

The Provision of a More Abundant Life

by Dan Augsburger

The sermon emphasizes the importance of dying to self and surrendering to God's will in order to experience His transforming grace and be filled by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Duration: 49:42

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 12:32, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 1:3, 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

Topics: "Abundant Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing and letting go of cherished sins and idols in our lives. God, who sees our hidden sins, works to separate these sins from us through a process of purification. The speaker highlights the need to trust God's way of purifying and changing us, as only He knows the best way. The sermon also emphasizes the progressive journey of dying to self, using the example of the Israelites' journey through the wilderness. Ultimately, victory over sin and evil habits comes from accepting Jesus and yielding to Him, receiving a new nature and the power to live a new life.

Transcript

Father in Heaven, I'm grateful that we are here discussing this subject that is really so wonderful. I'm grateful that the Holy Spirit has been present, and I pray, Lord, as people have listened, that they have been blessed, and that they have been able to learn some things that will hopefully help them in experiencing the more abundant, victorious life that You want them to have. Lord, we know it's an ongoing work, it's the work of a lifetime.

I'm grateful that You're the one that determines the pathway, that You're the one that helps us, and that in the end, Lord, we can find ourselves in that celestial city. Help us, Lord, to live in such a way that others will want to know that city as well someday. So be with us again.

Lord, You know that I'm only an instrument, I'm only a mouthpiece, and I really need You to speak through me, Lord, so that the people's time here will not be wasted. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Now, there's one good thing about knowing these things, and that is when you go and talk the way that I have been, and any of you, by the way, can do as much as I've done, and someday, the Lord willing, you'll be sharing just as I have. When it's not about you, when it's all about God, you don't have near the worry in standing up before people, because you literally look for God to impress you as you're sharing. And I

can assure you that if you've been to other seminars of mine, the subject matter is the same, but the illustrations always change, because they're prompted as I'm going along, and I just let the Spirit move.

And that's one of the reasons why I don't like PowerPoint, because PowerPoint just holds you in and you can't be flexible at all for the Spirit's promptings. So, it's good. It's good to know Jesus in this way.

Let's look at Galatians 2.20 as we pick up. Galatians 2.20. Welcome back. Galatians 2.20, it says, I have been crucified with Christ.

It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. He says, I've been how? Crucified with Christ. He says, it's no longer I who live, but it's Christ now who lives in me.

Let's look at another one. Galatians 6.14, it says, But God forbid that I should boast except where? In the cross of Christ, of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. Paul said, when I look at what's made the substantial difference in my life, it's been the cross of Christ.

He said, I don't want to boast anywhere but the cross. And you know, when Paul went to Athens, and there he attempted to reason with those people who were caught up in the mysticism of their day, and he tried to reason using logic, he discovered that that didn't work, and he says, I choose to only know one thing, and that's Christ and him crucified. Paul came back to Christ and him crucified.

Let's look at 1 Corinthians 2.2. 1 Corinthians 2.2. It says, therefore, I determine not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I guess I just referenced that. But here's the point.

Jesus said, if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto myself. I remember I was at the University of Michigan, teaching a little bit to the campus group, the missionaries that work on the University of Michigan campus, and I spent the whole week talking about what it means to really lift up Jesus, that we have been called to lift him up, and how sometimes we spend more of our time lifting up programs and good preachers, and we have a great music program, but it's pretty rare where we say, you know, at our church, you'll really experience Jesus. We don't do that much.

And is it any wonder, if he said, if I be lifted, I will draw all men unto myself, is it any wonder that we don't gain greater results? And I remember a student wrote me after the fact and said, you know, Dan, she said, for the first time, when I realized it wasn't about me and my enthusiasm, but it was all about Jesus, she said, it changed completely the way I give my Bible studies. You know, it's just a huge change, a huge change in how we view what we're doing. Now notice Romans chapter 12, verse 1. Romans chapter 12, verse 1. Gentlemen, go right ahead.

It says, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is what? Your reasonable service. We have been called to give our lives as reasonable sacrifice. Now, if you gave a sacrifice, what would happen? If you sacrificed something, you would take it and it would be, you would surrender completely, you'd put it on the altar for the purpose of what? Of it being completely consumed, right? When Paul calls us to give our lives as living sacrifices, he says, give it for the purpose of it being what? Consumed by God.

