

## UNITINGWORLD SUNDAY SERMON TRANSCRIPT 2026

*Dr Sureka Goringe*  
*John 10:10 — Life, Abundantly*  
*Filmed at Pitt Street Uniting, May 2026*



*[OPEN: Greetings reel from partners]*

Did you feel that?

That sense of connectedness. To something bigger than yourself. Something that stretches across oceans and languages and centuries of faith.

As Christians in Australia, it can be easy to feel isolated. A minority voice in an indifferent world. It eats into our confidence, our hope, our sense that what we believe matters outside these church walls.

But God's church is not small. And it is not irrelevant.

The church is alive in the highlands of Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea. In coastal communities across the Pacific. In rural villages across Bali, Maluku and Sumba. In towns and cities across India, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe.

The Uniting Church in Australia is connected to a vibrant, global family of faith. And every day, our partner churches are reaching out in love and service to transform communities from within.

In John chapter 10, Jesus says: *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."*

Some read this as a personal, spiritual promise. Abundant life as inner peace, or salvation. A blessing we carry quietly in our hearts.

Yes, Jesus gives us that, but his words are also far less abstract. He was speaking into a world of grinding poverty. Of systems that crushed the vulnerable. Of people trapped by forces beyond their control.

And he makes a claim against all of it. A promise of tangible change.

Is abundance really about having more 'stuff' than we need? Can't be. The Jesus we know taught us to ask only for the bread we needed for each day.

'Life' for Jesus was a lot more than stuff. Another translation of 'abundance' is 'life in all its fullness.' For Jesus, life was about dignity, about freedom, about peace with neighbour, enemy and creation. And enough to meet your daily needs.

We know from the rest of John 10 that the thief Jesus names is not an abstraction. He is contrasting himself against failed, self-serving leaders. People who held great power but did not use it for the liberation of people and creation.

When we look across our world today, we see those same thieves at work.

The thieves who hoard billions, pay little in taxes and suppress living wages for the poor.

The thieves who shield men who abuse women and girls.

The thieves who desecrate fertile land and displace indigenous people, in the name of growth and profits.

The thieves who start wars and sell weapons while innocents starve and die.

The thieves who push fossil fuels to protect their investments, while the climate crisis hurts those who did least to cause it.

Poverty steals joy. Hunger kills hope. And the thieves of this world target the most faithful and hardworking people I have ever met.

I was recently in Sumba, eastern Indonesia. One of the poorest and most climate-vulnerable places in our region.

I met Semis. Every morning she pounds rice by hand, because there is no mill nearby. Everything relies on a good harvest and everything she earns goes to her daughter's education. Her hope is simple: that her child has a better life.

I met Marcelina. She loads jerry cans onto a motorbike and rides kilometers for water, sometimes twice a day. When the rain failed last year, her crop failed with them. She had to borrow money and take on interest to feed her family.

I met Petrus. Sixty years old. A farmer and church elder who has spent his life teaching others to grow food, and watching forests return to land once written off as barren.

These people are not waiting to be rescued. They are already working. Already faithful. Already striving to transform their lives and communities from within.

Their dream of abundance is simple. It's children going to school with a full belly. It's going to the doctor when they're sick. It's living in the place of their ancestors, caring for their land, connected to their community, with enough to get through a bad harvest.



And UnitingWorld and our local church partners are walking alongside them, and thousands of others like them across the Pacific, Asia and Africa.

Planting resilient food gardens. Improving health through simple interventions. Creating employment and education opportunities. Supporting survivors of violence. Preparing for disasters and responding after they happen. Building the kind of peace that lasts.

This is why Jesus came. To bring fullness of life, abundance, to every person.

We follow the one who never looked away from human suffering. Who emptied himself of power and privilege and was found among the poor, the sick, the forgotten. Who was crucified by the very powers that steal and kill and destroy. And who rose, defeating every thief, every system, every injustice that says scarcity and suffering is the final word.

The resurrection is God's declaration that love wins, and abundant life is possible for all.

We are called not just to believe that, but to *live* it. To follow Jesus into the places where the thief is at work, and to stand with God's people, with our neighbours, until the promise is real for all.

Our role as the Uniting Church in Australia is to bring our resources, our prayers, our voices and our refusal to look away.

We can hold the thief at bay, not with a silver bullet, but in an accumulation of small, holy acts of faith.

It is Semis imagining her daughter finishing school.

It's Marcelina working hard in her garden to see it provide for her family.

It is Petrus, forty years planting hope in soil that others gave up on.

It is you — praying, giving, staying curious about the world beyond your street. Refusing to look away. Choosing, again and again, to believe that your faithfulness connects to theirs.

That is what it means to be the global church. Not charity flowing one direction, but a communion of people, across every ocean and language, holding the promise together.

Life, abundantly. Not just for us. For them. For all of us, together.