

Life Beyond the Comma

by Charles Anderson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living an abundant life, marked by peace, purpose, and abundance, which is available to all who put their trust in Jesus Christ.

Duration: 45:19

Scripture: John 10:7

Topics: "Death"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the fear-filled culture we live in today. He highlights the various sources of fear, including personal struggles, loneliness, and the general sense of hopelessness and insecurity. The speaker also mentions President Carter's speech at the UN Assembly, where he acknowledges the failure to achieve lasting peace. The sermon emphasizes the importance of using our voices to talk about the Lord and make our lives count, just like an elderly man who decides to share his faith by distributing tracks. Ultimately, the sermon encourages listeners to live a life that aligns with God's plan and to find fulfillment in hearing Jesus say, 'It's just like the plan.'

Transcript

I'm not absolutely sure myself what that means. I have discovered that since I am supposed to have retired, I have more honorary non-paying titles than I ever had in my whole life. What was that word again? I may know how to say it, but I don't know what it's all about.

Kind of reminds me of that story they tell about a little country church that had a fellow in the congregation who was always against everything. Didn't make any difference what it was. Came to a vote, he was on the negative side all the time.

And so there came a moment, they had some old-fashioned lamps around the church, and somebody offered to give the church a brand new chandelier. And when they came to voting to accept it, this fellow rose to his feet and said, I'm opposed to it. I'm against it.

And I'm against it for three reasons. First place, we can't afford it. And the second place, we ain't got no place to put it.

And in the third place, there ain't nobody around here knows how to play it. He said, what this church needs is a new light. I'd like to ask you to turn to a very familiar passage of scriptures tonight, and I want to

zero in on just one verse in that passage, but let me read a few verses from the tenth chapter of the gospel according to John.

Our Lord's wonderful words, commencing with the seventh verse of John 10. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.

I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture. The thief cometh not but for to steal, to kill, and to destroy. I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. Much more that he says, of course, in this great chapter, but we'll stop in our reading for the moment there. I say I'd like to zero in on half a verse, if I may, the latter half of verse 10, where the Savior says, I am come that they might have life, and there is, or should be, a comma at that point, and that they might have it more abundantly.

I'd really like to speak about life beyond the comma tonight. Our Lord is here saying that he is offering some kind of a life that he calls abundant. Now, I must confess to you that as I travel about our country, I find very many Christians who don't know what it is to have the abundant life that our Lord here promises to us.

They know what it is to have life indeed. They've gone through the experience of putting confidence and trust in the finished work of the Lord Jesus, but something seems to have happened beyond that point somewhere, and instead of living a rich and an abundant life of triumph and victory and joy, something has stagnated en route, and they're living an ordinary kind of a life. I don't think that our Lord intends that we should be living an ordinary kind of life.

We're extraordinary people. We're different from all the peoples on this globe. We who are the redeemed of God are different than anybody else.

Let's don't ever forget that fact. Some of us are different because we're a little cranky and a little cantankerous, I must admit, but I mean we're different because of our relationship to God. Now, the Lord here is saying, I am come that they might have life.

That's life before the comma, if you please. With that, I suppose most of us are familiar. Maybe somebody is in this audience.

It's always possible that there could be someone present who has never yet experienced that kind of life that he came to bring to lost men, and he indicates, of course, what it cost him in order to give us the life that he said he came to bring. Except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone, but if it die, it brings forth much fruit. And so, his death is indicated.

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. Anyone who is born again, who has experienced life before the comma, has a special kind of life.

I may have to repeat myself in our study in the morning, but it's a scientific fact that all life comes from preexisting life, from a seed of preexisting life. This is true in every realm of existence that we know anything at all about. For instance, plant life.

All plant life is found in the seed of life, and we are aware of that fact. You get the right seed, you get the right fruit. I remember once getting the brilliant idea that I was going to have a garden.

