

He Came
To Bring Us Life
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To Bring Us Life **John 10:7-10**

Well, good morning. If you have your Bibles then I invite you to take them and turn with me to John 10. All right. If you would look in John 10:7-10. We're going to look continuing at why Jesus came. Why Jesus came. Now not only to set the captives free. Not only to destroy the works of the devil. Not only to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. But this morning we see that Jesus came to give us life. If you would, read with me in your copy of God's Word, John 10:7-10: *"So Jesus again said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.'"*

Would you join me as we pray? Our Father in heaven, we are grateful – supremely grateful – this morning for the life that we find in Christ alone. And I pray that this morning as we look into your Word that you have so graciously given to us, I pray that by your Spirit that you would speak to us and that you would lift our affections toward Christ, and that we would enjoy – indeed, that we would enter into His life, and that we would enjoy it in all of its fullness. For your glory and for our good, we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

Well, Christmas is certainly a happy time for most people, for many people. But it appears that some people who enjoy Christmas the most are at the greatest risk of facing disappointment. I wasn't aware of this. I never heard of it, but apparently a lot of people suffer from what are called post-Christmas blues. Some times they even term it post-Christmas depression. And I was reading some sufferers, some people who were testifying to this, and these are some of the things that they say.

One person said, "I am good until the morning of Christmas Eve. That's when I realize it will all be over soon, and I'm already miserable. Then I have to spend the day with my family on Christmas, which only makes me more unhappy." One person named Kate said, "Ever since I was a kid, Christmas Day was bittersweet, because the day is here, but bitter because I knew it was over. I thought I was the only one who felt this way. I can't help feeling so sad when it's over. Even though there are other things to look forward to, like Spring, there's just a glow missing. I can play Christmas songs, but it's not the same."

And then Jeff really caught my attention more than anyone. He had several paragraphs. He said, "Wow!" And this is obviously from last year. He said, "Wow! January 21st, and I'm still having feelings of post-Christmas blues. I had to look it up on Google to see if there was some kind of disorder I had." That's where all sound medical advice is found, in case you were wondering. "Maybe there was a clinic or something that I could go to and get cured. It's comforting to know that there are others with the same feelings. "My season starts near the end of November when the local Santa Christmas parade comes to town. After the first day in Advent, the Christmas lights can be turned on. The Christmas decorations can go up,

and so can the tree. Then the Christmas CDs come out from their dusty collection. I start to browse through the TV guide to make sure I don't miss any of my favorite shows. And then January hits and the party is over. All the decorations come down and the music goes away. The TV is back to the same old shows. The food and the drink is no longer festive and it's time to go back to work. I look out my front window at the winter scene of snow falling over a while world, expecting to see reflections of the lights from the Christmas tree, but they are not there. Sigh. Only 337 days till next Christmas."

Well, I want to suggest to you that there must be something more to Christmas than that. I want to suggest that there is something that exceeds gifts and trees and music and food. Something that outlasts a weekend. Something that indeed lasts all year.

Two Designs upon Our Lives...

Something that extends all the way until eternity and that is the life that we have in Christ and Christ alone. And so what I want to do this morning is I want to walk you through, and just remind you and show you really two designs upon your life. One, the design of the thief, and two, the design of Christ, and then how it is that we might respond to the life that we find in Christ. Notice first there are two designs upon our life.

The Design of Devastation

The first, there is a design of devastation. There is a design of devastation. I want you to look with me in verse 10. We're going to kind of look in verse 10, then we're going to walk our way sort of back up to the top. When you read John you sort of have to kind of read a passage and then sort of take it all in because oftentimes the message is the same, and it's about Christ. But we're going to look beginning in verse 10, and that's really the key verse of the passage, where Jesus says, "*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy*" (John 10:10).