Now, we're lucky, in our day, we're not really thinking of our lives being consumed, you know, on a martyr's pile, on a fire. You know, we're not talking about that kind of thing. But the surrender should be to the same extent, and I believe that's what our brother Jeffrey was talking about this morning.

Because we don't know when the times will change, and we're called that way. And as he so rightly pointed out, he said it would be easier to die for Jesus than to live for Jesus, because living for Jesus is in the ongoing dying to self experience that goes on from day to day. Now, I'd like to have us look at a few quotations.

First of all, at line 41, it says, The new birth is a rare experience in the age of this world. This is the reason, I'm on page 19, by the way. 19, line 41, 42, something in there.

The new birth is a rare experience in the age of this world. This is the reason why there are so many perplexities in the churches. Many, so many who assume the name of Christ are unsanctified and unholy.

They have been baptized, but they were what? They were buried alive, self did not die, and therefore they did not rise to newness of life in Christ. Okay? The reason there are so many perplexities in the churches is because many have been buried alive, self did not die, and therefore self came back up just as alive and just as active for wanting its own thing as before. Now, if you went to a funeral home, and they were burying live people, would you have a problem with that? Sure, they would throw the funeral director in jail for that, wouldn't they? And I say this without throwing any stones, but I am absolutely amazed that we don't even mention dying to self in our fundamental doctrines.

If you read what the Bible says, if you read what Ellen White says on the subject, I mean, that's foundational. That is foundation, and I will prove that to you in a greater way. Just imagine what it would be like to be in a church where every person was wanting only God's will to be done.

I remember there was a time when I attended a church where we baptized a whole bunch of people. Now, we only had like a nominal attendance of 115, 120, and I think with re-baptisms we had almost 80 people. And we were thinking about the future, and some people quickly figured out that when they held the next business meeting, these on-fire members, these new members, could come and vote every single officer out of the church.

And it's interesting that the stress became to how to keep the status quo. You know, I don't know what the membership is here, but if, for example, how many members are there here? A couple thousand maybe? Okay, whatever, let's say there's 3,000 just for discussion purposes. Imagine if you had 2,500 people join your church in one month.

Your church wouldn't know what to do with it here. Why? Because you'd be so afraid that they would leave the church away. And I believe there's a great need in our church to convince people to want to know and do God's will at whatever the cost, no matter what the cost might be.

Because if that is the stress, there's no fear about new people coming in because everyone wants the same thing, and God isn't going to tell one person one thing and another person another. But it's because we've become so accustomed to listening to men, sincere, well-intentioned men, and sincere, well-intentioned women, instead of hearing God, that we haven't really learned the need to hear from God. George Mueller said some things about that, especially about how to know God's will.

And we haven't done as much in educating in that respect as we could either. But anyway, the new birth is a rare experience because there are many who are going down into the water thinking it forgives them, but now realize that when they come out of the water, they have made a public statement that from now on, just as this represents death, from now on there's only one voice I want to hear and obey, and that is the

Lord Jesus Christ. And I believe that the reason Jesus was baptized was not just as an example, you know, that you'll need to be baptized, so I need to go through it as well, but it was His public statement as well, of dying to self and saying, you know, in my ministry, in a special way, there will only be one voice heard, and that is the voice of my Father.

Okay? When we are baptized, it's not just forgiveness, it is also a public declaration that there is now a new person in charge. A new person in charge. Turn with me, because I've mentioned that, to page 21.

Line 28. This is a quotation, actually, from George Mueller. George Mueller said, There was a day when I died, and as he spoke, he bent lower until he almost touched the floor.

Continuing, he added, I died to George Mueller, his opinions, his preferences, taste, and will. Died to the will, its approval or censure. Died to the approval or blame even of my brethren or friends, and since then, I have studied only to show myself approved unto God.

He said, There was a day when I died. I died to my will, my preferences, my taste. I died to whatever the world would say, either good or bad.

I died to their praise. I died to their censure, to their negative feelings. I died both to the praise and the censure of my brothers.

