

Sermon Notes for July 17th

The Abundant Life of A Christian

Jesus said that He came to give us “an abundant life.” John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly, (full life).

(1.) Christ is a *shepherd*, and not as the thief, not as those that *came not in by the door*. Observe,

[1.] The mischievous design of the thief (John 10:10): *The thief cometh not* with any good intent, but to *steal, and to kill, and to destroy*. *First*, Those whom they *steal*, whose hearts and affections they steal from Christ and his pastures, they *kill and destroy* spiritually; for the *heresies* they *privily bring in* are *damnable*. Deceivers of souls are murderers of souls. Those that steal away the scripture by keeping it in an unknown tongue, that steal away the sacraments by maiming them and altering the property of them, that steal away Christ’s ordinances to put their own inventions in the room of them, they *kill and destroy*; ignorance and idolatry are destructive things. *Secondly*, Those whom they cannot *steal*, whom they can neither lead, drive, nor carry away, from the flock of Christ, they aim by persecutions and massacres to *kill and destroy* corporally. He that will not suffer himself to be robbed is in danger of being slain.

[2.] The gracious design of the shepherd; he is come,

First, To *give life to the sheep*. In opposition to the design of the thief, which is to *kill and destroy* (which was the design of the *scribes and Pharisees*) Christ saith, *I am come among men*, 1. That *they might have life*. He came to put life into the flock, the church in general, which had seemed rather like a valley full of dry bones than like a pasture covered over with flocks. Christ came to vindicate divine truths, to purify divine ordinances, to redress grievances, and to revive dying zeal, to seek those of his flock that were *lost*, to *bind up that which was broken* (Ezek. 34:16), and this to his church is *as life from the dead*. He came to *give life* to particular believers. Life is inclusive of all good, and stands in opposition to the death threatened (Gen. 2:17); that *we might have life*, as a criminal has when he is

pardoned, as a sick man when he is cured, a dead man when he is raised; that we might be justified, sanctified, and at last glorified. 2. That they might have it *more abundantly*, ***kai perisson echosin***. As we read it, it is *comparative*, that they might have a life *more abundant* than that which was lost and forfeited by sin, more abundant than that which was promised by the law of Moses, length of days in Canaan, more abundant than could have been expected or than we are *able to ask or think*. But it may be construed without a note of comparison, *that they might have abundance*, or might *have it abundantly*. Christ came to give life and ***perisson ti***—*something more*, something *better*, life with advantage; that in Christ we might not only live, but live comfortably, live plentifully, live and rejoice. Life in abundance is *eternal life*, life without death or fear of death, life and *much more*.

Secondly, To give his life for the sheep, and this that he might give life *to them* (John 10:11): *The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep*. 1. It is the property of every good shepherd to hazard and expose his life for the sheep. Jacob did so, when he would go through such a fatigue to attend them, Gen. 31:40. So did David, when he *slew the lion and the bear*. Such a shepherd of souls was the apostle Paul, who would gladly *spend, and be spent*, for their service, and *counted not his life dear to him*, in comparison with their salvation. But, 2. It was the prerogative of the great Shepherd to give his life to purchase his flock (Acts 20:28), to satisfy for their trespass, and to shed his blood to wash and cleanse them.

Once we are “in Christ,” God wants us to enjoy ourselves in the Lord. Christians are to be a joyous people Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. We must show our love for the Lord through our actions. One song says: “They’ll know we are Christians by our love.”

Paul tells the Colossians that since we are Christians our mindset must change Colossians 3:1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. This is the passage where we are told to “set our minds on the things that are above, not the things that are below.” Colossians 3:2 “Set your minds...” tells us that it must be a deliberate choice not only

to accept Christ, but one to serve Him. Jesus will never force Himself on the unbeliever, and likewise, He will not force the believer to grow in Him. We must want to. And if we want to, He has promised to equip us for the journey.

We must put everything out of our hearts and minds that is detrimental to the Christian growth. Colossians 3:5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Whenever God tells us to “put something off,” He replaces it with something for good. Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

We are told that we must have the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5: 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

We must realize that once we become a Christian these characteristics don't come automatically, they must be cultivated. These are attitudes we must have if we are to live the "abundant life" in the Lord. So, let's seek to "grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus," II Peter 3:18. If we make this our goal, we will desire everything God has for us and will use what he has given us to help ourselves and encourage each other as we live this life in the here and now waiting, watching and working for the Lord Jesus Christ.