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy, and so we have to ask the question, "Well, who is the thief?" Who is it that Jesus has in mind here in these verses? And He doesn't exactly say, but we do find a clue at least in verse 8. And so move back up the passage if you would to John 10:8 where Jesus says, "*All who came before me are thieves and robbers.*" He uses the same term there - "thieves" and "robbers." "*All who came before me...but the sheep did not listen to them*" (John 10:8).

So Jesus identifies these people as thieves and robbers. You say, "Well, who exactly is He talking about?" Well, again, the context is the answer to that question. So we have to back up even to chapter 9. So if you would, flip back over just one page, perhaps, in your Bible to John 9.

Who are these thieves and robbers that Jesus has in mind? Well, He kind of lays it out here. We have a story; it's a familiar story to many of us. You remember there in verse 2 that they passed a man who was born blind from birth and they asked a question. They said, "Rabbi" - His disciples said, "*Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?*" (John 9:2). So they see the man on the road and they ask the question, "Who is it that sinned? This man or his parents?" Because someone must have sinned. Jesus said, "Well, neither one of them, but in order that the glory of God might be shown in his life he was born this way."

And so you kind of work through the passage and you see there in verse 13 who the antagonists are. In verse 13, *"They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind"* (John 9:13). So they bring the man to the Pharisees. So the Pharisees evaluate whether this is from God or not. In verse 16 their motives are revealed. *"Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath'"* (John 9:16). And so they began to question the man about his belief and who is it that did this?

And you remember – it's a great line from that John 9. They just keep on pressing him and pressing him and pressing him about whether he believes, this blind man believes that Jesus is the Christ. So he says, "I don't know whether he's from God or not. You'll have to decide that. But one thing I do know I was blind, and now I see." And you'll notice as you flip back over to chapter 10 that the context never really changes. In other words, there's never a place where you shift and say, "Well, now Jesus is moving over to this place," or "Now Jesus is moving over to these people." It's kind of an unfortunate place where a chapter division has been inserted in the text, and so you see that chapter 9 flows right into chapter 10. Jesus says, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and robber"* (John 10:1).

And so Jesus is in this passage – in John chapter 9 there is the division between the Pharisees and Jesus, which one is from God. And so in John chapter 10, that dialogue continues, but now Jesus is the one controlling the dialogue, and He is going to distinguish who it is that is from God and who it is that is opposed to God. Which one is of God indeed? And so Jesus in John chapter 10 is distinguishing His way and the way of the Pharisees.

We see that in John 10:7. Again, they don't understand. They don't understand, and so Jesus again says to them, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door to the sheep"* (John 10:7). And so He reveals the intention of the Pharisees. They intend to steal, to kill, and to destroy.

But that really begs the question for us, because we don't have Pharisees in the same way. And so we don't have a group of religious leaders in this same exact context that are trying to trap us, trying to trip us up. But now I want you to notice something very carefully. We do not have the Pharisees trying to trip us, but we absolutely have the very same mastermind behind them that is trying to trip us every single day. We have the ultimate thief, and his name is Satan.

In John 8:44, I want you to listen to this. This is what Jesus said of the Pharisees. Jesus said, *"You are of your father the devil"* (John 8:44). You hear that? Jesus said to the Pharisees, *"You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer"* (John 8:44)—thief, kill, steal and destroy. *"He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies"* (John 8:44).

We do not have the Pharisees, but we absolutely have the thief, who is scheming, who is plotting, who is devising, who is strategizing every way that he can possibly do to eliminate, to destroy, to devastate you and your family and everything you love. We absolutely have an adversary who is attempting to destroy our life. He is a thief, and know this: the design of the thief is not open. The design of the thief is concealed. The design of the thief is concealed.

Just the very nature of a thief is to use deceitful methods. And so really there are two parts to what a thief may do. First of all, the immediate pleasures are highlighted. His ways are concealed; they're not broadcast openly. So the immediate pleasures of life are highlighted.

So he may come in all kinds of forms. He may come through all kinds of people. He may come through all kinds of institutions. But try alcohol, try drugs, try sex, try pornography, try money, try fame, try prestige. Try anything whatsoever, but do not try Jesus.

