

The Season of Advent: Love

This week we are blessed to have our brother Sylvester bring us our daily devotional. As we celebrate Christmas, let us focus on the source of our abundant life- a relationship with Jesus. I hope you and your family and loved ones have a very merry Christmas!

Living The Abundant Life Jesus Desires For Us

[Hope, Love, Peace and Joy]

Day 1

Many people erroneously believe that the abundant life in Christ Jesus is an abundance of things that cater to satisfying the flesh that make people feel good about themselves. The problem is the flesh can never be satisfied, the more it has the more it wants because things can't satisfy what begins in the spirit in and through God. Trying to satisfy the flesh is turning yourself into an idol for not only you to worship, but also the hope others will worship you because self wants all eyes on self. The unfortunate reality much of what we call worship Sunday mornings is ceremonial because it points to self disguised as pointing to God.

Living the abundant life God has called us to live in and through Christ Jesus begins with the cross, which leads to new birth in Christ Jesus, John 10:7-18. Abundant life wasn't and isn't cheap for we were bought with a price with the blood of Jesus, Romans 6:1-14. In order to walk in the newness of life in Christ Jesus's resurrection, we must understand what it means to be in relationship with God the Father in and through Christ Jesus. Proverbs 1:7, tells us, "The fear/reverence of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge." In, John 10, Jesus says His disciples know His voice, that's relational. In relationships knowledge reveals the intimacy of the relationship. Luke 10:38-42 reveals to us two very different situations about intimacy, Martha was caught up in tradition, the daily busyness of life, whereas Mary chose to break

tradition by sitting at the feet of Jesus, a tradition which was for men. Mary wanted something different than the daily busyness of life that was regulated to and for women. Her encounter with Christ Jesus as recorded in Luke 8:2 created a hunger within her for a deeper more intimate relationship with Him and Jesus didn't take that desire from her.

Day 2

Mary gives us a glimpse of what abundant living is like in the midst of the hustle and bustle of daily life. Abundant living begins at the feet of Jesus, spending time with Him intentionally daily. Even though hope is rooted in God's love, unlike peace, joy and love, hope is strengthened through our experience and our obedience to God. Therefore, hope is knowing because of sitting at His feet. Love, joy and peace are weapons of our warfare. Hope is where children of God live becoming more like Jesus. Hope is being transformed by the renewing of our mind which gives us confidence in Him because God's way isn't the way of this world, Isaiah 55:6-13; Isaiah 40; Romans 12:1-2; Romans 5:1-11; Christ Jesus is our living hope John 17.

Day 3

Mary shows us what resting in God looks like by her actions with Christ Jesus. The mistake people make is from lack of understanding due to the indoctrination of this world order which the devil is the prince of, and fallen man hunger for power and immortality in. Resting doesn't mean the lack of activity, but active participation. Sheep don't rest where the place hasn't been prepared, Psalms 23. Resting in God means peace, joy, love, hope experiencing the fullness of God thereby knowing Him more intimately. Resting in God means the Holy Spirit has spoken order into the chaos of daily life. The imagery of Genesis 1:2 speaks volumes, the Holy Spirit hovering waiting for us to allow Him to speak order to the chaos. Abundant living means starting the day with Christ Jesus because He knows the plans He has

for His children and He orders the steps of the righteous, Jeremiah 29:11; Ps. 37:23-24, Ps. 119:105.

Day 4

In Joshua 2:8-24 and in Ruth 1, are recorded accounts of what people see when they encounter children of God. In Joshua, Rahab saw hope and experienced redemption not only for herself but all in her house. In Ruth 1, Ruth experienced the love of God through Naomi, her mother in law. Do people see and experience Jesus in and through us? How do you carry Jesus? Do people see the joy of the Lord Jesus or do they see someone who lives their life as if God doesn't exist but yet have God talk in their mouth? God isn't looking for sinless perfection, but lives that are consciously surrendered to Him and only Him. Abundant living isn't about material things, but intimacy with God in and through Christ Jesus sitting at His feet as He molds and makes us. For God alone is the potter and we're the clay and all things were created by and for Him, Col. 1:16.

Day 5

Abundant living is resting and abiding in God through Christ Jesus, Matthew 11:28-30 and John 15. Abiding in Christ Jesus gives us the assurance of what God has planned for His children as recorded in 2 Timothy, John 15 and Gal. 5:22-26 as well as many other Scriptures. The abundant life in Christ Jesus is a lifetime of growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ Jesus. Growth is essential because God refuses to leave us the way He finds us. Abundant life in Christ Jesus is falling in love with God in and through Christ Jesus. God must be first in all things. Relationships are developed; they don't just happen by chance. Spending time with Him isn't an option when you want to experience Him in His fullness. How can you live in the spirit if you don't feed the inner man/new man? Back in the late 60's to the mid 80's the United Negro College Fund had a slogan that said, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste" and when a person claims to be in Christ Jesus and there's no

transformation by the renewing of your mind, who will you lead to the cross to encounter Jesus? Abundant living is for others to witness the glory of God at work in and through His children. When our neighbor can witness the glory of God in and through His children that's a sermon that creates opportunity to witness about the goodness of God. We, who are His children, are the signs and wonders of God's Amazing Grace that carry His presence in our heart. How do you and I carry Jesus is the question and issue. Hunger and thirst for Him alone and He will satisfy you while leaving you hungry for more of Him.