



# The Christian Life Institute

Wednesday, April 8

Thank you for joining us today, as we continue our series, at the Christian Life Institute, presented through 15-minute encouraging messages three times per week, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 12:45 Central time, on practical ways to grow forward in Christ in uncertainty, unpredictability, and upheaval.

This message is entitled: The Abundant Life we have in Christ

As we reflect on the events as depicted in the Bible during this week, passion week, we are drawn to the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior – in which we have a Triumphant Hope (as we shared in Monday’s message). Today, our focus is on the Abundant Life we have in Christ and in Friday’s message, Good Friday, we will focus on the Vanquishing Victory.

The phrase abundant life comes from John 10:10 where Jesus is sharing about Himself as the Good Shepherd. We read in John 10-1:10:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup> But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” <sup>6</sup> This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. <sup>7</sup> So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup> I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. <sup>11</sup> I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

Jesus is our Great Shepherd who is the entryway for the sheep (our way to salvation), His sheep (those who have professed faith in Him) know His voice (they hear, listen, and obey), He guards the sheep (He protects us), and He lays down His life for the sheep (He died so we could come through the Gate, Who is Christ). Christ has overcome the grave (as Peter explained in Acts 2:24, “it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him”) and the world. In 1 Corinthians 16:33 we read, “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” In such, we have life and life, everlasting. We have the promise of eternal life (John 6:47, “truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life”) and we have abundant life in the here and now. So, what is this abundant life?

Let’s be clear abundant life is not about prosperity, blessing, or materialism – it is about spiritual fullness. In our culture today it is easy to become lost in comparative thinking, evaluations based on market fluctuations, employment rates, what we, at the Christian Life Institute, refer to as externalities. God can bless and God can prosper. God can give and God can take away. Job 1:21 says, “the LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” Paul reminds us in Philippians 4:10-13:

“I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. <sup>11</sup>Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. <sup>12</sup>I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. <sup>13</sup>I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”

Our abundant life is in our connection to the One who nourishes and grows us, Jesus, the Messiah – the King – Lord of Lords, the Alpha and Omega. Our abundant life is found in God’s great desire that we should know Him and His power. In 2 Corinthians 13:4 we read, “for he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God.”

God’s first priority is our spiritual well-being. God wants us to grow – to blossom spiritually. Paul exhorts us to press on to maturity in Colossians 1:28-29, “Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil,

struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.” Abundant life comes from our desire to press on for maturity – to grow forward. God’s plans and desire for your good (“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope,” Jeremiah 29:11) desire you to be spiritually mature and spiritual maturity may come through trials - through testings - through hardships – through tribulations. The challenge for all of us is the mindset. We can choose an attitude, and I understand for some this is a very hard ask – but moving from head to heart is a critical part of our maturing process. As we digest the truths of God from His living, active Word (Hebrews 4:12-13) we come to see that no matter the externals, the difficulties – toils – trials – challenges of life, we can experience the abundance of He Who is Life – Christ, Himself.

The abundant life is a recognition of what you and I have because of Who we are in Christ and Who He is according to the truth of His Word. In His goodness and by His grace, God changes our standing — our position — before Him when we place our trust in Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. Ephesians 2:7 affirms that our new status flows out of that wonderful phrase “the riches of God’s grace.”

We asked in the message on Wednesday, do you believe? Scripture tells us that Jesus is our Way, our Truth, our Life (John 14:6). Jesus wants us to know the freedom and the fullness that come from Him and Him alone. Abundant life is abundance, an abounding fullness of joy and strength and life – Christ. Let’s put the together abounding joy and strength which flows from Christ to you and me as we secure the connection. In John 15:3-5 we read, “already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

How do we have abundant life we abide in Christ. We choose to allow Him to grow us. We choose to place our eyes on Him and not our externals. We acknowledge our struggles; we cry out as David did in the psalms and we walk it out until we end up in praise. We have in previous messages shared that life is a journey which consists of a series of choices. As we continue to be faced with uncertainty, unpredictability, and upheaval and as we, perhaps, struggle with the continued adjustment to these unfamiliar times we know that we have a Savior who is our Living Water and our Bread of Life. Today, let us remind

ourselves that our encouragement is based on the Abundant Life, Who is Christ.

Let us choose to experience the overflowing of His love upon us as Paul wrote “and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you (1 Thessalonians 3:12). Let us share the abundant life we have in Christ through the Hope that flows from His life. As we shared on Monday, the challenge for us during these times, is to keep our eyes up - on our mission and to continue to walk through whatever comes upon us in His strength, His love, and His Truth. The abundant life is a Spirit-filled, Christ-centric life which consists of living Christ in His strength, His power, and His truth one day, and even one moment at a time. The abundant life is a full and rich life – full in the fruit of the Spirit and rich in the riches of His grace, mercy, love, and forgiveness. The abundant life is not focused on what we do not have – it is focused on Who we have, Jesus Christ.

So, as we shared on Friday, let us persevere and not forsake assembling (virtually). Let us as the Scripture reminds us stir up (exhort, encourage, move) one another to love. Let us minister to one another during these times and in all times and continue to build community and not fall prey to withdrawal and isolation but rather turn our eyes up to the One from whom our help comes from.

In this season, and life which is a journey of seasons, we as Christ-followers, have opportunities to, through His strength and His power reflect Him to a broken and hurting world – so, let us persevere and come together, even when technology weary.

Let us agree together to:

“Walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7)

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Thank you for joining us for Live Streaming on YouTube. Please join us again on Friday, April 10th at 12:45 CST. Please check out our other videos on YouTube and please subscribe to us on YouTube as we need 100 subscribers for our own YouTube channel.

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