

The Surrendered Life

by David Wilkerson

David Wilkerson's sermon emphasizes the importance of living a surrendered life to God, modeled by Jesus and exemplified by Paul, highlighting the role of suffering and the Holy Spirit in this journey.

Duration: 54:48

Scripture: Acts 14:19

Topics: "Surrender To God", "Holy Spirit Guidance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus. After encountering Jesus in a supernatural revelation, Saul is left blind and confused. He is led by the Holy Spirit into a period of silence and surrender, where he seeks to know and serve God. The preacher emphasizes the importance of surrendering to Jesus and seeking a deeper relationship with Him. He encourages the congregation to embrace a surrendered life and learn from the pattern set by Paul in fully surrendering to Christ.

Transcript

This message is one of the Times Square Church Pulpit Series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing World Challenge, PO Box 260, Lindell, Texas 75771, or calling 903-963-8626.

You are welcome to make additional cassettes of this message for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission, existing copyright laws apply. I speak to you this morning on the surrendered life, the surrendered life.

I welcome visitors all over the building and the annex, the overflow, and all of the rooms and auditoriums, and here in the main auditorium. God bless you. We trust that you've been moved by the Holy Spirit this morning.

Heavenly Father, I need your help. The Holy Ghost abides in us, and the Holy Ghost abides in me. And I pray, Holy Spirit, that you take control of this temple this morning.

We're the temple of the Holy Ghost. And Lord, the words that we speak have to be anointed or they have no value. I'm asking you, Holy Spirit, to come upon me in a very unique and special way and speak your words, not mine, but yours.

Lord, I am wholly, totally dependent upon you this morning, as are our listeners. And we pray, Lord, that we will not walk away here this morning just shrugging it off, but receive it as from the throne of God. In Jesus' name, amen.

The surrendered life. The word surrender, let's talk about it a minute. It means an act of giving up one's possessions or person into the authority of another.

Giving up your person, your body, or your possessions to the authority of another. To surrender means to relinquish your own power, your own aims, and your own goals. The word surrender means to give back that which was given to you.

Give it back. What that means in spiritual terms. Surrender is the act of giving back to Jesus the life that He granted you.

Give it back completely. It's an act of relinquishing all control over things that you say, things that you do. It's a matter of surrendering to the point that you get your direction from Him, from the Holy Spirit.

You have no other goal or aim. A total resignation of your life into the hands of Him to do as He pleases. Total surrender is the giving up of all of your rights and control.

The Bible said Jesus came to live that kind of life. He didn't come to live as God, though He was God in the flesh. He came to live as man with the will of man, with the ability to take or leave His life as He chooses.

Jesus said, for I came down from heaven not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. He did nothing, He said, on His own. Nothing.

He made no move. He said nothing. He did nothing.

Except what He heard and saw from His heavenly Father. I do nothing, Jesus said of Myself, but as My Father has taught Me, those are the things I speak. And He that sent Me is with Me.

The Father has not left Me alone, for I do always those things that please Him. He said, I speak the truth which I have heard from God. I heard it of God, My Father.

And He said, and I don't seek My own glory, only My Father's. This life of full surrender to His heavenly Father was not imposed on Him. It was not imposed on Him at all.

Jesus Himself said, therefore does My Father love Me because I laid down My life that I might take it again. No man takes it from Me, but I lay it down to Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.

This commandment have I received of My Father. Jesus is saying very clearly, this act of surrender was within My human willpower. I had the right.

My Father gave Me that privilege, and it's a privilege He's given to all of us. He said, I have the power. I have the power.

He's not speaking of God in flesh. He's speaking as the man, Christ Jesus. The human man.

I've been given the right by My Father to lay My life down or pick it up and do as I please. That's within My power to see how obedient I would become. How I would lean upon Him for direction.

That was given to Me. That power was given to Me. And My power was given to Me to go to the cross or to take Myself from this cup.

But He said, I laid My life down. He did it because of love. I have this power.

Folks, none of us are forced by God to live a dependent life, a surrendered life to Him. You can get into Canaan land and stay on the border and never enjoy the grapes, the honey, the milk. You can get right into it, but never go to the heart of the fullness of what God intended by bringing you in to His heart.

