

LEADERTREKS **SERMON SERIES**

MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ find abundant life in Jesus.

SCRIPTURE

JOHN 10:10, PSALM 16

SERMON OVERVIEW

Students are given different versions of what a good life should look like every day in social media, in the songs they love, and in the shows they watch. When Jesus tells us that he came to give us abundant life, it can be difficult to understand exactly what he's promising and why it's better than what the world offers. In this lesson, students will hear Jesus proclaim that he wants to give them abundant life, and they'll grow to understand what that life really looks like.

OPENING

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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ICE BREAKER QUESTION

- How would you define "the good life?"

MESSAGE

Use the following teaching points and suggested illustrations as a starting point to build your message.

READ JOHN 10:10

POINT 1: Jesus is the only one who gives true life

The search for the "good life" is at the root of a lot of human motivation. For example, why try hard in school? So you can go to a good college, get a good job, and then afford the kind of life you want. Why slack off? Because you want the good life now—no pressure, no worries. But nothing we strive for will give us the good life. People disappoint, money runs out, and all possessions rot. If you want the good life, you need to look for something that you can't lose or grow tired of.

ILLUSTRATION: Pop culture has numerous examples of what many people expect the "good life" to be. An easy place to look would be any popular song in the past few years titled, "Good Life." In Kehlani and G-Eazy's track from a movie in the Fast and Furious franchise, the good life is being able to take care of the people you care about (your "day ones"), making money, and then spending money on jets, drinks and Bentleys.¹ In OneRepublic's hit from 2009, the songwriter wonders if his life of traveling the world and doing what he loves is the good life. Interestingly, he also seems to think that it may vanish any moment: "Hopelessly, I feel like there might be something that I'll miss. Hopelessly, I feel like the

window closes oh so quick.”² The world has a vision of the good life, but it pales in comparison to true abundant life with Jesus.

In this passage, Jesus shows us where to find the good life we want: himself. “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10, ESV). Jesus wants us to know that following him isn’t going to be a drag. But Jesus also gives a warning—anything else that might entice us is most likely a “thief.” Thieves promise to give us life, but they only take it from us.

So, what does abundant life look like?

READ PSALM 16

POINT 2: Unspeakable joy

In this Psalm, the author depicts a little bit of what Jesus is talking about when he talks about the abundant life that his followers look forward to. Much of the psalm is spent praising God for his goodness, which is displayed toward us in many ways. God is sovereign and has a good plan for each of our lives (vv. 5–6). He guides and counsels us (v. 7). He is our refuge and security (vv. 1, 8–10). And then David ends with the reminder of “fullness of joy” in God’s presence (v. 11). His mere presence will fill you with joy! That’s all we really want from the good life, right? Jesus promises that he will meet our need for joy in ways all our chasing never could. David, who wrote this psalm, even goes so far as to say, “I have no good apart from you” (v. 2). Only God is truly good, so how could we have a good life without him? The abundant life we find in Jesus is a source of true and unspeakable joy!

POINT 3: Unshakeable security

Nothing and no one we might chase in an effort to find the good life will last forever. But in God, we know we will never be abandoned. Not only does life with Christ give you joy, but you never have to lie awake at night wondering when it’s all going to go away. Throughout Psalm 16, David is confident that God is his refuge (v. 1) and that he is secure in the Lord (vv. 8–10). When we commit to a relationship with God, he also commits to us, so we can boldly say, “I shall not be shaken...For you will not abandon my soul” (vv. 8, 10).

ILLUSTRATION: When you read Psalm 16 and hear that God’s version of the good life means giving you unshakeable security and unspeakable joy, you might find yourself saying, “is that it?” Do you find yourself wishing that there were more tangible benefits? Consider for a moment that you are wired to need both of those to even survive. There is growing consensus in the scientific world that the one thing a child needs to grow properly is the ability to attach to a caring, dependable, and responsive person—typically the child’s mother or father. When a child has this, they have what is called a “safe haven” (a place where they know they are cared for) and a “secure base” (a place from which they can explore and take risks).³ When we are attached to God and hold onto him tightly, he gives us both a place where we know that we will be okay and a place from which we can adventure with him.

It can be tempting to look to things, experiences, or people other than Jesus for the “good life,” but true and abundant life is found in Christ. It is only through the abundant life Jesus gives that we can find everlasting joy and eternal security.

CLOSING REFLECTION

Use this prompt to wrap up your message and leave your students with a challenge to apply.

- What things or people do you find yourself prioritizing over your relationship with Jesus?

GROUP DISCUSSION

Pick a few questions from below to discuss. Close with prayer.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What risks might you be inspired to take with God because of your trust in him?
- Share a story of a time when you realized that God took care of you in this way.
- What examples of the good life can you think of in pop culture?
- How does the worldly example of the good life promise to satisfy you?
- How does the worldly example of the good life fail to truly satisfy you?
- Share a story of when you felt like following Jesus wasn't just something you should do, but something that you wanted to do.
- After reading these passages, how do you think Jesus feels about you?
- After reading these passages, how do you find yourself thinking about Jesus differently?
- How does knowing that you can have unshakeable security and unspeakable joy change how you think about your relationship with Jesus?
- What things or people do you find yourself prioritizing over your relationship with Jesus?

PRAYER

Close by praying or invite someone to pray for your group.

Use this space to keep track of any prayer requests.

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¹ Kehlani & G-Eazy, *Good Life* (Los Angeles: Artist Partners Group, 2017).

² OneRepublic, *Good Life* (Los Angeles: Mosley Music Group, 2010).

³ Mario Mikulincer, Phillip R. Shaver, and Ety Berant, "An Attachment Perspective on Therapeutic Processes and Outcomes," *Journal of Personality* 81, no. 6 (2013): 606-616.