I didn't realize that you've got to dig up the ground first, and that was a tough job, and it was hard ground. Then you have to fertilize it, and then you have to weed it, and then you have to sit there and watch it and water it and all the rest of it. I came to the conclusion it was much cheaper to buy the stuff in a can than to go through all that rigmarole for a little bit of string beans or whatever.

Well, you know, since I was such a greenhorn, the only way I could tell people what I had planted was I saved the packages from which the seeds came and stuck them on sticks at the end of the row, and I would say proudly, there are my radishes there. All went well until we had a summer storm and blew the whole works away, and then I was confused. I didn't know whether I was growing radishes, carrots, lettuce, or what.

I had to wait until the stuff got a little up there where you could kind of identify it. But you know that vegetable life is all contained in the seed of life, and that's how it is propagated. This is true of animal life as well.

All life comes from a pre-existing seed of life. It's true in the human realm as well, and it is also true in the divine realm. God has planted in this word of his.

I don't know how it can be. There's a marvelous mystery about it. Somehow, this book, I can have another book that is printed with all the materials that were used to print this Bible, and with maybe some of the leather binding left over, I can bind another book.

Maybe some of the pages of the paper, there are some superfluous paper, and so it becomes the pages of another book. And then also some of the ink, the very ink that's used to imprint these pages, may imprint words on the pages of another book. And the glue that's used to hold it together, and the thread that binds it, all of it.

And this is a book on any kind of subject you can mention. But let me tell you, there's a vast difference between that book and this book, because God has been pleased to deposit in the words of this book this mysterious thing called eternal life. It's here.

It's in the words of this book. When you were a high school student in your high school biology classes, you perhaps recall how you were asked to dissect a seed like a lima bean, for instance. Cut it all apart.

Dissect it. Get it apart. And identify each one.

Up to that point, I was doing well until they said, draw a picture of what you see. When I got finished, it looked like elephant ears. My artistry was nothing like my skill at cutting the thing open.

But you know you can cut a lima bean open. You can identify every single part that you can observe by microscope or just plain sight. And yet there is one thing you cannot discern.

No microscope can reveal it. There is planted in that lima bean lima bean life. It's there.

And put it in its proper environment, in the soil of the earth, and it will come forth. The same kind of life that is in that seed will reproduce itself. It's so in this book.

That's why it's the most exciting adventure of Christian service and witnessing is to take the seeds out of the package of this seed packet of God and cast them abroad into the soil of men's hearts and then watch the miracle of the Holy Spirit quickening those words into eternal life. There isn't anything that can match it for excitement and thrill. Now, the life that we receive from Christ is a special kind of life.

It's hard to identify it. It is called eternal life in the scriptures. But our problem is that we identify that word eternal purely with an extension of time.

We are the possessors of eternal life, which means, indeed, that we shall live on forever and ever and ever endlessly. But there is another quality. What else is there? Eternal life is the kind of life that is in God Almighty, and that life has been transferred to you and to me when we put our trust in the living Christ and in the promises of God concerning him so that we have within us a special kind of life.

God's very own life is in us. This is the basis for our victory, as well as every other blessing that comes to us through Jesus Christ. Now, I'm more concerned, however, about the quality of life that our Lord Jesus talks about here.

I am come not only that men might have life because they don't have it. They are born dead in their trespasses and sins. They need a quickening.

They are dead to everything that is in God. But I am come that they might have life, eternal life, God's very own life, and that they might have it more abundantly. Now, he's talking about a quality of life that we can enjoy as Christians.

When I first became a Christian, I remember I was raised in an unsaved, ungodly family. I never remember reading the Bible as a growing boy. I never heard it read in my home.

I heard instead other kinds of language and talk. And when I got converted, I was living out in the world, doing all the things that I could do at my teenage period in life, and traveling with a crowd that was godless and all the rest of it. And when I got converted, it was a revolutionary experience.

A revolution took place in my life. I was made a new creature in Christ Jesus overnight, immediately. Now, I had a lot of stuff hanging on.

