

Good morning! In John 10:10, Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly." Paul writes to the Ephesian congregation, telling them (and us) that God will do "exceedingly and abundantly" above all they could ask or think. Are you experiencing the abundant life the Bible talks about? What does that even mean anyway? One of the things that holds us back from experiencing abundant life is that we are fearful. Another thing is that we never really have to take a stand for our faith. Have you ever shared your faith with someone else? I have never regretted sharing my faith with someone, have you? Having to rely on God in faith is wonderfully focusing and we encounter Him in a very different way than we do just by studying about God in Sunday School. All of us have seasons in our faith when different passages have greater emphasis than others. Today, let's read one together that has recently been very alive for me:

This I call to mind; therefore I have hope. The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Lam. 3:21-23

Isn't this a beautiful passage? Interestingly, it is taken from the Book of Lamentations, which we often think of as kind of depressing. In fact, this chapter begins with the words, "I am a man who has seen the rod of affliction." All of us will have to face some kind of affliction in this life. Abundant life has nothing to do with money, possessions, or even good health. Hebrews Chapter 11 is filled with the names of people who experienced God's abundance in life despite the fact that (or maybe because) they had to contend for their faith. We find abundance in life when we have to dig down to what really matters and then fight for it. Here's my fighting ground, the place where I take a stand: God is good. All the time. Whatever happens to me, whatever happens to my family or to my friends, does not affect that one, defining truth. Today's passage says, "This I call to mind; therefore I have hope." Remember that rule of a good biblical hermeneutic? That's right; "When you see the word 'therefore' find out what it's there for." Why then does Jeremiah have hope---and why can you and I have hope? Because the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. Because His mercies are never-ending. I'm talking to someone this morning. Things are not going well and you are starting to lose hope for your situation. Take heart Lift your eyes to see the goodness of God. I want you to know this morning that no matter what happens, you can have hope. God really is good. He cares about you ...and He's good all the time!