So there was only one thing I cared about from that point, and that was to know and do whatever God wanted. And I believe that's the reason that God used him in such a great way. It's interesting.

I told you how in 1874 he was able to support all those missionaries and feed all those 2,100 children and 10,000 pounds overseas and all those things. And he wrote at one point, he said, There are those who think that God blesses me because I'm more spiritual than most. They said, That's not true.

He said, To the degree that I have followed God's will, to that degree God has blessed me. That is the secret. That is the secret.

To that degree. And you know what? It's only when we've truly died to self that God is on the throne the way he wants to and that he can truly bless us in unstinted measure. Now, I'd like to share with you a few quotations.

On page 20, line 22. It says, We cannot retain our own self and be filled with all the fullness of God. We must be emptied of self.

If heaven is gained by us at last, it will only be through the renunciation of self and in receiving the mind, the spirit, and the will of Christ Jesus. Are we willing to pay the price for eternal life? Are we ready to sit down and count the cost whether heaven is worth such a sacrifice as to die to self and let our will be bent in fashion into perfect conformity with the will of God? Until this shall be, the transforming grace of God will not be experienced by us. Did you hear that? Until we've done this, we will not experience the transforming grace of Christ.

Just as soon as we present our emptied nature to the Lord Jesus and his cause, he will supply the vacuum by his Holy Spirit. We can then believe he will give us of his fullness. He does not want us to perish.

You see, there's a relationship between our dying to self, being emptied of self, and the Holy Spirit's ability to fill us with himself. Some people have asked me the question, they said, Dan, when you talk about

dying to self, does that mean you're calling us to become doormats and benevolent nobodies? You know, this feels good, walk all over me. No.

The purpose of dying to self, the purpose of being emptied to self, is for the sake of being filled by the Lord Jesus Christ. Okay? And I can tell you that when he's the one in charge, he has you doing things and going places that you never dreamed possible. I told you, you know, I wander.

Last year and a half, I've been to New Zealand four times. I've been to Fiji twice. I've been to England, to Canada, to the United States.

I'm going to Cambodia, Thailand, later to England, back to New Zealand, probably Australia. All, by the way, by faith. No payroll.

No one's saying, Dan, we'll pay you. Sometimes the money comes ahead of time. Sometimes the money comes during the time.

Sometimes it comes within days after I get back home. But God knows what he's doing. And if he's busy and you don't say no, okay? Because, see, I believe that when the invite comes, it's not for Dan, it's for him.

And if I say no, I'm in effect saying no for him, and I can't do that. And it's amazing what he can do, because it's a life that's not about Dan, it's about him from beginning to end. Let's continue.

Line 44 on the same page. How few are aware that they have darling idols, that they have cherished sins. God sees these sins to which you may be blinded, and he works with his pruning knife to strike deep and separate these cherished sins from you.

You will want to choose for yourself the process of purification. How hard it is for you to submit to the crucifixion of self, but when the work is all submitted to God, to him who knows our weaknesses and our sinfulness, he takes the very best way to bring about the desired results. See, we all want to configure, you know, how God would purify us, how God would change us, but only God really knows the best way.

Can we trust him? Can we trust him? Page 21 now, at the top of the page, line 3. In order that we may die to self, we are called upon to endure trial, and when the chastening hand of the Lord is laid upon us, we are not to fret and complain and not to rebel, not to worry ourselves out of the hand of Christ. We are to humble ourselves before God, pleading with him to give us rest and peace. We enter the furnace of affliction with our hearts darkened by selfishness, but if patient under the crucial test, we shall come forth reflecting the divine image.

Okay? If we are willing to trust God, trust what he's doing, he will make an entire change in our lives. Line 33, same page. On one occasion I spoke in reference to genuine sanctification, which is nothing less than what? A daily dying to self and a daily conformity to the will of God.

Turn to page 22 now. Two more quotations on this, and then a little story, and then we'll move to the last section. Line 18.

You are to die to self to crucify the flesh with the affections and the lust. You need not devise ways and methods to bring about your own crucifixion. Self-inflicted penances are of no avail and will be found worthless when the test comes upon you.