That is the design of the thief. It is concealed. The immediate pleasures are highlighted. And notice also the inevitable wreckage is hidden. The immediate pleasures are highlighted and the inevitable wreckage is hidden. His design for your life – he will not broadcast every scene in its entirety. You understand that, right? He will not tell the end. He will not point out the heartache. He will not point out the destruction that it will inevitably bring. He will not point out the relationships that you will ruin. He will not point out above all things, he will not point out the judgment that we will inevitably face, and there are people right and left, all over the world, from the beginning of time until now until the time of Christ's return. There are people indeed even in this room. Perhaps there are people in your home that are falling for his deceit, hook, line and sinker.

And they believe. They believe the lies that he tells. If I can just get one more thing. If I can just have this measure of success. If I can just attain this piece of position. If I can know this person. If I can get into this place, then I will have peace. Then I will have satisfaction. I'll have everything that my heart desires, and I will be happy. And Jesus would say the very same thing to the people who push those things in your life and to Satan himself – they are nothing but thieves and robbers. And they do nothing but come to kill and to steal and to destroy. They do not care about the sheep. The design of the thief, it is concealed.

But notice also the design of the thief is comprehensive. Not only is the design of the thief concealed, the design of the thief is comprehensive. Look at his mission there in verse 10. Notice the thief is devoted to total destruction. Verse 10, "*The thief comes only (underline the thief comes only) to steal and kill and destroy*" (John 10:10). In other words, the thief is not interested in the slightest in my happiness. He is not interested in the slightest way in any joy that you may have that is everlasting, that is eternal, that is real.

We can talk about the mission of God, and we maybe sing about the mission of God, that He is redeeming a people for His own glory and for our good. That is happening, but that is going to continue to happen till Christ returns. But there is a competing mission as well. Jesus has a mission to redeem people for His glory and for their good, but there is a competing mission that Satan is on, that Satan desires only to steal and kill and destroy. And he is intentional about that mission.

Not only is the thief devoted to total destruction, he is intentional about it. He is intentional about total destruction. Notice that it says that he comes. Jesus comes – notice the parallelism in verse 10. Jesus comes to bring abundant life, life abundantly, in the same way Satan comes only to kill, steal and destroy. He has a purpose in mind, and he has a plan to go about doing it in your life.

A week or two ago, I was watching TV. Leslie and I were out of town and we were watching a special. It was one of those kind of 20/20, Nightline specials, something like that. And the story line of the night was a group of people, a small group of people that were facilitating illegal adoptions from the island of Samoa. And we watched and sort of learned that there was a couple that was conducting illegal adoptions over and over – as many as a hundred adoptions from Samoan families.

And what they would do, they would oftentimes when the American parents would arrive to adopt these children, these children just hours before had been ripped from their parents'

arms. You say, "Well, how did that happen?" Well, a number of the people that they were working with were illiterate, and so they crafted a document that was very careful and had lots of footnotes and lots of fine print. And as the parents thought that they were signing their children up for international aid and particularly for American aid for food and clothing and shelter for their children in the fine print, it was an admission that they were absolutely turning over their rights to any parent who may come to receive them.

As many as a hundred adoptions had been conducted in this way. As I watched, I remember commenting to Leslie. I was just reflecting on really the depth of the wickedness of that. And thinking, "You know, that's not a crime of passion, but rather it's a crime of purpose and of planning." It's an intentionality about destroying the lives of families and destroying the lives of little children. And I thought as I was reflecting on this message, that is not so different than the design of the thief.

There is an intentionality. There is a design. There is a carefulness. There is a preparedness that Satan goes about, that the thief goes about. And he has designs upon your life, and it is not the same design that is upon my life that is upon your life. And he crafts it according to our weaknesses, according to our backgrounds, according to our temptations. He is crafting an intentional design to destroy you. But as a side note as David preached a few weeks ago – fear not, for Jesus has come to destroy the works of the devil. There is an intentionality. There is a design of devastation.