Jesus said, I have the power. And I believe it's within our power to fully surrender our lives to be directed in everything we say and do. To be totally given over to His will and His purpose while we're here on earth.

He invites us, for example, in the Scripture, to yield our bodies to Him as a living sacrifice. He doesn't impose it. He doesn't force it.

I believe you can have as much of Jesus as you want. I believe you can go as deep in Christ as you want to go. I believe you can be as surrendered as you want to be.

I want to talk about that this morning. The Apostle Paul chose to follow Christ's example of a surrendered life. His name was Saul when he was first accosted by the Lord.

He's a Christ-hater. Self-righteous. Persecutor.

A man with a self-will and ambition. A man who literally breathes hatred toward the children of the Lord. Yet God takes this one of the most self-dependent, one of the most self-sufficient, self-determined men on earth.

He takes this man and makes him an example of the most God-dependent, God-filled, God-trusting man of all men. He takes him, Paul said, as a pattern. Paul called his life a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

He said, Paul's saying, if you want to know what it is to surrender your heart, if you want to know what it takes to live a surrendered life and to come into this kind of life, you look at my life, the pattern. I'm a pattern for all those who should follow. He's a pattern for us.

He said, if you know, if you set your heart to seek the Lord and you want to go deeper, you want to know him like you have never known him, he said, let me tell you what it's going to take. Let me tell you what will happen in your life if you want to be fully surrendered to Jesus. Paul said, Christ saved me and he showed me mercy and long-suffering, that I may be a pattern.

Or you can look at my life and you say you want to serve Jesus with all your heart and you want to be a fully surrendered child of his. He said, look at my life and see how he works it. First of all, the path, according to this pattern, the path to the Christ-surrendered life begins with a God-led season of helplessness.

Absolute helplessness. This is where full surrender to Christ begins. God begins to knock us off our high horses first.

Saul is on his self-assured way. He's got his plan in his hand. He's got the endorsement of the dignitaries.

He knows what he wants. He knows where he's going. He's self-assured.

He's been taking the Christians to jail. And now he's on the road to Damascus, well-accepted by the religious order of his day. His life well-planned ahead, well-educated.

He knew where he was going. He had the commendation of his spiritual leaders. And suddenly, a light from heaven, and he's on the ground on his face, trembling.

You see, I believe there's been an inner unrest in Saul for a long time. Because there was something missing in his life. There was something kicking inside, according to the Scripture.

Because with all of his study of the Word, because he was a student of the Word, he was a Pharisee, he was trained by the best leaders of the day. He had zeal. He had a hunger for God.

But there was something missing to it. And I believe when he went to Damascus, he was a very empty man. And I think it traces back to the moment he stood by while Stephen was being stoned.

And he saw something that shook him to the core. He saw something that exposed his life. Because he came face to face with a fully Christ-surrendered man.

And exposed the emptiness of his own life. He said, I know the Word of God. I've had more training than he had.

I had a hunger for God, a zeal for the things of God. But I saw a man who spoke with authority. I saw a man who knew God like I've never known him.

I met a man, I heard a man, and I saw a man. His words were so convicting. His words were so cunning.

It cut me. I've never spoken like that. He has something I don't have.

You can imagine he's out there to try to imprison the very kind of man and woman he has just seen. Being stoned to death and so convicted him. And there's something kicking inside.

It had made him all the more miserable to come face to face with somebody that was otherworldly. So unsouled, righteous and holy. It convicted his very life.

He's empty, well-educated, wanting God. And suddenly he hears the words, I'm Jesus whom thou persecutest. And I suggest to you that when he was on the ground, he was there for hours.

And he's saying, after all my education, now I understand this man Stephen. I understand what he got, what he has, what he had. I understand now what it's all about.

It all makes sense now. Everything about Isaiah that I've read. Everything I've read in the Old Testament now.

I know it makes sense. It's all about Jesus. And I missed it.

I went after the applause of men. I went after the approval of men. I went after that which I thought was right, but I never even knew Jesus.

I missed the point. Now it starts making sense. Now I see it was intimacy with this man Jesus.

I am Jesus whom you've been persecuting. And now it dawns on him in the great revelation. It had burst on Saul's heart.

