

# Surrender

by Dick Brogden

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God in preaching the gospel to all nations, highlighting the need to surrender the idea that people will be won by anything other than preaching, that the gospel can be preached from a position of security, that it can be preached only in select parts of the world, and that it can be preached in our own power. The call is to surrender all to Jesus and trust in His strength and guidance for the mission of spreading the gospel to every people group.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 24:3, Acts 1:8, Acts 4:31, Romans 10:14, 1 Corinthians 2:4, 2 Timothy 4:2, James 2:17, Revelation 14:6, Psalm 96:3, Isaiah 6:8

**Topics:** "Surrender to God", "Trust in His Strength"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God in preaching the gospel to all nations, highlighting the need to surrender the idea that people will be won by anything other than preaching, that the gospel can be preached from a position of security, that it can be preached only in select parts of the world, and that it can be preached in our own power. The call is to surrender all to Jesus and trust in His strength and guidance for the mission of spreading the gospel to every people group.

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## Transcript

If you know this chorus, would you sing it with me? All to Jesus I surrender, All to Him I freely give. I will ever love and trust Him In His presence daily live. I surrender all, I surrender all, All to Thee, my blessed Savior.

I surrender all, There is nothing as precious as the presence of Jesus. How I long for uninterrupted communion with Him. My soul was made for this.

Our souls were made for our heavenly home. To live daily in His presence. And having tasted of that, I long for its ultimate fulfillment.

If you have your Bible with you this evening, would you take it and turn to the book of Matthew chapter 24? I'm going to read from verse 3 to verse 14. If you don't have your scripture with you this evening, you'll find the text on the screen. Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately saying, Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age? And Jesus answered and said to them, Take heed that no one deceives you.

For many will come in My name, saying, I am the Christ, and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars, see that you are not troubled. For all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

Then they will deliver you up to tribulation, and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations, for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations. And then the end will come.

I went to boarding school when I was seven years old. Cry no tears for me, for my best friends and my fondest memories, my growth in Jesus all come from those blessed years. Nevertheless, as a seven-year-old, I longed for term to end.

I longed to go home. There were many things to enjoy at school, sports, scouts, music, drama, friends, and more. But my little heart knew that I was not home and that loving teachers were not my precious mother and father.

A winding dirt road led up to the front of that school. At term's end, I would perch with my sisters on the stone steps, and we would fix our eyes on the turn of that road. It was the mid-1970s, and my father had a white 504 Peugeot saloon with mandatory roof rack.

This was the ubiquitous missionary vehicle of choice where I would sit and stare as other cars would make that turn, my longing heart flutter. With each passing moment, I would grow more excited, more anxious. My heart would yearn.

My pulse would quicken. My eyes were fixed. I would not leave my post.

I had one desire. I had one blessed hope. I had one longing.

I wanted to go home. And suddenly, it was 7-0-3. I can still remember it.

The clouds seemed apart. The sun to shine. My father had come for me.

Joy in my soul. Life in my bones. Troubles forgotten.

School had passed away. It was time to go home. The 1800s are referred to in mission's history as the great century.

Building on William Carey's foundation to reach the coastlands, John Patton went inland China, inland Africa, into the uttermost islands of the sea. They searched for the peoples and the places beyond. The 1900s are now referred to in history as the Pentecostal century because something happened, something wonderful, something prophesied, and it exploded the growth of the church around the world.

That something was birthed by a desperation, a collective desperation for our heavenly home. Enlightenment had brought darkness. Industry had manufactured weapons of war.

Education had ushered in arrogance. Commerce fueled slavery. Every advance of man had been corrupted.

Every promise turned to a nightmare. The world was not improving and all the wisdom and all the might and all the effort of humanity proved incapable of bringing peace or hope or love or joy. And a longing grew and burst in the hearts of men and women.

This world is not our home. We're just a passing through. This school of earth has some shiny attractions to be sure, but ultimately our souls long for our heavenly home.

This is not where we belong. We cannot redeem the earth for we ourselves bear the cause of its demise. We are part of the problem.

O Lord, help us. O Lord, come and deal with fallen man. Restore fallen creation.

O Lord, take us home. And God's people, collectively perched on the stone steps of fallen Eden, fixed their eyes on the bend of history with one hope, one prayer alone. Jesus, would you come? Jesus, please take us home.

And as they waited to go home, their attention was drawn to the one clarification that scripture gives about timing. And the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations. And then the end will come.

There were other indicators to be sure. Earthquakes, famines, signs in heaven above, the beginning of sorrows, the text calls them. But the clearest indication and requirement for the end game is the global declaration to every ethno-linguistic people that Jesus alone is Savior.

Jesus alone is Lord of every people. That in Jesus' return alone is the ultimate redemption of all things. Our fathers and mothers in the faith, they believed in imminence.

