



St. Timothy Presbyterian Church

# ABUNDANCE

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Sermons

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# Going Forward

September 13, 2015

Philippians 3:10-14

## Time is Constant

Time always flows forward, never backward, and time never stops. It always moves forward. Within time, there is content and events. Time doesn't just go, there is content and events that are happening. Time also does not move randomly. Time has its own flow towards fulfillment. Time always moves towards fulfillment. It doesn't just pass by, it always moves towards fulfillment. The philosopher Mircea Eliade said, "How do I understand time? Is time just going around and around for 365 days? Is it just the same January? Is it the same on Sunday? Is it going around and around at the same place? Or is time like a linear line from A to B, just moving along?" He discovered that time is just like a spiral that turns around, but it is still moving forward somewhere. Time is still moving around and around, but it doesn't stay at the same place. It moves toward a certain goal; a certain fulfillment. If time is like that then our life has to move forward as well. Our life cannot just go around and around at the same place. Moving forward means that you are pursuing something. Life that moves forward means you are pursuing something in life.

What is sad is not that you have failed to reach your goal. What is sad is that you don't have a goal to reach, that is what's sad. Sometimes we fail in fulfilling our dreams and goals, that's part of life. But the fact that we don't have a goal to achieve, that is truly sad about life. What kind of life is that? Life without a goal to reach is just like a life on hold, just staying still. We should all have a certain goal to reach.

Saint Paul said in verse 14: "I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus". That was Paul's attitude. He pressed on towards the goal. Paul lived with a clear sense of purpose in his life. To him, life was not just living to him. Life was calling. He came to this world to do this, and he pressed on towards that goal. I wondered what that goal was for Paul, so I went back to verse 11, and this was what Paul said: "If somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead," that was his goal. He wanted to attain the resurrection. Attaining resurrection was Paul's goal

in life. And I don't think Paul meant resurrection in a narrow sense of the word, for example, a dead person coming alive. That's a resurrection, but I think he has a broader sense of the word. To him, the resurrection was not just a dead person coming alive. To Paul the resurrection meant that everything comes alive.

When you look at Paul's theology, it is mainly focused on resurrection. It was your life coming alive. So, you don't acquire resurrection after you die, you attain resurrection right now in the present time. You can experience the power of resurrection, not when you die, but instead right here, where you are in the present time.

Let us look at verse 10. He said: "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection". I want to know now, not later. I want to know the power of his resurrection now. In Paul's mind, resurrection is what's happening right now, and he wants to know that power.

So, to Paul, the resurrection was not just a phenomenon of a dead person coming alive, but the power that enlightens our whole existence. When the power of resurrection comes upon us, everything within us comes alive. You come alive. When the power of resurrection comes upon us, every cell of our body comes alive. My rational comes alive. My consciousness is awakened. My soul dances with joy and aliveness. That is the power of resurrection. Only then, when the power of resurrection comes upon us, does our life move forward. We cannot make our lives move forward. When the power of resurrection comes upon us, it pushes us to move forward. When we sail through the storms and challenges of our life by our own strength, we become drained. We become tired and give up. We cannot move forward. I need a power within me that energizes my life to move forward. That's why I see so many people with dreams and visions when they were younger, but they were disappointed once too often, and they get discouraged and they feel powerless, helpless and hopeless. And then in the middle of their lives, they give up on their dream. I had that dream, but not anymore. They just coast along.

## Dreams and Visions

Yesterday I had a visitation and a man said "I probably earn 10 times more than you. But I need a dream. I need a vision. I need meaning in life".

That's what we need. But when we experience so many failures, we give up on our dreams. I'll just maintain the status quo as long as there's no problem with it and I'll be satisfied. I just want to live my life like this until I die. We give up our dreams. They're satisfied with maintaining the status quo. Do you want to finish your life having your life on hold? No.

In my life, I want to do something that of which I want to do. I have to do something that is meaningful. No matter how difficult that may be, it's what I want to do with the life given to me. I don't want to just live it. I want to think about what I want to do with my life. I cannot just be satisfied with false satisfaction. This is what Saint Paul said: "Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal, but I press on to make it my own. I press on towards the goal". If the power of resurrection works in us, we are not fooled by the false satisfaction and the false destination. We have yet to arrive at our destination. We know that an oasis is only a temporary place to enjoy, but that is not our final destination. You have to move forward. You have a journey to take. You can't just stay there enjoying temporary pleasure and temporary safety. People who prepare for marathons don't just prepare themselves for the beginning of the marathon or the middle of the marathon. Everybody will be able to run well in the middle, so runners prepare for the last 10-20 minutes and give their whole effort. Olympic swimmers don't prepare for the game in the middle. Everybody swims well in the middle, but in the last 10th of second, they work so hard.

What is your goal? What is your dream? You probably used to have one – did you give up on it now? I don't even know what my goal is. We need to really think about what we're living for. For the last journey, we have to give our best effort. What's done is done, don't look back. You have a journey ahead of you to take. You have a road ahead of you to walk. Saint Paul said: "Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward. What lies ahead, I press on". Forget the failures or fear that you have and start fresh from today. Think about what you want to do with your life and pursue that dream, press on towards that goal. If that is a holy dream it will be better, but even if it not a holy dream, whatever it is, set a goal and live towards that.