It's Jesus. It's been Jesus all along. I've been on the wrong road.

I've been the wrong way. And suddenly the revelation comes to him. Supernatural revelation of who Jesus is.

And revealed not only to him, but in him. He said, Christ has been revealed in me. This was a living revelation, supernatural.

You would think now that he says, Saul rises up and says, Lord, what do you have me to do now? How can I walk with you? How can I please you? How can I serve you? What shall I do? You'd think that after such a supernatural revelation, all the education he has, God sent him out now with a great testimony. The Lord said, Arise and go into the city and it shall be told you what you must do. Now look at Saul, blind, dumbfounded, being led into the city by his dumbfounded friends.

His friends are speechless. But I'll tell you what, if you see this blind man, confused, wanting only to serve God, only to serve Jesus and give him everything in his heart, he's being led, blinded now, he's being led into the city. I want you to picture that man walking into the city now, educated, and everything now has come apart.

But I want you to know something, he's being led also by the Holy Ghost into the surrendered life. He's being led by the Holy Ghost to three days of silence and quiet, where his heart's yearning and crying out, Oh God, all I want, Jesus, I want to know you, I want to serve you, nothing else matters now. It's all dung, it's all waste, all my past.

Everything I've done in the flesh, it's done, it's done now. What do you want me to do? Days alone fasting and praying, utterly confused. All his studies of the Word, now he can't find anything in those studies to satisfy his heart.

Preached and taught to others and now not a word comes to him of all he's learned, all of his past and everything and everything he had in the past, it doesn't help him now because he's helpless. This is the path, the pattern of the surrendered life. If you're going to really set your heart to walk fully surrendered, Lord, God's going to put a Stephen in your path.

You're going to be a face to face with some man or some woman, some young person, some preacher, somebody so given to God, been so alone with the Lord, they have a countenance that's different, they speak only about Jesus, they're not interested in the applause of men, they're not interested in your car, they're not interested in hearing about your golf course, they're not interested in hearing anything about your shopping patterns, nothing at all. They talk about Jesus, they sign Jesus, they talk Jesus, they look like Jesus in their eyes. And it convicts you to the car because you've been complacent and compromising.

And everything you sought for, you have not sought for the real issue, you have not seen, you've missed it. And the Lord will put you face to face with a spiritual man who will expose your spiritual bankruptcy. This is what happens.

You see, it's all of God's doing. He'll bring you to a place where you don't understand what's happening to you. You come to a place where you are helpless.

I've been there, and He keeps taking me back there when I start getting a little self-confident. He somehow always brings us to this point, back to utter, utter helplessness. Where you say, after all the preaching I've heard, after all the teaching I've done, after all the blessing I've blessed others, right now I feel like I don't know anything.

I feel so confused. But you see, it's God's doing. He can't bring you into dependent, surrendered life until He brings you to the end of all self-reliance.

Until you have totally no more confidence in your flesh. That's the beginning. Secondly, this path leads to much suffering.

Turn to Acts 9, please, and we'll see it clearly. Acts 9, verse 10. There was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias.

And to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. The Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus.

For behold, he prayeth. And it is seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hands on him, that he might receive his sight. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man how much evil he has done to the saints of Jerusalem.

And here he hath authority from the chief priest to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way. For he is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.

And I will show him how great things he must suffer for my sake. Now, look at this for just a minute. God promises this man, Saul, a very fruitful ministry.

But he's got to endure great suffering in the process. Now, folks, when we talk about suffering, the subject is so broad and so wide, I don't even know how to begin to approach it. Because you see, there's spiritual suffering, there's physical suffering, there's mental pain, pains of all kinds.

And it's just impossible to deal with this subject. It's so wide and broad. You think of Saul, how he had a thorn in the flesh, shipwreck, rejection, stonings, beatings, mockery, snakebite, robberies, malicious gossip, persecutions of all kinds.

Now, God's not calling all of us to the multitude of sufferings or the deepness of the sufferings of Paul the Apostle. But in some way, in some manner, we are going to suffer. If you're going to live the totally surrendered life, it's going to be accompanied by much suffering.