Jesus could come at any moment. And they also believed in obedience to the scripture. Go, make disciples, preach the gospel to every ethnic group, and then the end will come.

These beliefs were complementary in their minds, linked in mutual fulfillment. Dependent therefore on Christ's return for final liberation, agreeing that Jesus could return at any moment, conscious of the requirement that every ethnic group hear the gospel. Our fathers and mothers in the faith ask the obvious question.

How? How on earth can the gospel be preached to every ethnic, that Jesus come, that we all go home? And the heavenly answer was Spirit's empowerment. To be Pentecostal is to be dependent on the Holy Spirit. Dependent on the Spirit to preach the gospel in every nation amongst every ethnic, compelled by love for the glory of God, in obedience to the Great Commission, that Jesus come, that we all go home.

We now stand on the edge of a new millennium, and we're not the first to dream of closure, and yet the scripture has not changed, nor has its mandate been fulfilled. We have seen more war, more bondage, more injustice, more economic oppression, more racial divides, more abuses of human dignity, more perversion of culture, more violation of creation, more corruption of institutions than ever before, and more troubling yet, we still all of us struggle with indwelling sin. There yet remains one blessed hope.

There is still one precious and priceless priority. There yet avails to us the promise of empowerment, and all these in the context of the gospel of the kingdom being preached in all the world to every people as a witness, and then the end shall come. Our theme tonight is that in order for the gospel to be preached amongst every people, in order for the end to come, we must surrender.

Number one, we must surrender the idea that the peoples of this world will be won by anything other than preaching. Number two, we must surrender the idea that the gospel can be preached from a position of security. Number three, we must surrender the idea that the gospel can be preached only in select parts of the world.

Number four, we must surrender the idea that the gospel can be preached in our own power. We must surrender the idea that the peoples of this world will be won by anything other than preaching. The verb preach comes from the Greek word *keriso*, and it means the verbal announcing, the spoken proclamation, the audible hearing of a message.

We should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Verse four, we will devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word. Stephen is chosen as a result.

Verse seven, the word of God continued to increase the number of the disciples multiplied, and Stephen, verse eight, full of grace and power was doing great wonders and signs. Verse 10, they could not withstand the wisdom and the spirit with which he was speaking. But he never ceases to speak, for we heard him say, it is academic to us that super apostles, luminaries, leaders, pastors, clergy devote themselves to prayer and proclamation.

But note what pedestrian Stephen, the table waiter does. He opens his mouth and speaks. Grace, power, signs, wonders accompanying.

Stephen will not shut up. His spoken wisdom, controversial as it was, is not understood. We know nothing of the tables that Stephen served, but we have 53 verses in Acts chapter seven, practically the whole chapter of Stephen's proclaimed sermon.

Words, words, words, says Eliza Doolittle. I'm so sick of words, and she has a point because the words of man are pompous, hypocritical, and self-serving. Humanity is sick of the empty words and is not to overcompensate and say little.

The cure is to open our mouths, die to our silence, and proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ because faith still comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. And how shall they hear unless they preach? The forces of your age seek to muzzle you. The siren song of respectability urges moderation.

Powers within, and powers from below make it their one ambition to silence the compelling, consistent, verbalized presentation of the gospel. You are pressured not to offend. You are persuaded not to inflame.

You are badgered toward suffocating tolerance. Impressed on your thinking anew, Jesus' words brought division. He came to bring not peace, but a sword.

The Baptist's words led to his beheading. Stephen's steady sermons summoned stones down upon his head. In the kingdom, yes, we attack injustice wherever we find it.

But do you want a justice issue? Let us not waver from the greatest of them all. Not all are poor. Not all are trafficked.

Not all are illiterate. Not all lack clean water. Not all have AIDS.

But all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Sin is the universal malady. You want a justice issue? Men, women, boys, girls, young, old, rich, poor.

They perish. They die eternally. They suffer.

They march to hell in their legions. They will be damned, not because of our excesses or the hypocrisy of our fathers, but because of our thundering silence. Our prayers, our finances, our action must prioritize the proclamation of the gospel amongst the unreached.

Entire people groups are damned and rumble towards incalculable horror because the church will not proclaim in power. The unparalleled injustice of our day is simply this. 6,500 unreached people groups, 2 billion people who have not heard the gospel, and yes, the unreached are blind because the church is mute because of our self-protecting silence.

God, have mercy on us all. We must surrender our words and our lack of them, for the gospel must be preached to every people, and then the end will come. We must surrender the idea that the gospel can be preached from a position of security.

My friend Miriam Smith sent me a Helen Keller quote. Keller was, of course, blind and deaf and mute, and she said, Life is either a daring adventure or nothing. Security does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men experience it as a whole.

Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than exposure. The fearful are caught as often as the bold. Our text reminds us just how the gospel must be preached.

Let me juxtapose verse 14 with its context. In this gospel, wars and famine, of the kingdom, earthquake and pain, will be preached trials and death throughout the whole world, hatred and falling, as a testimony, betrayal and falsehood to all nations, astray and cold. And when we have endured in so proclaiming Christ under such pressure, then the end will come.

One of my closest friends was imprisoned in Sudan for 58 days. He was released just three weeks ago. He demanded a Bible and after one week was given one, he memorized the whole book of James and Romans for 52 days.

He was in solitary confinement, without any action. He stood hour after hour at the window of his cell reading at the top of his voice the Scriptures into the prison courtyard. He read even after the guards insisted that he stop because the gospel has always been preached under pressure.

The best sermons in the book of Acts are in prisons or at trials. The most powerful testimonies of our day come from the mouths of those who suffer and die for their witness I live in Cairo and the daily existence of our team reminds me that we cannot wait for peace. We cannot wait for Pax Americana.

We cannot wait for stability in the Arab world. We cannot wait for a guarantee against danger or abuse or rape or prison or pain or death. We cannot wait for assurances of non-violence.

The gospel speaks loudest when its message of hope is the only excuse not to be spent for the gospel. The dangers that are real and rush upon us do not remove our preaching mandate. We must embrace ongoing insecurity.

Instability is the new normal. Suffering and persecution must increase as the end draws nigh. The word will soften some.

It will harden others. Missionaries will increasingly be imprisoned and suffer and die. We will deploy to war zones.

In the context of famine, destruction and death we will lose some of our finest and replace them with you, our ready youth. Preach from the prison. Preach from the pit.

This is our privilege. This is our destiny. This is the live-dead joy.

There is no safe time to preach the gospel. We must surrender the idea that the gospel can be preached from a position of security and can be preached under pressure. We must surrender the idea that the gospel can be preached only in select parts of the world.

Our text is very clear. The gospel must be preached amongst every people. The Greek nation in our text is ethnesi from it.

We derive our word ethnic and it refers to specific language and cultural peoples or what we call ethno-linguistic groups. This has ever been and will have gone. The gospel must go to every people group.

This is why we plant indigenous churches that they can reach their own and the peoples beyond them. This is why we train national leaders that they may raise up apostolically and go to the regions beyond. This is why we touch with compassion that we might access those peoples who have never heard the gospel.

The goal has never been planting churches. The goal has never been training leaders. None of them are salvific by intent.

All of them are means to an end and all these work towards the ultimate goal of mission. Why do we plant churches? So the gospel can be preached to every people group and the end come. Why do we train leaders and ministers so the gospel can be preached to every people group and the end shall come? Why do we touch with compassion so the gospel can be preached to every people group and the goal is love and the means is the preaching of the gospel amongst every people group for then and only then shall the end come.

William Carey admonished us that we should pray with an open Bible and an open map. Alan Johnson reminds us that we cannot pretend not to know what we know. In some places amongst some peoples of the world the gospel has been preached.

Hallelujah! The church is planted there and cannot build on another man's foundation. We dare not confuse geopolitics with the strategy of the spirit. Somalis are flooding into Minneapolis.

Indonesia is outside the 1040 window. Many of Europe's great peoples are less than 1% evangelical and inoculated by the traditional church against the gospel. The borderless church is not bound by the politics

or nation states of man.

The strategy of the Holy Spirit has always been the glory of God for the joy of all peoples. Missionaries in Africa will catalyze the African church for the unreached. Missionaries in Europe will model frontier missions to the lethargic.

Missionaries in Latin America will function apostolically and raise up new armies of those who will live and die amongst unreached peoples in all places amongst all peoples. The priority of God's people and then the end shall come. 6,500 unreached peoples in our world today.

This, the best that we can understand it, is the priority of Scripture. This is the purpose for the filling of the Holy Spirit. This is the reason for mission and we must surrender the idea that the gospel be preached only in certain places of the world.

And though none of us would ever admit to thinking that way, we collectively have acted that way. And we must now be resolute for the Spirit demands and the corporate calling of the assemblies of God insists we will ever prioritize the regions beyond. We will ever focus on neglected peoples.

We will ever preach the gospel amongst the places and peoples where it has not been preached. This is our requested obedience. This was our beginning.

This shall be our culmination. The gospel will be preached amongst every people and then the end will come. Fourthly, we must surrender the idea that the gospel can be preached in our own power.

There are three spirits that plague humanity and there are three spirits that hinder the mission of God and these spirits are these. I know. I can.

I am. And I am. And these spirits must be strangled out of us and in their place we must desperately, frantically seek the Holy Spirit.

