

Experiencing Abundant Life

Message 1 of 3 in the series: "Paramount"

1. The Bad News: Apart from Christ, we are all lost sinners who are spiritually dead.

- a. Spiritually dead people are hopelessly trapped in sin.

"Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else." Ephesians 2:1-3 (NLT)

- b. Spiritually dead people have no idea how to find abundant life.

"With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him." Ephesians 4:17-18 (NLT)

"Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God." 2 Corinthians 4:4 (NLT)

- c. Spiritually dead people will spend eternity in hell.

"And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire." Revelation 20:15 (NLT)

2. The Good News: Jesus came to bring us abundant life.

"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." John 10:10 (NKJV)

"abundant" = over and above, more than is necessary, surpassing expectations

"Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think." Ephesians 3:20 (NLT)

- a. Abundant life is new life.

"You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross." Colossians 2:13-14 (NLT)

"Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)

- b. Abundant life is fruitful life.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5 (NIV)

"But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." Galatians 5:22-23a (NLT)

- c. Abundant life is eternal life.

"Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever." Psalm 23:6 (NLT)

"I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, 'Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.'"

Revelation 21:3-4 (NLT)

3. Abundant life is **NOT** possible through religious rule-keeping or sin management.

"You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world. So why do you keep on following the rules of the world, such as, 'Don't handle! Don't taste! Don't touch!?' Such rules are mere human teachings about things that deteriorate as we use them. These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, pious self-denial, and severe bodily discipline. But **they provide no help in conquering a person's evil desires.**" Colossians 2:20-23 (NLT)

4. Abundant life is possible through a personal relationship with Jesus.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that **whoever believes in him** shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16 (NIV)

"...I am the way and the truth and the life. **No one comes to the Father except through me.**" John 14:6 (NLT)

"When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. **So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.**" Romans 5:6-11 (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions

1. In his song, "Only the Good Die Young," Billy Joel wrote, "They say there's a heaven for those who will wait. Some say it's better, but I say it ain't. I'd rather laugh with the sinners than cry with the saints. The sinners are much more fun." Why do you think this song was a hit?
2. Read John 10:10. Then discuss the following three dimensions of abundant life through Christ:
 - Abundant life is new life. (2 Corinthians 5:17, Colossians 2:13-14)
 - Abundant life is fruitful life. (John 15:1-5, Galatians 5:22-23)
 - Abundant life is eternal life. (Psalm 23:6, Revelation 21:1-4)

Which of these dimensions means the most to you?

3. Discuss the following three reasons the Bible says we need the abundant life Jesus offers:
 - Spiritually dead people are hopelessly trapped in sin. (Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:1-3)
 - Spiritually dead people have no idea how to find abundant life. (2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 4:17-18)
 - Spiritually dead people will spend eternity in hell. (Revelation 20:15)

How does it make you feel to discuss these reasons?

4. What does a personal relationship with Jesus look like in a believer's daily life?
5. Read John 3:16 & 14:6. Why did Jesus say no one can come to the Father except through Him?
6. Spend some time as a group praying for our church. Ask God to help us introduce many people to Jesus and show them what abundant life looks like.