know the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:8).

In our text, Jesus claims to be the door through which His sheep enter to experience the abundant life. This is the third of Jesus' seven "I am" statements (for the others, see John 6:35; 8:12; 10:11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; and 15:1, 5).



This means that the Lord's message is Himself. Christianity is not primarily a bunch of rules or rituals; Christianity is Christ Himself. Our text teaches us that...

### **Jesus is the only door to abundant life for all who enter through Him.**

Jesus again uses "truly, truly" to alert us that what follows is important (John 10:7):

"Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep." We have four verses with four important truths:

### **Jesus is the only door of the sheep (10:7).**

In John 10:2-3, the scene was a common sheepfold in the village where the different shepherds would bring their sheep each night.

There was a hired doorkeeper to guard the entrance. But now, the scene probably has shifted to the country, where the shepherd would take his sheep for summer pasture (William Barclay, *The Gospel of John* [Westminster], rev. ed., 2:58).

The shepherd would build a protective enclosure for the sheep so that they could go in for protection and go out to feed. The shepherd himself would lay across the opening to the shelter at night. Thus Jesus could be both the shepherd and the door. Any intruders had to get by him to get to the sheep. As the door, He let in the true sheep, but He excluded predators or thieves that would harm the sheep.

G. Campbell Morgan (*The Gospel According to John* [Revell], p. 177) tells of a conversation he had with Sir George Adam Smith, a scholar who had spent much time in the Near East. Smith told of meeting a shepherd there who showed him the fold where the sheep were led at night.

It consisted of four walls with a way in. Smith asked, "That is where you go at night?" "Yes," the shepherd said, "and when the sheep are in there they are perfectly safe."

"But there is no door," said Smith. "I am the door," the shepherd replied. He was not a Christian man, but rather an Arab shepherd. But he was using the same language that Jesus used. He explained further, "When the light has gone, and all the sheep are inside, I lie in that open space, and no sheep ever goes out but across my body, and no wolf comes in unless he crosses my body; I am the door."

Jesus is the only door of the sheep. J. C. Ryle (Expository Thoughts on the Gospels [Baker], 3:184) points out that no apostle or prophet could make such a claim.

Only Jesus the Messiah could legitimately claim, "I am the door." It's the same thing that He later claims (14:6), "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." Jesus was claiming to be the exclusive, only way to God.

Just as there was only one door into the ark and only one door into the Tabernacle, so Jesus is the only door to salvation and God's presence. The apostle Paul put it (Eph. 2:18), "For through Him we both [Jewish and Gentile believers] have access in one Spirit to the Father."

Unbelievers are okay with it if you say, "Jesus is a door to God." They think, "That's fine! Mohammad is also a door and Buddha is a door and nature is a door."

All religions lead to God. There are many doors." But when you draw the line that Jesus drew and insist, "No, He is the only door," you get accused of being intolerant and bigoted. Even C. S. Lewis, in his otherwise mostly helpful *Mere Christianity* ([Macmillan], pp. 176-177) wrote,

There are people who do not accept the full Christian doctrine about Christ but who are so strongly attracted by Him that they are His in a much deeper sense than they themselves understand.

There are people in other religions who are being led by God's secret influence to concentrate on those parts of their religion which are in agreement with Christianity, and who thus belong to Christ without knowing it.

For example, a Buddhist of good will may be led to concentrate more and more on the Buddhist teaching about mercy and to leave in the background (though he might still say he believed) the Buddhist teaching on certain other points.

But Lewis is missing the fact that all people, whether Buddhists "of good will" or "good" Catholics or "good" Baptists are all sinners by nature and can only be saved through faith in the death of Christ to atone for their sins.

As Peter put it to the "good" Jews of his day (Acts 4:12), "There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." Since Jesus is the only door ...

## **Conclusion**

Years ago there was a TV game show called, "Let's Make a Deal." The contestants had to choose between a prize that was visible to them or another prize that was concealed behind a curtain or door.

The visible prize was usually a nice item, like an expensive stereo or TV set.

Sometimes the unseen prize turned out to be a joke, such as 10,000 boxes of toothpicks. But at other times the person chose the visible gift and discovered to their horror that they had passed up, behind the curtain, a new car worth thousands of dollars. Whenever that happened, you felt with the contestant that awful feeling in the pit of your stomach that comes from making a major wrong choice.

Don't make that mistake spiritually. The visible prize is all the stuff you see in this world. But when you enter through Jesus as the door, you gain things that eye has not seen and ear has not heard, which have not entered into the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him (1 Cor. 2:9).