

The More Abundant Life

by J. E. Davis

The sermon emphasizes that the abundant life, as taught by Jesus, is a life of fruitfulness, sacrifice, and service to others in the kingdom of God.

Scripture: John 12:24, John 15:8, Romans 12:1, 2 Corinthians 9:6, Ephesians 3:20

Topics: "Discipleship", "Evangelism"

Description

J. E. Davis preaches about the abundant life as the core teaching of Jesus, emphasizing the principle of multiplying life for moral force. Jesus calls for a life of fruitfulness, where disciples are willing to give up everything for the salvation of others and zealously extend the kingdom. The true mark of discipleship is bearing much fruit, evangelism, missions, and giving, as seen in the lives of various historical figures and missionaries who poured out their lives for others.

Transcript

Carnegie Hall, Wednesday Afternoon, October 12.

The more abundant life is the kernel of the teachings of Jesus. The Father's law of life on creation morn, that life should multiply and fill the earth, was the principle Jesus applied to moral force. According to Jesus, "except a

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grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone."

The rich young ruler was taught to sell all he had and give to the poor, and come and give his life in wholesome service for the salvation of the world. The inheritance of eternal life in him was to become the fruitfulness of the kingdom in behalf of others. Nor would Jesus suffer the eye of a disciple to be turned aside from this fruitfulness, but each one must leave all to follow him. A man who would put his hand to the plow and look back can not fruitfully abound in the kingdom of God, and is refused by Jesus.

The abundant life is the fruitful life. Spiritual, mental and bodily force once spent in temporal lustful pursuits is now spent in zealously extending the kingdom. Such is the true mark of discipleship. "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit: and so shall ye be my disciples." Again, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." And yet again, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." Barren

trees are cursed, and fruitless branches burned. Thus fruitfulness, evangelism, missions, giving, is the true earmark of discipleship.

John Wicklif was a disciple of the abundant life, and the fruitfulness of his labors leaped from isle to mainland, found good soil in Prague, the Bohemian capital, and brought forth John [128] Huss and Jerome. Martin Luther was a disciple of the abundant life, and his disciple spirit turned Wittenberg into a Jerusalem, and set all Germany singing the songs of a Protestant evangelism. The fruit of his discipleship was a saved Germany. John Wesley and George Whitefield were disciples of the abundant life, and their soul-winning spirit was the fruit-bearing power among Kingswood colliers, the London rabble at Moorfields and Kennington Common. Alexander Campbell, Walter Scott, Barton W. Stone, "Raccoon" John Smith, Knowles Shaw, and others who labored with them, were disciples of the abundant life, and their passionate zeal for the salvation of men kindled the mightiest evangelistic company of either Old or New World fame since the days of the apostles. Their hope of uniting the religious forces of Christendom on the New Testament basis for the salvation of the world was a stupendous undertaking and a vision of the larger life.

And such disciples, rich in the abundant life, were Morrison, Judson, Carey, Wharton, Livingstone, and others. A life overflowing, poured out for others, an evangelistic, a missionary life, an abundant life in Jesus Christ our Lord, was theirs. In all these, the abundant life flowed out profusely, watering barren continents and races, and bringing forth bountiful harvests to the Lord. Theirs was passionate living. Men who have been enlivened by the spirit of Jesus no longer live themselves, but Jesus Christ lives in them. Persuaded by the personal example of Jesus, they present their bodies as a living sacrifice to God. Their biographers bear them record that first of all, in their abounding life, they "gave themselves" to the Lord.

Nor is this abundant living to heralds of the gospel alone. The rope-holders, the supporters of missionaries, have it to their record that "beyond their power" have they succored the laborers and the needy. Deprived of the privilege of giving "utterance" to their hope, they "abound in faith, knowledge, and in all earnestness, and in love to one another," and also in the grace of giving. They have labored and believed that it is His will that the abundance of the Christian life in everything shall become a supply at this present time to minister to the need of others. They have joined the great cloud of missionaries, evangelists and martyrs in presenting their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto the Lord, counting it only a reasonable service. Such are not in bondage to the tithe system. They may give, not less, but more, than a mere tithe to God.

William Carey, when superintendent of an indigo factory at Mudnabatty, at a salary of \$300 per year, gave \$100 to missions. Later, when Professor of Bengali, in the Government college at Calcutta, he received a salary of \$3,000 per year, \$2,800 of which was given to missions. When he finally assumed the labors of three languages in the same school and his emoluments rose to \$7,500 per annum, he still lived on \$200 and gave \$7,300 to missions.