The Design of Delight

But the good news of Christmas is this: beside this design of devastation upon your life, there is a design of delight. And this is the design of Jesus. This is the supreme design of Jesus found in verse 10, where it says that "the thief comes only to steal, to kill, and destroy." But there is the design of Christ, and that is in the latter part of the verse. "*I came that they may have life and have it abundantly*" (John 10:10).

And even before we walk in through this verse and look at what Jesus is saying about abundant life, I just want to point out the contrast, and I want us to glory in the contrast and revel in the contrast that there is a thief who has a design to destroy you. But there is a Savior who has a design to give you life.

Notice first in the design of life the design of Jesus is abundance. The design of Jesus is abundance, and that is eternal life. That Jesus came to give us life, and not just life, but life abundantly. And there are all kinds of abuses that may take place at this point if we're not careful. We hear people say, "You know, Jesus came to give you life, and He wants you to have an abundant life. And so He wants you to have everything that you desire; everything that you want. That abundant life is about getting Jesus and it's about getting other stuff as well along with Jesus.

And so Jesus wants you to have life, yes, He wants you to be saved. But Jesus ultimately wants you to be healthy, to be wealthy, and to be wise. But abundant life is not about having what only the world can offer. Abundant life is having what only God can offer. Abundant life is not about having what only the world can offer. Abundant life is about having what only God can offer, and what only God can offer is eternal life. And we see that as you back up into verse 9. He says, "*I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture*" (John 10:9). It's really an explanation of what comes in verse 10. He will be saved. This is what abundant life means: he will be saved, and he will go in and out and find pasture. The design of Jesus is abundance. It is eternal life.

But not only is it eternal life – what is eternal life? What is the life that Jesus promises? Well, we find also that the design of Jesus, it is simple. It is the knowledge of God. Not only does He come to save us – what does it mean to have life? I looked over this verse and this term over and over and over, just praying and asking God what does it mean to have life? We know what it means to be saved. To be taken from the clutches of Satan to the embrace of God. We know what it means to be saved in terms of having the forgiveness of our sins. But what does Jesus mean when He says, “I came that you may have life and have it abundantly?”

It’s interesting that the concept, the term “life”, is used over 40 times in the Gospel of John alone. 40 times the term “life” is used. But if you look, and you begin to look at every single instance of where “life” is used, you begin to see that this term “life”, there’s a lot of places where you find that Jesus is life, and that Jesus brings life, and how do we get this life, by trusting in Christ. And there are all kinds of places where we see those kinds of descriptions, but very rarely do we have an actual explanation of what life is.

And that is until you get to John 17. Now I want you to flip over there; it’s a verse you might want to mark in your Bible because it’s really the only place that I know of that John explicitly defines life. In fact, that Jesus explicitly defines what is life. In John 17 beginning in verse 2 – this is Jesus’ prayer, what sometimes we call the high priestly prayer. It’s Jesus’ prayer on behalf of His disciples that were there, and then as you read on you see it’s Jesus’ prayer regarding His disciples going forward through all time.

And so here is what Jesus prays. In verse 1, when Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said this, *“When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, ‘Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent’”* (John 17:1-3).

What is eternal life? If someone were to ask you, “What do you mean when you say that you can have eternal life?” Is all that is meant by eternal life is that we have a life where we never die? In other words, it’s a quantitative idea that we continue in existence for all of eternity. Well, the truth is we believe that about unbelievers as well. That everyone who is created will never die. They will die the second death, but it will be an eternal punishment. In other words, their soul and their body will live on forever under the very wrath of God. But that is not eternal life.

Jesus says that eternal life is to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. In other words, it is to be in a relationship. It is not merely academic knowledge, not merely “I know His attributes, I know His character, I know things about God.” But it is to be in a relationship with Him. And not only to know God the Father, but to know His Son, Jesus Christ, whom He has sent.