Passion from Christ

We all have different goals and different callings of life. Please, don't give up. Don't get settled down with just maintaining the status quo. Let the power of resurrection work in you. Then you will have courage that the power of resurrection will work in you. The way you see your life will change. You will have energy, vision, passion, excitement, even for the tiniest things. I don't know how we get that, but I believe that this the grace of Jesus Christ. Why do I have passion? Why do I have such a dream and vision? It's probably because of the grace of Jesus Christ who gave the power of resurrection within us. Even when you're tired and drained, you feel the power that moves you forward. Having no dream and all that means that you became a victim of fear, that's why you don't set up a goal. Be courageous. Stand up again, move forward, and you can do it with God's power. Not by yourself because you'll be drained. But with the power of resurrection, you can move forward. That's what I would like to see in your life.

# What is Your Message to the World?

May 22, 2016

John 10:9-14

## Weekly Reflection

It is great that, once a week we gather together like this and ask ourselves the fundamental question of life. We don't always do that. We will not be able to answer all the questions about the fundamental things of life, but at least once a week we need to reflect upon that and see where our lives are going. What is the purpose of my life? It's a very, very big question, but it is still very important for us to continuously ask this question. You will reflect on that when you come to church, but you will forget it too. You can hear it today and then tomorrow you will forget it. That's okay. That's a part of life—you understand, learn, and forget but forgetting doesn't mean that it disappears. It remains in you. When some critical moment of life comes, all of a sudden, all those things that are within you that you didn't even know where there will come out. So, whatever you hear, whatever you understand, whatever you realize, it will not disappear. You may forget it in your consciousness, but it will always be there in your heart. When the right time comes, you'll be surprised and think 'I didn't know that I have this insight, or this understanding, or this attitude'. It is great that once a week at least, we come to church and reflect on the fundamental questions of life.

## Life's Calling

Sunflowers move towards the sun. That's natural. You don't have to tell them to do so. Similarly, roots of the tree by the river reach out to where the water is. Automatically roots will go down to the stream of water. Salmon make an incredible upstream journey to spawn, to lay eggs in the same places that they were hatched. These are natural things. Those who want to be actors and actresses dream to move to Hollywood. They hope that someday they will be picked someday someone will recognize their talents and ability. Our life is like that. Whatever we desire, we move towards. Sometimes we realize there is strong force that a guide us, moves us and leads us to a certain direction. That's what our life is like. I'll call that life's

calling. It calls you to certain things in life. Life's calling does not have to be your job or career. For some people it is, but it doesn't have to be. A job is a job to some people, it does not necessarily define their life's calling. But to some people, life's calling so strong they even give up their old job and then change it to live out their life's calling.

I think that's quite courageous to give up all your things and do whatever life calls you to do. We all have life's calling and our life moves towards that. Think about it. Why are you doing certain things? Why are you attracted to certain things? Why is your life moving towards a certain direction? I believe that there is a life's calling. Oprah Winfrey said, "there's no greater gift you can give or receive than to honor your calling, it is why you're born and how you become truly alive". She's not even a minister. She has wisdom. Yes, we may live our life's calling. That's where we are the happiest. Then how do we find life's calling? I've realized that it's not just one decision that you're making, sometimes when we do that you make a mistake. I think it's a process, a slow process. Little by little you realize things about your life's calling, rather than willfully deciding that 'I make this decision, I'm going to live like this'. That's not life's calling. That's your decision, but life's calling is much bigger than your decision. There may be a series of events that may have awakened you. There may be one or two instances that made you seriously think about what you want to do with the rest of your life.

Maybe sometimes you experience or discovered a very strong force that forces, guides and leads you in a certain direction. For me, it was a book that finally, I mean before the book there were lots of other things that happened, but in the end, it was a book that finally convinced me to go into ministry. So, everybody has a different experience of finding life's calling. Ask yourself a big question: why do you live? Why do you exist? Why did I come to this world? Was I just a product of my parents' decision and will? Is as simple as that? Or was I just born with no meaning attached to it? I was born and because I was born, I just live?

## Your Life's Calling

Jesus was very clear about why he came to this world. I think that's the difference between great people and mediocre people. Mediocre people don't know why they came to the world, but all the great people know clearly why they came to the world, why they live. That's what I discovered.



Jesus said this, “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly”. That was why Jesus Christ came. He came to this world so that we, not him, may have life and have it abundantly. What a noble thing to say. He was only a 30-year-old young man. How could a young man have such a noble idea about life. He came so the other people may have life abundantly. I respect that. That is awesome to have that kind of idea about life.

The other day I was thinking about what my message is to the world. What is my message to the world? You all have a message to the world, whether you verbally articulate it or not, through your life, you’re living out your message. You show what you want to speak and what you want to say to the world. This is what life is all about. Your message to the world reflects what your philosophy of life is and also that will point to the direction of your life. Depending on what message you have to share with the world. I can see your philosophy and I can see where your life is heading to.

Jesus’ message to the world was ‘live life abundantly’. That was Jesus’ message to the world. What was Paul’s message to the world? It was that you must live your life always joyfully. Rejoice your life always. That was Paul’s message to the world. What was Bobby McFerrin’s message? Don’t worry. Be Happy. That was his message to the world. That’s a good message. Nelson Mandela’s message was that everyone is equal and can have their say, and he lived and died for that message. Martin Luther King Jr’s message was that one day all people will be judged not by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character. That was his message to the world. The message of Mother Teresa was that, your life is supposed to take to take care of weak, vulnerable, poor children. That’s the right thing to do. Take care of the poor children around you. All these people had messages to the world and they tried to live out that message. That his life’s calling.

