

**Text:** [John 10:1-10 \(CEB\)](#)

**Date:** April 26, 2026

**Title:** “Abundant Life”

**Theme:** What Jesus offers us is not a thimbleful of life, but a big, full, abundant life rooted in the love and grace of God.

## 1

It’s easy for us as humans to lose the thread of living  
To allow our day to day struggles to turn our days into something  
that feels less like life and more like a chore

As someone who has struggled with depression on and off  
throughout my life

I sometimes need touchstones to remind myself that my life  
consists of something more than how I feel today

This is one of them

Because it lifts me out of my own self-focus to see life in a larger  
perspective – what Jesus is offering me

In particular, the verse I want to focus on is John 10:10:

*The thief enters only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came so that  
they could have life—indeed, so that they could live life to  
the fullest.*

To the fullest. I love that.

A lot of translations use the words “in abundance” or “abundantly.”

That’s how I usually think about it:

I came so that they might have life, and have it *abundantly*.

In the Greek, the word here means “more than enough.”

“Plenty.”

“I came so that they might have a life that feels like *plenty*.”

I know I’m not alone in my love for this verse – I hear it quoted  
constantly

Yesterday, we were doing a visioning retreat with our church  
leaders

And I noticed that our facilitator referenced it there  
We return to it again and again because it is a simple and  
powerful reminder

## 2

The life Jesus offers us is not a *little* life  
Not little in terms of joy  
Or courage  
Certainly not little in terms of love

Not little in terms of our willingness to engage the world  
Even the world's deepest hurts

To be moved by every expression of beauty  
And every instance of suffering

A life lived with Jesus feels deeply  
And loves fully  
And lives with a sense of purpose  
Knowing that we are here for a reason

Do you forget that sometimes?  
Yeah, me too.

Throughout my ministry, I've preached John 10:10 over and over  
again  
And I'm inviting you to bookmark it and memorize it this morning –  
again, John 10:10 – because you know what?  
We all need a reminder sometimes

That Jesus didn't come to give us a *little* life  
But an abundance of life, life to the fullest

Life rooted in the expansive, inexhaustible love and grace of God  
Rather than our fear about the things we lack  
or the ways we don't measure up

We need this as a constant reminder – and here's why:

Because I know that this week, you're going to be at work and  
someone will be getting on your last nerve  
And you're going to say to yourself, "I don't know why I do this, I  
can't stand this"

Or you're going to be fighting with the gas company about the bill  
they sent last month  
And you're going to say to yourself, "I don't know why everything  
has to be so difficult"

This week, you're going to see something on the news or read  
something in the paper and it's going to break your heart  
And you're going to say to yourself, "I don't see how this gets  
better"

In those moments, you're experiencing what Jesus talks about as  
"the thief" who comes to steal and kill and destroy  
Jesus is talking here about the false teachers, the misleading  
voices that peddle false narratives about how the world  
works

We are misled by voices that tell us our only value is in what we  
can produce

How hard we work, how successful we become

Too often, we allow ourselves to believe them, to live out of those  
messages rather than Christ's message to us

Our relentless desire for efficiency and productivity leaves us  
precious little room for joy  
And plenty of space for fear and doubt and anxiety  
These thieves rob us of our peace of mind  
And even our love if we let them

Here Jesus calls us to listen to his voice, and not the voice of  
others  
To hear his call to a full and rich and abundant life

### 3

When I feel like I'm losing my ability to hear the shepherd's voice  
Because I see a social media post celebrating someone else's  
achievements, their accomplishments  
And I start to feel like I'm not measuring up

That's when I want to return to John 10:10  
And try to take to heart what Jesus is saying  
So that I remember that life is not just existing  
Jesus didn't die on the cross so that I could exist – but rather so I  
could live!

I know that's hard to see sometimes  
Because we have short memories for joy  
And long memories for hurt

Our brains are designed that way to keep us safe  
That's terrible, but it's true scientifically – it's called the "negativity  
bias"  
We are wired to focus on the negative  
What that means practically is that we forget that we weren't  
made for little lives

### 4

That's not to suggest that our pain  
Even the things that we're tempted to make light of as being  
    insignificant pains of everyday life – aren't real or important  
I'm not trying to make the argument that *fullness* of life is always  
    about *goodness* of life

Sometimes fullness of life is finding beauty while living in the  
    valley of the struggle  
And not only what we find on the mountaintop  
Because all our life can't be lived on the mountaintop

The promise of abundant life means that God is present, even in  
    the depths of our greatest suffering  
Even in the depth of the world's greatest suffering  
Whether that's the death of someone we love  
The loss of our health, our job  
The loss of a relationship  
Even when we face our own mortality

We find God when we give ourselves grace and the space to feel  
    that pain  
Without trying to dismiss it or deny it  
Or to just power through it with positive thinking

Sadness and grief is also part of the fullness of life  
I know it's not the kind of fullness we *want* to experience  
But it is real - the realest part of being human  
And part of what it means to be fully alive

And in the Church, we believe that God meets us there  
We believe that's why Jesus became human  
Was so that God could meet us in our pain  
To identify with us – all the way down to the depths

I know Jesus has met me in *my* moments of greatest hurt  
Otherwise I wouldn't have survived them – I know I wouldn't have

Now what do I mean by that – that God meets us there?  
I mean that when we hurt, we find comfort in God's presence  
A word of assurance we receive in response to our prayer  
An unexpected kindness from a friend who shows up with food  
Maybe a sermon or a devotional that makes perfect sense to us in  
a moment when everything else feels confusing

The fullness and abundance of life Jesus talked about means we  
don't have to deny or stifle any emotion – even painful ones  
Because to do that would be something less than fullness,  
wouldn't it?

Like a flower that's had some of its petals pulled off  
We'd be missing something

From the greatest joys to the greatest pains  
Jesus promises to meet us in all of it  
That's what it means to know the fullness of life

## 5

I want to close by reflecting on abundance  
What Jesus promised was not scarcity, but abundance  
A fullness to overflowing  
That's what the Greek here really means

And THAT is the difference between the voice of Jesus and the  
voices in the world around us  
Even the voices of doubt and fear inside our own heads

We spend so much of our time wrapped up in thoughts that keep  
telling us that we don't have enough  
And what's more, that WE aren't enough

We are so hyper-focused on what we perceive that we lack  
What we think we are missing – gifts or talents or money or  
relationships or courage

That we don't hear what the Shepherd's voice is telling us:  
"I didn't come to offer you a thimbleful of grace  
I didn't come to offer you a thimbleful of blessing  
Or power  
Or joy  
Or peace  
Or love  
I didn't die on the cross so that you could exist  
I was raised to life to give you fullness of life  
THAT'S the promise today"

And so the challenge this week  
When we feel like we are merely existing rather than living

Is to keep coming back to a place where we can hear the  
shepherd's voice  
Back to the scripture, back to his presence  
Back to a place where we can hear and receive that promise from  
Jesus again and again, as often as we need it  
Because it's the voice of the shepherd that matters  
Not the voices of the world around us

And what the shepherd offers is not a thimbleful of life  
But a big, full, abundant life

Amen.

**By Joe Monahan, Medford UMC, Medford NJ**