You know the contrast just could not be sharper. The contrast between the design of the thief and the design of Christ it could not be weightier. Satan holds out for us all that the world can offer. 1 John 2:16 says, *“...the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life...”* That is what is held out for us as life as we know it. But then Jesus holds out life in verse 4 of chapter 1, and John says, *“In him was life, and the life was the light of men”* (John 1:4).

So it’s really simple. As we’ve learned in the last couple weeks, really there are only two kinds of people. There are only two kinds of ways. There are only two kinds of destinies;

two kinds of eternities. We can have all that the world offers for a season, and we can live under the wrath of God eternally, or we can know God now and live with Him forever.

You know Paul knew both sides. Paul was a Pharisee. He attained to the highest levels. He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He had the right background, the right lineage. He had the right pedigree. He had a sharp mind. He had the right character. He was a leader, and he was ascending in the ranks in Jewish society. But then he met this man named Jesus on the Damascus Road, and all of that came crashing down.

So he knew what it was to be a Pharisee and have everything that this world affords, and he knew what it was to have Christ. And listen to what Paul said in Philippians 3:7-11, *"whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord."* Do you hear what Paul is saying? "I count everything as loss." It is refuse. It is worse than you can possibly imagine. All of those things, all of the attainments, all of the success, all of the pedigree, all of those things now are worthless, he said, "compared to the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ, my Lord." *"For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death"* (Phil. 3:8-11).

I suspect that there are many people in this room who know Paul's story very well. That this world has nothing to offer. That this world has nothing that lasts, nothing that satisfies, nothing that brings everlasting peace, nothing that saves. And Jesus comes to bring every bit of that. He said, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

Two Responses with Our Lives

There are two designs upon our life. There is the design of Satan upon your life, and there is the design of Christ upon your life. There are two designs upon your life, but notice also there are two responses with our lives. Two designs upon our life and two responses with our lives. There certainly could be others, but I just want to point out two for you this morning.

Enter by the Door

First, we enter by the door. We enter by the door. Two responses from our life – first, we enter by the door. Look back up to verse 7 where He begins this particular section. *"So Jesus again said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep'"* (John 10:7). Now Jesus uses this expression "truly, truly" in a number of different places. It's not that the other things that Jesus says are unimportant. Indeed, everything as the Word of God to man, everything that Jesus said is of precious value to us. So all of His words are true. All of them are right. All of them are good to us. But certainly we see in the ministry of Jesus that He desired to highlight certain things that were of life-and-death character, and this is one of them.

He says, "Truly, truly." "Verily, verily," some translations say. "Indeed, I am the door of the sheep." First, Jesus points out that the door is personal. He points out first of all two truths. That the door is personal. He says, "I am the door of the sheep."

Now it's interesting; if you read this passage and you look through it, it can be kind of confusing. If you begin in 10:1 and you read all the way through, because you'll find that Jesus speaks in a lot of different ways; uses a lot of different metaphors. He talks about sheep where there are multiple sheepfolds and there are multiple shepherds. Then He looks in here in verse 7 where He is the door. Then you get over to verse 11 and He says, "I am the good shepherd." And so he's taking this sheep idea and he's using different metaphors, different expressions of it throughout.

But here in verse 7 He says that "*I am the door of the sheep*" (John 10:7). Oftentimes when the shepherd would lead sheep away from – in particular lead them away from the city or lead them away from what was sort of home base in a sense. Oftentimes when he would lead them, at night it would be too far to return to where they were. And so in order to manage the sheepfold at night – obviously, if you just sort of turn in for the night and you let them wander, you're going to lose the sheep. And so he would build often an enclosure – usually four sides. And he would take whatever he could find, whether that was stones, or whether it was just rubbish, or maybe briars. And he would pile them up, and so he would make sort of a fenced enclosure that would prevent the sheep from going out. But obviously he didn't have time or didn't have the resources, oftentimes, to make a door.

