

# The Abundant Life

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[ 0 : 00 ] This message was reported at Vision Baptist Church in Alpharetta, Georgia. This is the next message in our series on the book of John entitled, Jesus is God.

That ought to be our heart's desire more than anything, that Jesus would reign in us. Amen? Take your Bibles and turn to John chapter 10 and verse 10. I'll give you a few things in a minute that I would dream about for this coming year.

And you can pick up a calendar on the way out. I'm pretty sure that Trent made enough at least for one family, one per family over there. And get you an idea of what's going on. But I want us to look at a verse, John chapter 10 and verse 10.

This is one of the most exciting verses in the Bible in my opinion. But one of the most misunderstood verses. And I'd like you to look at it with me. John chapter 10 and verse 10. The Bible says, The thief cometh not but for to steal, to kill, and to destroy.

I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. Would you read with me the last part where it starts with I am? Could you read all that with me in one voice?

[ 1 : 05 ] Are you ready? I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. Father, help us tonight to understand just a little bit about what it means to have abundant life.

Help us to trust you and look to you and believe you. Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you are the good shepherd. Thank you that you only do what is best for us and good for us. And I praise you for that in Jesus' name. Amen.

Just several things real quickly. I couldn't just share a vision without you without sharing some Bible. So I just wanted to take John 10, 10 and go through that with you. The first thing it says in the verse is there's a thief that has come to kill and to destroy.

And that is obviously Satan who does not want you to enjoy all that God has for you. Number one, he doesn't even want you to have life. He does not want you to go to heaven. He wants you to go to hell.

And he has come to steal and to kill. He comes to steal our joy, kill our contentment, destroy our intimacy with the Father. Religion and false shepherds have been abusing the sheep.

[ 2 : 04 ] Jesus said, I am the good shepherd. I don't abuse the sheep. I take care of the sheep. The thief offers to lead you, to take care of you, and to protect you.

But the thief is a liar who will actually destroy you. When you read the verse, a lot of you will automatically go to, the thief comes but to steal, to kill, and destroy our outcome.

They might have life, and they might have it more abundantly. And in America, because of prosperity preaching, we often think that means that God wants to make us rich, that God wants to meet our financial needs in such a way that we would be extremely comfortable.

But I'd like you to read with me 1 Timothy chapter 6, verses 9 through 10. 1 Timothy chapter 6, verses 9 and 10. This is a passage of Scripture that I literally challenge you to memorize.

This is a passage of Scripture I challenge you to read with your family and to think about. The Apostle Paul is writing to Timothy. This ought to be something that gets in the pit of our stomach, in the depths of our heart that we would learn.

[ 3 : 05 ] Look what he says. They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

Stay on that verse just a second. Now, I want you to notice something. If you've got your Bible open, circle will be. He's not talking about if you're rich, you can be rich and not be this person. But they that will be, they that desire, they that look for, they that seek that, they that are hungry to be rich fall into temptation and to snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

So I want you to know that when he said in John 10, 10, I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly, he wasn't talking about what he knew would set you up for hurt.

He also wasn't talking about what wouldn't work outside of America. So many messages won't work overseas. So many messages, when you go to a poverty-stricken area where the people are literally wondering if they'll eat their next meal, so many of those verses are like, hey, I don't know how that works.

It works if you preach it like the Bible says it. Look if you would in the verse. In the verse, underline temptation and snare. Don't under snare. Why don't you draw a line around that, a circle around that word, and put trap.

[ 4 : 18 ] It's a trap. God warns his people, don't you let money become something that would hurt you. Look in the verse, it says, foolish and hurtful lusts or desires, that we would be hungry for things that would actually hurt us, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

Verse 10, for the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Would you look at what happens? They fell in love with money. They fell in love with money. They desired money and what money could do, and they erred from the faith. They got out of the faith.

They got out of serving God. They pierced themselves through with many sorrows. Satan would love to help you focus on money. Satan would love to help you think that God's abundant life had to do with the amount of money that you had.

Satan would love that if you had that idea. But look at what the Holy Spirit said in 1 Timothy chapter 6 and verse 11. But thou, O man of God, flee these things.

[ 5 : 28 ] Flee these things and follow after. What are you to seek after? What are you to follow after? Look at it. Righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness.

