

“...to Bring us Life”

Christmas 2021 - John 10:1-10

by Pastor Tim Dodson
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JOHN 10:1-10 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2 "But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 "And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. 5 "Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." 6 Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them. 7 Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 "All who *ever* came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9 "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 "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.

I would think...with even a passing historical knowledge of the person of Jesus Christ, that the extent of the method in which he lived, the breathe of all the events that transpired and even the nuances of his human interaction along the way, would cause a person to take pause and wonder. For the magnitude of His journey and all of His efforts and difficulties...was certainly, *from an earthly stand point*, the *long way around*. John 21:25 says that "...there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen."

Looking out at the world today...a world that on many levels seems to be so chaotic, one could easily just wonder why He did all of it. Christmas is the celebration of His birth...the celebration of His *coming*... and our text tells us the answer to our query...for according to His own words he came and did it all "*to bring us life.*" I find that very interesting, because from where I sit, it seems that the world today is still so madly attempting to find that *life!*

No one can argue that the world today is seemingly lost in a *strife and struggle* to find that apparent illusive brass ring called "life." Yet Jesus literally said that he came to bring it to us. To "*bring life.*" So what are we missing here? Strangely enough, the very birthday of the one who said He came to bring us that life, seems to have morphed into just another attempt of mankind to attain such to a full crescendo. Instead of "peace of earth" we get "the mother load of debt" as we coerced into buying all kinds of stuff that the TV says will make us happy and bring us fulfillment.

Indeed mankind clearly seems to be blindly flaying about in a desperate attempt to find some meaning and purpose, yes even for many who are in church on Sunday and claim the mantle of Christianity. Hobbies and earthly distractions, exchanging one spouse for another, recreational drugs, prescription "anti-feel" pills, hyper education, the drive for business success, the drive for money, possessions, sex...(we erroneously call it "love").

And yet few will argue that we are clearly still failing to reach the stated goal. We are living... we are *alive*, but the vast majority has still never known the fullness of said "life." It is always and forever *just out of reach...*

Verse one paints a fitting picture of the world in its attempts to “grab the prize.” A **thief** steals in secret and a **robber** plunders openly with violence. Both are trying to “enter the sheepfold” in some other manner than the door. Whether it be us personally or those who are the “pied pipers” of this world, according to the text, anyone who attempts to *grab hold of ...or better yet steal*, the safety of the “sheepfold” is an outlaw.

We can easily grasp the meaning laid out here before us: *Christ is the shepherd, the Father is the doorkeeper, and the sheepfold is the place of safety and rest...* perhaps we could go so far as to say it is that place of life.

Many had come to the Jewish people, professing to be their spiritual rulers and guides. Many have followed throughout the world and time since then. Self-appointed messiahs and secular roll-models for the nation. The world this Christmas is even yet still cranking out these “worldly models”...the liars who claim to bring us life and purpose. They appear in many forms...from Hollywood, to politics, to the uber-rich and inexplicably famous.

So where is this illusive “life” that the world thirsts for so mightily?

Re 22:17 *The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." Let each one who hears them say, "Come." Let the thirsty ones come—anyone who wants to. Let them come and drink the water of life without charge.*

The only pre-requisite there in that verse is that we “come.” “*Come and drink...*” In our text today, Jesus said *He* came to bring this life to us, and here we are given the second half of the equation: we are instructed to now “*come to Him.*”

Rev 21:6 *To all who are thirsty I will give the springs of the water of life without charge!*

Isa 55:1 *"Is anyone thirsty? Come and drink—even if you have no money! Come, take your choice of wine or milk—it's all free!"*

Joh 4:10 *Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who I am, you would ask me, and I would give you living water."*

Joh 7:37-38 *On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, "If you are thirsty, come to me! If you believe in me, come and drink! For the Scriptures declare that rivers of living water will flow out from within."*

Again we hear the echos of Rev 22:17 “*Let the thirsty ones come...*” Are **you** yet thirsty this morning? “Anyone who wants to...let them come. Let them come and drink the “water of life.” Notice that this water is given “without charge.”

But we still are missing an important link: *just what is it exactly we are looking for? What exactly is this “life” that we are seeking? Would we know it if we found it?* “**Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life...**” Jesus tells us that He is **the way** to life....His is **the truth** of life...and further, that He literally *IS* that life!...

JOHN 5:24 *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me **has everlasting life**, and shall not come into judgment, but **has passed from death into life.**"*

John 8:32 *And ye shall know the truth, and **the truth shall make you free.***

2John 1:1-2 *To...all those who have known the truth...because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever:*

John 14:6 *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

THE WAY...He is the **path** to that illusive “life.”

THE TRUTH...He is the answer to a world of lies and false Messiah’s. We must *believe* Him and His words.

THE LIFE... Mark 8:35 NLT “*If you try to keep your life for yourself, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will find true life.*”

What should we look for in this “life” so promised? What are the characteristics of such a life?

LUKE 6:47-49 “*I will show you what it’s like when someone comes to me, listens to my teaching, and then obeys me. It is like a person who builds a house on a strong foundation laid upon the underlying rock. When the floodwaters rise and break against the house, it stands firm because it is well built. But anyone who listens and doesn’t obey is like a person who builds a house without a foundation. When the floods sweep down against that house, it will crumble into a heap of ruins.*”

Certainly we all have witnessed those whose house was clearly *not* built on the Rock....the storms and floodwaters of life *did indeed* come and they were **washed away**.

How do we achieve such a rich and grounded life?