## A Good Message

I hope, my friends, that our message to the world may not be as follows: Be selfish. Life is meaningless, and the future is hopeless. Don’t think too much. Just live. Do whatever you want. Pain is useless. Suffering only destroys us. All people are bad. I hope that that is not our message to the world, but sometimes, unfortunately we deliver these toxic messages unintentionally through our behaviour, through our actions, through the

words that we speak and through the attitudes we have. Yes, I know life is hard. Living almost 60 years, I know that much. Life is hard, and life can be quite gloomy sometimes. There is so much suffering in our lives and in the world. Just last week, all 66 members of Egypt Air, thought they were going to work. They all got killed. All 66 people. And we were very saddened by the news of the aboriginal young people committing suicide, one after another. A mass suicides. Why? Young people are supposed to live with excitement and for a bright future. But they felt so helpless and hopeless and they killed themselves. Why? And we just prayed his afternoon about a Bangladesh. So many people lost their homes and families. Life can be gloomy.

The world needs the message of hope, courage, strength and belief. And who will speak the message to the world? You. That's why the world needs you. The world needs your message. You are the prophet. Each one of you is the prophet. In every situation. We go there, and we speak the message of hope, a message of love. You're called to deliver that message. My friends, our life's calling is to help people around us. It is simple as that. What's more difficult? What more is there? Our life's calling is to help people around us. Just as there are many different messages, there may be different ways of doing it. It may be as simple as to help people around you. When people fall, help them get up. If people are discouraged, be with them and encourage them. Life's calling is to help people around us.

## Live the Life of a Shepherd

Ultimately, we want people to live abundant life. That was Jesus' message. As Jesus was a shepherd, you are also a shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Jesus said, that is a good life to emulate. These days, so many people live with 'hired hands' mentality or 'thieves' mentality. They steal, kill and possess things from the world. "What profit can I get from this world?" That's all they think about. They don't think about taking care of the world. They are not good shepherds to the world. They are hired hands to the world. The only think about the profit they can get from this world rather than how they can make this world abundant. How can I make the lives of these people abundant? Doesn't matter who they are, Christians or non-Christians. We must ask "how can I help humanity live abundantly?" Sometimes as a good shepherd, you may even have to sacrifice what you have to do that. I think that's a noble life. That's the highest ethics and morality and that's a good life. This is what I

realized: when you have the mentality of a hired hands, the message does not come. That's what I realized. If you have that attitude, the message doesn't come. What is my message to the world? I'm not sure. What is my life's calling? I don't know.

But amazingly when we live a life of a shepherd, all the blessings come to us. We experience the abundance of life. When we live a life of good a shepherd. We realized that life is full, not empty. Life is meaningful, life's joyful. It's always full, not empty. That's that was God's message to Abraham, right from the beginning of Genesis. God called Abraham and said, "I will make of you a great nation and I'll bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing". God gave you blessing so that you may be a blessing to other people around you. So, you are a prophet, you are a good shepherd and you are a blessing. Don't ever forget that. I hope that all of you may be a blessing to others and that you discover a message for your life.

# It is God

May 29, 2016

Hosea 2:7-8

## God Gave us Abundance

My friends, it is God who has provided all we need and beyond. God lavished upon us all the good things that we enjoy in life. Not just the material things, the totality of life. I was thinking, would God be able to give more than what he gave? Is there any more things to give on God's part? And I realized that there's nothing more he could give. He gave all the abundance.

When I was young, I could only imagine going to heaven. I could not imagine beyond this. You can eat whatever you want, there are all kinds of abundance, all kinds of things that you enjoy. That's what heaven was like when I was young. So, God has provided all good things for us, but it's not just material things. We have to remember, God did not just give you material things. God gave you peace, God gave you happiness. God gave you good friends, good family and good people who will always be there for you. Life is not just material. Life is more than a lot of things, and God gave all of us all good things. In that sense, life is a gift from God. Yes, life is a gift from God. He provided all good things, so I believe that says that life is a gift from God.

## Peace Through Chaos

Last week and the week before were tough for me because I had two retreats back to back and I had two funerals back to back. First, I had a funeral on Thursday night, and then a funeral on Saturday, a Friday morning funeral, a Friday evening funeral, Saturday morning. Too many funerals. Too many reflections on death. It was tough. But you know what? In the midst of a very busy and hectic schedule, I had peace of mind. Where did that peace come from? I don't know. I could very well be frustrated and stressed out. I didn't even try to make myself feel good, but peace was there. So, I sit down, I'm stressed out, I'm frustrated and all that, but where did that peace come from? I realized that life is like that. That's

what life is. When you face hardships, difficulties, and problems in life, life has its own way of finding peace. That's what I realized. Life moves into that direction. Life knows how to find peace and happiness on its own. I don't have to even try anything, life just moves towards that. That's what I realized about life. Because life is a gift from God, it is made to be that way.

Whether you're religious or not, you will find peace, comfort and assurance if you don't ruin it yourself by being angry and frustrated. We are often the culprit of our own unhappiness. We are the ones who block the way. We are the ones who don't let our lives find peace and comfort and assurance. We are the problem. If we just move ourselves outside of it, life will find its way, but we are the ones who make ourselves frustrated, angry and stressed out. Life is a gift from God and it will know how to find its own giftedness and its own peace and its own happiness, and yet we are in the middle and we are making ourselves very unhappy. We are the problem.

## The 7th, Most Important Day

About the nature of life, and our life force, I realized that God made our life that way. I thank God for that. For six days God created heaven and earth. The material things. First day, second day, third day, he created all of these things, mountains and oceans, and all material things. After he created all those material things for six days on the seventh day, what did he do? He rested. Why? Was it because he was tired? Can God be tired? Since he worked so much for six days, on the 7th day he had to take a rest? I don't think so. He left the seventh day to rest and he let every creation on the seventh day rest. He created rest, and without peace there is no rest. Just because you physically rest, that doesn't mean that you're rested. If you don't have peace, then you don't have true rest. In other words, God gave peace on the seventh day.

