

# THE BAD NEWS AND THE GOOD NEWS

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## Text: John 10:10

■ Many men would love to lead the life of Sean Connery. Tall, handsome, and dashing, Connery played the glamorous part of 007 in six James Bond movies. Connery travels the world to shoot movies in places exotic as equatorial Africa or the Orient. In addition to acting, Connery works as the producer of films, a position of considerable power.

Yet when asked in an interview why, at age sixty-two, he continues to act, Connery gave a surprising reply: “Because I get the opportunity to be somebody better and more interesting than I am.”

Many people feel like Connery. Their lives aren’t all that they could be. They aren’t as good as they should be. Something is missing that even glamorous acting roles cannot fulfill. (Larson, 9)

What’s missing for many, is the life that Jesus Christ offers. In the previous verses, Jesus tells us that He is the Good Shepherd, the One who protects, gives and sustains the life of the sheep—which is a picture of His relationship with us.

But then in our text he refers to the “thief.” The thief is the one who wants to break in on the sheep and steal and kill or simply take from the sheep—in this case you and me. It’s a picture of those who have used and abused the people of God for their own gain over the centuries. It is also a perfect picture of Satan and his work since the beginning. He sought to steal the worship and glory of God in the beginning and nothing has changed since—he is still trying to steal kill and destroy.

With this in mind, we get to the heart of the matter. We’ve all heard the saying; “I’ve got some good news and some bad news, which do you want first?” Well, concerning our lives, Jesus gives us the bad news first and then the good news.

## **I. THE *BAD NEWS* IS THAT THE THIEF HAS COME.**

### **A. The thief, Satan, has come to kill.**

■ Someone has said that, “God never threatens; the devil never warns.”

-- Oswald Chambers, *Leadership*, Vol. 3, no. 1.

He will attack swiftly and without warning because he is a murderer and his work is to take from you any semblance of life that you may have.

### **B. He has come to steal.**

■ Clayton Bell says, “There are two big lies that Satan has been perpetrating ever since the Garden of Eden. The first is that God is mean, vindictive, a spoilsport whose main role in life is to keep us from being fulfilled and happy—when we step out of bounds, he takes delight in making us pay.

The second lie is that God really doesn't care what we do—probably doesn't know. And if he does, his business is to forgive us. He'll always forgive no matter what, so it really doesn't make much difference how we live and what we believe.”

-- B. Clayton Bell, "Many Happy Returns," *Preaching Today*, Tape No. 135.

It's when we start believing Satan's lies that he really begins to be able to steal from us. In a sense, he is stealing by deception—not an obvious tactic but a very effective one.

### **C. He has come to destroy.**

Destruction is the goal of the thief, what he cannot have or control he wishes to destroy. Satan's work has never been about building anything. Even the act of building his kingdom is all about the tearing down of the people of God and the things of God.

## II. THE *GOOD NEWS* IS THAT JESUS HAS COME.

### A. The coming of Christ cancels out the coming of the thief.

The coming of Christ was a voluntary act of intervention. He chose to come for the very purpose of destroying the works of the devil.

Some will say,

*"Satan has always been able to kill"*

I say, "THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW!"

*"Satan has always stolen"*

I say, "THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW!"

*"Satan has always been a destroyer"*

I say, "THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW!"

### B. Jesus has come that we might have LIFE.

The life that Jesus offers begins with our accepting all that He has for us. He doesn't offer His assistance or His advice. He is not serving in an advisory position. If we want the "life" that He offers we must accept all that He offers—He must be Lord.

■ A fellow who had been reared in the city bought a farm and several milk cows. In the feed store one day he complained his best cow had gone dry.

"Aren't you feeding her right?" asked the storeowner.

"I'm feeding her what you've been selling me," said the man.

"Are you milking her everyday?"

"Just about. If I need six or eight ounces of milk for breakfast, I go out and get it. If I don't need any, I don't get it--I just let her save it up."

The feed storeowner had to explain it doesn't work that way. With cow's milk, like God's presence, you take all that's there, or you eventually have nothing. Asking for God's power in six-ounce doses, or asking sporadically only at our convenience, may mean that for us, the source dries up.

-- Don Aycock, Franklinton, Louisiana, Leadership, Vol. 6, no. 3.

### **C. He has come that we might have ABUNDANT LIFE.**

Abundant life is not a separate stage or level for the believer to achieve but rather the norm. It's not "life" and "abundant life" it's life and that (life) in abundance.

■ In Ephesians 1:17-19 Paul writes, I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the *eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.*" NIV (Italics added)

■ Oswald Chambers writes, "As long as the devil can keep us terrified of thinking, he will always limit the work of God in our souls." -- Oswald Chambers in *If Thou Wilt Be Perfect*. Christianity Today, Vol. 33, no. 17.

## **CONCLUSION**

■ In *God's Smuggler*, Brother Andrew tells in the first couple of chapters the story of his early life—one section of which dealt with his hell-for-leather days in the Dutch army in Indonesia. While serving in that area, fighting against Sukarno in the late 1940s he bought a young ape, a gibbon, who took to him, and Andy treated him as a pet in the barracks. He hadn't had the gibbon for many weeks before he noticed that when he touched it in some areas around the waist it seemed to hurt him. So he examined the gibbon more closely and found a raised welt that went around his waist. He carefully laid the animal down on his bed and pulled back the matted hair from this welt until he could see what was causing the problem. He discovered that evidently when the gibbon had been a baby someone had tied a piece of wire around his middle and had never taken it off. As the monkey grew larger the wire became embedded in his flesh. Obviously, it must have caused him a great deal of discomfort. So that evening Andrew began the operation, taking his razor and shaving off all the monkey's hair in a three-inch-wide swath around his middle. While the other boys in the barracks looked on, he cut ever so gently into the tender flesh until he

exposed the wire. The gibbon lay there with the most amazing patience. Even when he obviously was hurting him the gibbon looked up with eyes that seemed to say, "I understand," until at long last he was able to get down to the wire, cut it, and pull it away. Instantly, as soon as the operation was over, the gibbon jumped up, did a cartwheel, danced around his shoulders, and pulled Andy's hair in joyful glee to the delight of all the boys in the barracks. "After that, my gibbon and I were inseparable. I think I identified with him as strongly as he with me. I think I saw in the wire that had bound him a kind of parallel to the chain of guilt still so tight around myself—and in his release, the thing I too longed for."

--James S. Hewett, *Illustrations Unlimited* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988) p. 68.

There is no reason to allow our lives to be dominated by fear, misfortune, calamity and destruction. We've been save "unto hope"—the expectation of a better life—and why not? We need to stop living in the "*then*" and start living in the "*now!*"

#### References

Larson, Craig B. (Ed.). (1996). *Contemporary illustrations for preachers, teachers and writers*. Grand rapids, MI: Baker Books.