

“Life **Abundant!!**”—John 10:7-11

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Life **Abundant!!**”, is John 10:7-11 → *So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”*

This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

Frank and Marjorie were devastated when they received the phone call stating that their 16 year old son had been in a serious car accident from which he had to be cut loose by the jaws of life and air lifted to a nearby medical center. While sitting in the surgical waiting room, wondering about the condition of their son, it seemed that life had stopped for them in anticipation of news concerning their son’s well being. When the doctor emerged from the surgery and informed them of the slim chances of their son’s complete recovery their heart sank within them at the news of him possibly living the

rest of his life as a paraplegic. Within seconds his quality of life had drastically changed, affecting perceptions of the “abundant life” which most people expect in this world.

An unmarried 14 year old girl discovers she is pregnant. Her boyfriend does not want to have anything to do with her and her family is very disappointed in her. She comes from a very poor family and the conditions under which the baby is to be born are not the most favorable. Within seconds her perspective of life changes. Her dreams, desires and plans for the future now become more challenging with the responsibility of a baby. She may not be able to experience the “abundant life” which most people expect in this world.

Do you expect your life to be a life filled with abundance? Is this not the concept behind the “American dream?” The struggle with expecting the abundant life in the experiences of life on this earth is that it is distraught at the sight of unfulfilled expectations. The couple who believe that they’ve found their soul mate only to wonder after the wedding whom they married. The college graduate enters the job of his dreams only to discover what a nightmare it is. The woman who becomes instantly rich by winning the lottery with the blessing of no more financial problems or worries only to claim bankruptcy a few years later. The couple who plan, invest and save to enjoy

their retirement only to discover what can happen in the golden years—as they get old and the doctor gets the gold! Ultimately, where do you find the “abundant life?”

In our text Jesus used the picture of a shepherd’s relationship to his sheep to describe His relationship to those who follow Him. Speaking about His sheep He says in verse 10 → *I came that they may have life and have it abundantly*. In keeping with His picture Jesus described this “life abundant” as being *saved* as well as being able to *go in and out* of the gate of the sheep pen to *find pasture*. It is a picture of being able to live in safety amidst so many dangers in life, both physically and spiritually. Jesus may have been continuing the picture of our relationship with Yahweh as described by King David in Psalm 23—a relationship picture which is very near and dear to many a Christian’s heart!

In that psalm David describes the abundant life as the LORD making him *lie down in green pastures*, leading him *beside still waters*, restoring his *soul* (probably giving his guilt-burdened conscience the forgiveness of sins), leading him *in paths of righteousness*, not fearing death or evil while Yahweh provides for him even *in the presence of his enemies*. How could David see himself as living this “abundant life” when he was still plagued with enemies trying to kill him, temptations striving to mislead him and all the other

unfulfilled expectation which plague us in our lives so surrounded by wickedness?

Notice the first phrase of the Psalm states why David could view his life as the abundant life: *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.* His contentment in the midst of it all is revealed in the object of His faith—Yahweh. Because of the LORD's *goodness and mercy*—His steadfast love—David did not need anything else in life to define what it means to live the abundant life! His not being in *want* was not because he was rich and could live like a king—which he did anyway as the King of Israel. Rather, it was because He was experiencing life abundant in an **eternal** faith relationship with the LORD! Jesus carried on this relationship, bringing it to ultimate fulfillment as He said in John 14:6 → *I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.* He is the door to life abundant!

Jesus contrasted Himself in our text to the *thieves and robbers* who come *only to steal and kill and destroy*. They come to take away the life of the sheep rather than give them life abundant. It is a description of satan whom Jesus described in John 8:44 as *a murderer who does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

Unfortunately, the world with its deluded perceptions of the “abundant life” believe the devil’s lies about life. Along with his desire to create a total disrespect for human life through assisted suicides, infanticide, abortion and murder on all levels, he leads people astray in their search to find the “abundant life” apart from the One Who imparts life on all levels—the Lord Jesus Christ! The devil’s perspective of life will always lead away from Christ Who desires to give you life abundant!

This is why Jesus’ description of Himself as *the door of the sheep* in verse 7 of our text is so crucial. It is only through faith in Jesus and what He has done for you that you can experience life abundant in heaven no matter what your quality of life may be this side of heaven! Because your life is so filled with the murderous delusions of satan and the death he strives to bring, Jesus has made it possible for you to have the victory over such “dead ends” in life! Why? As He said in verse 11 of our text: *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd **lays down His life for the sheep.*** The only way to experience life abundant in heaven is for the sheep—that’s us—to trust **totally** in what the Good Shepherd—that’s Jesus—has done for you—in this sense Jesus is also *the door*—instead of listening to the teachings which point people to trust in other ways to experience life abundant—those of the *thieves and robbers!* They want to steal your joy, kill your life and destroy your contentment which

is totally yours by faith and forgiveness in the Good Shepherd!

Thus, the abundant life is not something you strive to get. **It is a gift given by Jesus Himself as the Holy Spirit works faith in your heart!** This is so crucial not simply for a proper understanding of the sanctity of human life but even more so for a proper living of the life abundant **now!** How will your soul be restored when you are ridden with the guilt of your disobedience to God? Trusting Jesus, the good shepherd Who has given His life as the **final** sacrifice for the forgiveness of your sins! They are wiped out forever by Him! How will you resist the temptations waged by the devil through this world's teachings to define life abundant in your quality of life only here and now? Trusting the Holy Spirit to carry you through your weaknesses as He brings you to Jesus in Whom lies the fulfillment of life abundant! Where will you turn when your expectations and definitions of life are challenged? To God's written Word where you are reassured again and again that life defined according to how He has given it and restored it in the Good Shepherd moves you to live now in eager expectation for living life abundant in an eternal relationship with Him on the Last Day! Amen.

As those experiencing such abundance in life in our culture 1 Timothy 6:17-19 says: *As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, Who*

*richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, **so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.** Amen.*