And so in place of making a door, the shepherd usually would simply sleep in the doorway. And so that's why Jesus says here in verse 7, "*Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep*" (John 10:7). So that the only way of entering in that context, in that situation, the only way of entering is by the door. Is indeed through the shepherd. And Jesus is paralleling that with a spiritual truth, which is to say this: that there is only one way to salvation, and it is not a system. It is not an organization. It is not a church. It is not any set of rules. Salvation is through a person, and that person is not you. That person is not me. It is Jesus Christ alone. He says, "I am the door of the sheep."

And not only is the door personal, the door is singular as well. The door is personal – the shepherd would sleep across the doorway so that the sheep could only go through him. But also we learn that the door is singular. He says – literally it says, "I myself am the door." It's the same expression that we find in all the other "I am" statements in the Gospel of John. If you look in the Gospel of John, you'll see that there are seven places where Jesus speaks about being something. He says, "*I am the bread of life*," in John 6:35. In John 8:12, "*I am the light of the world*." Here He says, "*I am the door*" (John 10:9). Verse 11 He says, "*I [myself] am the good shepherd*" (John 10:11). In John 12 we find that He is the resurrection and the life. In John 14, the way, the truth, and the life. In John 15:5, "*I [myself] am the vine*." In every single instance He used the very same construction: "I myself." In other words, to exclude any possibilities. It's almost in a sense bad grammar, but it is great theology. "I am the door, and there is no other way to eternal life."

Now that's not certainly in our context... It certainly wasn't popular when Jesus said it. But in our context, this is not a popular truth. To say that Jesus is the only way to salvation. And while it may not be a popular truth, it is the truth. Because of all the people in human history, Jesus of Nazareth is the only one born of God and of man. He is the only one who is perfect in word and deed. He is the only one who bore your sins and bore my sins and bore the sins of the world. He is the only one who was buried and who was raised for our justification three days later. He is the only one who has ascended to the right hand of the Father. He is the only one who is interceding for you and me, and for all of the saints. And He is the only one who is reigning King of kings and Lord of lords. And He is the only one who will return as that King. And He is the only one here in this passage – He is the only one who can give you life.

He is the only one who can give you life. Acts 4:12, *"There is salvation in no one else. There's salvation in no other name given among men whereby we must be saved. 1 Timothy, "there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"* (1 Tim. 2:5).

And so I don't know where you're at this morning. You may be a member of this church. You may just be here visiting family. Maybe it's Christmastime and you felt, "You know what, I just need to go to church." Well, I would urge you above going to church, above entering in these doors, enter in this door, Jesus Christ. I urge you above all things. Above getting that next promotion. Above buying another house. Above having a new relationship. Above attaining anything this world can offer. Above all of these things, anything that the world can offer. Above these things, enter in the door of Jesus Christ. He said, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." We respond by entering into the door.

Enjoy Christ's Provision

But not only that. Not only do we enter the door, turning from our sins and turning to Christ. We not only enter the door, we enjoy His provision. We enter the door, and we enjoy the provision of Christ.

You know, I suspect that many of us are somewhere in the middle. That we have entered in the door of Jesus Christ; that we have been saved from our sins; that we have truly placed our faith in Christ. And we are – I pray that this is God's grace in your life. I think that many of would say that we are increasingly dissatisfied with everything that this world can offer. And we find in comparison to Christ, over and over, day unto day, week unto week, year unto year, that there is a decreasing allure to the world for us.

But we also find that the sway and the invitation of the thief does not go away. And so the war continues in our soul, day after day and year after year and decade after decade. Paul even said, *"I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members"* (Rom. 7:22-23). He prayed even, *"Who will deliver me from this body of death?"* (Rom. 7:24). In other words, there is a continuing struggle that goes on even in the life of the believer... There is a continuing struggle that goes on of turning from the world, over and over and over, and turning to, and turning to Christ.

