

How to Consecrate

by Catherine Booth

The sermon emphasizes the importance of consecration and faith, and the need to surrender to God's will and trust Him to lead us.

Scripture: Proverbs 22:6, Matthew 16:24, Mark 8:35, Luke 14:26, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Philippians 4:19, Hebrews 11:8, James 1:22, James 4:17

Topics: "Surrender To God", "Holy Obedience"

Description

Catherine Booth preaches about the importance of accepting God's will for our lives and the hindrances that prevent many from fully surrendering to Him. She emphasizes the need to obey the teachings of the Bible and the Holy Spirit, even when it involves sacrifice and suffering for the sake of salvation. Catherine challenges the congregation to be practical in their faith, to be willing to bear shame and losses, and to follow Christ wholeheartedly, even if it means being rejected by family and society. She urges parents to train their children solely for God's Kingdom and calls for a complete acceptance of God's plan in every aspect of life.

Transcript

How is it that so many people go to Meetings and hear about this consecration and faith, and then fail in carrying it out in their lives? What is the hindrance?

It seems to me that this is largely because they do not receive what God has revealed, as to what the life of His real followers ought to be. They fritter away the teachings of the Bible and of the Holy Spirit on this question.

I believe that the Spirit of God does show people how they ought to live, how they ought to labour, how they ought to sacrifice and suffer for the Salvation of men; but instead of obeying His teaching and becoming co-workers with God, they say, 'Oh, that is too high for me; it will cost me too much; it will be too much trouble; it involves too much sacrifice. I cannot do it; I cannot receive that way of putting it.' So they read books, or go to see those who are supposed to be leading Christians, in order to get a second opinion, after God has given them His opinion. They try and find excuses for themselves. They know sufficiently well what is God's will concerning them; but they try to find an easier way.

I am told that I have a practical mind, and I am glad I have. I hope I shall keep it to the end. I believe that any other kind of mind will be found to have been a snare, when we get before the throne of God; because

Jesus Christ is going to be intensely practical in that day. He is not going to say 'Inasmuch as ye thought it,' or 'Inasmuch as ye felt it,' or 'Inasmuch as ye intended it,' or 'Inasmuch as ye promised it'--but He is going to say 'Inasmuch as ye did it.' I want to be among the doers, and I want you to be among the doers.

Now, dear friends, are you prepared to receive this life of absolute, practical bearing of the shame and the losses, the suffering and the crucifixion, involved in following the Christ? Are you willing to be cast out by fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, fathers-in-law and mothers-in-law, aunts and cousins, from circles and society, and to be boycotted by those round about you, in order that you may thus follow Christ in the regeneration of the Spirit? Are you prepared to accept it? Do we all accept it?

Have you accepted God's version of the life of a saint, or are you seeking all round for excuses to make it a little easier? If the latter, then that fly in the pot will make all your ointment to stink, that flaw in the foundation will topple over any edifice of your resolutions and determinations, your promises, or prayers, or faith; and you will be no better for these Meetings, but worse.

What we have to come to is to accept God's will for our lives; but in many cases people won't do this. They won't accept the hardship which following Jesus Christ involves; they like ease and comfort; but to follow Jesus Christ in the way He lays down involves a great deal of hard work. It involves the continual use of all our faculties, not allowing any of them to lie by to rust, not using any of them, either mental or physical, merely for our own gratification.

We are His servants, we are His children, we are His husbandmen, and He will demand the increase of all the faculties He has given us. Now, do we accept this? Are we willing to go and work hard for God? Are we willing to use our brains, making them think and plan and scheme for God, instead of for our own selfish interests? Are we willing to use our time, our influence, our money, for the promotion of His interests? If you are, you will make a mark on London and England in that one particular alone. Are we willing to use our families for this end? Oh, how guilty thousands of Christian parents will stand before God as to the purpose they have towards their families, the training they have given, and the use they have made of their children! It is not the first purpose of their hearts to train their children for God. Their great purpose is educating them after the elements and fashion of this world. They make it manifest by devoting six or seven hours a day to having them trained in earthly learning, as being the primary consideration, while they leave the impression on the minds of the children that the things that belong to the Kingdom of God are only secondary.

Do you accept God's plan for yourself, for your family, for your business, and for your money? Now this is the point; it is all contained in that. You must accept God's plan, you must choose it, and say, 'Yes, Lord, I will have this one ambition, motive and desire to live for Thee alone.' You must not only say it, but act it out. I affirm before you tonight, The Salvation Army, with its endless ramifications, its permanent results, and its influence upon the populations of the earth, is the result of the acceptance of this principle by two single individuals and their determination to act them out in their own lives, and to so train and inspire their children that they also should act them out. If God can bring so much out of a couple of people embracing those principles and acting them out, without their knowing how He was going to do it, what could He not do with thousands of such people, if they would only put themselves in His Hands? What could He not do with you?