Let me focus on the reason. I want to just, I'm not going to try to explain this subject because everyone here listening to me, you have your own kind of suffering. See, young lady in the choir, her sister was murdered in Philadelphia last week.

She's here now singing. So Laura's in the hospital and her husband died last night at 9 o'clock. And she wasn't there because she's in the hospital sick.

I don't know what your pain is. I don't know what your suffering is, but there's not a person here that knows Jesus who is not acquainted with suffering. If you tell me you don't know what suffering is, you don't know who Jesus is.

Suffering and pain. Some of you came in, burdened down this morning. The annex and overflow rooms, you're totally burdened down.

Nobody knows. You hide it well, it doesn't even show on your face. But you see, suffering is one area of our lives that we have little or no control over.

And that's why it's so important for God to allow this in our lives. Because it's that point, I tell you, you want to talk about losing control? You go in a hospital and look at somebody that's being waited on. They can't bathe themselves, they can do nothing.

They're totally at the hands of others. Some of you have been there, you know what that helplessness is all about. But you see, suffering, you come to the end of yourself, you say, I can't handle this anymore.

And this is the school, it's a training place where you learn total dependence on the Lord. You come to a place where you say, I can't handle this. God says, good, I can handle it.

I've been waiting for you to yield. And sometimes God allows severe suffering in our lives to bring us down from our horses of self-dependency. He will bring us to the ground to our faith there.

Though He can lovingly say, turn it over to Me. All your cares, all your worries, everything, I want you to live a surrendered life. Surrender even your physical body, your brain, your mind, everything, give it to Me.

Trust Me because I care for you. Have you been there? Now, if you're really going to set your heart to be totally surrendered to the Lord, you're going to suffer more than complacent believers ever suffer. Because you see, the complacent believer, he will suffer, those that are in compromise, they'll be suffering because the Lord is trying to wean them from some particular sin or from a very complacent lifestyle.

And there'll be a telephone call, there'll be something, you see, they haven't prayed in weeks or months, and there'll be a call to get you on your knees. God's not mad at you. He's not going to let the devil have you.

And He's going to allow a slap on the wrist where it just wakes you up and says, hey, where have you been? I'm not trying to scare anybody. I know, I've been there, done that. And I know what it's like.

And the Lord says, come. But you see, if you are not setting your heart, I'm going to go all the way with the Lord. I'm not going to live the normal Christian life that you see today where the Lord has given His one or two hours on Sunday, and I just park Jesus on the back roads of my mind.

No, no, no. If He becomes everything in your life, He's going to allow you to go through things that no one else goes through because He wants you to be a comfort and a strength to others. He's doing it.

You see, the complacent Christian, he will have suffering, but there are no lessons learned but in his own life. No one's going to learn from it. No one's going to hear about it.

They may complain about it, but nobody is learning anything about Jesus. Nobody's learning about how the Lord works. There's no comfort out of it but for the individual.

But if you have a heart for people, if you want the Lord to love you, if you care for others and you know it's in your heart, you say, I care about people, you are going to go through a different path and suffering is going to be deeper than others because He wants you to become wholly dependent on God as an example and as a source of comfort to your family and to those around you. This is important. I'll wait until those in the annex and everywhere have it, because I want you to read it with me.

Please just follow me as I read it. 2 Corinthians 1, starting in verse 3, Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For if the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounded by Christ.

And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer. And whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. Look at me please.

Some of you endure greater sufferings, greater pain, because He has a wider reach for you to comfort others around you. He wants to use you in some special way. And the greatest comfort ministries come out of the greatest sufferings.

I've seen it all my lifetime. That the God of all comfort would be known to you, and that our affliction or my affliction will prove to be a consolation to others who are suffering. Now thirdly, we're talking about how God brings us into this surrendered life.

This path leads to a single ambition, that I may win Christ. One ambition. No other agenda, no other ambition in life, but to win Christ and to know Him intimately, and to possess Him fully.

No other ambition. I asked a godly young pastor this past week, on a telephone call. I said, Pastor, you've traveled the country, and you know ministers, young ministers.