I smoked, I drank. I drank good beer because I know I made it. My father and I made it, so we know it's pretty good stuff.

And I did all the things that we called worldly things in those days. And you know, I thought, my, now I've become a Christian. Boy, that's the end of joy.

I'm finished. No more fun, no more joy, no more gladness. I wonder if it's worth it.

And then I soon discovered, very shortly afterward, that all those things that I thought were so valuable and so fulfilling were empty things, and they disappeared as quickly as it was possible to shed them. And I found a whole new life that was rich and full and wonderful in Christ Jesus. And that's exactly what we have in him.

Now, I want to know what the dimensions of such a life are. I probably could mention a half-dozen or more characteristics of this abundant life, but let me select only three that seem to me to be indispensable. Without these three characteristics, we can't really say that we're living an abundant life.

First of all, I would say that the abundant life that Christ is here promising must be a life of peace. Romans 5, 1 says, We have peace with God, therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The very first characteristic of the new and abundant life in Christ is peace of mind.

Peace of mind. There was a Jewish rabbi some years ago who wrote a book that overnight became a bestseller. Almost as before the ink was dried, it was at the top of the list.

His name was Joshua Liebman, and I think the thing that sold his book was merely the title. The title was exactly this, Peace of Mind. Like a lot of other people, I went out and bought the book.

And while I majored in psychology in college, I confess to you that I lost all interest in Joshua Liebman's book at about the second or third chapter. Then I skimmed through the rest of it and said, I've wasted my money. He was trying to talk about how to have peace of mind purely from a psychological point of view.

Why did the book become a bestseller overnight? Because there were so many people who did not have peace of mind, who hoped that this book would give them the secret of how to have it. Over against that book, I could recommend another that God has used. Billy Graham's book, Peace with God, which has sold, as you know, multiple hundreds of thousands and has been used of God to lead people to true peace of mind.

This abundant life that we have is marked by peace of mind. There's nothing quite like that. Jeremiah the prophet, a long time ago, said, Is there no healing for us? We look for peace, and there is no good.

And for the time of healing, and behold, trouble. Ours is an age of restlessness and fear. Few people today experience real peace of mind and heart.

You know, it's possible to assess the turmoil of a nation's soul by the labels on its drugs and the titles of its books. They betray exactly what's in the soul and mind of a culture or a society. This is an age of fear.

The psychologists tell us that the dominant emotion of our world is not anger or hate or jealousy or, on the other hand, sympathy or love. Although all these emotions are widespread, they say it's fear. They tell us that we're born with two basic fears in life.

A baby is afraid of just two things when he's born. He's afraid of a loud noise. That's why he kind of quiets things down with a newborn baby, and he's afraid of falling.

That's why one wonders what some foolish parents are doing by tossing their little kids up in the air like a basketball and catching them. They're fighting against the basic fear with which everybody is born. Now, to that, we've learned how to add a whole lot more fears.

You want to hear some of them? You can maybe say, oh, I didn't know that that was what was wrong with me, but this is it. And we call them now by a fancier name. We don't say fears.

We say, I have a phobia. That's like saying I have an allergy. But I have a phobia as if it's something nice to have.

Some people have mysophobia. That's fear of dirt. Others have hydrophobia.

That's fear of water. Then there are some who are afflicted with taxophobia. That's the fear of being buried.

Then there are some who are afflicted by hematophobia. That's the fear of blood. Or claustrophobia.

That's the fear of being in a confined place. Some people endure an elevator. They don't enjoy it, but get out of it as fast as they can.

Others are afflicted with algophobia. That's the fear of pain. Or nyctophobia, the fear of darkness.

Or aquaphobia, the fear of high places. Or xenophobia, fear of strangers. Or necrophobia, the fear of the dead.

Or triskidecophobia, the fear of the number 13. Or photophobia, the fear of light, to which I've added one that I like. Workophobia, the fear of work.

I don't mind boasting in that one. But there are some people who seem to fear work. Well, this is true of our age.