'Ah, but,' you say, 'the circumstances are so different, we are such different individuals.' How do you know? It is not the quality of the instrument you place in the hands of God which determines its

usefulness; it is the full surrender you make, of it; it is not the quality of the agent, but it is God's having the full disposal, the undisputed sway, in using him. Sometimes it pleases God to do more with the weak instruments than He does with the strong ones. Will you let Him have you? What God wants is for you to put yourself thus practically into His hands. Now, we want this Meeting to have this result; we want you to believe with that faith which produces action. Do you accept this plan? Are you willing to follow the teaching of the Holy Spirit? Are you willing to take that Harry, or that Mary of yours, and begin tomorrow a new plan of education--a new system of training--and to train those children only for God and His Kingdom? That is the test.

Oh, I covet the children for God! This generation is at the best a poor mongrel affair. I want a generation trained from their babyhood for God, and inspired from the cradle with one ambition, that they are to live and, suffer and die, if need be, for His glory, and to have no other business but the extension of His Kingdom in the world. You can make your children that, if you will. I am certain of it. I am as confident of it as that I stand here. You can make such children, if you will, if you are co-working with God. If you won't make your children hypocrites by teaching them sentiments which you never intend them to carry out; if you let their practice keep pace with what you teach, you will make them such, and God will use them as saviours of the world; but you must do your part. Will you begin tomorrow?

Will you begin with your business tomorrow?

How many of you business men, I wonder, have some matters that you count little things, that rise up in your consciences to condemn you? Perhaps it is not an unlawful business. But is there anything unlawful in your mode of doing it? Is there something about which your conscience is constantly saying, 'You know that is not square, that is not right; you know you would not like Jesus Christ to investigate that!' Something which you would excuse by saying 'But I must live; I could not compete with that shop over the way, or with yonder manufacturer over the water, if I did not allow this; I must do it.' Where is the 'must'? That is one of the Devil's 'musts'! Jesus Christ did not say you 'must.' He said you 'must not.' He said you must obey Him and keep a conscience void of offence, and be able to look straight up into the face of your Heavenly Father and know that your ways please Him. Do you accept this with its consequences? Never mind about competing with anybody. God does not keep you in the world to compete with all the rogues and vagabonds in it, but to represent to the world Him, who was pure and spotless, undefiled and separate from sinners, and to assert and extend His Kingdom in the earth. No man ever helped His Kingdom by a single dishonest action, or by anything that would not bear His smile. Do you accept that? Will you go and begin tomorrow morning by putting out of your mode of doing business those things for which your conscience condemns you?

Will you say, 'Never mind whether I save or lose money, whether I prosper or fail? I am going to be a Jesus Christ man in my business and trust Him to look after the consequences.' Do you accept that?

You who work for God, do you accept God's choice for your service?

Oh, what stories I have revealed to me in letters from backsliders and others, who are hid away in holes and corners the world over, who have lost the favour and presence of God in their own souls and all power to serve Him. And how do you think they lost it? By refusing to obey God's call for some particular kind of work. They were willing to do anything else, but not that particular thing to which He called them. They were willing to shoulder any other cross, but not that particular one; and so they got wrong and have been wrong ever since. They are wandering about as poor backsliders, because they would not do that work to

which God called them. Now, some of you have a call in your heart to some special work or field. Do you accept it? If not, your faith will be but faith without works, which will be dead. Faith and obedience must go together. Will you go away believing, and resolving the very first opportunity to obey?

This is what God wants. Then you may believe as much as you like. Then you can just put your hand out to God and have what you want. He won't give His Spirit by limit unto you then. He won't hold you back from any of the glorious enterprises to which your soul gushes out; but He will say, 'Be it unto thee according to thy faith,' and what you now would deem impossible, what you now would look upon as vain and romantic, shall be accomplished by you.

Will you say, 'I accept Thy plan for myself, my time, my influence, my money, my children, my home, and my future; I accept it'? If so you can take hold of His hand. You will be in perfect harmony, and may claim every promise made to the saints. You have then a victorious faith, a faith that dares to presume on the promises of God; a faith that dares to step out when there appears to be no possibility of God performing His word to you; the faith that dares to stand on the naked promise, and say, Now, Lord, I am right with You, I have given up all,

and I claim all. I open my mouth, it is empty, You will fill it. I take this step, I do not know where I am going any more than Abraham did, but You know; now I trust You to lead me forth.' Does your heart say that? If so, you may claim the blessing now.

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