

# The Need for More Abundant Life

by Dan Augsburger

---

*The sermon emphasizes the need for a more abundant life in Christ, and the importance of having a Christlike life to share with the world.*

**Duration:** 53:24

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:48, Matthew 22:1-14, Colossians 1:28, James 1:4

**Topics:** "Abundant Life"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the need for believers to sell out and fully commit to God in order to experience a more abundant life. The speaker refers to Matthew chapter 22, where Jesus tells a parable about a king who arranges a wedding for his son. The invited guests initially refuse to come, and even when a second invitation is given, they make light of it and prioritize their own interests. Some even mistreat and kill the king's servants. The speaker highlights the importance of not being distracted by worldly pursuits and instead responding wholeheartedly to God's invitation to a life-changing event.

---

## Transcript

The question was asked, is your Christianity worth sharing with the world? Do people want to know Jesus as a result of what they see in your life and in my life? Are people's lives better? And last night, Jeffrey spoke to the fact that by our actions, we can cause people to lose interest in Jesus. We can actually cause people to have less confidence in God. There's a story in the Bible that strikes me a great deal.

It's the story of the father who brings a boy to be healed by the disciples, and the disciples try to pray for him, remember, and they fail. Now, there were nine disciples at the base of the mountain, and there were three, you know, up in the mountain with Jesus. And Ellen White says the problem was jealousy.

And the fracture, you know, the break in their relationship to each other actually caused a break in their relationship with Jesus, and therefore, His power could not work through them. You know, they had the truth. They knew the one who had the truth, you know.

They were in relationship, and the man came to the right people, right? He came to the right group to get help, but they couldn't help him. And it's interesting, when Jesus finally came, He didn't say, Lord, you know, do this. He said, if you can do this.

And I believe the reason there are so many questions in the world today regarding Christianity is not because the Bible has lost, you know, its wisdom and God has lost His power, but it's because our relationship with God is often so compromised that God is unable to work with us in the way that He wants to. But people, instead of questioning us and saying, why is it that somehow your relationship is negating the power of God, they're saying there must not be anything to God. And so a lot of people, they even sometimes join our churches with the expectation that as a result of that association, as a result of what they learn, their lives will be better.

But in too many cases, they find themselves still stumbling, still struggling, and many of the issues not being resolved. And so what we're talking about here is the ability for us to know Jesus in such a way that we will experience victory and we will experience power. So here, this question was being asked, is your form of Christianity worth sharing with the world? Hannah Whittle-Smith in her book, *The Christian Secret of a Happy Life*, speaks of someone coming to her and asking the following question, line 12 and page 6. You Christians seem to have a religion that makes you miserable.

You're like a man with a headache. He does not want to get rid of his head, but it hurts him to keep it. You cannot expect outsiders to seek very earnestly for anything so uncomfortable.

Oftentimes, you know, it's like we're happy Christians, but we've forgotten to tell our faces that we're happy. And it's like a headache. You know, it hurts, but you can't afford to get rid of it.

Speaking to these kinds of things, Ellen White said, Let us remember, line 18, that a Christlike life is the most powerful argument that can be advanced in favor of Christianity, and that a chief Christian character works more harm in the world than the character of a worldling. It is the purpose of God to glorify Himself in His people before the world. He expects those who bear the name of Christ to represent Him in thought and in word and deed.

A Christlike life is what? The most powerful argument that can be given for the world. Now, in Christian history, there was a man that probably some of you have heard of. His name was John Bunyan.

He was the author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, remember? And it's interesting. He wasn't a Christian in his younger days. He was very wild.

In fact, there was a time in his life where he speaks of trying to sin as much and as rapidly as he possibly can. You read about that, I think, in his book, *Grace Abounding to the Chief Sinners*. He speaks of the fact that he could sin without any difficulty.

It didn't bother him one bit, but when he saw Christians sinning and going against what he knew was right, he said it caused him physical pain. It pained him a great deal. And I believe that there's a lot of people who have enough of God wired into them, whether they want to acknowledge it or not, that they are very aware when they see the real thing versus the pretend thing when it comes to Christians.

John Bunyan spoke of being in such pain. And I think there are those people who are searching. They're searching.

Sadly, though, they sometimes go searching in all the wrong places. Turn with me, if you would, now to Matthew 13, verse 44. Matthew 13, verse 44.

