

The Gospel of John

Lesson #87
The Journey
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The Gideons

- 1908 – 2002 the 1st billion bibles distributed.
- 2003 – 2015 the 2nd billion bibles distributed.
- 25% of travelers read bibles in their hotel room.
- Every Gideon hotel bible could reach 2,300 people.
- 100% of every \$ donated goes to providing bibles.
- Far better to be a Gideon, but some are Ginos.
- Dave, Gene, Joe, (Mercy), and me.

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The Gospel of John

- John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.
- Jesus makes it clear what he offers is far superior to what the Jews had for the people – the Jews offered to use them and then discard them without a purpose.
- Jesus' offer turns out to be one where the Good Shepherd will use us for our good and his glory and reward us with an abundance of life.

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The Gospel of John

As we read the scriptures it turns out that Jesus' intentions around the abundant life have more to do with meaning and purpose than houses, cars, and money. We need look no further than Jesus himself. No one in history is more renowned than him, and he didn't have a place to lay his head. The most productive Christians I've seen in my lifetime were not the ones with the stuff, or the ones with the life of ease, but on the contrary the ones whose lives were humble, hard, and tragic at times. And why are these two, trouble and difficulty, often linked with godliness – because when life is free from affluence we tend to prioritize better.

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The Gospel of John

- John 10:10 tells us in no uncertain terms the mission of the enemy, the language is quite blunt – our enemy wants to steal from us, kill us, and destroy our lives.
- And what you may not have considered is that Jesus means the devil's mission is both figurative and literal.
- Remember Job – Satan was allowed to literally steal from him, kill his children, and in so doing nearly destroyed his life. Only God kept him from killing Job.

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The Gospel of John

- Putting Job's experience, orchestrated by God, along side Jesus' promise of an abundant life should shake us free from assumptions we tend to make.
- And what are those assumptions? We tend to assume the abundant life is about care free living or about a Christian life of ease.
- We should assume the opposite – the abundant life is gained by serving the Lord and then growing via the experiences, and battles, that come with serving him.⁶

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- All the wars in history have been brutal and bloody which is no doubt where the phrase, "war is hell" comes from – it's not hell, just similar.
- We are in a different war as Christians – the enemy has many of our loved ones captured and locked up awaiting the time when their release is not even possible.
- Our fight today requires the same things as any war of the past – soldiers, commitment, and a will that refuses to avoid the fight and will not quit.

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- The best Christian we know of was the Apostle Paul and I ask you - did Jesus fail to deliver on his promise to Paul to have an abundant life?
- Paul's life was anything but easy, long, and care free – he was beaten, rejected, and beaten and rejected again, yet he is universally cited as a great Christian.
- 1st Peter 5:8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (the language of war)

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- Ephesians 6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.
- Do I think the above is the abundant life – yes, I do!

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Given what Paul outlines for us in Ephesians 6, his own affliction of a “thorn in the flesh”, and his many experiences of violent persecution, does it not become evident that the abundant life is no proverbial “walk in the park”? And, if Paul is really the Christian we cite as the gold standard of righteous living, then it would seem to me the lesson from his life is found in the words of Jesus when he said, “in this world you will have tribulation”. Furthermore, the only reason we don’t embrace the same for ourselves is that we don’t want to accept what could not be more obvious – no pain, no gain.

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- No less than five times in John 10 Jesus says plainly, “I lay down my life for the sheep” – if that doesn’t sound like war then what does?
- Hebrews 2:10 For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder (KJV captain) of their salvation perfect through suffering.
- Genesis 3:15 “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” War!!¹¹

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The Gospel of John

So, Jesus’ offer of abundant life in John 10:10 means that to gain Him as your Shepherd is far and away the greatest thing that could ever happen to you. This despite the certainty of being placed on Satan’s target list (*there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years, Luke 13:11*). It means that anything this world may either give to you, or take from you, doesn’t really matter that much, because a life awaits you beyond the present that greatly surpasses this one in every way. It means that for the one who has faith in Jesus, the best is yet to come. You see, the cross wasn’t a disaster it was a design – and it was not a tragedy, it was a strategy.

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- John 10:11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.
- Psalm 23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- The shepherd carried a “rod” and a “staff”, and the psalmist cites those tools as a comfort – the rod was used to club wild animals and the staff was used to control the sheep. 13

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The Gospel of John

- In the picture of the rod and the staff we see something that is seldom taught, but when it is, it brings comfort to the sheep (us).
- The rod was used to defend against predators from the outside – the staff was used to protect the sheep from themselves.
- It’s possible that more sheep were (and are) lost due to wandering from the shepherd than were lost due to wolves – there is surely little difference today as we wander from Jesus into the traps of the enemy. 14

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- John 10:12 He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13 He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.
- There is a vast difference in the business world between the owner and those who are hired to work for the owner.
- Jesus recognized this same principle in the flocks of sheep – the owner cares for the sheep, the shepherds wanted paid. 15

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- The teaching here in view of Jesus' perspective on the "Jews" who were to tend to the flock of God, is their main concern was getting paid.
- He is turning his teaching back on those who were to protect and guide the people of God, but were actually just trying to shear the sheep.
- John 10:14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

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- Let's look closely at this phrase, "I know my own and my own know me" – know in Greek is ghin-ocē'-ko.
- The word became a Jewish idiom for the intimacy experienced in sexual intercourse – a closeness, a familiarity like no other.
- The same word is used twice in verse #15 – "just as the Father knows me and I know the Father" to illustrate that this closeness extends to the Father as well as to us.

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- The teaching also extends to the ownership of the sheep – we, the sheep, belong (are owned by) the shepherd by virtue of the price paid by the shepherd.
- 1st Corinthians 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.
- Jesus "bought" us in the market place of sin – it was an intentional act on his part, very much like we would intentionally go to a store even when we don't want to.

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Questions?

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