Our goal isn't an amount of money, isn't an amount of certain physical blessings. Our goal is righteousness, living a holy life. Godliness, being like God.

Faith, trusting God and knowing that God will take care of me. Love, loving others. Patience, endurance, I'll stick it out for Jesus. Meekness, meekness, which is a humility and an ability to be under control for him.

I'm to be after those things. Flee, flee, flee. That's the word flee. That word flee means run like you're scared from those things. Seek the things that come from Jesus.

And Jesus wants us to have life. Go back to John 10, 10. In John 10, 10, the thief comes but for the seal to kill and to destroy. And can I tell you the thief's in the church? Can I tell you that if you turn on the television, almost all the messages that fill the coliseums and build the biggest churches are going to talk to you about, if you serve Jesus, he'll make you rich.

[ 6 : 34 ] If you serve Jesus, everything will go well. If you serve, hey, if you can think it, you can have it. If you can reach it, it's yours. But the Bible doesn't really say those things. The fact is, in the Bible, a lot of people didn't get what we might call a good life.

A lot of people got a short life. A lot of people didn't get a good life. A lot of people got a persecuted life. In fact, this Hebrews chapter 11 lists a group of people and says the world wasn't worthy of them and they walked around in horrible conditions serving God's no promise that you'll have health and wealth and all of that sort of thing.

So what does abundant life mean? What's abundant life mean? How can Christians all over the world know what an abundant life is? Abundant life does not mean a life free from problems.

It's not a life free from problems. We're going to have problems. That's just life. You're going to wake up with problems. You're going to have heartaches. It would not be a life based on an abundance of material things.

The abundant life wouldn't be an abundance of material things. That wouldn't be the truth. John the Baptist then didn't have an abundant life. If that be the case, then Jesus didn't have an abundant life. If that be the case, then James, the preacher in Jerusalem, didn't have an abundant life.

[ 7 : 46 ] If that be the case, the apostle Paul didn't. He was in hunger often. They didn't have an abundant life. That certainly wouldn't be what it is. It wouldn't be a life based on comfort, but it would be.

Are you ready? Write this down. A life based on contentment. A life based on contentment. The abundant life would be a life based on contentment. Look at 1 Timothy chapter 6 and verse 6.

That's back where the passage I wish you'd learned with your family is. Look what the verse says. But godliness with contentment. But godliness with contentment is great gain.

Godliness, doing right, loving God, serving God with contentment. Happy with where I am. Happy with what's going on in my life. Godliness with contentment is great gain.

I was in Burkina. I was out in the village. I was watching people that had no running water, no electricity. They have no idea what an iPad is or an iPhone. They have no idea.

[ 8 : 47 ] They did have, most of them or lots of them have a radio. A lot of, none of them have televisions. They didn't have lights in their house. In fact, it's people that had a little bit of money.

Bought a generator and they would turn on some television. So people could watch movies. That's how they made money. Selling that. And I thought to myself, the problems Austin Gardner faces and the worries Austin Gardner faces would never even cross their agenda.

They don't even have any concept of what we consider problems. I'm worried about my car payment. They don't have a car. I'm worried about, I'm worried about, can I pay the light bill? They don't have a light bill.

I'm worried about, can I pay the water bill? And they don't have a water bill. I'm worried about, I'm worried about, can I go out to eat? And they're worried about, can they get something to eat? It's a totally different thing. So the thief comes for the steel to kill and destroy.

But I am come that they might have life and to have it more abundantly. It's godliness with contentment is great gain. What is that? It's life knowing we can have confidence and trust in our shepherd.

[ 9 : 49 ] Confidence and trust in our shepherd. That he is equal to every need and every emergency. You are going through problems. There are people in our church that are hurting.

I want you to know that because you are going through financial difficulties, it doesn't mean God loves you less. It doesn't mean that something's wrong in your life. It means this. Get a hold of one thing.

God loves you and you ought to be happy about it. It means one thing. God cares about you and that's what ought to bring commitment. You can have abundant life with nothing. What about all the Christians locked up for 20 years in China?

That I met some of those guys that had an abundant life in prison. This life knowing that we can trust him. It's believing that we're in the hands of a good shepherd that can carry us through.

How many of you believe you're in the hands of a good shepherd that can get you through? Say amen. That ought to be something. That ought to be something. The abundant life is a life of satisfaction. Knowing we have enough.