Peace was built in in God's creation from the beginning. The 7th day is more important than the six days. In six days, he created all the material things. On the seventh day he created the crucial thing that we need, which is rest, peace and all those things that make us happy.

When you look at the scripture of Genesis, God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it because on it, God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. God not only created all the trees, flowers, oceans,

mountains, rivers, animals and human beings, on the seventh day, God blessed them. In other words, he added blessing to the materials. So what you get is not just materials. What you get is blessed materials. You have all the materials, but don't have joy. What good is it? God not only gave materials, but blessed materials. The happiness with it, the joy with it so that you can have appreciation for the abundance you enjoy. That is what God wants.

## God Gave Enough

Then how come people don't seem to be very happy with life when they have all the abundance they can get? You can't get any better. You can't get any more than this. If you want more than this, that's greed. Wake up. If you want more material than this, that's greed. We have more than enough. God gave enough.

The reason we human beings are not happy is because, Hosea saw it this way; verse 8, she did not know that it was I. That's a problem. (She is Israelites). She did not know that it was I who gave her the green, the wine and the oil, who lavished upon her silver and gold that they used for Baal. The problem is she did not know that it was God. The reason we cannot enjoy all the abundance and live with happiness is because we don't know it is God who provided all these good things for us. She used silver and gold for Baal. That's an idol. She went to Baal thinking that Baal can give her true happiness. How true that is for us right now. When God gave all the abundance, we turned to something else and asked for blessing. Asked for happiness. We often forget that God is the source of all the blessings and all the good things that we enjoy. We try to create our own happiness. Try it. You can never. Our autonomy has become our own Baal. Our ability and capability have become our own Baal. But you don't realize that your self-centeredness kills your soul and takes away the true joy you're supposed to experience. The more we try to create our own happiness, the more miserable we become, because the source of happiness is in God. It is God who created all that. It is God who gives all that.

## Two Things Humans Have Done

There are two things human beings did. One, they have forgotten that it is God who has provided all the good things in our lives. Two, they have become self-centered and self-absorbed to create their own happiness.

The result, we have become very unhappy and feel very empty. That's exactly what happened. That's what happened to people in history. That's what's happening to people right now, and that's what will happen to people in the future because that isn't how God made life.

## Two Things Humans Must Do

If life is a gift, we need to do two things. One, be thankful to those who gave the gift. Be thankful to God who gave you the gift of life. Two, share the gift of life with others. Share. If it is a gift, share it. Don't take it all. Share it with others. Be thankful and share, those two things. Very simple. If life is a gift, then we always live with thankfulness that will drive away all our worries, anxieties, frustration, all that. Two, share it. By sharing it, you will experience the abundance of life. When you are thankful, and you share your life, that's when you become the happiest. Life when it is shared shows it's best, and you start enjoying the beauty of life. If you remember these two things, your life will only get better.

A good life is not a good life because nothing bad happens. A good life is a good life because in the midst of all the bad things that happen in life, we will never lose hope and the beauty of life. That's when life becomes good.

## Life is Beautiful

When I watch the movie, I'm sure most of you watched it, Life is Beautiful, I heard the message very clearly and strongly. This Jewish man who was about to be executed is so bright. He takes care of his son. He talks with him, he plays with him as though nothing bad will happen. He celebrates how beautiful life is, and the title of the movie of is Life is Beautiful.

Life is good, not because nothing bad happens, but because in the midst of all the bad things that happened in your life, you never lose hope. You never lose perspective. You never lose the beauty of life.

We will only discover a deeper taste of life. As wine gets better. As it matures, you will taste the deeper taste of life as you get mature about life. Don't forget that life is good. And what is good you share. Don't forget the life is gift. Celebrate it, enjoy it, and don't ever forget that it is God who gave you all the good things in life. I want you to enjoy the maximum joy of

life. That's what I want for everyone, to enjoy the maximum joy of life. Remember those two things, one, be thankful and two, share.



# Freedom and Abundance

October 23, 2016

Luke 4:16-21

## Jesus' Vision

We are studying Galatians on Fridays and also Tuesday, and we'll start a Wednesday Bible study too. And also, since we're at the end of the year, we are busy planning for 2017, next year. It is our 20th anniversary for this church and we need to think about what ministry is all about. And actually, what life is all about, because ministry and life, they are not separate. What life is all about and what ministry is all about.

Vision is very important. Without vision, we are dead. Vision shows where we need to go. It shows us clear direction of where our life needs to go. That's what vision is. Whatever we do, wherever we go, we must do it with vision. In our scripture passage today, Jesus, before he did any of his ministry, he laid down his vision. He did not come up with his own vision, he took it from the scripture, Isaiah, and then he took the vision for his life and for his ministry. And this is what he said, "He has come to bring good news to the poor. He was sent to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." That was Jesus' vision for ministry and that was Jesus' vision for His life. Think about it. Meditate upon that. That was what Jesus Christ came to do, and that was what his life was all about.

I'd like to talk about vision today with you. What is the church's vision? What does the church need to do? What is the church's mission on about? In this day and age, I admit, that church is not a place where people love to gather together. There are not many people who say, "I love to go to church." Or, "Church is a place that I love to be." You know, we get 50,000 people. I had Roger Center, but not at the church all the time. Even people who are going to church are kind of confused about what the church is all about. Why do I go there every Sunday? What is church all about?