What's the number one problem? What's the biggest problem in the ministry today? And very clearly he said, the need to be successful. He went on, he said, young pastors see churches like your church, Times Square Church, spring up, it seems like overnight, and you've got to make a church. And other pastors have struggled in the city for years, and just a handful of people.

And he said, young people, young ministers, have this pressure upon them to overnight produce something. There's a cry and a hunger for success. Now we know that's in the secular world, but it's also a plague in the church of Jesus Christ today.

I get letters from people from all over the United States, and they say our pastor was displeased with the lack of growth in our congregation, so he went to a conference, to a large church, a mega church, and he learned some new techniques on how to build a church. One pastor told me, he said, one expert told me, in so many words, you can't grow a church if all you give Him is Jesus. You can't grow a church if all you give Him is Jesus.

The pastor came home, one woman in particular said he came home, and overnight on a Sunday morning he got up and said, we're changing the order of this church. We're going to become, and he named the kind of church it was going to become. Going to be more friendly to sinners.

And so they revamped the worship style, everything. No one was to be offended. No sinner to be offended, no one.

The worship was changed, everything. Nothing out of order, everything perfect in time by the clock. And see, I hear it over and over again, we old timers who knew what it was like to be in the meetings where the Spirit of God would move, where people would be touched by the Holy Ghost, and our kids would be touched, and where you could worship and praise the Lord and lift your hands and say, God, it's all gone.

And all of us, as old timers, we don't know where to go. The pastor took it away. It's all gone.

There's no spirit. There's no life. You see, there's another agenda.

It's not now all Christ. It's not just winning Christ. By today's standard, Paul was a total failure.

He didn't build any buildings. He had no corporation. In fact, the message was so offensive, the preaching of the cross was so offensive, they stole him.

Every time they got a multitude, they tried to kill him. But he taught about dying, not buying. He never spoke of bigness, but only brokenness.

I have striving young pastors come to me. I remember one in particular said, Brother Dave, you don't realize it. See, you pastor and make a church, and you have got a worldwide ministry, and you have had bestsellers and all of that.

And another, somebody said, your reputation is set for life. You don't have to do anything. You've got a reputation.

What's wrong with my going after it? What about me? Why can't I go the same path? And you know, the answer would be, well, you don't know what I've been through. But I'm not going to say that. You don't know the cost I've paid, I hear people say.

No, no, no, that has nothing to do, because I know ministers who know God more than I will ever know Him, have sacrificed more than I've ever sacrificed, suffered more than I've ever suffered, paid a price more than I would ever know. And they've been faithful, and they've been honest and holy, and nobody knows their name. So that's not the issue.

When I stand before Christ at the judgment day, there's only going to be one measure of my success, or the success of any other man or woman of God. He's not going to look at any of my books. He's not going to talk about Times Square Church.

He's not going to talk about any of my crusades. I'm going to be judged on how Jesus controlled my life. How yielded I was to His will and purpose here on earth.

That I had no other will, but His, no other agenda but His. That I was fully surrendered to His purpose for my life. It's going to be, did I follow the crowd, or did I wait on Him for direction? Did I borrow my messages, or did I hear directly from the Father? It's going to be my walk with Him.

I can say with an honest heart before you today, my greatest joy on earth is to hear from God. To stand before a congregation like this this morning, and know in my heart that words I speak to you, I heard first from Him, that worked in my own soul. And I know the greatest joy in my life is to hear Him say this is the

way.

Walk in it. That's the joy. You can't be a man or woman of God until that's everything in your life that I hear from God.

That He speaks to my heart. My ambition now is to learn more and more how to be nothing in self. And be able to say my Father's with me because I do only His will.

Now finally, the surrendered life, listen closely because this is very vital and important. The surrendered life, if you fully surrendered to Christ, it will bring contentment in where you are with what you have. It will bring contentment.

You're not going to be nailing a stake out in the future and say if I just get there and throw a lasso there and a rope and keep pulling yourself to that point out there in the future, say if I can just get that or if I can just be that or do that, I'll be happy, I'll be contented. And people, when they get to that point, it doesn't bring them the joy and contentment so they throw it further out. And all they do, they're never satisfied with what they are, where they're at and what they have.