It says there, again, the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field which a man found and hid, and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Let me repeat that again. The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field which a man found and hid, and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

A couple of elements there. First of all, the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure. It is something, you know, wonderfully valuable.

And a man is out walking, he's out, you know, going along through life, and he finds this treasure, okay? It says he hides his treasure, and then for the joy, you know, that he has, he sells all that he has in order to obtain it. And I believe this verse speaks of kind of the pathway of the Christian life. First of all, it has to do with something that is worth everything, okay? Exceedingly valuable.

And there are literally, you know, millions of people who have been willing to give up their lives for the sake of what they gain in the Lord Jesus Christ. I think of one young woman, her name is Marie Durand. At the age of 14, as a result of her being a Huguenot, and because of her father being a Huguenot pastor, and her brother Pierre being a Huguenot pastor, and the authorities trying to find them, especially Pierre, her brother, at the age of 14, they put her in jail there in Aigues-Mortes in the south of France, and every day they said, if you will just recant, if you will just give up your beliefs, you know, in your Huguenot religion, we will give you your freedom.

All you have to do is say, I recant. But she refused. Every day it went on.

Eventually, they caught her brother and killed him. Her father, by that time, had also been killed as a result of their faith in Jesus. They'd been martyred.

They continued this every day until finally someone came along and said, this has to stop. Makes no sense. And they let her free.

Now, I've been to the Tower of Constance. It's very cold, drafty. It was not, you know, it was, think of the worst hotel, you know, and then go down.

As far as you can go from that in terms of, you know, the rank scale, that's what it was like. It was a swampy area. They only let her out in her 50s.

And we think we have it bad. You know, when in England they made the law that they basically said, unless it's a pastor, you agree to conform to what the king wants. You know, you're going to be disenfranchised.

You're going to be thrown out. 2,000 pastors, you know, left. John Bunyan was one of the people in prison, you know, because of his preaching illegally, quote unquote.

And they said, you know, if you just stop preaching, we'll let you free. And he said, if you let me free, I'll be preaching tomorrow. And they left him in jail for for 12 years.

OK, these were authentic Christians because they had found something in Jesus that was more precious than everything else. And some people think that Christianity is all about obedience. But let me tell you, there's something even more important than obedience.

And that is learning to love God and trust God, because if you love him, you will obey him. But if you're not convinced that he is trustworthy and that he's precious and what he wants to give you is precious, it'll be hard to obey him. For those of you that are married, there's a few married couples here.

If your relationship were only based on obedience to each other, it'd be a pretty lousy relationship. OK, it's because you love each other, because you trust each other, because you value what you gain in the relationship. And it's supposed to be the same way with Jesus.

Welcome. I'm glad you're here. Anyway, so here's this treasure and he goes down the pathway and and he finds his treasure and he hides it.

Somehow that treasure is taken into his experience. OK, in his case, it says he hid the treasure because Jesus was using something that the people could understand. And it says that he rejoiced, right? It says for the joy, he rejoiced and eventually he sold everything he had in order to gain that, to buy that field that had the treasure.

Right now, here's my point. He found it, he hid it. In our relationship with Jesus, we can find, you know, we can learn about him and we can hide it, quote unquote, in our hearts.

And we can rejoice over it. And there's a lot of rejoicing that goes on over knowledge. But until we have given all, the treasure is not ours.

OK, we can have the truth, we can have the knowledge of the truth, we can be friends with truth filled people. But all the rejoicing in the world until we've actually given all will not bring the treasure. The treasure is only ours when we sell all.

That's what we're going to talk about in the next session. What does it cost to gain this more abundant life? Right now we want to talk about the need. And the first point I'd like to make is that we can't have this more abundant life unless we're willing to sell off.

And so there is a need. You know, we are called to have this experience. God is calling us to something precious.

Now, turn with me to Matthew chapter 22. Matthew chapter 22. If we had an entire week or a semester to discuss this, we would take a lot more time, but we have to keep going.

Matthew chapter 22, verses 1 to 14. Reading from verse 1. And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said, the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son. And sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding and they were not willing to come.

Again, he sent out other servants saying, tell those who are invited. See, I prepared my dinner and oxen and fatted cattle are killed and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.

Welcome. Welcome. So here is here's a wedding being prepared and an invitation is being sent out and people are responding to the invitation.