People are afflicted by fears of all kinds. Several years ago, a Presbyterian minister in Chicago sent out a questionnaire to over 4,000 people in all walks of life. And in each questionnaire, he just raised one question.

What is the outstanding question you face in all your thinking and your living? It wasn't a complicated affair. It was just a simple answer. Twenty-two percent said it was within their family.

Forty-eight percent said it was personal living, the seeming loneliness, general failure, and the futility of it all. That's our generation. Hopeless and helpless, without security, afraid of a million things.

Some of those fears are baseless, and some are indeed based upon all sorts of things that justify a fear. We're living in a fear-filled culture. President Carter, before he left the White House, spoke at the U.N. Assembly, and I quote him, I think it was on an anniversary of that institution's founding.

He said, Thirty-three years ago, in the cold dawn of the atomic age, this organization came into being. Its first and foremost purpose has been to secure peace for an exhausted and ravaged world. Yet, the assurance of peace still eludes us.

Before the end of this century, a score of nations could possess nuclear weapons. If this should happen, the world we leave our children will mock our hopes for peace. Never were truer words spoken by anyone.

And that fear penetrates all of our society. And when you talk about peace of mind, there are millions of people tonight in America who will pillow their heads upon hard pillows and will toss half the night because they don't have peace of mind. They're trouble, they're trouble.

Maybe the only comforting thing is that sin has a narcotizing effect. It acts like a narcotic, and it kind of dulls the senses of the unconverted so they don't feel the sharp pain of an empty, lonely life. I think it's because our generation has lost any reason for existence that there's a pathetic search for identity.

Young people are asking, Who am I? Why am I? They're asking, Why am I alive? Whither I? Where am I going? What's it all about? And maybe the theme song is, Stop the world, I want to get off. Well, the first result of a plus life, the abundant life, is peace of mind. But it also must be a life marked with peace of heart.

And this is in spite of the fears that beset us. Hear the psalmist. In the 56th Psalm, he says, What time I'm afraid, I will trust in thee.

In God I have put my trust. I will not fear what flesh can do unto me. In God I have put my trust.

I will not be afraid what man can do unto me. That's the peace of mind that comes, and the peace of heart when you're enjoying the full, abundant life that the Lord Jesus says is your right. He purchased it for you and for me.

I guess I would add that this peace has to extend also to our conscience. It was the poet who wrote long time ago, Trust me, no tortures which the poet feigns can match the fierce, the unutterable pain he feels who night and day, devoid of rest, carries his own accuser in his breast. And a clear conscience is like a coat of mail.

It's wonderful to have it. Well, I am come that they might have it more abundantly. What do you mean, Lord, by this abundant life? I bring a life of peace, peace of mind, peace of heart, peace of conscience.

And in a troubled world like ours, it's wonderful to move through it knowing that all is well, that you have peace between yourself and God. But you see, this life, I think, must have another dimension. I call it a life of purpose.

You know, when you lose purpose in life, you begin to lose any real desire to stay alive. Healthy people get sick because they don't have a purpose anymore for living. They give up.

You've got to have a purpose. And the Christian life, this abundant life, is a life of purpose. It's a life that's lived under the constant control of the will of God.

God controls our lives constantly. Without God's will, we're nothing. You can take a motor car.

You know, a motor car is made to run on gasoline. And so, human beings were made to run by the will of God. You can take a beautiful automobile and put alcohol or witch hazel in the tank, and no matter how shiny the exterior or elegant the upholstery, that thing just won't function.

It's not made for that. No man, no woman can ever find fulfillment in life who doesn't gear his life to the plan and the purpose of God for it. And you can make your life count, you know, for God.

I don't know whether I'm... I hope you won't take me wrong, but before I'm finished, I want to speak on one of these evenings, maybe Friday night. That might be a safe night because I'll disappear during the night. I'll be gone in the morning.

But I want to speak on life begins at 80. Do you think that might match some of us? Oh, it does. It can begin at 80.