We are to surrender the heart to God that he may renew and sanctify us and fit us for the heavenly courts. I remember when I was sharing this at Pioneer Memorial Church, and Pastor Dwight sat on the front row and said, Dan, you've convinced us about the need to die to self, but you can't leave until you tell us how we die to self. Is that a good question? Absolutely.

How do we die to self? What did we just read there? She says that it's not for us to figure out, devise ways and methods of bringing about your own crucifixion. Okay? We can't devise our own method. Line 27.

No outward observances can take the place of simple faith, but no man can empty himself of self. We can only consent for Christ to accomplish the work. Then the language of the soul will be, Lord, take my life, for I cannot give it.

It is thy property. Keep it pure, for I cannot keep it for thee. Save me in spite of myself, my weak, un-Christlike self.

Mold me, fashion me, raise me into a pure and holy atmosphere, where the rich current of thy love can flow through my soul. It is not only at the beginning of the Christian life that this renunciation of self is to be made, at every advanced step. Notice.

No man can empty himself of self. You can't do that. How does it happen? I believe that from my experience, and I can show you one good example in the Bible, is that God providentially orchestrates the circumstances that force us to release into His hands those things that we find so impossible to surrender.

Okay? He knows each one of us, and He will literally sometimes bring us kicking and screaming because we don't want to surrender. And He'll put us in situations where we have to accept His way of working. But as a result of that, we die to self in that area too.

Sometimes, because we have no choice but to endure. But out of that process, we learn. Think of the children of Israel.

You know, they had severe problems in Egypt, didn't they? For 80 years, their life was falling apart. Wasn't it? More than that. When they were being enslaved, and the male babies were being killed.

And they were praying, weren't they? You know why their prayers weren't being answered? Because they were praying, bless me in Egypt prayers. And God is not in the business of answering, bless me in Egypt prayers. When we pray, bless me in Egypt prayers, you know what happens? God makes our life more difficult instead of better.

God makes our life harder. Because it's so hard to get Egypt out of our blood. When they finally were ready to go, what did they always think about? Oh, if we were back in Egypt, right? But that journey through the wilderness was a progressive journey of dying to self.

First, God's voice is serious. You have to accept it. God's direction, going to the Red Sea.

Accepting God's way of deliverance. And then, accepting God's timing, three days to the hot desert sand. Accepting God's bitter disappointment at Mara.

Accepting God's blessing. Accepting the Sabbath. Accepting God's way of health.

Accepting the Ten Commandments. Accepting God's leadership. All of that stuff was a progressive journey of dying to self.

And He's going to take each one of us down that journey, providentially. They're not the ones that chose to go to the Red Sea. It seemed an absolute trap.

There was the water before them, mountains on each side, and the Egyptians behind. And for all they knew, they were going to die and they were ready to go back. But God spoke to Moses, and Moses, you know, he raised his rod and the waters parted, right? And they went forward.

And that which had been the obstacle to them became God's way of deliverance in their lives. And they were saved. Okay? And for us, often this process of dying to self, the way forward looks impossible.

And on each side are circumstances that we can't change. And behind us, guess what is running from behind? Our past. And the devil is saying, you've never changed before.

Don't expect a change now. Okay? That's what he says. But as we, by faith, obey, God takes us through.

Sadly, like the children of Israel, even though we have head knowledge, sometimes we haven't learned to trust Him enough to actually do what we know. And so instead of crossing over the river to take Jericho, as you heard this morning, we go back into the wilderness. I say this morning because the other church, I heard a few minutes and they were talking about taking Jericho.

They went back into the wilderness and there they enjoyed wilderness blessings, not promised land blessings. And many of us have become so accustomed to wilderness blessings that we think that's all there is. Eventually they came back.

They crossed the river and God took the city down. You know how it happened? They obeyed consistently. They obeyed unitedly.

They obeyed in a peculiar way. No one had ever seen that before. But because they did their part, God could do His part.

And those walls came down. And that which is impossible does, if we will obey and trust God, will come down too. But it's a progressive journey where God leads us intentionally in a way that our lives will change.

A little illustration from my own life. Some time back I was dating someone, thoroughly in love with her. Because I'm divorced, I'm single.