So what do we do? How do we win that battle? How do we fight that fight? How do we enjoy the provision of Christ fully? This Christmas even, how do we know, how do we enjoy, how do we take in and appropriate what Jesus says here in verse 10, "I came that you have life, and not just life, but have it abundantly." I think there are two things that are demanded.

Enjoyment of Christ's provision demands a repentant heart. Enjoyment of Christ's provision demands a repentant heart. I want you to understand that you know the tragedy – when we follow the designs of the thief, even in small things or maybe in bigger things. When we buy what he is selling and when we turn away from the abundant life that we find in Christ and the joy that we find there, the tragedy is not only in the pleasure that we miss. The ultimate tragedy is in the glory that we despise.

The tragedy is not just in the glory – in the joy that we miss. We're going to talk about that in a minute. It's not just in the joy that we miss, but it is in the glory of God that we despise. Because when we submit to the designs of the thief, and when he holds out things for us that are contrary to the will of God, and he holds out things that are mutually exclusive, and they always will be. When he holds out things that are mutually exclusive to the joy that we find in Christ, and we choose the way of Satan, and we enjoy what he has

to offer, we by definition despise the character, the goodness, the glory, and the worth of God Almighty, because we say that what Satan has to offer is better than what Jesus offers. That what Satan has designed is better, is more worthy, is more appealing than what Jesus Christ offers.

And so I pray that we just beg and ask God, forgive us for belittling you! Forgive us for giving our praise and our affection and our adoration, our attention, to things that are not worthy, that are despised in comparison to the glory and the majesty and the worth of Almighty God. I pray that God would do that in my heart.

Because I feel, I feel that war, and I know that battle that Paul was speaking of in Romans 7. That the things that I want to do, I do not. And the things that I do not want to do, those things that I do. And that is the essence of the battle here that the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy. He holds out things that are not worthy of our life. Not worthy of our affection. Not worthy of abundant life. And Jesus holds out Himself. He holds out knowing Him. Knowing the power of His resurrection. Knowing abundant life. And I pray that God would send me to the cross, and that God would grant to me a spirit of repentance for despising His goodness and His glory in Christ Jesus. But praise God as well that He died for those misplaced affections as well. And having seen that, God help us to turn and to embrace everything that Christ offers.

It demands a repentant heart. But also it demands renewed desires. It demands renewed desires. Not only do we turn from, but there's a turning to as well. You've perhaps heard this quote; I think John Piper has sort of made it famous, but it's actually a quote from C.S. Lewis in *The Weight of Glory*. And this is what C.S. Lewis said,

Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels (and by the way, I think abundant life would fit in that category). If we consider the rewards that are promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition, when infinite joy is offered to us. Like an ignorant child, who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea, we are far too easily pleased.

We are far too easily pleased. We settle for the trash that Satan offers, and we despise the glory that is Christ. I think Isaiah 55 sums up really what C.S. Lewis is saying. God says in Isaiah 55:1-3: come. I want you to hear this. As you listen to the words of God, listen – this is God speaking to us. In the same way that you hear my voice, this is God speaking. *"Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live;"* (Is. 55:1-3). That is the invitation of God. That is abundant life. Forgiveness now and forever. Hope now and forever. Joy now, today, and forever. Peace now and forever. Contentment now and forever. Assurance now and forever. "I came," He said, "that you may have life, and you may have it abundantly."

The psalmist's prayer in Psalm 34:8 is this, *"Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good."* Would you do that? Would you taste and see the goodness of the Lord Jesus Christ? *"Taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him"* (Ps. 34:8). God grant us

repentance. God grant us repentance for preferring broken world – a broken world to a broken Savior. And may God incite in you and may God incite in me, this Christmas, this year, for all of eternity, may He incite in us a desire to enjoy everything that He has to offer. “I came,” He said, “that you may have life, and you may have it abundantly.”

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