The most exciting experiences of your life can still be ahead of you, no matter what your birthday. But I can think of a life that is so filled with purpose. Some years ago, I took a singer with me down to South Africa, and we went through all of South Africa, mainly back in the bush, ministering to missionaries and to national groups of believers.

He would sing. It was the most interesting experience because they were out in the bush. They don't have any instruments, you know.

So we had a little tape recorder run by batteries, and this friend of mine, he recorded before he went organ background for all kinds of hymns. And then he would sing without a compliment. And when we got way back in the bush, it was fascinating to watch the reaction of natives.

First of all, they'd never heard music come out of a box like that. We were in areas where they didn't even have radios. And that was a miracle to hear music coming out of a box.

But I noticed that all the little African kids and the teenagers, when my friend began to sing, they began to titter, and you know the Africans have to hide their teeth when they smile. And when they laugh, they put their hands up like this, and you know they're enjoying themselves. And they would be hiding behind their hands.

And I wondered why it happened every single time until I noticed that my friend had a very prominent Adam's apple. And whenever he sang, that apple would, you know. And those Africans thought that was the funniest thing they'd ever seen and heard in their whole lifetime.

Well, one day we were invited to speak at a little Bible school in the suburbs of Johannesburg. It was for blacks only. And in the audience that day was a young man.

I never dreamed that he would have such a prominent place in my life as well. It was a young man who'd had a very interesting experience. He was reared in a fairly well-educated home.

His father was a school superintendent. And this boy was very clever as an athlete. He was an excellent soccer player.

You have to know that South African kids are born with soccer balls in their mouths, you know. They all play soccer. Every one of them do.

And they're clever at it. They can do things with their feet nobody else can do. And he was exceptionally gifted.

So, he wanted to be an athlete. His father wanted him to be a school teacher. They are.

And so, anyway, when he was just a boy, maybe 10, 11, 12 years old, he went into a bank and because he forgot to say thank you or sir or something, the teller lost his temper and called for a policeman. And right there in the presence of other whites, that policeman beat that boy mercilessly. Just because of this little slip.

Well, that generated in him a growing hatred for things white. And so, when he got to be about 17 or 18, I guess, on Christmas Eve he was riding along the road on his bicycle and a white man was driving his car behind him. And he struck him and ran over the bicycle and over him.

And then sped off. And in the process, this boy's leg was jammed into all that mesh, broken wires of a wheel and an artery was pierced. And he lay there bleeding, really bleeding to death.

And because he was black, a nearby hospital refused to take him in. And so, they rushed him off to another one nearby and it too refused to accept him. And by the time he got to a place where they would accept him, it was too late.

And he told me, he said, Dr. Anderson, and he said this rather sarcastically, he said, the grimmest Christmas present I ever received in my life was to be told on Christmas Eve that to save my life I had to amputate my leg just below the hip. And so, when Christmas morning dawned, I felt and my leg was gone. That ended forever his days and dreams of being an athlete.

And he became exceptionally bitter toward God, towards everything. But he had a friend who was a believer, who was connected with a youth ministry called Youth Alive in Johannesburg. And this friend consistently and faithfully witnessed to this boy.

His name was Caesar. And he brought him finally to Youth Alive, one of the rallies. And after several weeks of coming, he came under conviction of his need of the Savior and he was saved.

And his whole life was changed then. And so, he was in this little Bible school as a student, studying. And when we arrived there, we were told that a black quartet was coming to the United States.

And they had appointments and assignments all the way across the country to Denver, Colorado. And they were going to raise some money to help support Youth Alive's ministry. And on the eve of their departure, one of the boys in the quartet got pneumonia and died.

And so, there was a blank space and they reached for Caesar. Now, I don't know whether Caesar can carry a tomb in a bucket, but the point is he had to go. They pushed him in.

So, he came to the United States, and he gave his testimony of what the Lord had done in his life all over the country. And finally, he came to our church in northern New Jersey on a Wednesday evening. They were to fly out the next night to Africa.