It is very important for us to know what Jesus came to do, and the church needs to continue what Jesus came to do. If the church does that, then I believe that the church is relevant to people's lives, and I do believe that church is relevant to people's lives. Even though Roger Center may be gone, but the church cannot be gone. That's what I believe, because the church is a very relevant, very important place. It doesn't matter how many people gathered together. Jesus was the one who established the church and the church is going to continue with the vision of Jesus Christ. And we're going to carry out what Jesus wants to do in our lives. In today's scripture, Jesus said he came to bring good news to the poor, to release the captives, to recover the sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free and to proclaim jubilee.

Look at it... When you look at this vision statement, one word comes to my mind? What is that one word? It is freedom. That's one word that comes to my mind. Freedom. At the end, the year of the Lord's favour, that is called 'jubilee'. Jubilee comes every 50 years, and on jubilee, they let the slaves go free. So even the jubilee is about freedom, and I do believe that Jesus came to bring freedom from suffering.

## What Does Freedom Mean?

When we studied Galatians, we heard Paul's interpretation of what Jesus came to do. Oh, I'm reading a book right now, Paul – was he a follower of Jesus or was he the founder of Christianity? It's a very interesting book because Paul never met Jesus and then Paul never quotes Jesus in his letter, and yet Paul captured the essence of Jesus so well. He never met Jesus, but he captured who Jesus was so clearly. All other disciples could not do it. He was able to summarize what Jesus came to do, what Jesus' ministry was all about. And this was what is what Paul said about the coming of Jesus. Paul said, "Grace to you and peace from God, our father and the Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself for our sins to set us free."

Freedom to set us free from the present evil age according to the will of our God and father. Freedom. You know, freedom to the powerful and the privileged is to be free to do whatever they want. Because they have the power to do whatever they want, so for them, freedom is to do whatever I want. That's what freedom is to them. To me, that's a corrupted understanding of freedom. Freedom is not to do whatever you want to do. Freedom means to be liberated from what enslaves them, what oppresses

them, and what makes them not to be who they are meant to be. That's freedom. Whatever enslaves you within you, if you are free from that, that is freedom.

God wants all of God's creation, every single one of us, to live abundantly. Abundant life, that's what God wants from all of us. God doesn't want us to live a miserable life. God wants us to live an abundant life. John captured that very well in Chapter 10. This is what Jesus said, "I came, that they may have life and have it abundantly." That's why Jesus came. To give us the abundant life. My friend, money does not give the abundance of life. Don't be fooled. Money does not give the abundance of life. "Oh, money will give me the abundance of life!" That is a slogan of capitalism. Don't be fooled by the propaganda of the system of capitalism. "Money will give me abundance!" Lie. That is a lie. Deception. Sometimes money can even enslave you rather than giving you freedom and abundance. I don't believe in that. I don't believe in that slogan. Money may give me convenience, but not abundance. What gives the abundance of life, I believe, is freedom.

Only freedom can give you abundance. Jesus came not to give us money, he never said that. Jesus did not come to give us money. Jesus came to give us the freedom that makes our life abundant. You know, people work and work and work, and they make money... but when they go to a restaurant or when they see people around them who need their help and all that, they don't give any. You know? They all always think about getting it rather than paying for it. They have lots of money. Can we say that that person is abundant? That that person's life is an abundant life? Can we say that? Even though they have lots of money, they never pay, they never give for people around them. What do we call them? Cheap. We don't call them abundant, we call them cheap. They only think about themselves. They never share to give to other people. Abundance does not come from having money. Abundance comes from sharing the money. When you share more money with others, then you are abundant.

## Generosity & Greed

Today and tomorrow we are going to collect offering for Haiti. I hope that you give generously. There are people who are suffering tremendous human suffering. I think that it is right, just simply right, for us to share our resources with them. Don't just give 10, 20 dollars. We're talking about people who are suffering or dying. When we are able to share freely with

those who suffer around us, I do believe that that life is an abundant life. I think that that definition is a much better definition and understanding than the slogan of capitalism, that money will make you abundant. Don't be a slave and fool of capitalism.

You have to have a philosophy of life. People who are the powerful and the privileged, they need to be free from the greed and selfishness. And that applies to most of us. To us, freedom is to be free from the greed and selfishness. As they share freely with those who are suffering around them, they shall be able to enjoy the abundance of life, and also help the poor and free the captives from their suffering. That should be our humanity. That is simply the right thing to do as a human being.

You know, I'm envious of Jews, Jewish people, because they have wisdom for thousands of years. It is recorded in their document and then they lived with that wisdom of life from generation to generation. I mean, these documents gave them – "This is what good life is supposed to be" – so I'm really envious of them. Our Christian history is very short, a few decades or a few hundred years, but they have thousands of years. They have this wisdom in that book, and that wisdom taught them how to let live their lives. This is what it said, "When you read the harvest of your land, you shall not reap the very edges of your field or gather their cleanings of your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the alien. I'm the Lord, your God." How wise that is. Don't be aggressive for your own profit and benefit. Don't like deals so much. Don't like sales so much.

Don't be so aggressive for your own profit and benefit. "Oh, \$1000 TV? I got it for \$200! I'm so smart." Be generous. That generous spirit is the abundance. Generous spirit. Having money is not the measure of abundance. Sharing money is the measure of your abundance. Saving money for yourself is not the best life philosophy or policy. Sharing the money with those who suffer around you is the best philosophy and policy. That is a principle of blessing. Again, I'm envious of Jewish people because they have all these things in their scripture. This is what God said to Abraham, listen, "When he first called Abraham, He said, 'I'll bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing.'" Blessing to who? To others. I'll bless you so much that you'll be a blessing to other people. You will be the source of blessing. That's what blessings are like. Blessing is a flow from me to others to others and to others. It's a flow. If you're stingy, if

you're greedy, you block that flow of blessing. My friends, please don't be a slave of capitalism. Please don't. Money doesn't make you abundance. Don't be a fool believing that!