LUKE 10:25-28 *One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: "Teacher, what must I do to receive eternal life?" Jesus replied, "What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?" The man answered, "'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.' And, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" "Right!" Jesus told him. "Do this and you will live!"*

So let’s get this straight...Jesus came to earth as baby...a mere man...went through all the hassle of putting up with the apostles, not to mention all of mankind...taught us...lived for us...and died for us...and we are still stumbling about seeking the very thing that He did it all for? How can this be?

REASONS WHY:

1) We want *instant gratification*. So often we are unwilling to wait on God...His seasoning, His maturing, yes even His *breaking*, ...that we might come to know Him and the life that He has brought us. You see, “coming to Jesus” is not merely a trip to the altar with a prayer of salvation. “Coming to Jesus” is coming to Him, embracing all that He is, and following Him thereafter *wherever He goes*.

Heb 10:36 Patient endurance is what you need now, so you will continue to do God’s will. **Then** you will receive all that he has promised.

James 1:4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

2) Because we hear more of the world than from God, we naturally begin to *believe* the world. It's not that God is not talking, it's just that we listen *more* to the world than to the voice of God! The investment is not made, and thus the payout is not received!

2 Tim 2:4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

1 Jn 2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

3) We do not truly trust Him, His care, and His plans for us. We are afraid of letting go... We hear the words. The scriptures proclaim it, the preachers preach it. But we cannot seem to allow it all to sink into our souls. This because we exist in a world that has wholly lost the meaning of *real* love, we don't know love when it is staring us in the face. The truth is that we *just don't trust Him*. We either think we can get a better deal from the world, or have a fear that He will make us be something that we hate, or have to endure a life that will not be fulfilling. After all...that's what religion is all about right? Giving up all the good stuff to live like a monk in the mission fields of some third world country?

Luke 12:6-7 "Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

1 Pet 5:7 Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about what happens to you.

Mark 10:29 – 30 "Yes," Jesus replied, "and I assure you that everyone who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property, for my sake and for the Good News, will receive now in return a hundred times as many houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and property—along with persecution. And in the world to come that person will have eternal life.

For most of us, no matter how and how much God reaches out to us and proves Himself to us, we still do not *rest* in what He has given us, and where He has placed us. We want the grass on the "other side of the fence." Especially as long as it starts with the word "new," *we're there*. *New* wife, *new* job, *new* house, *new* car, *new* church, etc etc. We fail to grasp that God has our *whole* lives and futures on His agenda. He created us individually for a specific and individual path, blessings and destiny.

Isa 28:12 God has told his people, 'Here is a place of rest; let the weary rest here. This is a place of quiet rest'. But they would not listen.

Matt 11:29 Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle, and you will find rest for your souls.

Isa 56:11 And they are as greedy as dogs, never satisfied. They are stupid shepherds, all following their own path, all of them intent on personal gain.

Joh 6:33 The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

A) He came that *YOU* might have life, and *YOU* might have it more abundantly!

B) all of this Christmas season, is a celebration of that gift.

C) the greatest gift you and I will receive this year...in fact, the greatest gift we will *ever* receive in this life: *The gift of life abundant.*

HAG 1:5-11 This is what the LORD Almighty says: Consider how things are going for you!

6 You have planted much but harvested little. You have food to eat, but not enough to fill you up. You have wine to drink, but not enough to satisfy your thirst. You have clothing to wear, but not enough to keep you warm. Your wages disappear as though you were putting them in pockets filled with holes!

7 "This is what the LORD Almighty says: Consider how things are going for you!

8 Now go up into the hills, bring down timber, and rebuild my house. Then I will take pleasure in it and be honored, says the LORD.

9 You hoped for rich harvests, but they were poor. And when you brought your harvest home, I blew it away. Why? Because my house lies in ruins, says the LORD Almighty, while you are all busy building your own fine houses.

10 That is why the heavens have withheld the dew and the earth has withheld its crops.

11 I have called for a drought on your fields and hills—a drought to wither the grain and grapes and olives and all your other crops, a drought to starve both you and your cattle and to ruin everything you have worked so hard to get."

God gave the life of his only son, that you and I might have life. Scripture tells us that He gave us "all things that pertain to life and Godliness." Yet even in this season of celebration, how many of us today are holding "white knuckle tight" to more than just possession, comfort, and self-will. What about things like: 1) BITTERNESS, 2) ANGER, 3) SADNESS, 4) JEALOUSY

In that text we just read, we were told "*Now go up into the hills, bring down timber, and rebuild my house. Then I will take pleasure in it and be honored, says the LORD.*" But because of inner emotional cancers, many have never known what it is to have those great promises of God realized in their lives. Because God's house lies in ruins...*oh not the building, but the larger house of God... for scripture tells us that WE are God's house...individually and corporately.*

1Co 6:19 Or don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself,

1Co 3:16 Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you?

Jesus said "come" to Him...here we are told to "go" up to the hills, bring down the timber and rebuild. Such life will never be known without active participation on our part. 2000 years ago, God in flesh was born that we might have life. And here we are... still struggling to know that life. Striving for all the wrong things that the world says will fulfill us. For many of us today, 2022 must be a year of "rebuilding the temple." For we have lost our way somehow: *we ceased to listen to His direction...we ceased to obey...we have somewhere lost our*

faith...our passion. We have lost our joy! We have grown apathetic and lazy. We put down the shovel and trowel...we stopped building. We stopped growing in our lives, and our participation in the greater "temple" of the church. Somewhere along the way, we lost track of "life" as God wanted for us.

But on this Christmas day, please hear these words. Jesus is still offering that gift to you...life! Isaiah 9 tells us: "For all this His anger is not turned away, *But His hand is stretched out still.*"

His hand is stretched out still.