Sadly, there was a group that rejected. A second invitation was given out and it was rejected again. Now it's interesting in verse 4. Says again, he sent out other servants saying, I tell those who are invited.

See, I prepared my dinner and my oxen, my fatted cattle are killed and all things are ready. Come to the wedding. But they made light of it.

They minimized it and went their ways. One to his own farm, another to his business. They were distracted and did other things that seemed important.

And that goes on all the time. And in verse 6, and the rest sees his servants, treated them spitefully and killed them. Now this was a very important event.

You know, a life changing event. A future changing event. But they rejected it.

They made light of it. They found other important things to do. And there are many who are hearing about this life.

But they're not interested because they have other things to do first. And sadly, as we'll see, one of the reasons we need this more abundant life is because if we reject it, it will have eternal consequences. We continue.

Then he said to the servants, the wedding is ready. But those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore, go into the highways and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.

So he said, you know, the first group we tried to invite, which I think in the parable referred to the Jewish people in particular. He said, now go to others who are worthy. Just go to the highways, the byways and invite those people to come.

So those servants in verse 10 went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. We're reading from Matthew 22 for those of you who are wondering.

Verses 1 to 14. So here went out another invitation and the hall was filled with people, both bad and good. In other words, if you feel bad this morning about what you've been or where you've been and what you've done, it doesn't get in the way of God sending out an invitation to you.

You know, the hymn Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. You know, in our worship this morning, Matt spoke of a salty dog. And sometimes their language is salty and their thoughts are salty.

You know, they kind of are the epitome of sometimes the way we shouldn't be in life. And John Newton even amazed the other sailors. You know, his language was more crude, more coarse.

His behavior was more extreme. I mean, he was the one that led the other sailors down into the hold to rape the women that were chained down in the hold. You could not find a worse person.

But it was when he thought his life was going to be lost. And the livestock that he had on his boat at that point had been washed overboard. And the sailors had tied themselves to the boat that he suddenly began to think of his mother's prayers and ask God to save his life.

And God turned his life around. And so he wrote that song. So the invitation went out to, it says, to both the bad and the good.

And no matter, you know, where you are this morning, how good you feel about your walk with Jesus, it doesn't matter. Because the Christian life is not about what you can be or what you've done. It's what Jesus has done and how you can bring that life into your life and change your life completely.

So the invitation went to both the bad and the good. God won't hold the badness against you. God won't hold your goodness against you either.

Because sometimes we can have such a good feeling about our walk with Jesus that we won't look for him either. OK, there's a ditch to fall into on both sides of the road. We continue.

So the wedding hall was filled with guests, verse 11. But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

Then the king said to the servants, bind him hand and foot, take him away and cast him into outer darkness. And there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.

So here we see that not only is there concern about accepting the invitation, but accepting the wedding garment, OK? There's something about preparing for that wedding that if we don't come prepared, we can also lose out. So why do we need to have this more abundant experience, number one? Because God has called us to it, OK? The world needs it. And because if we don't have that experience for ourself, we will lose out.

Now if you would, we're looking at page 6, line about 40. It says there, I'm instructed towards the necessity of personal consecration and sanctification of the whole being to God. I am in fear and trembling for those who have not yet put on the wedding garment.

Many are expecting to sit down to the marriage supper of the Lamb, who are unprepared for the coming of the king. They are like the blind, they do not discern their danger. OK, she said, I am worried because there are people who have not put on that wedding garment and therefore are not prepared for what will be coming.

Notice the next quotation on line 48 on page 6. It says, the man who came to the feast without a wedding garment represents the condition of many in our world today. They profess to be Christians and they claim to the blessings and privileges of the gospel, yet they feel no need of transformation of character. They've never felt true repentance for sin.

They do not realize their need of Christ or exercising faith in Him. They have not overcome their hereditary or cultivated tendencies to wrongdoing, yet they think that they are good enough in themselves and they rest upon their own merits instead of trusting in Christ. Here is the word, they come to the banquet, but they have not put on the robe of Christ's righteousness.

See, in this case, the man thought that he'd been invited and therefore everything was OK. But when he got there, he discovered it was a little different. Now, perhaps felt that this was a minor lack.

I remember some time ago, someone loaned me a machine where you could actually transfer music onto a DVD. And I had some old vinyl records which, you know, are hard to play. It's not convenient, so I said, I want to transfer my old records, my LPs, these are actually 33s, to DVD.