[ 10 : 49 ] Could I just tell you this? The devil would like to always remind you that somebody has a little bit more than you. The devil would just... The 99% is really mad at the 1%.

But did you know in the 1% there's a big disparity of funds? To get into the top 1% that makes the news, you got to have \$400,000 a year. That's what they said makes you into the top 1%.

You got to earn \$400,000. Did you know there are people earning \$30,000 and \$40,000,000, \$50,000 and \$60,000,000 a year? Not \$400,000. You understand no matter how much you got.

Unless you're the biggest dog in the world, somebody else has got more than you. Did you know that that's not what contentment is? That's not what the abundant life is. It's not based on money.

Did you know I've met people with all kinds of money that weren't as happy as people that didn't have money? Did you know I've seen men try to buy things to buy the love of their children and their children weren't happy?

[ 11 : 43 ] They bought them motorcycles and they bought them toys. They bought them everything they could ever dream of. And I saw those sons turn against their dad because that wasn't what they wanted. It wasn't about the money. It wasn't about the toys.

The Bible says the thief comes up for the steel, to kill and to destroy. But I am come. Who is I am? The I am is I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd has come that you might have life and have it more abundantly.

So let me real quickly take you to Psalm chapter 23. Psalm chapter 23. That's the good shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want.

The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. And you know the story. So let me just give you four or five things out of that chapter real quickly that ought to help us know what it is to have an abundant life. That is a story about the shepherd.

The passage in John is about the good shepherd. The thief comes to steal, to kill and to destroy. But the good shepherd has come that you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly.

[ 12 : 41 ] The first thing he said was, I shall not want. I shall not want. I know that God will not leave me wanting or lacking. Now that want's not the want you probably use.

You probably use the want that says, I want a new car. I want a better car. I want the best car. I want the biggest car. That's not what it was about. The shepherd says, I'll make sure you got enough.

The shepherd said, I'll take care of you. I'll lead you. I'll get you to food. In fact, as in Philippians chapter four, verses six through seven, you might notice this for later on. Another passage y'all ought to learn.

Be careful. Don't worry about anything. Be careful for nothing. Don't worry about anything, but learn to take it to God and ask him in prayer. Be careful for nothing. In verse seven, we can have peace of God that passes all understanding.

In verse 11, Paul said, let me tell you something. I know what it's like to have a lot of money. I know what it's like to have no money, but I have learned one thing. I can be content in whatever state I'm in.

[ 13 : 41 ] I have an abundant life no matter where I am. When they put me in jail and put handcuffs on me and whip me before they do, me and my partner sing praises at midnight when everybody else will be whipped.

We have an abundant life. Life for us is not about money. It's about Jesus and trusting him. Second thing is found in verse two. The shepherd, number one, will see to it my needs are met.

Number two, he will give me direction. He will lead me where I should go. He will lead me where I should go. He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul.

He leads me in the paths of righteousness. Do you understand that everybody in the world right now, in fact, is everybody throughout all of history has always been facing uncharted waters.

No one knows what's going to happen tomorrow. No one knows anywhere in the world what's going to happen tomorrow. I need somebody who will get me through tomorrow and take care of me. There was a guy in Hunter, the place I used to work in, in Arequipa in Peru.

[ 14 : 39 ] And I had a church there and this guy on a, on a, on a Sunday, Sunday afternoon won a big amount of money, a lottery. He got a lot of money. He got rich and everything was going well. And he was so excited and he had gotten a little bit too much to drink.

And he was driving out of the sit, out of the little village or a little town of, I'd keep of a hunter with about 50,000 people. And on the way out, he ran into the back of a bus and died.

He and his wife left a kid. You don't know what's going to happen tomorrow, but I'm a Christian. I have a good shepherd. I do know what's going to happen tomorrow. The absolute worst thing that could happen to me is things might go wrong in my opinion, but my good shepherd is going to be there to take care of me.

And if death comes my way, my good shepherd is going to take me home. I will not be left alone. He will not leave me, nor will he forsake me, no matter what's going on in my life. The third thing that ought to, that ought to be something that gives us a life of contentment and abundant life.

Verse four, he'll be with me and he will comfort me. He will be with me and he will comfort me. In verse four, he says, Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil because you're with me.