There's always some ship coming in. Restless. Because they heard a word from a preacher or they heard a word from their own flesh that says you're going to be mightily used of God, you're going to be this, you're going to be that, and they're living for that.

And when it doesn't happen on time, live in total discontentment. Always living in the future. My word to them would say wake up and live.

Get a life. Now, listen to what God told Saul. Your chosen vessel to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.

God said I'm going to use you mightily. God does give words like that. I heard that when I was eight years old.

So Saul goes forth straightway preaching Christ in the synagogue that He's the Son of God. Saul increases the more in strength, confounds the Jews at Damascus and after many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him. God says I'm going to call you to the Jews.

Only the first time He gets to speak to the Jews, they want to kill Him. So He goes to Jerusalem. But the disciples were all afraid of Him and believed not that He was a disciple.

This is some start for a ministry where God says I'm going to use you mightily. But you see, God's teaching Paul to be content one step at a time. Where I am with what I have, where I am.

I'm not going to worry about everything else. If God told me that's fine in His time, in His way in the meantime, I'm going to rest in Him. I'm going to live my life to the fullness of Jesus right here, right now.

So much for His call to reach the Jews. And now He's rejected by His own brethren. But He's thinking in His heart at least I have the Gentiles.

He said I'm going to win the Gentiles. But when Cornelius gets a word from the Lord, who does he call? Peter. I wonder what went through Paul's mind.

What a wonderful surrendered man he must have been because when he goes up later to Jerusalem, Peter stands up. Peter rose up and said unto them, men and brethren, you know how that a good while ago God made choice among us that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And that's the word God gave to Paul.

He said you're going to be the man who wins the Gentiles. Peter. Paul had to listen to all these reports coming out of the house of Cornelius how the Holy Ghost had fallen and that Christ had revealed Himself now to the Gentiles.

He goes to Antioch finally to preach to the Gentiles later. And the Jews rejected Paul so he said I'm going to turn to the Gentiles. And many Gentiles were converted in Antioch.

Great revival breaks out. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. But the Jews stirred up the women and the chief men and expelled Paul and Barnabas out of their coast.

What kind of message was he preaching that made everybody so mad? The cross. The surrender of self. So he goes to Iconium.

Great multitudes of Jews and of Gentiles believed. Paul's saying now God's keeping His word to me. It's a great revival there breaks out.

Once again there was an assault made both of Gentiles and of the Jews and their rulers. So much for ministering to kings. And their rulers used them despitely and stoned them.

Here's a man who's called to minister to kings and rulers. To Jews and Gentiles they end up cursing him and stoning him. But I read of no complaining.

I read of no murmuring, no questioning because I hear him instead say I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content. I am content that God is leading me. I may not see now what He's shown me, what He's revealed to me.

I may not see it but I'm going on because I have in me a contentment in Christ. My pursuit is not anything the world is pursuing. I'm pursuing Jesus.

Now I can pursue Him anytime, anywhere. I can grow here and now. See Paul's in no hurry.

He has a promise he's holding to. God's going to use him alright. In the meantime he's willing to speak to a little group of women in a prayer meeting along a river bank.

He'll speak to a sailor. He'll speak to a jailer. He'll go one-on-one even though he has a worldwide commission.

He says I'm going to be faithful here. And you find Paul speaking to one here, leading one here, one here. Small groups.

When he does get a multitude he loses them. He's not jealous of younger ministers who he taught who pass him by now while he's in prison. They're outreaching the world, both Gentiles and Jews.

There's no envy because a surrendered man knows how to be abased as well as to abound. Paul said godliness with contentment is great gain. And having food and raiment let us therewith be content.

You've got a whole world starving. You say you've got food, you've got raiment, you've got protection. Be content.

Most of all because you have Jesus. You have Christ. Clothes in just a few months of it.

You know what the world would say to Paul? Paul, you're at the end of your life now but you have no savings. You don't have a chariot. You only have one change of clothes.

You have no investments. And oh, but I have a life. I won Christ.

I won Christ. You could say to Paul that Paul, the devil harasses you. You suffer more than anybody.

You go from one suffering to another suffering from shipwreck to snake bite to this and to that. And you have this great testimony of knowing Jesus and you suffer! The devil is always harassing you. You have constant pain like no one around you.

