



LIFE IN ABUNDANCE

June 2019

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

John 10:10

This picture came to mind as I was waking up from a nap a while ago. I took it in 2013 on a trip to the Greek islands. Strange how thoughts and memories will appear out of the blue—often just after a night's sleep or a mid-afternoon nap.

The moment the memory of this picture entered my mind, my heart did a skip and a jump. I remembered the boy's spirit—his joy, his apparent love of life. I knew I would have to share his

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picture with you. Could it bring a joyful dance to your heart as well? Good feelings need to be shared.

The boy's spirit reminds me of the abundant life Jesus talks about in the scripture above. One definition for *abundance* is "an extremely plentiful or over sufficient quantity or supply." That abundance is what I think I felt when I accepted Jesus into my heart. I had a sense of freedom and joy I didn't have before. I had become a new person, a child of God.

Jesus says that he can bring such a life to those who believe that he paid the price for their sins. Those who believe that he sacrificed his life on the cross and made forgiveness possible.

Believers come to realize Christ's immeasurable and everlasting love. After all, why else except out of love would anyone give his life in such an excruciatingly painful death?

Life changes happen for those who accept Jesus and follow him. They find a reason for living they hadn't known before. A life with Jesus overflows. It's exhilarating. And burdens aren't as heavy because Jesus will help carry them.

Sometimes I feel like the boy in the picture. Simply existing delights me. I'm happy to say that I know what abundant life is like.

But don't get me wrong . . .

. . . having abundant life doesn't mean I'm always happy or that everything is always fine. Like most people I deal with periods of depression and many other problems. At times I've suffered. It's all part of living with an imperfect body in an imperfect world. It's all part of being human.

But Jesus understands. He too suffered. We're not on our own when we deal with pain and struggles. If we stay close to him as we would stay close to a best friend, he'll be at our side, giving encouragement, giving us hope.

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