## It's A Trap

You will be destroyed. Your soul will be destroyed if you keep going that way. Share what you have with others. That is the purpose of life, not making money. Truly your soul will die if you keep doing that. Joy will be gone, peace will be gone. And then we don't even know what the purpose of life is all about after all. Blessing is a flow. Don't break – don't block that flow. Break it open, so that this flow really smoothly goes from one to another. Jesus came to break open this flow. Jesus shared everything he had – his time, his talents, his love, his gift. I see so much of enslavement in this day and age. People are dying. In the modern world, in the name of false abundance, so many people have become enslaved in their own greed and unhappiness. Why do you think people are so unhappy? Because they don't have money? No, because they have money.

They don't experience the freedom of life, and they don't experience the abundance of life. You know, you cannot enjoy the abundance alone. You can only enjoy the abundance with others, together. So, in that sense, abundance is like a party. You cannot enjoy the party alone. "Oh, let's have party!" But you're all alone... How can you have a party? Abundance, same thing. You can only have abundance with others, together.

Let us not be fooled by the false teachings of this world. It's enough. We are being fooled enough, it's time to wake up. It's time to say, "Enough is enough." It's time to say "No. I'm not going to be fooled by that anymore. Because my life is very short. I'm not going to live for the rest of my life chasing after the money." Let us learn from God. The way to be free and abundant. You have enough material to enjoy the abundance of life, but only one thing that you need right now. That one thing is freedom. Freedom to share. Won't you join me doing that? Try it. Have freedom to share. You will see more abundance in your life. That's what a blessed life is like, and I do believe this philosophy much more than any other teaching

# Path of Life

March 19, 2017

Isaiah 43:14-21

## Life is Like a Path

Life is like a path. When you say that life is like a path, life is a path. Do you agree with that? Or is life bunch of unconnected and disconnected events that has nothing to do with each other. This happened, and another thing happened, and another thing happened. It just random events, they're not connected at all. You cannot say that it is kind of a connected path. It's just happening every moment.

Or how do you look at it? When scripture often says, a life is like a story of Abraham, the story of Jacob and Joseph, there's a story. So, their life is a story. In other words, whatever is happening to them is connected with each other and they create it kind of weaves, a story. So, in that sense, a life is not just a whole bunch of unconnected events, but it is connected events that create a story that creates kind of path and we need to find a path, but it's hard to see a path and find a path. It is pretty difficult. What is the path that I'm walking on. Where does this path lead to and how have I lived all my life? What kind of path have I walked on? If life is a path, am I paving that path? If life is life is a path, do I just follow a general path that everybody is following? You finished school, you get a job, you get married and have children and all that.

## Each Person's Path is Very Unique

Is there a general path that everybody just follows and then I just walk on the same path? Or is there a unique path just for me. Not for everyone else, but just for me is there a unique path just for me? And I want to say that there is no path that is alike. Every path is unique. As every person is unique, you have your own way. You have your own path to walk on. That's what I believe. Each person's path is very, very unique. You cannot walk on other's path and are the people cannot walk on your path.

Your path consists of your dream, your vision, your passion, the career that you chose, the friends that you make along the way, the kind of family you came from and the kind of family you make now and a kind of community you belong to all of these things together and make a path for you and that is very unique to individual and no one can walk the same path. I mean we may experience the same events, but what you get out of that event is very different. Today you hear the same physical message from me, but each person takes that message differently and processes it and digests it differently and different things are triggered. So even though we are in the same place same time, but what you get is very, very different, different and very unique for each individual. That is your path. How you make a decision, how you feel, how you relate to the world, how you build yourself. All these things shape your path. My friends, I don't think there is a path already made for you.

## You Must Forge Your Own Path

I don't think the path is yet made. The Path you're going to walk on is not made yet. You have to make it. It's not that there is already a path that you just have to walk on, no. The path is not there yet it's not created yet. Yet you have to create it. You have to make it now at this point. But depending on what kind of path you make; the destination will be very different. If you take the TTC Bloor line, you'll end up in Scarborough, but if you take the Yonge line, you'll end up in North York, so depending on what path you create, the destination will be quite different. If you live out your life with resentment, disappointment, greed and selfishness. You'll create a path that leads to bankruptcy, of life and meaninglessness. But if you live out your forgiveness, love, self-giving, and hope you will create a path that leads to an abundant life and eternal life. And then I realized that yes, I have to make a path now, but realized that I cannot make a path all by myself because I don't know life enough. I don't have enough knowledge or enough wisdom, not even enough strength to make my own path. Often, I experience that I get drifted away and don't know where I am and where I'm going. I just live busily doing everything. And at one point I question, "where am I? Where am I going? Where do I want to go?"

## My Canoe Anecdote

Many years ago, I used to take a college group to Algonquin Interior. So, portaging and all that stuff, sometimes 10 people, sometimes 20, 30

people. I think one trip we even had about 40 people, like troops with canoes. So, we went there, and it was a very windy day. And on that day, I went out in canoe by myself. I just wanted to experience the quietness. So, I went out in the middle of that lake and just lied down and enjoyed the peace and serenity. I really enjoyed the silence and peace. So, for about 30 minutes or an hour, I just lied down there looking at the sky, but you know, when you lie down there in the canoe, you don't know whether the canoe is moving or not. You think that you're at the same place. But after, 30 minutes I went, "Where, am I?", you know, I got totally lost and I looked around and way back there.