And we were talking about things like marriage. But I just wasn't convinced that she wanted to have the vagabond kind of life that Dan had. Because sometimes I'm on the road for two months and I'm in a different house every couple of days.

And that means that you're always in a fishbowl and you're always getting acquainted with people and doing all those things. And two months is long, but that's okay. But I wasn't convinced.

And so one day I told her, I said, You know, I said, you need to really make a decision about whether you want to be married to me considering the kind of lifestyle that I have. And then she said, well, what if someone wants to date me? And it's like, you know, that's between you and God. It can't be between you

and me.

And I was fine because I was fairly convinced she'd come back to me. But one day she started dating someone else. Told me about it, you know.

I think she was wondering what I was going to say. I said, hey, it's between you. And she's married to the person now, okay.

Has a baby. We're not enemies. But I went into depths of despair over the whole thing.

I stopped eating. I stopped sleeping. It was horrible.

Forget Weight Watchers and all those other things. Just, you know, serious breakup for Dan. It just changes his whole lifestyle.

Some of you know what I'm referring to. And finally, in desperation, I said to God one day, God, unless you help me, I am not going to survive. And that evening, the Lord suddenly spoke to me out of the blue.

And God has a way. When he speaks, it's very short, but it's absolutely profound. You know it's him.

Only happened to me a few times. He said the following. He said, Dan, write her a letter goodbye.

And by the way, your struggle is not with her. Your struggle is with me. Do you trust me? Wow.

That changed things. You know, I was worried about whether she was making the right decision, you know, and if this guy was right for her and had I done the right thing. God, in effect, said, I'm the one that impressed you that you needed to, you know, give the space.

Can't you trust me? And I said yes. And where I had felt no peace before, suddenly I felt peace. Went to sleep for the first time and actually slept until four o'clock in the morning.

Woke up thinking about this letter. I'd never written a letter like that before. Was I saying goodbye to her or saying goodbye to the relationship? I didn't know what was going on.

And in the, maybe the fog of waking up, I imagined that perhaps there was a hole open in the ground next to me. And I kind of looked in the ground and I imagined that she was down there and I was kind of, you know, burying my problem. I said, no, I like her too much.

I would never do that. And then the Lord spoke again and said, no, it's not her down in the hole. It's you down in the hole.

And I get to hold the shovel. You no longer have to worry about this relationship. To me, that taught me a great deal about dying to self.

Dying to self is not getting rid of your problems. It's actually giving your challenges to God. And accepting what happens from Him and somehow He knows what He's doing.

It's you in the hole and God holding the shovel. But as we trust God, as He leads us forward, that which was so impossible before becomes very possible. And it is life changing.

So we talked about two costs. One was pride, you know, accepting our nothingness so we truly receive Jesus. As our personal Savior receiving His pardon and receiving His righteousness.

And then the other problem is the cost, okay, of control. Losing control of our lives so that He will be the one in charge. I have to point out something to you as we go into kind of the last little mini-section of what I wanted to share.

And that is that we've only heard about what I refer to as the emptying half of sanctification. We haven't heard yet about the filling half. And if I only stop now I would do you a great disservice because we are emptied of self.

We die to self for the purpose of what? Being filled by the Lord Jesus Christ. And Adventists are really good on the surrender side. But we rarely understand the need to receive Jesus as a living Savior as well.

So let's talk about that for just a few moments. If you would, turn with me to about page 24 and we will look at some of the things there. First of all, this first quotation on line 18 of page 24.

It says, The work of sanctification begins in the heart and we must come into such a relationship with God that Jesus can put His divine mold upon us. We must be, notice, emptied of self in order to do what? Give room to Jesus. Now that you have heard some of these things, you're going to find these concepts all through the writings of Ellen White.

The incredible thing is you hardly read anything at all about it. It just amazes me. So we must come into a relationship with God that Jesus can put His mold.

We must be emptied of self in order to give room to Jesus. I'm on line about 18 now. But how many have their hearts so filled with idols that they have no room for the Redeemer of the world? The world holds the hearts of men in captivity.