I said, oh, but I glory in my afflictions because that's when I'm really strong. He said, I don't measure it the way the world measures it. But Paul, don't you know a Paulist has the crowds? He's eloquent.

You minister mainly to small groups and your speech is contemptible? He said, none of that moves me because I'm having a revelation of the glory that awaits me. I'm not of this world. But Paul, what about God's promise to you? You're going to be a witness to the kings.

And all you did was stand before them in chains as a defendant. Where's the fulfillment of the promise God made to you? And Paul would answer, oh, but God did keep His word because as a defendant He gave me a pulpit I could have never had. And he said, boy, did they get convicted! I preached Christ in fullness because I had the right as a defendant to say what I will.

Nobody could stop me. I did reach kings. God was faithful.

Not the way I thought He would do it. But He did it in His way. God kept His word.

Paul, you're a fool. Everybody in Asia has turned against you. The more you love, the less you're being loved.

No one seems to appreciate your dedicated labor. Even pastors are mocking you. Some try to ban you from their churches.

Why do you stay in a ministry? Why do you keep on? You're not a success. Paul would say, I've quit this world. I have no other ambition.

I don't need the praises of men. I don't have to keep up with the competition. Because, you see, I was caught up into paradise.

And I heard unspeakable words, which is not even lawful to a man to utter. I'm telling you, I'm the winner. I've been to heaven.

I saw what's waiting. You take this world, with all its competition, and all of its strivings, and all of its self-centeredness, but I'm determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And His one ambition now is to stand face to face with Him who is loved.

Not many want to go down this path. Not many want to go this way. They want to take a shortcut.

They want to go to a meeting somewhere and have some prophet or somebody lay hands on them, speak a word that's going to bounce them right into the presence of the throne of God. No way. No way.

Does the suffering ever end? Oh, it's going to end one day. It's going to end with a trumpet blast. A trumpet blast.

It's coming. And then the apostle says, and with this I close, he said, all the sufferings of this present time are not to be compared with the joy, the glory of their ways. Paul said, I've got a crown on my head even now that I want only to lay at His feet.

Hallelujah. Let's stand. Hallelujah.

Lord, help us this morning to stop right now before we leave this building and examine our hearts. Lord, have I been seeking You for direction? Have I just been doing what I want to do and just saying whatever comes out of my mouth? Oh God, I open my heart to the Holy Ghost to be searched this morning. Lord, put it in my heart to go deeper.

Put it in my heart to lay down everything that is in my flesh and self, all my ambitions and my desires. Help me, Lord, to lay my future down. Just say, Jesus, one day at a time with You.

Take it all. I yield that all Lords speak to me. Lord, there are some who are going to have to admit that they haven't spent quality time with You to hear Your voice, to know Your mind.

Lord, You're so anxious to lead us. You said in all Your ways acknowledge me and I'll direct Your path. In all Your ways.

Lord, we haven't been doing that. We've just been acting on our own, so forgive us. And Lord, I pray for those that walked into this building this morning that have been complacent.

They've truly, honestly been complacent with You. Oh, Lord, it doesn't mean that You've turned Your back on them. It doesn't mean You're mad at them.

It means, Lord, they're missing. They're missing the contentment. They're missing the joy that we should have now.

Lord, in the midst of all the suffering in the United States, in the midst of the tragedy, we can be contented in Christ. We can have a peace that passes all understanding. And we can walk among men saying, I hear from God.

He leads my path. I hear from Heaven. God, You want to do that for every one of us, not just the pastors, not just the staff, but for every member of this body, every part, every one of us that we can walk in that surrender to You, Lord.

You're just waiting for us to come before You and say, begin the work in me. Begin the work. I'm going to open the altars in the annex, here in the main auditorium.

I'm going to limit it just to this, if you will, please. Because, you see, what I'm talking about, you can do in your seat right now to make a commitment. I want this.

You start praying about it. Ask God. I want to know Jesus like I've ever known Him.

And I want to surrender everything I am and all I have to You. I want a surrendered life. Lord, no matter what it costs, I want You.