There was our campsite. I usually look out for the island because of bears, you know, to be safe. Bears won't come there. I hope. So, and then I found and island, so I canoed there by myself. It was windy day. It was so hard to canoe by myself because it goes back and forth like this and that. And then finally I got to the island. But somehow the problem is you get there and then I missed the island. And because of the current, and the way the wind was going like this and there was a guy, I'm not sure, maybe it was John, I maybe. I didn't know who it was. There was a guy standing at the rock and then I wave right. Help, help. How do you say hi? James is raising his hand, it was James. Yeah, I mean I was going to James. Hi, how are you? And for about five times of saying Hi back and forth he realized, oh, he needs help. So, he came out with other guys and then they saved me.

## We Need to Look to God to Help us Create our Paths

Sometimes, you know we need help. I don't think I can create my path all by myself. I need help from God. Israelites tried to create a path on their own. They thought they were smart and strong enough. And then Jeremiah a different prophet, he said the mistake of the Israelites were that they created a cistern, like a kind of hole on their own, the things that they made a mistake one day, try to dig a hole all by themselves and they dug a hole that cannot contain water. These two things. How true that is for us. We tried to dig our life by ourselves and at the end of we realize this whole cistern cannot hold water. I create a life that cannot hold water. The Israelites, they try to create their own life and ultimately at the end where did that path, lead them to? To exile. They lost everything. They lost their land, their temple, their identity and everything. That's sad.



You know if all your life you've lived a really good life and at the end do you want to experience bankruptcy? Do you want to get to a point where life is so meaningless and empty.?. I hope that we don't end up there. Isaiah today, he said this, "their life was like in a desert and in the wild sea the path they created, lead them to the place they didn't want to be." But Isaiah gave us good news the message of good news. The good news is even though because of our mistakes, we ended up at the desert, but God is going to create a path for you in the desert. That's Isaiah. What Isaiah proclaimed God would even make a way in the desert.

## No Matter Where we are, God will be There to Help us

Because of their stubborn and arrogant attitude. They created a path that led them to nothingness, but god created a new path for them. That's what God does. My friends, sometimes we make innocent mistakes because we don't know enough because we create a certain path because of our innocent mistakes, but other times knowing that this will lead to nothing but because of our greed and selfishness we followed the path anyway. Sometimes we are so blinded, and we don't see what we are doing. We are just making ourselves busy doing anything and everything without knowing where this life leads to? We just live mindlessly and habitually, and we just let things happen and by doing that we create a path that takes us where we don't want to be, but the good news is that God has given us up. If you're. If we are at the desert, he'll come there to make a path. If we are in the mighty waters, he will come there to make a new path in the wild sea. This is what God said, "I am about to do a new thing" The next verse says, "now it springs forth. Now he springs forth to you not pursuing." You know, when I read this this time, what is that? Where is that?

When I read this, this time, somehow that new thing sounded like new path to me. I am going to make a new path for you. Do you not perceive it? I'm going to make a new path for you don't you see it? That's what Isaiah said to the Israelites and this is what God said. Also, I will give water in the wilderness and rivers in the desert to give drink to my chosen people. You are God's chosen people. God will give you to drink. even though you are creating a path of our life, but we are not creating just my own path. I said we have a very unique path. That's why Jesus said, take the narrow road. That means your own unique way. Live your life, but yes, my path is unique, but we also create a path together. Each unique path gathers together and create a path for us to walk together. Every drop of water

gathers and creates the river and each river, each river gathers and makes an ocean together. We're creating a path and this path that we create together will enrich each and every one of your unique individual paths. It will enrich you only with God. We can create a path that leads to abundance. We don't want to end up in the desert. We want to be where God's abundance is, I don't know where you are individually, but wherever you are, you can always start anew. You don't have to repeat the same path as you have lived. Now you can create a new path with God and this is what God said "do not remember the former things or consider things of old the path is not made yet for you and it you have to make a path to not make the same path necessarily. You have to make your own wonderful path from this moment on and do it with God, not by yourself, not on your own.

# More than Enough

May 28, 2017

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

John 1:12-16

## Are we Really Living Abundant Lives?

Today I would like to talk about what it means to live a life that is full, abundance life. I do believe that a life has got to be abundant. I mean Jesus Christ came to give us abundant lives. Our life should be full of joy, full of laughter, full of life and full of everything. The life it's got to be abundant. Life has got to be full, and that was his purpose. Today, John said, "from Jesus' fullness the grace upon grace came to us Jesus' fullness" and in John Chapter 10 he said, "I came so that they may have life and have it abundantly." Jesus came to give us the abundant life, but I don't think abundant life is just about having a lot. That's what I thought before. If you have a lot, then you're abundant I thought. If you have a lot of degrees, if you have a lot of money, if you have a lot of everything, then your life is abundant, and I realized how wrong that is. I don't think an abundant life comes from having a lot. I think we should be awake from that illusion. Look at our lives. We have so much in the modern world, probably in history we never had this much. We have so much. We have abundance, and yet when I look around, can we say that people really appreciate their abundance? Do they really think that they are living an abundant life? Do people say that, "hey, I have enough. I'm content. I have enough." How many people really say that? Still, people say I don't have enough. I'm not enough. I mean we have abundance and yet we don't experience the abundance. It is a very strange phenomenon. You have a lot, and yet you don't feel abundant at all. We always live with the sense that we don't have enough.

## Advertisements Tell us our Lives are Still Lacking Abundance

Some people say that is because of commercials, that we watch every day. They always tell you that unless you have this thing, your life is not full, your life is not good enough. You have to have this. So even a commercial on the gum, if you buy this gum and chew it, a lot of women will come to

you, you know, abundance, whatever. They continuously say that you don't have enough, you are not enough until you have this thing. They create false cravings.