They center their thoughts and affections upon their business, their positions, their family. They hold to their opinions and ways and cherish them as idols in the soul. But we cannot afford to yield ourselves to the service of self, holding to our own ways and ideas and excluding the truth of God.

Line 23 now. We must be emptied of self. But this is not all that is required.

For when we have renounced our idols, the vacuum must be supplied. Did you notice that? When we have renounced, the vacuum must be supplied. If the heart is left desolate and the vacuum not supplied, it will be in the condition of him whose house was empty, swept and garnished, but without a guest to occupy it.

And the last day of that man was worse than the first. As you empty the heart of self, you must accept the righteousness of Christ. Lay hold of it by faith, for you must have the mind and the spirit of Christ that you may work the works of Christ.

If you open the door of the heart, Jesus will supply the vacuum by the gift of his spirit. And then, and then, and then, you can be a living preacher in your home, in the church and in the world. You can diffuse light because the bright beams of the sun of righteousness are shining upon you.

Your humble life, your holy conversation, your uprightness and integrity will tell to all around that you are a child of God and an heir of heaven, etc. You see, dying to self is for the purpose of receiving Jesus as a living Savior. If we do our part, he will do his part.

Do you see that? Do you follow? Is that clear? I'm curious. We've vaguely known that, but do you see it maybe more based on what we've shared this afternoon? I hope so. It certainly was something that looked very new to me when I first saw it.

Look at Romans, actually not Romans, let's look at John chapter 15. John chapter 15. Speaking of the vine, it says, I am the true vine and my father is the vine dresser.

Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he takes away and every branch that bears fruit, he prunes that it may bear more fruit. You're already clean because of the word which I've spoken to you. Abide in me and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me and I in him bears much fruit, for without me you can do nothing. So if we're abiding, how much fruit will we bear? Much fruit.

If anyone, verse 6, does not abide in me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered, and they gather them and throw them into the fire and they are burned. If you abide in me and my words abide in you, you will ask what you will and it shall be done for you. By this my father is glorified that you bear much fruit so that you will be my disciples.

Now when we think of the life of a branch, what do we know about the life of a branch? Here are a few suggestions. When you think about the life of a branch, particularly in relationship to the vine, what do we know about that branch? It depends on the sap, okay? Good. What else? Requires a connection.

Constant connection, right? Requires a connection. What else? Excuse me? It has to be pruned. Absolutely.

I haven't noticed too many grape vineyards down here, but up where I live they're beginning to put more and more vineyards. And they prune them mercilessly, okay? Mercilessly. Because otherwise they'll just be branches and not fruit, so they have to be pruned.

What else? Does the branch have any identity apart from the vine? Does the branch ever say, look at me and look what I can do? No. The branch, it is completely dependent upon that vine and its life is but an extension of the vine, right? And when it's pruned, does it say, whoops, here we go again? No, it just sits, it endures because, well it has no choice, but you know looking upon it, it's because the one doing the pruning knows what he's doing, right? And as I read in one book, I thought it was a very helpful thought, that the vine dresser is never closer to the branch as when it's pruning, okay? The person pruning is never closer as when he's actually doing the pruning. So if we're going through a pruning experience, it's not that God has abandoned us, but it's because he is so close, you know? The devil would suggest, and I think we can understand the bigger picture now, he would suggest that God has forgotten about us, because he doesn't want us to successfully undergo the dying to self process, okay? Because our very dying to self allows the Holy Spirit to come in and it defeats his purpose.

So the devil doesn't want us to do that. Now notice, if you would, with me some verses about the new life that is possible. Look at 1 Corinthians 1, verse 30.

This is the kind of life that God wants us to have. 1 Corinthians 1, verse 30. It says there, So Jesus becomes what? Wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

All of those things become ours in Jesus. We've already read Galatians 2.20, but let's look at it one more time in the context of what we've just read. Galatians 2.20. It says, I have been crucified with Christ.

It is no longer I who live, but who? Christ who lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. I no longer live, said Paul.

It's Jesus that lives in me and lives through me. Philippians 1.21. We read that as well earlier, but I think you'll see it in a new way. Philippians 1.21. For me to live is what? For me to live is Christ.

