

Abundant Life

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Even if there were no Heaven to gain and no Hell to suffer, the Christian life would still be the most noble, satisfying, happy and abundant life on this earth. There was never a greater misconception than the one held by the world that the Christian life is one of drudgery, unhappiness, and dullness. Unfortunately, those who are Christians far too often leave that very impression with those who observe their attitude.

To those in the world, there is no happiness apart from indulgence of fleshly desire. They have utterly confused pleasure with happiness and gratification with joy. The pursuit of life and happiness by such people is typified by Solomon's indulgence in every conceivable fleshly desire, only to proclaim, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit" (Ecc. 1:4). If the accumulation of wealth, power, territory, and fame could bring abundant life to any man, Solomon would have had it.

Some have the mistaken impression that if the Christian life is the best life, and the most joyous life, it should therefore be free of trial, care, sadness, pain, etc. Since Christians have pain, trials, etc., just like non-Christians, it is falsely concluded by some that there is no advantage to the Christian life. Some sins do produce immediate and specific consequences. However, most of the pain, suffering, etc., in our world is because of sin in general in imperfect humanity. Christians undergo their share of such sufferings and have never been promised immunity from them. Wherein, then, lies the joy and abundance of the Christian life?

The Christian life is one which is Christ-centered rather than self-centered. It is a life of giving as well as getting ("freely ye received, freely give," Mat. 10:8). It is a life of serving and not merely being served ("whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant," Mat. 20:26). It is a life with the security of boundaries and restraints, requiring self-discipline ("If ye abide in my Word, then are ye truly My disciples," John 8:31). It is a life of trust in one greater than oneself ("except ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins," John 8:24). It is a life of freedom from the guilt and practice of sin (the Lord "loosed us from our sins by His blood," Rev. 1:5). It is a life of hope beyond the grave ("I come again, and will receive you unto myself," John 14:3). No wonder that even after a life of suffering for the Savior, Paul could still write: "I rejoice in the Lord greatly" (Phi. 4:10). No wonder Jesus called the life He brought through the Gospel "abundant" (John 10:10)!

[**Note:** I wrote this article for, and it was published in The Edifier, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX, September 6, 1984, of which I was editor.]

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