## The More you Have, the Thirstier you Become

Whatever the cause may be, I see that many people live with this dissatisfaction much more than ever before. People are not simply satisfied, it's like having a huge hole within you, deep, dark, huge empty hole, and you feel that that deep dark space and you can never fill it. That hole sucks up all the energy within you and you feel that it sucks the life out of you and it stares at you, but you don't know what to do with this deep dark space. What John said was very different from this modern life, from his fullness, we have all received grace upon grace. When you hear the expression grace upon grace, what image comes to your mind? To me, grace upon grace is an image of flowing, overflowing.

It is not the dark empty space that can never be filled up, but the life of abundance, life of overflowing, the image of grace upon grace is not the image of squeezing, life out of you. It is image of life overflowing from you. So, abundance life is not possible by having more. It is not about having more. The more you have, the thirstier you become. Did you realize that? The more you have, the thirstier you become. That's what human beings are like.

## Materialism is Flawed

So, there is a flaw in materialism. Materialism tells you, tells you that if you have this, then you will be full, satisfied. That's not true. That's a lie. If you have this, your life will be full? No, that's what materialism says so there's a flaw in the materialism, so don't be fooled by the materialism in that way. If you have this, you want to have more, a bigger, better all the time. If you have the best phone right now, you have next year you are waiting for iPhone 7 or 8, 9 or 10, and as soon as 8 comes iPhone 7 doesn't look that great. You got to have an 8 or 9 or 10.

## God's Grace Fills us up Abundantly

The abundant life is a sense that you have more than enough. If you have that sense, your life is abundant. If you ever sense that, "what I have is

more than enough.” Think about the attitude of people who say that what I have is more than enough and also about the attitude of people who always say, “never enough”, who’s more abundant? I believe that the former, the person who has the sense that I have more than enough. When you have that sense, then your life is abundant, but the sense that you have more than enough can never come by having more, then what do we do? Are we stuck? We cannot live abundant life? Because by having more you can never fill it. You can never have that sense. I do believe that is a work of the overflowing grace.

Only when grace comes into you and touches you, when grace overflows within you, then you have this new sense that what I have is more than enough. Grace always overflows. Grace always makes your life full, it gives you the sense that your life is more than enough. The only way that you can fill up that empty dark hole space is with grace of God. In exactly the same condition, when grace touches you, you realize that it’s all right. My life is more than enough. What I have is more than enough. I am more than enough.

## Abundance is Sharing

St. Paul in today’s scripture that we read, he had a thorn in his flesh and he felt he felt that he’d be better off without this thorn, so he prayed three times as much as he could, but god didn’t think so God did not grant him what he wanted, but instead God gave this. “My grace is sufficient for you.” In other words, it’s enough. My grace is enough. He was exactly in the same position, St. Paul, externally, he still had a thorn in his flesh. Before he received that message or after he received the message, he was exactly the same. He had a thorn in his flesh, but this time he could say, “hmm, it’s all right. I have more than enough, and I am more than enough.” He discovered the secret of the life of grace, so my friends. One more thing about grace, abundance and blessings. I said overflowing. It always overflows to other people. That is the nature of grace.

Abundant people always make other people abundant. You become abundant, not by having more. You become abundant by making other people abundant, instead of taking away the spotlight to yourself by giving away the spotlight to other people you become abundant. By just enjoying what you have by sharing, not by having it, but by sharing it with others your life becomes abundant. And blessing, when God called Abraham, this

is what he said. When God called Abraham God said to him, “I’ll bless you so that you’ll be a blessing to other people.” That’s what blessing is. That’s what abundance is. That’s what grace is.

True blessings don’t stay where you are. They always overflow to others. Abundance in life is not in what you have. Only when you share what you have, you experience the abundance of life.

## Generosity Begets Generosity

Some people went to women’s gathering and some of you came to me and told me, my goodness, I live in a small well, I didn’t know the world. There are so many noble holy people who are really working to live their lives for other people. They just give everything. They just give their whole life for other people and some people who took pictures and all that. They were blessed, and they donated a \$2000, \$3,000 for the woman’s gathering because they saw how God is working.

Abundance is in sharing. There’s a church on Spadina and Harbord I told you. That Church owns the land. One generous person gave a donation and from the rent that church received millions of dollars and they do mission with that money. Generosity begets generosity.

## Serving is Living

The other day I got a call from one of my ESM members and he told me: “Moxanim I’m applying to Moxies and then he asked me if I could be his reference. So, I said: “sure, yeah, I’ll be your reference” And then a few days later a manager from Moxies called me and he asked me about this guy and I said, “he’s a really, really nice guy. He serves our church, is a good member of our church and he goes to Evangel Hall” and the manager asked, “what is the Evangel Hall? “So, uh, that is, uh, every month we give hot food to the people in the street and then he goes to Teasdale, what is Teasdale? Teasdale is a food bank. We hand out food and, and we started talking. He said, “every year I take my children and during Christmas time I make sandwiches and go out and give out a of food to them.” And he and I were talking about, “yeah, that’s what life is supposed to be. That’s what human beings should live like.” And we’re still talking about that, but we didn’t talk about this guy at all. We were just talking about what life should be and how we should live and all that. So, I called her and said, did you

get a job? “Yeah, I got the job.” Generosity begets generosity. Abundance does not come from having it, but from sharing it, serving is living. When you serve, you will live.

When you are selfish, you will die. Serving is living, every small cup of water that you gave to a stranger, God knows God knows, let us live a life of abundance.

