**Abundant Life**

We have all heard and probably can quote John 10:10 where Jesus said, “I have come to give life and life in abundance”, but have we actually wondered what that word “abundance” means in relation to life and how it works out in our lives?

Karlene and I have been attending some online lectures through Carey College by Professor John Barclay in England, talking about grace and economics, which prompted me to think about this abundance that Jesus declares.

In many passages in Scripture, particularly in Paul’s letters, we read of abundance available to those who follow Jesus.

2 Corinthians 9:8-11 8 *And God is able to provide you with every blessing (charis) in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. 9 As it is written, “He scatters abroad; he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.” 10 He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.*

Professor Barclay tells us that Paul assumed an abundance with plenty to pass on to others, whereas modern economics starts from the premise of scarcity. He asks the question: What is enough? And replies that it is human fulfilment, not in acquisition or accumulation but in enjoyment of what is given, and in sharing with others.

I realized just how radical that saying of Jesus actually is. It is counterculture. It runs against the ways of the world.

“I have come to give life and life in abundance.”

World economics operates on a scarcity model. To get a higher price, you restrict the supply and make the item scarce, which increases your profit. That is what monopolies do. That is why we see farmers in the US dumping tons and tons of tomatoes, because there was a glut in the market and they could not get the price they wanted so instead of giving them away they dumped them. I get more because you get less. The rich get richer, and the poor get poorer.

You may have heard in the news about the rare earth minerals needed for our technologically advanced lifestyle. They are rare because they are not normally found in deposits large or concentrated enough for mining except in a few places. This is the reason they are called "rare" earths.

Rare earth minerals are the basis of the ongoing war in DRC – foreigners wanting the mineral riches for themselves, to gain a monopoly. When you have all of something, you can dictate the availability to others, to restrict and make the availability scarce and therefore make more money.

But Christianity operates on an abundance model. I will give you life and life in abundance.

The scarcity mindset focuses on limitations and fear of not having enough, while the abundance mindset embraces possibilities and the belief that there is plenty for everyone. The scarcity model is characterized by the belief that resources (such as time, money, and opportunities) are limited. This perspective often leads to feelings of anxiety, competition, and a sense of lack.

An abundance mindset, on the other hand, is the belief that there are ample resources and opportunities available for everyone. It encourages a positive outlook and a focus on growth and collaboration.

Jesus said he comes to give life and life in abundance.

The abundant life is the life which knows personal blessing and victory over sin, and which in turn brings blessing to others.[[1]](#footnote-1)

God says I will give you more than you could ever hope for or dream of. I will not withhold my hand of blessing,

John 10:10 tells us that Jesus always provides an overflowing measure, a surplus.

In essence, he was saying to them: “You are going to get life, lots of life, life overflowing in buckets. Life force rising over the banks of your personhood.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

Let us start with three home truths:

God’s plan and purpose is that the abundant life should be the NORMAL life of His people. Many think that the life of spiritual abundance is the abnormal experience of Christians, but it is not meant to be, for anything less than abundance is the abnormal. God’s desire and provision for every believer is fullness of life.

This abundant life is for EVERY believer. We sometimes think that the abundant life is only meant for a few special people of God. But that is not the case. If you are a Christian, God’s desire and plan for you is fullness of life.

This abundant life is to be enjoyed NOW. When we die, we shall enter into a fuller life altogether, but the abundant life of which we are thinking is to be enjoyed while we are on earth.

God wants every believer to experience what Jesus called the abundant life (John 10:10).

The Bible everywhere teaches the possibility of believers living “the abundant life” here and now. Every provision has been made by God that His children might live “the abundant life.” [[3]](#footnote-3)

2 Peter 1:3: *His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.*

Do not read into this that he expects everyone to be rich in material possessions; that is not what abundance is limited to. I am not preaching the prosperity doctrine. That doctrine teaches that financial success and physical well-being are God's will for believers, emphasizing that faith and positive actions can lead to material wealth. That is a false doctrine.

God’s divine intention is that we have abundant life by experiencing the closeness of the Holy Spirit in our cells, synapses, thoughts, dreams, attitudes, and emotions—in our entire being.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Yes, God may abundantly provide what we need materially.

Our community garden this year has out produced any of my previous gardening endeavours, so much so that we have been able to bless families across Invercargill with spinach and pumpkin and carrots and onions and lingalinga.