But my turntable, for those of you that have had turntables, you'll know what I'm referring to. To set the speed, you can actually have two, you adjust the speed to where the line that's going on, as the turntable turns, suddenly the line stops and you're adjusted perfectly at 33 and a third to have the pitch right. But I couldn't get it to go quite right.

I think maybe the belt was a little bit stretched or something. But I said, this is so close, no, no, no, it won't make a difference. I was in my car later, just shortly after that, driving a student home, a pianist in New York City.

He'd gone to New York City for a piano lesson, a really good pianist. And I thought, well, he likes classical music, I love classical music. I'll put some Chopin or Rachmaninoff, something like that.

And I put on one of these DVDs of this old record. And I hadn't played it more than 30 seconds when he said, that's from an album, isn't it? I said, what do you mean? He said, it's off pitch. I said, what do you mean? He says, it's off pitch.

I have perfect pitch. And that's absolutely not right. I was thoroughly embarrassed, okay? Because I didn't think anyone would know the difference.

But it made a huge difference. And in the spiritual life, we may minimize, you know, the need to have this robe of righteousness. We may minimize the need to have character transformation.

But it will make all the difference in the world. All the difference in the world. Now, notice on line 6, approximately, of page 7, God has made how much? Every provision whereby our thoughts may become purified, elevated, refined, and ennobled.

How much provision has been made? All provision, right? God has made every provision whereby our thoughts may become purified, elevated, refined, and ennobled. He has not only promised to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, but He has made an extra provision for the supply of grace that will lift our thoughts towards Him and enable us to appreciate His holiness. God has made provision whereby we will receive that provision, that supply of grace, that will change our lives.

Look with me, if you would, to Matthew chapter 5. What is God calling us to? Matthew chapter 5. Welcome. We are on page 7 of the syllabus. It says there, chapter 5, verse 48, it says, therefore you shall be what? Perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.

It's interesting that the Bible is stated with the words perfect and blameless and holy. Those are words that Paul and Peter and Jesus and others used quite comfortably, but those aren't words that we use very easily. Notice another one, Colossians chapter 1, verse 28.

This is Paul speaking of what he was hoping. Colossians chapter 1, verse 28. It says there, Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ.

He said, the goal of my preaching, the desire of my preaching is to be able to present every person as perfect in Christ. That is the aim of the Christian life. Now, please don't be discouraged, okay? Because what I'm trying to do is set the standard as high as I possibly can.

And then I'm going to tell you, you can't possibly do it. But then I'm going to say, but God can, if you will choose and if you'll allow Him to do for you what you can't do for yourself. But we have to first be really clear the standard that God is calling us to.

So here Paul says, in all my preaching, you know, it's to be able to present every person as what? Perfect, okay? Present every person as perfect. Let's look at another one, James chapter 1, verse 4. James chapter 1, verse 4. It says, let patience have its perfect work that you may be what? Perfect and complete, lacking nothing. It says somehow let patience.

There's something to do with things that cause us to develop our patience that allows a perfecting work whereby we lack nothing. One last one, 1 Peter chapter 1, 15 and 16. Actually, turn to Ephesians chapter 1, verse 4. We'll just go with Ephesians chapter 1, verse 4. It says there, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

We've been called to be holy and without blame before God in love. As I said, don't be discouraged by it, but we must make sure that we have our eyes set on the goal. And as I have read Christian history, and I've read a fair amount of it, you know, when you read of some of these giants of the past, they seem to achieve lives that were almost otherworldly.

I already mentioned that to those of you that were here earlier, Marie Durand, who every day could have had her freedom just by saying she recanted, but remained in prison from the age of 14 to her 50s. That'd be pretty hard. That'd be pretty hard, but she endured.

She endured. I think of a pastor of the Puritans who refused to conform. And when he died, they branded his face and cut off his ears.

And there were lots of other pastors who were non-conformists at that time. Lots of other pastors. It's interesting, one of them, Samuel Rutherford, he said, you know, trials are to the Christian like birds to a wing and sails to a ship.

He said, the people that sent me here to Aberdeen thought they were going to make me suffer, but he said, what I really discovered is you have allowed me to be feasted at banquet halls with my Lord Jesus. See, many of us don't understand what the Christian life is all about, but God has called us to live in such a way that they'll say, what is it about your life that makes you different? I hope that somehow, the way that we live, people will say, whatever it is that you have, I want it for myself. We've been called to the highest standard possible.

