

sins forgiven, living in the power of the Holy Spirit, and enjoying all of the good things that God provides.

The thrill of living the Christian life, with all its privileges and joys, is available to everyone who accepts Jesus as Lord of their lives and who is in right standing with God through the forgiveness of sin. As Christians, we should have an experience of victory over sin and an attitude that is positive toward life in general. In the Bible the Apostle Paul says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). You can see that Paul had a positive attitude toward the life that Jesus came to give all of us.

The meaning of the "abundant life" is that Jesus supplies us with *more than enough* for our lives. In II Peter 1:3, Peter tells us that Jesus has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowing Him. Jesus Himself says in John 7:38 that whoever believes in Him, rivers of living water will flow out of his innermost being. The abundant life produces a life of much excitement and activity. Some action words the Bible gives for Christians are: stir up, follow, hold fast, flee, be strong, fight, endure, continue, press, walk, etc.

We can see that this abundant life is not just a life of receiving. It is a life of giving and serving. It is a life of overflowing love to others in response to what Jesus has done and is doing for us. Here is a song that children sing:

"Running over, running over,
My cup is full and running over.
Since the Lord saved me, I'm as happy as can be,
My cup is full and running over."

As Christians, we may see others that do not seem to be as happy as we are. Does this mean that Jesus does not give them the abundant life? No! They may not understand all that Jesus offers them. It is possible that some weak Christians do not accept all of the promises that Jesus offers.

What should be our attitudes toward those who are passive and not overflowing in their Christian lives? Should we just pity them and wish they were like us? No, we should be willing to make sure that they know Jesus wants them to have the abundant life. The inactive Christian is a weak Christian. For that reason they need our help to grow, because they will soon die spiritually if they do not start to grow. As in many things, "the only evidence of life is growth."

Can we truly know the strength of a Christian by their activity? No, just because a person is active in church work and witnessing is no proof that he is born again. But a spiritual person will be active. Inactive Christians are often the ones who are the complainers in the church. A person who has a spirit of thanksgiving for what Jesus has done for them will not be a negative Christian, but an active Christian.

With this abundant life, Jesus has promised us many things. In Philippians 4:19 we are promised that all of our needs are supplied. We are promised abundant (more than enough) mercy and grace from God. *Mercy* is God not giving us the punishment we deserve; *grace* is God giving us good things that we do not deserve. Because of Jesus God gives us both abundantly.

In Ephesians 3:20, Paul says that God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, because of His power in us." God wants us to be satisfied and happy (I Timothy 6:6).

We can have this abundant life because of what Jesus did for us: dying for our sins and forgiving our sins. We know that Jesus is able to give us the abundant life He promised. To give us the abundant life here and hereafter was Jesus' only purpose in coming to the earth. Jesus even gave Himself to us abundantly. We draw our spiritual and physical blessings directly from Him.

The tenth chapter of John is known as the Good Shepherd Chapter. In the first part of the chapter, Jesus talks about how false teachers lead

people astray. The false teachers are shown as false shepherds who frighten and scatter the sheep. They are pictured as thieves and robbers who want to kill and destroy the sheep.

Jesus tells us that He came to give spiritual life and that He is the Good Shepherd. We all know that a good shepherd will provide what His sheep need. The Good Shepherd provides a fold, a pasture, living water, and the perfect shepherd's care.

In Psalm 23 we see that David accepted Jesus as his Shepherd. He mentioned the abundant life that his Good Shepherd gave him. He said, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want (lack nothing). Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Psalm 23:1, 6). Mankind's greatest blessing is that which will satisfy his greatest needs. Jesus has promised to supply our needs.

As Christians, we should be excited and joyful in response to what Jesus is giving us. God's love and power should flow through us to the people around us. Jesus brought the delights of an abundant life within everyone's reach. This should make us the happiest of all people. We can know that our past sins are gone (washed away with Jesus' blood) and that Jesus is our Lord; that God is our Father and that we can live above the power of sin. We can know that we are in right standing with God, and that we will go to heaven when we die or when Jesus comes for His people.

Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). The enjoyment of this abundant life is too great to be fully enjoyed in time. Because the abundant life is so great, it must be experienced and enjoyed *forever*.

Experiencing the abundant life reveals the power and the work of the Holy Spirit in one's life. The temptations of the devil will try to draw our minds from living in the promise of the abundant life.