



St. Luke's East Hampton

Sermon Preached by the Rev. Benjamin Shambaugh

April 26, 2026; Easter 4A: [Acts 2:42-47](#) [1 Peter 2:19-25](#) [John 10:1-10](#) [Psalm 23](#)

“I came that you might have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10) Initially people often think of abundance in terms of finances. Great finances can be a great blessing. You can do a lot with a lot of money. As the song says, however, “Money can’t buy you love.” I have known very affluent people who are very happy and very affluent people who struggle in all kinds of ways. There are rich people who feel poor and feel like they never have enough and poor people who feel rich and incredibly blessed. Abundance could refer to finances. It could also refer to physical health. Health, strength, and physical and mental agility are wonderful things that we take for granted until they are gone. Don’t we all feel like we are 30 years old inside... that is until we look in a mirror or try to go for a run or do some of those things we used to do? Though physical health is great, there are many people whose experience of physical illness and adversity has led to health in other areas of their lives, given them great spiritual gifts, and helped them connect with others and with God. Abundance could be about physical health, but some of the strongest people I know aren’t physically strong as all. Maybe it’s about family. I am one of five kids (11 if you count steps) and Shari is one of six. Our children know first cousins, second cousins, and cousins once removed. Our family is big and our church family is even bigger. Families can be the source of amazing joy. Families can be places of incredible dysfunction, generational suffering, and pain. Finances, Physical health, family all come to mind when we think about abundance in human terms. In God’s mind, abundance is even more.

Consider the 23rd Psalm. The 23rd Psalm is one of the few pieces of scripture still repeated in the Elizabethan words of the King James Version of the Bible. Unfortunately, this beautiful prose can be easily misconstrued. “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want” does not mean that we don’t want him. It means that we shall not be in want, that we shall want for nothing.

To quote a less poetic but clearer translation, “The Lord is my shepherd, he supplies my every need.” The Good Shepherd not only supplies our needs but gives us so much that our cup overflows. Today’s gospel is John 10:10. In John 15:11, Jesus repeats this theme, saying, “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full,”

The Greek word translated as “abundance” means “extraordinary,” or “beyond measure.” To understand this passage, we need to go beyond this and look at the meaning of the Greek word for the “life” which abundance describes. In Biblical Greek, physical life is referred to as “bios.” (Think “biology.”) In this passage, Jesus doesn’t use bios. Jesus uses “zoe,” a word which refers to spiritual or divine life—the life of God. The life Jesus is talking about is deep within us, the still waters of our soul. This life leads to a way of seeing a world, not just as half full but overflowing with enough abundance. Jesus is offering us Shalom: the peace of God which passes understanding, that peace which is not just the absence of war but about the absence of the anger and fear and anxiety that lead to war in the first place.

In the book of Acts, we hear that the disciples lived in common, sharing their resources with whoever was in need. Their generosity came because they had experienced the generosity of God. They were able to bless others because they knew that they had been blessed. They were able to do for others because they know what the God who knows them each by name had already done for them.

In today’s gospel, Jesus describes himself as the gate. He opens the door, calls his followers by name, and leads them to pastures where they can grow and thrive. He warns against false shepherds who use a combination of fear and false promises of abundance to keep people penned up and penned in. False shepherds were as common in Jesus’ day as they are in our own. Today, Jesus is giving us a choice. We can follow those false shepherds or we can follow one who loves us and calls us by name. Jesus said, “I have come that you might have life and have it abundantly.” May we make that shepherd - and that abundance – our own.