Look at Romans chapter 8, verse 2. It says, For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. And you know, I read it as for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ has set me free from the law of sin and death. You can vary where the break is in that phrase.

And it speaks of a life and how that life, Christ's life, is the one that gives us the new experience. Has made me free from the law of sin and death. Look at 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 22.

It says there, For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. Or in Christ all shall be made alive. Do you agree that in Adam somehow we all die? Do you agree that in Christ we all can live? The verse says that, but I'm not convinced that everyone is as quick to believe it and actually live that.

Okay? You know, we're quite convinced about the fall. We're not nearly as convinced about the potential of a new resurrected life. That's because we have such a tendency to, as Adventists, especially on the surrender, the giving side, not as much on the receiving side.

Look at 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 57. Same chapter. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory, how? Through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to God who gives us the victory, how? Through Christ Jesus our Lord. 2 Corinthians 2, verse 14. 2 Corinthians chapter 2, verse 14.

It says, Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph, where? In Christ. We're always led in triumph in Christ. Look at Galatians chapter 5, verses 22 and 23.

It's somewhere in here. Here we are. It says, But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness and faithfulness, and gentleness, self-control against such there is no lot.

And those who are aware are Christ have crucified the flesh with his passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. In other words, the fruits of the Spirit come in this relationship.

Those who are Christ have done what? Have crucified the flesh. There has been a change. Look at 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 17.

It says there, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is what? A new creation. Old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new.

Okay, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new.

Look at Ephesians chapter 1, verse 3. It says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, where? In Christ. Okay, we've

been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ. Look at, finally, 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, verses 23 and 24.

1 Thessalonians chapter 5, verses 23 and 24. It says, Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He says, May you be completely sanctified.

Verse 24, He who calls you his faithful, who also will do it. Okay, he's faithful, he'll also do it. So, if you get discouraged, don't look at yourself.

If you do your part, then you can say, God, I've done my part. Please, come in and live in my heart. Live in me.

Live through me, if necessary. Live in spite of me. Make an entire change.

Make an entire change. Now, let's look at some quotations that go with this. Page 25, line 23.

A union with Christ by living faith is enduring. Every other union must perish. Page 25, line 23.

Christ first chose us, paying an infinite price for our redemption, and the true believer chooses Christ as first, last, and best in everything. But this union costs us something. It is a union of utter dependence to be entered into by a proud being.

All who form this union must feel their need of the atoning blood of Christ. They must have a change of heart. They must submit their own will to the will of God.

There will be a struggle, notice, with outward and internal obstacles. There must be a painful work of detachment, as well as a work of attachment. Pride, selfishness, vanity, worldliness, sin in all of its forms must be overcome if we would enter into a union with Christ.

The reason why so many find the Christian life so deplorably hard, why they are so fickle, so variable, is that they try to attach themselves to Christ without first detaching themselves from these cherished idols. You see, there you see the need to die to self so that we can receive Christ. Now, line 43 again.

And I've read this quotation before, but I must give it to you again. The Lord Jesus loves His people, and when they put their trust in Him, depending wholly upon Him, 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.

He acts through their faculties and causes them to choose His will and to act out His character. Is that not good will, based on what we've seen? You see, He'll even cause us to choose His will and to act out His character. Could there be anything better than that? Would you not agree that that is truly the ultimate definition of righteousness by faith? It's not just a righteousness in a legal kind of forensic, you know, His character has been placed, you know, to my credit, but it's where actually our lives become changed, and we become increasingly like the model, like Jesus.

Line 49. When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart, a change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature.

The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own what? His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul that's kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan. You see, this life is about a new power in the new heart.

And I'd like to say something to you that's quite radical. Victory is not so much a behavior as it is a person. You see, victory is not something I have, but victory is something that happens as Jesus is living His life in and through me.

And so if our behavior is an issue, instead of focusing more on our behavior, guess what we need to do? We need to focus more on Jesus, and He will lead us down that pathway of dying to self in whatever area, showing us, you know, often what we have chosen not to surrender, and then He will lead us onward, and then, you know, through it, and then onward as well. Let me see if there's anything else that we should truly make sure we... I have to share one more paragraph. It's starting on line 26, 30, and then I'll be done, okay? It is hard for those who are slaves to sin and evil habits they have long sought to overcome to believe that by simply accepting Jesus and yielding to Him, they instantly receive a new nature and a power enabling them to live a new life.