When John Wesley's income was \$150 he lived on \$140 and gave \$10 away. When his salary was increased to \$600, he still lived on \$140 and gave \$460 to missions. Like the Corinthians, "in a great trial of affliction the abundance of his joy and his deep poverty abounded unto the riches of his liberality."

Some years ago a young man graduated from Princeton. He volunteered for the foreign field. The physical examination proved that he would not be able to endure the strenuous life of a missionary in a tropical land. He went into business and has been successful. Since he began to acquire competence, he has set

apart a certain portion each year for foreign mission work. Last year he not only supported a missionary, but gave, in addition, in the neighborhood of \$2,000 toward a house in China for his sister, who, inspired by his example, went out a few years ago as a missionary. In this man, "the more abundant life" entered the money markets of the world and compelled base things to declare the "more excellent way."

Alpheus Hardy in youth had a burning desire to train himself in college to be a minister. His health broke down and he was forced to give up even his pursuit of a college education. The painful cry of his crushed heart [129] was, "I can not be God's minister." In his distress he threw himself on the floor and wept aloud. But ere long, through his tears, there appeared to him a new vision. It was clear to him that he could make his business life a sacred calling, and that he could make money for God. With this new idea of life he joyfully arose and went to Boston and engaged in the merchant-marine trade to make money for God. God worked with him and his profits were abundantly increased. During the sixties a young Japanese lad, having heard of Christianity, his soul burning within him for a Christian education, fled from his native land and was in hiding at Shanghai, China, waiting for a chance to escape to America. Hither the Father brought a ship owned by Alpheus Hardy, on which young Neesima hid himself, revealing himself and offering to work as a sailor after the ship had put to sea. The desire of Neesima's heart was made known to Mr. Hardy, who persuaded the young Japanese to enter Phillips Academy, the very school from which he was driven by reason of ill health, for an education at his expense.

It was God's open door to Mr. Hardy. He was not permitted to complete his education in Phillips Academy, but he could give such training to another. He could not prepare himself to preach God's word, but he would support and train one who could do such work. After nine years of thorough college training, fully educated and prepared for his work in Japan, prominent persons in this country and the "Sunrise Kingdom" contributed large sums for the establishment of Doshisha College in Kyoto, Japan. Hundreds of pupils were soon thronging its halls of learning. One of the most remarkable revivals of the Japanese renaissance spread from this school. The work of Joseph Hardy Neesima and his school in Japan is an agency for the multiplication of heralds of the gospel, made possible by the more abundant life in the bosom of a layman, who went forth into the business world to make money for God.

In a modest Kentucky home, a half-century ago, there resided a gentle-natured family, mothered by a woman who desired that her son should walk in the footsteps of Jesus in his ministry of calling men to repentance. For some good reason this son was never able to fulfill his mother's desire to become a minister, but was thrown upon his own resources in the business world. But even here his heart and his plans were for the kingdom of God. He seems to live for but one purpose--to make money for the support and service of the church of Jesus Christ. The heavenly Father has generously blessed his business increase until to-day the unnumbered gifts of R. A. Long have enriched and made possible the enlargement of almost every benevolent and missionary enterprise carried on by the brotherhood.

A soul goes forth on mission bent, touches and quickens another. The one quickened, touches and makes alive still another. Heaven alone will be able to measure the abundance of the increasing life of that initial laborer. Even so the zealous layman through his money possesses a multiplying power and shares in the glory of the redemption. Money speaks all languages, possesses the gift of unknown tongues, laughs at discouragements, never breaks down in health, climatic conditions do not weary it, claims the world as its habitat, and preaches the gospel in tracts and books long after the hand of the translator has crumbled to dust. The word "abundant" is taken from the Latin word *unda*, meaning wave. The great ocean is the home of the wave. There it was born when God made the seas. There it was when great heroes of commerce or discovery sailed forth to conquer its baffling power. There it is this moment--the

boundless wave. There it will be when Gabriel calls us home. And this perpetual motion, this ceaseless wave of the sea, rolling on and on through the ages, never ending, and rebounding only to rise and express its power again, is Jesus Christ's picture of the abundant or "boundless life."

Such is the abundant life. Abounding in joy and happiness; in sacrifice and service; in life and in death; in earning and giving; in the tears of the sower and the songs of the reaper; in fertility and fruitfulness; in prayers [130] and in preaching; in the Word and in the Holy Spirit. And from such a state "shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

"Now, unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen."

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