But more importantly he will give us abundant life spiritually.

Jesus said in John 7:37-39 “*Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.”*

*And John 4:13 “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.”*

*John 6:35 Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.*

We are talking about an abundance, despite what our bank account may look like, or whether our pantries look like Mother Hubbard’s, or whether or not we can afford an overseas holiday or that new car.

In John 1:16 we read of an abundance of grace - *From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.*

In 2 Cor 8:2 we read of an abundance of joy - *during a severe ordeal of affliction, the churches of Macedonia’s abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.*

In Jeremiah 33:6 we read of an abundance of peace - *I am going to bring recovery and healing; I will heal them and reveal to them abundance of prosperity and security.*

And so too in Ezekiel 34:25*I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild animals from the land, so that they may live in the wild and sleep in the woods securely. 26 I will make them and the region around my hill a blessing; and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. 27 The trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase. They shall be secure on their soil; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I break the bars of their yoke, and save them from the hands of those who enslaved them.*

We know the stories of the feeding of the 5000 and the 4000. There was not just enough to go around but an abundance, more than enough. They ate their fill and yet there were bushels of leftovers. God is not the God of just enough but the God of abundance.

The abundant life is the life of the Lord Jesus Himself, imparted to us and lived in and through us by the Holy Spirit.

God’s salvation is not merely the forgiveness of sins but is about the restoration of life in the person through the Holy Spirit of Christ.

We are restored from just existing to being alive – to being alive in Christ, through the Holy Spirit.

Jesus comes not merely to preserve but impart LIFE and communicate it in rich and unfailing exuberance. [[5]](#footnote-5)

Some people stop merely with the possession of life; but this is not the whole plan of God, and it is His will that every hour of every day the waves of the life of our blessed Christ should roll in upon us. (J. Wilbur Chapman in The Surrendered Life)[[6]](#footnote-6)

The measure in which I can know and experience His abundant life depends upon, and is in exact proportion to, the measure in which I am surrendered to Him, says the writer Wilbur Chapman.

God wants every believer to experience what Jesus called the abundant life (John 10:10). Therefore, the Holy Spirit leads Christians into a deeper and deeper knowledge of him.[[7]](#footnote-7)

In our Christian walk we need to strive for that genuine relationship with the Holy Spirit, and all else will fall into place.

Just as rejecting a word from God inevitably leads to death, accepting and obeying God's Word brings abundant life. As the people of Israel prepared to enter the promised land, Moses gathered them together and reminded them of all God had promised: “*See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death, and destruction. For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess”* (Deut. 30:15–16 NIV).[[8]](#footnote-8)

Abundant life is not a synonym for an easy life. A life directed by Christ’s Spirit is a life that runs counter to the grain of society and our sin nature. This path is difficult – we will face opposition - but it is a life full of hope. As he did with the first believers, God empowers us with his Spirit.[[9]](#footnote-9)

There is a wonderful organization called “I am Second” and it is Youtube testimonies from Christians who through the power of Jesus Christ have overcome adversity and live abundant lives. They are actors, sports stars, TV personalities and everyday people whose lives have been transformed by a relationship with Jesus.

I want us to watch one now, by an Australian Nick Vujicich

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WE-ifT0de8>

Prayer:

Gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and rich in mercy. As I enter this new week, may I go filled to overflowing with the love of the Father, may I lay my life down in the sacrificial love of the Son, and may I be spurred on in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rt9EYvS6VP4> Deitrich Haddon Gospel Singer Abundant Life

1. T. S. Rendall Living the Abundant Life: Expository Studies in the Life and Ministry of Elisha the Prophet)

   - Highlight Loc. 174-76 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Larry Shallenberger Divine Intention: How God's Work in the Early Church Empowers Us Today)- Highlight on Page 5 | Loc. 248-52 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Rendall - Highlight Loc. 178-82 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Shallenberger - Highlight on Page 6 | Loc. 270-71 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible (Vol. 2, p. 147) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Rendall - Highlight Loc. 262-65 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby Hearing God's Voice - Highlight on Page 68 | Loc. 1280-81 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Blackaby and Blackaby- Highlight on Page 94 | Loc. 1759-64 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Shallenberger - Highlight Loc. 2397-2403 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)