

# Be Encouraged

Each week we end each webcast with the same phrase. We always leave you with, “Be encouraged, in Jesus’ name.” We say this on purpose. We mean it every time. Today we’re going to talk about being encouraged.

A few weeks ago we were talking about the birth of Jesus Christ. We were celebrating the season of Advent leading up to Christmas. One of the focal points of the birth story in the Gospel of Luke chapter 2 is the Angel’s announcement to the shepherds. Let’s read Luke 2:10.

(10) But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.

The angel said he had good news, and that good news was going to cause great joy for everyone! Joy! For everyone! Some translations say for all mankind, some say for everyone. Regardless of the translation you are most comfortable with, the news of the birth of the Messiah brings great joy to the world.

The world really needed some joy at that point. God had been silent to the Israelites for 400 years. Their promised land had been occupied by the Romans for quite some time. Their very existence was threatened daily. They were definitely in survival mode.

Have you ever been in survival mode? Just trying to make it moment to moment? Not knowing where your next meal was going to come from, or if you were going to get one? Maybe you were so much in debt you couldn’t see a way out? Maybe you are there now. Maybe you are in a living situation that is not good. Maybe you are so overwhelmed with the pressures of life and you are so discouraged at everything you are at the end of your rope and considering ending everything.

Many of us go through a season of surviving. But it is only a season. Many of us find ourselves in survival mode from time to time. The Bible tells us the rain falls on the just and the unjust. As long as we are living in this world, we are susceptible to the calamities and storms that this world experiences and the troubles in life that come from those calamities and storms.

The good news the angels brought though is supposed to bring great joy. The Israelites needed that then, and we need that now. Jesus brings us joy and life. Let’s read John 10:10.

(10) The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

That is the New International Version. Look at how the New King James Version puts it:

(10) The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. (NKJV)

Jesus says he has come to give life and to give it more abundantly! MORE ABUNDANTLY! That is awesome and it is a promise we need to cling to.



An abundant life is a life of excess. An abundant life is a life void of need. An abundant life is a life that spills over onto others. There is a reason Jesus gives us an abundant life. He gives us all we need to more than survive. He gives us enough to thrive, and when we thrive, we have more to share with others.

This abundant life is not isolated to physical things. Yes, you will have the necessary finances to live the life the Lord has called you to and you should have enough to share with others. This abundant life also gives you more joy than you need. It gives you more encouragement than you need. It gives you more wisdom than you need. It gives you more hope than you need. It gives you more faith than you need.

Why does the abundant life give you all these things? The answer is simple. Jesus gives you such an abundance so you can share with others and be a blessing to them as he is a blessing to you. This is shown before Jesus even starts his earthly ministry. We see John the Baptist starting to teach living life abundantly and putting others before ourselves. Let's read Luke 3:10-16.

(10) "What should we do then?" the crowd asked. (11) John answered, "Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same." (12) Even tax collectors came to be baptized. "Teacher," they asked, "what should we do?" (13) "Don't collect any more than you are required to," he told them. (14) Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?" He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely--be content with your pay." (15) The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. (16) John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

This is a life that is more than surviving, it is thriving! Let's thrive in this life we are serving here on earth. Let's hold on to the joy that is promised us through Jesus. Let's share what we have with others who need it, and let's continue to encourage one another on in amazing Jesus filled ways.

I personally find these verses very encouraging. On a day when I am discouraged, I make sure to connect with a brother or sister in the Lord who can help lift my spirits. These are brothers and sisters that are close to me and know me. These are brothers and sisters that know me and can encourage me. But they can't do it in and of themselves. They can only encourage me because they have been anointed to do so by Jesus Christ, the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Are you discouraged today? Are you just surviving? Are you at your wits, end? Take heart. As we read in Proverbs 3:5-6

(5) Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; (6) in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Trust in the Lord, friends. Believe in your heart he has your best interest in mind and a plan and purpose for you. A life for you. An abundant life. He has a hope and a future for you. And we are here to continue to lift you up, as others lift us up, as the Lord lifts us all up.

So, trust in the Lord, and be encouraged.