And when Caesar gave his testimony for God, a man in our church became very, very touched. And he went up to Caesar afterward and he said, Caesar, you ought to be right here in America and get training so that you can go back and minister more effectively to your people. And I'll tell you what I'll do.

If you'll sign up at Northeastern Bible College, I will pay all your expenses, whatever they may be, your tuition, your room and board, and your transportation for four years. You can count on me for that if you'll come. Well, that man kept his word.

And I'll tell you, he made one of the greatest investments he ever made in his life, in a life like that. Caesar came to our school, and you know, he was one of the brightest students in the school. I asked him one day in class, how many languages do you speak? And he said, now just a minute, I have to count them.

So, he started counting, and he stopped at eight, eight languages. Now, he spoke English beautifully, true, with a little tint of South African accent. But his English was superb.

His vocabulary was beautiful, and still is. He made some of our students look rather silly and sick. You understand, don't you, how kids today talk? The average kid.

What's your name? My name, you know, is Jimmy, you know. Anderson, you know. I live, you know, in Florida, you know.

And I, you know, I've been in school, you know, for a couple of years, you know. And you know, that reveals the depth of brain power that most of our kids have who use that. Also, it is a brilliant commentary on the marvelous vocabulary American youth possess.

You know, you know, you know, you know. Well, anyway, Caesar graduated from our school. He went to Wheaton College to the graduate school, got his degree.

And while he was there, a telegram came from South Africa saying, Caesar, we need somebody to head up Youth Alive. Will you come back and do it? And yet, friends, for the last several years, he's been back in Soweto, one of the hottest political spots in all of South Africa, there heading up that work from which he came and where he was first saved. And I think that Caesar Malabatsi is perhaps one of the best-trained, sharpest-minded South African black men in all the world.

He is being called upon to speak all over the world now. He has his head screwed on tight. He understands the situation as far as the church is concerned.

But, you know, some folks might have said that the day he was hit by that car and the day that he lost his leg, what purpose was there in life for him from that point on? Everything was shattered. His dreams were broken. No, here was a man who was convinced that his life was going to count for God.

You can make your life count for God. Oh, no, you're saying, I'm too old for that now, too late for me. Oh, no, don't give me that stuff.

If you can still gossip like you can, some of you talk the head off a nest, you know what I mean? You got nothing wrong with your tongue, I'll tell you that. Your legs may be giving out, but, man, your mouth keeps rolling. And if you can use your mouth to talk about weather and sports and the country and all the rest of it, you can talk about the Lord.

I heard about a fellow who was past 75, I think he was, and he decided he was going to make his life count. He said, I've wasted most of my life. And he was a widower then, so you know what he did one morning? He got all dressed up like he was going to church.

He put on his best suit and tie and a hat, and he filled his pocket with trash. And he started down the street. He knocked on the door, and a lady came and he bowed to her and took these hats and he said, Excuse me, madam, I'm just asking a simple question.

Does Jesus Christ live here? He said, The lady nearly fainted. She never had anybody ask that question. And she gasped.

He knew, of course, that he had bumped into an unconverted person. So he said, Oh, I'm sorry. But I'd like to give you a little piece of paper.

Would you read this when you have some time? And he gave it back and said, Thank you very much. He didn't preach any sermons. He didn't give her any deep theology.

He went to the next house. Same thing. Madam, excuse me.

Does Jesus Christ live here? And down the block he went, house after house. He came to one place when he knocked on the door and asked that question, the lady said, Yes, he does. Oh, he said, that's wonderful.

You're the first person I've met on this block where Jesus lives in your house. Isn't that wonderful? Will you pray for me? I'm asking people. That man has covered the whole city where he lives, block by block by block, on his own.

You don't have to be a great preacher. You don't have to do anything tremendously great. Just make your life count for God, and you can do it, because this abundant life is a life of purpose.

It really is. Einstein, everybody knows Einstein's theory of relativity, but very few people know that Einstein also had a philosophical theory. He said, Perfection of means and aimlessness of goals marks our age.