But You have to put that voice, You have to put that in my heart. But remember what Jesus said, I have the power to take it up or lay it down. Now, you can walk out here and take up your own will, take up your own ambition, or you can say, Lord, I lay down everything to You and I'm going to trust Jesus.

I'm going to lay everything down, my life. But I'm asking only for those to come forward, here in the main auditorium, for those who this morning have been complacent or backslidden or you've been walking the wrong direction. Others who don't know Jesus.

I'm going to open this altar and I'll pray with you and I'll pray in faith. I want you to step out of the crowd upstairs in the balcony, go to the stairs on either side and come down any aisle. And those that are in the annex, if you go directly into, is that 204 or 206? 206.

Just go into 206 and we have people there that will pray with you. Just get on your knees. Find a chair and just get on your knees.

In fact, those in the big hall, you're facing 206. And those in 206, if you want to just fall on your knees right there, if God speaks to you by His Holy Spirit, please don't do anything unless the Spirit is moving. If there's something that was said in the message this morning, the Holy Spirit made real to you, something you have to make right with God, then follow the leading of the Holy Spirit and we'll meet you right here and I'll pray with you in just a moment while we sing the hymn.

Now Father, finish the work that you've begun. There are many here, Lord, that have been so complacent, Lord, and it's going to take an honesty to walk down the aisle and say, Jesus, by this I'm telling you, I want to go all the way with you. Not just to the edge of the promised land, but I want to go in and taste the good things of God.

I want the peace and the contentment. And I want the assurance. I want that all.

I want all of Jesus. Not this world. I'm tired of materialism.

God's not after your materialism. He's just after the spirit of materialism. Father, finish this good work now.

In the annex, in the overflow rooms and all over this audience and in the balcony. We're not trying to build the numbers here. We just want the Holy Spirit to have time to convict you and finish the work in your heart.

You can still come while I'm talking. You can still come. You that are here and in the annex, listen closely to me.

I'm not going to preach another sermon. But you see, I start out by saying, surrender is an act of the will. You have to begin this process.

God will take you as fast as you want to go, as you yield, as you seek His face. But you begin now, where you're at. Those of you that have come forward, there has to be something in your heart and mind that says today, Lord Jesus, You said I can take up my life or I can lay it down.

By an act of faith, I lay down my will. Now that's when the Holy Spirit comes in and He empowers you. That was the Holy Spirit that drew you.

It's the Holy Spirit that put the Word in your heart. It's all the work of the Holy Spirit. That's His covenant work.

But right now, you have to respond to that and say, Lord Jesus, that's what I want. You're calling me. I want You to touch my life.

Right now. Wherever you're at. Now, the whole audience, while I pray, would you let your heart just go out to the Lord right now and say, Jesus, in this service this morning, help me to come into this surrender.

Deal with my stubbornness and my self-will. Oh, Jesus, move me into Your presence where I can pray and seek Your face until I can hear from You. Now, Father, I pray that all over this building, wherever my voice is heard, Holy Spirit, You would finish the good work that You've begun.

You started this morning in our worship to walk among us. We felt and experienced Jesus. The Holy Spirit abiding and breathing life into us.

And now, Holy Spirit, we come to bow our hearts before You and say, come, Lord Jesus, and be everything. Take my life. Lord, I want to surrender everything.

Lord, there are some that have burdens on them and pain. Lord, just lay it down now at Your feet and say, Lord, I surrender it. And some, Lord, are worried about their jobs.

Some are worried about their future. Worried about their bills, how they're going to be paid. But, Lord Jesus, You said we're not to carry that kind of a burden.

You're the one who cares about these and You will supply our need. You will take care of us. We're not to fear.

We're to trust You, Lord. And that's a part of being surrendered to You. God, we don't try to figure it out.

We don't try to think it out. We rest in Your grace and Your love and Your power. God, You're going to take care of Your children.

You're going to take care of every one of Your people. Not one are going to have to beg for bread. Lord, I thank You now.

Before you walk out of here in the annex and all over the place, please, we have people from all over the world visiting us. And some of you know each other. But men can hug men.

Women can hug women. And just love somebody truly from your heart or a good handshake. God love you.

God bless you. Let there be peace and contentment. God is good.

God is so good. That's it. This is the conclusion of the message.

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