But notice, line 14 now on page 7. For those of you that have the syllabus, I use line numbers and page numbers. It says, before the believers held out the wonderful possibility of being like Christ, obedient to what? All the principles of the law. But of himself, man is what? Utterly unable to reach this condition.

Did you read that? On the one hand, provisions have been made to reach all the requirements of the law. But of ourselves, and that's the key word, of ourselves, we are utterly unable. Now, what does that word utterly mean? What? It is completely impossible, right? There's no ambiguity.

It didn't say, you know, he's going to struggle or he's unable. It says, he is utterly unable. Now, as I have shared this quotation with people, it's surprising that some people find it quite surprising that this actually was written by Ellen White.

You know, we need to realize that as Ellen White writes about so much of what we should be as Christians, she never writes it with the thought that we're going to do it by ourselves. It's all about what Jesus does, okay? You know, it's not only being saved by faith, but it's being changed by faith. It's learning to live by faith.

That's why every day we have the opportunity to wake up with a hopeful attitude. Because it's what's going to happen as God is there with you and prompting you and leading you and living his life in you, through you, sometimes, if necessary, in spite of you. But we must continue this quotation here.

It says, The holiness of God's word declares he must have before he can be saved is the result of the working of divine grace as he bows in submission to the discipline and restraining influences of the spirit of truth. This change of life comes as God works in us and as we submit, there's that word, patience having its perfect work, the restrained influences of the spirit of truth, submission to the discipline, the restrained influences of the spirit of truth. Man's obedience can be made perfect only by the incense of Christ's righteousness, which fills with divine fragrance every act of obedience.

Okay, so there is an obedience, but even when we're doing our best, unless Jesus is adding his righteousness to it, we fall short, okay? So if the devil comes along and says you're not good enough, you know what? It's true. We're never good enough, but Jesus is good enough, and somehow, as we obey in him, he adds his fragrance and we are accepted through him. We'll talk about that later today.

But notice, the part of the Christian is to persevere in overcoming every fault, okay? Now, we're utterly unable, but we're called to persevere in overcoming every fault. So the standard is high. We're unable, but we're still called to persevere.

Now, notice what happens. Constantly, he is to pray to the Savior to heal the disorders of his sin-sick soul. He has not the wisdom or the strength to overcome.

Notice that. He has not the wisdom or the strength to overcome. These belong to the Lord, and he bestows them on those who in humiliation and contrition seek him for help.

Now, let me share just a little bit how I understand this matter of perseverance. To come down here, I had to, you know, I got some e-mails from Lindsay Smith. She said, Dan, we'd like you to come, and she gave me the details, and I began preparing.

I had to have this thing printed. I had to get an airplane ticket. I had to make arrangements for someone to be with my mom while I was away.

I had to get a rental car, you know, in Nashville, because that's where I flew into. I had a bit of a drive to come over, more than I expected. That's okay.

But anyway, I had to do a lot of persevering, didn't I? You know, I had to persevere in making arrangements and persevere in preparing, persevering in calling people, all that kind of thing. But eventually, when I got to Chicago, when I got on the airplane, I had to entrust myself to a machine I hadn't personally certified. I had to trust myself to a pilot who I soon would know what he was doing.

And I can assure you, I didn't say I took myself to Nashville. I was taken by an airplane. But there was a whole range of things I had to do within my domain, okay? I had to make many choices.

But at some point, a higher power had to take over. It's the same way in the Christian life. There are many decisions that we must make.

But at some point, there's a higher power that combines with us. And it's in that connecting together that this life of more abundance, this life of victory becomes possible, okay? You follow what I'm saying? God has made every provision, but we must persevere doing our part so that God can do His part, okay? We can't do it on our own. Only God can do it.

But when we let Him do it, He can truly do a miraculous kind of thing. So why do we need? First of all, God has called us to a higher experience. Now turn to page 9. One reason that we need this more abundant life is because God has called it to us.

And if we don't live in that way, as Jeffrey reminded us last night, others by our influence will lose out. And certainly the story of Adoniram Judson is a wonderful, wonderful story. And I think that some of those stories can be very instructive and helpful.

Turn with me, though, if you would, to Luke chapter 15 now. And we're going to read just verses 11 to 16. It's a well-known parable.

