

“I have come that you might have life...and have it abundantly.”

JOHN 10:10

The Christian faith is often portrayed in very negative terms: When I was a boy, one of the messages I heard was Christians shouldn't "smoke, drink, dance, or play cards." Sound familiar? As a result my impression of many religious people was a pretty serious, pious, somber, even sour bunch. Who would want to be a part of that club, I wondered? Then I discovered a passage in John's Gospel which gave me a more positive, hopeful, and inviting vision of why Jesus came to earth. "I have come that you might have life...and have it more abundantly." Jesus has just described himself as the good shepherd and, like a shepherd; Jesus protects us from the dangers of the world. But his ultimate goal is to lead us to abundant and full life. Do you hear the echo of Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside still waters, he restores my soul' (Psalm 23: 1-2). We cannot deny or ignore the temptations or problems in our lives and in the world. But God's ultimate hope for creation is renewal and restoration. God's kingdom which has begun to dawn in Jesus, is a world where God's abundant blessings are generously shared with all people for sake of the whole creation.

Reflection Questions:

- Jesus said, "I have come that you might have life...and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). What does this mean to you?
- What are the things that give you the most joy and satisfaction? (material item or relational?)

Family Activity:

Create a family "abundance" list (strengths/assets) and write a short (3 sentences) family pledge with ways your family can share of its abundance of time, money, prayer, or service with others.

Teenage Activity:

Life is wonderful when you feel that you "fit in," but sometimes we don't feel like we do. Too fat, too skinny, too shy, not smart enough – we all have lots of doubts about ourselves and need the reassurance that we're okay. Text or email a word of encouragement to someone who needs it!

Adult Activity:

Take a moment to think about what gives meaning to your life. Are they things or moments of care and love? What can you do to share the love and care that Jesus gives at home, community and world?

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, help me to...