How very true. Perfection of means, but aimlessness of goals marks this age. And that aimlessness, that purposelessness, has seeped into the church, and even among Christian people, and we seem to be content with an apathetic kind of an experience.

Friend, if you're going out, go out in a blaze of glory. Don't peter out. Run out.

See? Because this abundant life is a life of purpose. On the bulletin board of an Ivy League college, and I thought, my, how this would apply to Boca Raton, Florida, where we live. Everybody calls Boca Raton God's waiting room.

That's where people come down getting ready to die, and they do two things en route. Count the coconuts, and play golf. And in between, the favorite sport is comparing restaurants.

That's all of life in Boca Raton, really. Anyhow, here's what it said. Wanted, a young couple to care for an elderly millionaire who has been taking tranquilizers for 20 years.

This couple is needed desperately to give him meaning in life he has nothing to live for. Tragic. Tragic.

But so true. Yes, this abundant life, this life beyond the comma, is a life of peace, it's a life of purpose, but it has to be a life of power. Of power and victory over sin.

Almost at the close of this holy volume is God's appended promise, Revelation 21, 7. He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. I believe the Bible is the story not only of God's victory over Satan and sin, but of man's victory over the same. And what are the keys to that victory? What secrets are there for victory over Satan and sin? I think there are three of them.

And they're mentioned in Revelation 12, 11. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death. Three things In that tribulation period, men will overcome Satan, first of all, by the blood of the Lamb.

Victory over Satan and sin is only possible to one who has been born again. The pure blood of Christ is the antitoxin for sin. He turns our defeats into victories.

There was a Frenchman who became a British citizen, and when he came out of the hall where he had been sworn in as a British citizen, one of his compatriots said, How do you feel now that you're a British citizen? And he said, Well, before today, Waterloo was an ignominious defeat for me, but today it's a glorious victory. That's right. How do you feel since you've been to the cross? Oh, before that, everything was a defeat.

Now it's victory all along the way because of the blood of Christ. And then it says that they overcame him by the word of their testimony, because of the purity of their testimony. And I've shot my wad on time, so I must conclude, and also because of their attitude or the preciousness of life.

They did not count their lives dear unto themselves. At the end of the road, when it's all over, I want to ask myself, Lord, have I enjoyed what you came to bring for me? I know you came that I might have life. Hallelujah! To know that.

Have I really entered into this abundant life, this more abundant life that you also promised? Have I known what it was to have constant peace of mind and heart and conscience? Have I known also your purpose fulfilled in my life day by day and its experiences? And have I known the power of your blood to give me victory every step of the way? Because when it's all done, I want to be dead sure, and I'm sure you do too, that what we have lived for him pleases him. J. H. McConkie, a businessman from Pittsburgh, tells this fine story. He says before they were building bridges, before they had built bridges over the rivers of Pittsburgh, one of the first bridges built had been designed by an engineer architect, and in the early stages of the bridge's construction, he fell and broke his back, and he was taken to the hospital, and he was in the hospital for months.

Finally, it came for the day when that bridge was to be opened for traffic, and this architect was now, he had recuperated enough though he was still in a cast, that he requested that he might be able to be there somewhere when the bridge was opened. He finally said, I'd like to be on a boat, in a boat, on the river, if I may. So they put him in a small boat, and they took him out into the river, turned the motor off and let it drift, where he could see that entire bridge, all the spans, the cables, the great struts, and he studied it very carefully, didn't say a word for a while, and then they heard him murmur, it's just like the plan, isn't it? It's just like the plan.

When we stand in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, there'll be nothing more satisfying than to hear him say, as he surveys with us the life we've lived here, it's just like the plan, it's what I planned for you, and it has filled every detail of that plan. To know that, and to experience that, to have indeed enjoyed abundant life. For this thy word, we're grateful, dear Father, and for these blessed words, our Savior, that remind us of the purpose.

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