Then he said, A certain man had two sons, and a younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me. So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country where and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.

But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and he joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would have gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.

What's the second reason we need this more abundant life? Because if we are not under the control of Jesus, if we are making our own decisions, we quickly find ourselves to be enslaved by the devil. Now, the devil doesn't put a great big flag and say, I'm about to lead you down a pathway that will be heartbreaking and will bring misery to you. He makes sure there's plenty of nice roses along the way, and it's just as nice and as sweet a pathway as possible.

But after you're down that pathway, his habit is to reveal himself and pull the hook and say, you are now mine. And it's interesting, in my travels in various places, I've heard this story from more than one person, that these are some people that are actually involved in the occult. They said, you know, at first, he was a really nice man.

And then suddenly, he took off the mask and it was horrible, and I was amazed at what I suddenly found myself caught in. And I'm going to give two testimonies along those lines, but I think it's really true. Now, he comes and afflicts us differently, right? To us, it may be this relationship is so important that I'm going to forget my other goals or priorities, or my good common sense, whatever.

Or maybe some other hobby or something else. But eventually, in this young man's case, he was dissatisfied with what was going on in the farm, and so he took this journey. He asked for all of his inheritance, and then it says he wasted his living on prodigal living.

Wasted his living on prodigal living. Many of us probably know that experience, and it's a very sad and unfortunate experience. How could it have happened? Why did it happen? Notice in Genesis 3, verses 4 and 5, there is a lie that is spoken of there that is still succumbed to in our day.

Genesis 3, verses 4 and 5. It says, Then the serpent said to the woman, You will not surely die. Eve had just told the serpent that God had forbidden her eating from the tree with the knowledge of good and evil. Then the serpent said to the woman, You will not surely die, for God knows that in the day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

And I'll read one more verse. So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took its fruit and ate. She also gave her husband with her, and he ate.

Satan basically said, God is trying to withhold something that will make you very happy. God doesn't know what he's talking about. And she believed him, didn't she? Now, I personally believe that compared to you and I, she was probably a whole lot more innocent, wasn't she? Because she didn't know.

She should have trusted God completely, and I'm not trying to justify her mistake at all. But you know, there's a lot of people that do the same thing she does, and we have so much more knowledge, don't we? We have so much more knowledge, and people go down that pathway with their eyes wide open, and later are surprised. But remember, sin blinds, okay? That's the only thing that comes through to me when it comes to some of the things that I've observed.

People get involved in things, and they are completely unaware of what the future will hold. And it's just heartbreaking. Well, Satan said, I have something better.

And most of us have fallen to that, unfortunately, more than one time. Well, how does Satan exert control? Look at Proverbs 5. Proverbs 5, verse 22. It says there, we'll start with verse 21, For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he ponders all his past, his own iniquities entrap the wicked man, and he is caught in the cords of his sin.

Satan has a way of wrapping our mistakes around us in such a way that we become completely entangled and find it virtually impossible to escape. Adam and Eve had no intention of doing something that would cause the death of Abel. And you know, to this day, every time someone makes a mistake to a certain degree, Adam is still responsible for that mistake.

We're all responsible for things. I'm not gratuitously throwing stones at Adam. The point is that the influence and the effects, the consequences, often go for a long, long time.

And Satan has a way of causing things to come together that it's almost impossible to extract ourselves from what is going on. Now, if you would turn to 2 Peter 2. 2 Peter 2, verse 19. It says there, While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption, for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.

Okay, Satan literally brings about an enslavement. I'm not sure we always appreciate the extent of that enslavement. Look, if you would, at Romans 7. Romans 7, verses 21 to 24.

Romans 7. And we're going to read verses 21 to 24. It says, Paul speaking here, I find in a law that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God, according to the inward

man.

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into what? Captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death? Who will deliver me? There's a couple of books that have been written in history that speak, I think, in almost childlike terms about the struggle of what it means to be a Christian. John Bunyan, in his book, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, just talks about how he tried so hard, but he couldn't succeed.

Another man who spoke to this was a man by the name of Augustine. Maybe you've heard of him. He wrote, he said, my prayer was God give me chastity, but not yet.

There was a part of him that said, I really want this better experience, but I'm not quite ready to go there yet. Because something inside of him said, if I go, there's going to be something I'm going to miss. And there's a lot of people who though they want to say, God, we only want to go your way.