This is Meade McGuire at this moment, okay? He says, it's hard to believe that by accepting Christ, we get a new nature. Yet this is true, and countless thousands have experienced this mighty miracle. Man of himself not only has no life, but no peace, no victory, no faith, no righteousness, nor any other attribute of God.

The Father gathered up all these blessings and bestowed them upon us in the precious gift of His Son. Nothing has been withheld. All is embraced and included in the one great gift.

Is it not strange, he asked the question, that everywhere men are praying and pleading for that which has already been graciously given in Christ? Okay? They pray for peace, but the Father answers, I've already bestowed my peace upon you in Christ. Receive Him, and you have peace. Men pray for life, and the reply is the same.

I have given you eternal life. It is in my Son. Receive Him, and you have life.

Men cry to God for victory, and the answer is, there is no victory for humanity except in the victory. Now, Christ took our humanity in one everlasting victory, not for Himself, but for men. In the same way that life and peace are gifts, so is victory a gift.

Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory. Why do men struggle and fight to obtain what comes as a gift in Christ? They talk of victory on this point, and victory on that point, when if they would only believe it, Christ is the victory on every point. How about that? Is that not good news? Now, here's the quotation from Ellen White.

This is kind of the capstone to everything else. By faith you became Christ, and by faith you are to grow up in Him, by giving and taking. This is from Steps to Christ now.

You are to give all, your heart, your will, your service. Give yourself to Him to obey all His requirements, and you must take all. Christ, the fullness of all blessing, to abide in your heart, to be your strength, your righteousness, your everlasting helper, to give you power to obey.

You see, we must not only give all, we must take all. And it brings about an entire change. That's the secret of the more abundant life.

It's not about me, it's all about Him. And when we realize that we can't, when we come to our nothingness, God begins to lead us providentially, carefully, correctly, to the point that we increasingly empty ourselves of areas that we don't want to surrender. Sometimes one finger at a time, kicking and screaming, but He still leads us until we get to the point where we're willing to be God's person, doing God's work, God's way.

And Hudson Taylor said, God's blessing, he put it this way, he said, God's work done God's way will always bring God's blessing. And if we're not experiencing God's blessing, there's a pretty good chance we're either not doing God's work or not doing God's work God's way. And because of that, we're just experiencing what we can do on our own.

God wants you to experience the more abundant life. As I have learned these things and I have surrendered my life more to God, He has sent me on amazing journeys. I wish I could share more stories, I won't take the time.

But trust me, it works. It really, really works. I'm not perfect.

I don't claim to be perfect. But I'll tell you what, the things that were impossible before, they're no longer an issue. And God is leading me further in my trust with Him.

It's a progressive journey. Praise God for that. Now, we're at kind of a break time.

They said we were supposed to network for a while. Would you like to take a break for like ten minutes? And if you have questions, come back. I'll be here and I can answer your questions.

But we should take a break. I'd like to have a word of prayer in closing. And then we'll take a break.

And if you have questions, you can come back. Father in heaven, I am grateful that you have allowed us to consider this matter of the more abundant life. I've tried to share how we need that life, Lord, that you called us to it, the world is looking for it.

There will be consequences in terms of our friendships and in terms of our own lives if we don't pursue it. Lord, I've tried to show as well that there is a cost admitting that we can't do it on our own, that it's not righteous by works at all, and that somehow at some point you call us to die to self, to surrender, to be empty, so that you could have the last word, in fact, all the word from beginning to end. And Lord, in the Bible it talks about counting the cost.

Counting the cost. And I pray, Lord, that there's not a person here who doesn't trust you enough to not say, Lord, I'm willing to give you a chance with my life. As we give all, please flood us with your life.

That voice, that saying, this is the way, walking in it, that I'm with you, be a good share, I have overcome the world. Might you be everything including our victory. Reach each one of us wherever we are today.

And thank you that you are with us as we study together. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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