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Subject: Abundant Life - John 10:10

Page 1 of 4

"The thief comes not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

John 10:10

These are the words of our Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. When most of us think of our Christian life, we don't usually think of it being abundant, but that is precisely what our Lord says, He has given each one of us an abundant life.

Now I know that there are many Christians today who are suffering severe trials; cancer, and other diseases, the loss of their spouse of many years, loss of children, persecution and poverty. There are many kinds of trials we must go through before we enter heaven, yet even through all these - and more - Jesus says that we have abundant life through Him.

Only Jesus could say something like that, right? I certainly couldn't, I couldn't tell somebody that they have abundant life while they battle some disease or other hardship. There's no way I

could tell someone that, neither could you. But Jesus - the Author and Finisher of our faith - He can, and does!

When we think of the Gospel and the grace of God, we think of having our past sins forgiven, we think of our future hope in heaven... but what about the present? Isn't that true? We think of the Gospel applying to only two aspects of our life, the past and future; but when Jesus speaks of our abundant life, He is referring to our whole life in Him: past, present, and future.

Having the abundant life in the present, doesn't mean that throughout our life we will have abundant presents. Jesus warned, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses." (LK. 12:15)

Jesus didn't promise us an affluent life, but as abundant life, "abundance of peace" (Ps. 37:11); "abundance of grace" (Rom. 5:17); "abundant mercy" (1 Peter 1:3); the Holy Spirit "which He shed [or poured] on us abundantly" (Titus 3:6); because "The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." (Ex. 34:6).

In the Apostle Paul's letter to Timothy, he said that he "was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious"; that is, presumptuous and insulting in speech, "but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." (1 Tim 1:13-14). In the present of grace through Jesus Christ, Paul unwraps "faith and love" <sup>AS TWO PRECIOUS JEWELS</sup> what carried Paul through the beatings? Through the betrayal? Through the imprisonments? What motivated Paul to continually press toward the mark of Jesus Christ while spending all his bodily strength? His "Faith and love." Paul trusted his life to his Savior, and Christ's love to him, ~~ignited~~ ignited his love for ~~him~~ <sup>Christ</sup> and so as Paul looks back over his life and is humbled at the sight of his own wretchedness, his ~~heart~~ <sup>heart</sup> swells within and so <sup>he</sup> continues, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." (vs. 15). Paul had an abundant life in faith and love.

For Paul, the abundant life didn't remove the trials of life; in fact, many of his trials were a direct result of his abundant life in Christ. The abundant life Christ gave Paul - and us - is freedom and victory over our old sinful nature.

The abundant life brings crosses along with it, and these crosses aren't intended to destroy you, but to mold you, to conform you to the image of Christ. The worst pain with the cross is better than the best pleasure without the cross. My beloved Christian friend, will you remember this the next time you're in a difficult situation? Maybe you are in one now; <sup>if so</sup> I want to encourage you to stretch your faith a little farther than you have before. Family problems? Money problems? Health problems? If you're at the point of, "Why me? Why now? Does God even love me anymore?" It's right here my beloved friend, remember your abundant life in Christ, and even though it may be difficult, trust in His love for you. <sup>trust</sup> That He cares for you, trust that He loves you, <sup>?</sup> that He is using this very situation to strengthen you. Believe it. The abundant life your Saviour Jesus Christ promises you, is for the past, for the future, and even for the present. "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Eph. 3:20-21

Your servant for Jesus' sake,

*Rev. D. Allen*