They find that there's another part of them that is just crying out. And I appreciate what Matt said about going to the beach or something like that. Paul says, don't make provision for the flesh.

And if our struggle is, for example, with the television, maybe we need to get rid of the television. That's how we deal with that. But anyway, Satan has a way of enslaving us.

Satan has a way of enslaving us. And yet, God wants to give us freedom. Jesus said, I've come that they might have life.

And have it what? More abundant. God wants us to experience more abundant life. Now, if you would, on page 9, look at some quotations.

Line 31 approximately. I think my printing is off. Maybe a line or two at times.

It says, there are but two powers that control the minds of men. The power of God and the power of Satan. Okay, there's not a third alternative.

Either we're controlled by God or we're controlled by Satan. Some of us think that, you know, I can make a choice. You know, I can be in charge, or I can let God be in charge, or I can let Satan be in charge.

But the truth is, there's only two choices. Okay? We are either going to obey God or we're going to obey Satan. Okay, those are the two choices.

Secondly, line 33 approximately. Satan takes control of every mind that is not decidedly under the control of the Spirit of God. Okay? Satan comes in, he says, they haven't made a commitment to God.

They haven't surrendered to God. They are therefore my property. I can do with them as I would wish.

And I can't explain how that works. But I believe that Satan is as happy with the half-converted Christian as the person who is not converted at all because a half-Christian gives a wrong idea to other Christians and to other people. And that's why in this world today there is so much confusion as to what it means to be a Christian.

You know, there's kind of the old-time religion that was very much about being like Jesus. There's a new form of Christianity. It's kind of the prosperity gospel.

And then there's another form that is an aberration that is horrible called the emerging church which is really not Christianity at all from what I can tell. But people are saying this is all what God is about. And Satan is having a heyday.

Satan is having a heyday. And you know where the greatest proof is of what real Christianity is? It's in your life and my life. You know, if I was sitting at home watching television one evening and just minding my own business or watching the news or reading a book or something like that and someone suddenly came to the door, a policeman came to the door and said, we are here to arrest you for a hit-and-run accident, what would I do? How would I respond to him? Would I say, that can't be true.

You know, I want to go back to that accident to make sure that an accident really took place. Would that help my case at all? Absolutely not. I'd say, you know, officer, I appreciate your being here, but I only drove my car today and my car is in the garage and you come with me and you look at my car and based on what you see in my car, my car is okay.

I'm not guilty. And when God has to prove, you know, what is real and right in His kingdom, He doesn't go to sin and say, that's what it's all about. He says, here are the people that trusted me, here are the people that followed my law.

Look at their lives and it will prove, it will prove that my government was right. That's why Adventists believe in the pre-Advent judgment. Okay? And it's interesting that it says, judgment was given how? In favor of the saints.

Because down through history, millions of real Christians were persecuted and killed by other supposed Christians and someday God is going to say, these are really my people. So there is a judgment and sadly a judgment in favor of one group becomes a negative judgment against other people, okay? But that's why we believe in the Advent judgment. And so Satan takes control of one or the other and you know, he's going to do his best to bring about a compromise to diminish God's witness if he possibly can.

But it says we're either under the control of one or the other. Now, line 37. Every soul that refuses to give himself to God is under the control of another power.

He is not his own. He may talk of freedom, but he is in the most abject slavery. He is not allowed to see the beauty of truth for his mind is under the control of Satan.

While he flatters himself that he's following the dictates of his own judgment, he obeys the will of the prince of darkness. You see, we can talk about freedom. We can say, I can do whatever I want.

And the devil says, absolutely. And he smiles. He's really happy.

Because he knows that in our supposed freedom, actually he's leading us down a pathway that we're going to find very, very hard to come back from. Oh, we can. We can.

I'm not minimizing that we can. But he's going to do all he can to make it difficult. Would you agree? Absolutely.

Notice line 42. Man is Satan's captive and is naturally inclined to follow his suggestions and do his bidding. He has in himself, what? No power to oppose the effectual resistance to evil.

It is only as Christ abides in him by living faith, influencing his desires and strengthening him with strength from above, that man may venture to face so terrible a foe. Every other means of defense is utterly vain. In and of ourselves, we cannot oppose Satan.

You need to realize that. Either we're on Satan's side or on God's side. Line 52.

The enemy is prepared for his last campaign against the church. He has so concealed himself from view that many can hardly believe that he exists. Much less can they be convinced of his amazing activity and power.

