

Life Group Topic #23

Abundant Life: John 10-1-10, Psalm 23

WELCOME: (15 minutes)

Today we will talk about thriving! Thriving is what life was intended to do, like a flower stubbornly pushing through a crack in the sidewalk. How would you describe your own emotional/spiritual life right now?

1. Thriving
2. Steady and sure
3. Wilting

WORSHIP: (15 minutes)

Use whatever means possible to turn the group's attention to the wonder and majesty of our God- including music, prayer, meditation on the Psalms, etc.

WORD APPLICATION: (45 minutes)

Briefly read or paraphrase the following sermon summary before moving to the heart of this section: the discussion around the application questions.

How are we doing? Are we thriving? Jesus will never be content until we are experiencing abundant life.

Read John 10:1-10 . The second sheepfold in v 7-9 is not in the town but in the countryside...a rough circle of rocks, piled into a wall. It had a small space, an opening through which the sheep could enter at nightfall. There was no door or gate so the shepherd would lie across the opening to keep out the wild animals...he would be the door or the gate for the sheepfold.

So what are the lessons of this metaphor...

There is only one door...one way into this sheepfold. Jesus said in John 14:6...*I am the way, the truth and the life, no one can come to the Father except through me.* He did not claim to know the truth, He said He was the truth. He did not claim to show the way to God, He is the way to God. He did not offer one other option for *zoe*, life in its essence, He said He is that life.

Jesus claim to be the only door is contested by thieves and robbers. The word thief speaks of those who steal by cunning and stealth. The word robber speaks of those who steal by violence. The challenge will be losing truth that Jesus intended you to have.

Anyone may enter and if you enter...

- You will be saved...you will escape sin's penalty...you will progressively escape sin's power until one day sin's presence will be gone.
- You will be safe...you will go in and out which is the picture of peace and security
- You will be satisfied...you will find good pastures...contentment

The clear promise for anyone who enters Jesus' sheepfold is a rich and satisfying life... *My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.* Words are of great significance in Scripture so don't miss the significance of the word abundance...

- Abundance speaks of satisfaction and satisfaction means to have enough
- Abundance come from 2 Latin words in English which mean to rise in waves or to overflow. It is a picture of being content in the knowledge that His ability will be more than sufficient for our needs...nothing can stop it and God's favor toward us will be unending
- Abundance in Greek has a mathematical meaning and speaks of a surplus like the 12 baskets that were left over after Jesus fed thousands of people with a boy's lunch

Word Application Questions:

Please keep in mind that these questions are meant as catalysts designed to get the group talking about life application.

1. **Jesus intention it to give us a rich and satisfying life- would this describe your life right now?**
2. **What are the barriers in your life to the abundant life that Jesus offers?**
3. **If abundant life is like a flower stubbornly pushing through a crack in the sidewalk, what are the cement slabs we might have to push through to know the satisfying life Jesus offers us?**
4. **Read Ephesians 3:20-21. How might this promise apply to us as a Life Group? What unimaginable things might God want to accomplish through us?**

OPTIONAL: Read Psalm 23: The abundant life is described here so take the time to share how you have experienced different phases of the abundance in your life using the Psalm as a guide.

- The Lord is my shepherd...how did that begin for you?
- I shall not be in want...how has that been played out in your life?
- He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters...when has that rest been your experience?
- He restores my soul...has there been an event that pictures that in your life?
- He guides me in paths of righteousness...when was His guidance most clear?
- Even though I walk through the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me...when was this your experience?
- You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies...my cup overflows—has this been your experience?
- Surely goodness and love will follow me...any application for you?

WITNESS: (15 minutes)

- **Make final preparations for the Love Abbotsford outreach**
- **Think of creative ways to do life together this summer**