[ 15 : 46 ] Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. Do you understand that no matter, you know, some people that we love are facing enormous problems. I have a grandson that is literally, he is facing a lifetime of issues, at least until he's 20 or 25, a lifetime of issues and problems.

And he'll have none of his own teeth in his head. And he may not be able to talk clearly. And all kinds of problems are coming his way. And my grandson's, but can I tell you something about that? He will not ever be left alone.

He has the Father. He has the Son. We have a God in heaven that takes care of us. And if you're, even if you were on your deathbed, I can tell you something, on your deathbed, you will not be alone.

Lazarus died. The rich man died and in hell he lift up his eyes being in torments. But when Lazarus died, there was an angel there. He wasn't even left alone in the last minute before he went to paradise to be with the bosom of Abraham.

Verse five. Got to hurry because I got at least 10 minutes. I want to talk to you about other stuff. Verse five. He will provide for me even in difficult times. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.

[ 16 : 54 ] Thou anointest my head with oil. My cup runneth over. Did you realize there were enemies? He wasn't getting away from enemies. It wasn't like everything in his life was going to smooth out and there'd be no problems.

He said, even in the presence of mine enemies, you provide for me. Some things are going to go wrong. You're going to face difficulties. You might be feeling like you've been left alone.

But I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly. Who said that? Our good shepherd said that. Our good shepherd, he will be with you.

Last one, he will never ever leave you. Look at verse six. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

So I can tell you what's going to happen. Sooner or later, they're going to lay our bodies in a tomb. They're going to cover us with dirt or seal us in or burn our bodies and spread our ashes.

[ 17 : 50 ] But you want to hear a wild one? He will never ever leave us. Go back with me to John chapter 10 and verse 10 real quickly if you would. John chapter 10 and verse 10.

Look what the Bible says in John 10. The thief comes but for to steal, cometh not but for to steal, to kill, and to destroy. You see what's being told in that passage is that there are sheep in the fold that was the nation of Israel.

And there were thieves that came to hurt them. There were thieves that came to steal them. There were thieves that came to harm them, kill them. But there was a good shepherd that came to the sheepfold that came to Israel.

And he said, hey, they may come to hurt you, but I didn't come to hurt you. I am come that you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly. In 1962, I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior.

And I began that day my eternal life. And my eternal life will never end and he will never leave me. Look at what it says. I am come. Jesus is come. The good shepherd is come that I might have life.

[ 18 : 52 ] How many of you have life say amen? That means you got eternal life because most people are walking dead people. But we got eternal life already. Can you say amen right there? But he doesn't just want you to miss hell. He wants to bless you.

He wants to give you an abundant, exciting, abiding, wonderful life here on earth. You say, does that mean he's going to make me rich? No, not necessarily. He might give you some money, but if he does, he doesn't ever want you to want the money.

He wants you to want him. You know, when you buy gifts for your kids, you don't buy gifts for your kids. So they like the gifts more than they like you. You want them to fall in love with you. Say amen. You don't want them playing with a toy instead of you.

Little kids can't understand it. You ever notice how selfish a little kid gets over a cheap toy you buy them? They're about like grown-up adults in church, aren't they? It's all about what toy you give me.

And if my little car breaks, I'm going to be mad at God. I want to take it back to Walmart. And the God of heaven says, I am come that you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly.

[ 19 : 51 ] Here's the secret to life. Godliness with contentment. Godliness with contentment is great gain. Can I translate that into English for you?

Godliness with contentment makes you rich. Godliness with contentment. Boy, I'm content with the wife he gave me. I'm content with the church he gave me.

I'm content with the life he gave me. I'm content with everything. Paul said, sometimes I go really, the things go really bad and I'm hungry and things aren't going well. But Paul said, I have learned in whatever state I am, there we to be content.

Let's bow our heads for a word of prayer. Father, please work in our lives. Please honor yourself. Please magnify yourself. And I pray, God, that our people would look to Jesus and honor him, the author and the finisher of our faith, our good shepherd, that your name would be glorified.

And I'll give you praise for all in Jesus' precious name. Amen. You have been listening to Austin Gardner, pastor of Vision Baptist Church.

[ 20 : 53 ] For contact information, location, service times, or more audio and video recordings, log on to [www.visionbaptist.com](http://www.visionbaptist.com).