A lot of people say, Man, I don't see Satan. He has so subtly concealed what he's doing that people can't believe what's going on. Boasting of their independence, they will, under his specious, bewitching influence, in other words, under his deceptive influence, obey the worst impulses of the human heart and yet believe that God is leading them.

And that is certainly to be seen down through history. Could their eyes be opened to distinguish their captain, they would see that they are not serving God, but the enemy of all righteousness. They would see that their boasted independence is one of the heaviest fetters that Satan can rivet an unbalanced line.

That's why, you know that song, I'll do it my way that was so popular? Why do you think Satan was so interested in popularizing that song? Because it fed right into his agenda. Because the more people say, I want to have it my way, I want to be independent. In effect, we're placing ourselves under Satan's control.

Now, page 10, about line 22. Let's think about this matter of choice. We can make choices.

There's something about willpower. This will that forms so important a factor in the character of man was at the fall given into the control of Satan and he has ever since been working in man to will and do of his own pleasure, but to the utter ruin and misery of man. You see, at the time that Adam fell, Ellen White says that our wills were placed in Satan's control.

And that's why he can have so much power over us. But we have the right to make a choice. We have the right to make a choice and say, we will not leave our wills in Satan's control.

We're going to place them in God's control. God can do it. God will never take away our power of choice.

But we can make the choice to take it from Satan and give it over to God. All we can do is decide which will be in control. Okay, that's our part.

That is our part. Notice line 32. The Christian life is a battle and a march.

Can you identify with that? Do you ever find yourself in a battle? Absolutely. But the victory to be gained is not won by human power. The field of conflict is the domain of the heart.

The battle which we have to fight, the greatest battle that was ever fought by man is the surrender of what? Self to the will of God, the yielding of the heart to the sovereignty of love. See, that's the greatest battle. The greatest battle is saying, God, I choose to let you have the last word in my life.

And so that's why our next session we're going to talk about the price. What is the cost of obtaining this more abundant life? Okay? I've tried this morning to, in this first session, to say there is such a life. We can't do it because of Satan's control, but God can if we really want it.

Look at page 11, line 6. You will be in constant peril until you understand the true force of the will. You may believe and promise all things, but your promises or your faith are of no value until you put your will on the side of faith and action. If you fight the fight of faith with all your willpower, you will conquer if you make the choice.

Your feelings, your impressions, your emotions are not to be trusted, for they are not reliable, especially with your perverted ideas and the knowledge of your broken promises and your forfeited, you know, your broken pledges weakens your confidence in yourself and the faith of others in you. But you need not despair, okay? We need not be discouraged this morning. It is for you to yield up your will to the will of Jesus Christ, and as you do this, God will immediately take up possession and work in you to will and do of His good pleasure.

Your whole nature will then be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ and even your thoughts will be subject to Him. Okay? God can make an entire change. One last quotation and then we're done for this morning.

About line 25 or 26. The Lord Jesus loves His people, and when they put their trust in Him, depending wholly upon Him, He does what? He strengthens them. He will live through them, giving them the inspiration of His sanctifying Spirit, imparting to the soul what? A vital transfusion of Himself.

We must remember that. He acts through their faculties and causes them to choose His will and to act out His character. Okay? When He lives in us, He'll literally cause us to choose His will and to act out His character.

Is that not good news? Absolutely, that is good news. With the Apostle Paul they may then say, I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. Okay? God is able to bring about an entire transformation as we yield our wills to God.

Okay? He'll literally come in and cause us to choose His will and to act out His character. Do you want that life? God has called us to the highest life possible, a blameless life. That's what He's called us to.

But we can't, right? So later today, we want to talk about the cost, and then later we want to talk about how to receive that life. Two more sessions. Let's pray together.

Father in Heaven, I'm grateful that you have brought people here who want to learn about this life of victory, this life of more abundance. We acknowledge, Lord, that too often we have wanted to be independent, thinking that we had something on our own. We've learned, though, this morning that apparently Satan has a lot more control than we often remember.

Forgive us for that. But thank you that Jesus is greater, that He won a victory that Satan can never take away. And so, Lord, today we just say we want to know that life.

We want to know it. Thank you that we can have it in Jesus. In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/22/SID22657.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/dan-augsburger/the-need-for-more-abundant-life/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**