For even circumstantial exposure to the realities of mission impresses the sobering reality upon us that indeed I know not. I cannot. I am not.

I am Pentecostal by necessity to be refilled with the Holy Spirit out of sheer desperation. The continual refilling of the Spirit is the lifeline of the weak. I have nothing to give.

I have nothing to offer. We have no solutions. We have no sources.

We know not. We cannot. We are not.

Our spirits are sour wine prone to wander. Lord, I feel it. Our spirits betray us prone to leave the God we love and unless the Father sends the Spirit all is lost.

The cardinal doctrine of Pentecost can be summed up in one word. More. In Acts chapter 2 verse 4 the disciples are filled.

In Acts chapter 4 verse 31 this same group prays again, is shaken again, is filled again. I don't have enough of the Son. I need more of you, Jesus.

I don't have enough of the Spirit. I need more of you, wonderful Counselor. And like Moody, what I do have leaks out.

So Jesus, baptize me again today in your Holy Spirit. Jesus, fill me afresh. Jesus, give me more of yourself because if you don't I will dry and die.

Jesus, I need more of you. My spirit is so small. The unreached world is so big.

Jesus, the Christian, repeatedly cries. Jesus, the missionary, constantly pleads, help me, fill me, Jesus or I perish. I was at a conference earlier this year.

Late one night I sat with three friends. Alan works in Thailand, Jason in China, and David in Lebanon and we were talking of the many times when we failed and nothing happened. The week after the conference Jason wrote us and said in effect, I think that God gets a different kind of glory when his servants pray and nothing happens and pray again and nothing happens and believe and nothing happens and trust and look foolish and step out in faith and are not rewarded and their spirit persists and their spirit endures and their spirit remains and their spirit believes and their spirit trusts and they pray again and nothing happens they pray again and nothing happens they pray again and nothing happens and pray and pray and pray and the heavens are his breast and the answer does not come and they believe again and trust again and depend again and pray again and nothing happens and when the spirit of man is subject to God do you have anyone like that devil? Do you have anyone like that? Do you have anyone so surrendered devil? Do you have anyone whose spirit is so soft and subtle? Do you have anyone like that devil? Do you have anyone that trusts you so unshakably? Do you have anyone with a surrendered spirit like that? Devil, do you have anyone like that? Nothing strikes fear into the heart of that old serpent like the spirit of one completely surrendered to Jesus.

For a surrendered spirit doesn't have to know why and a surrendered spirit doesn't have to be known and a surrendered spirit doesn't have to be able and a surrendered spirit doesn't have to succeed. Yet a surrendered spirit can be trusted with power from on high and a surrendered spirit is unlimited and a surrendered spirit is unstoppable. We must surrender the idea that the gospel can be preached to every nation in our own strength for it is to the desperate that Jesus sends more of his spirit.

Disabuse yourself today of the notion that God needs you. China does not need you. Afghanistan does not need you.

Libya needs you not. The Middle East, the Orient, the islands of the sea, Somali pirates, Thai Buddhists, Saudi princes, European atheists, they don't need you. They don't need your smallness.

They don't need your weakness. They don't need your baggage. They don't need your sin.

You need Cairo more than Cairo needs you. You need Syria. You need Mauritania.

You need Turkey. You need Myanmar. You need Indonesia.

You need Spain to reveal your smallness, to break you, to cast you in fragments upon the mighty rock. You were not providentially brought to this summit because you are needed. We don't need you.

The nations don't need you. Jesus doesn't need you. He doesn't need your words.

He doesn't need your deeds. He doesn't need your ideas. He doesn't need your puny security measures.

He doesn't need your individual preference about where you should go. He certainly doesn't need your ridiculous strength or undisciplined spirit. We are not needed.

But we are invited. The God of glory invites us. The Lord of all peoples instructs us to preach the gospel among all the ethnic and His surprising condition of invitation is surrender.

Jesus doesn't stand before us begging. He never has and He never will negotiate terms. These are the terms of Jesus invitation to you.

Number one, we must surrender the idea that the peoples of this world will be won by anything other than preaching. Number two, we must surrender the idea that the gospel can be preached from a position of security. Number three, we must surrender the idea that the gospel can be preached only in select parts of the world.

Number four, we must surrender the idea that the gospel can be preached in our own power. If on these sacred understandings you are willing to take up the invitation of God and join Him in His grand, precious priority of the gospel being preached amongst every people group and then the end coming, I want you in this moment to silently and soberly get up out of your chair and come now to this altar and kneel and to surrender all. Would you come if you would want to surrender? I want to ask you just to find a place to kneel.

We are going to respond to Jesus without any music, without any distractions. If you can't make it to the front, would you just kneel in the altars or in the aisles? And then I want us as a body to quiet our spirits and to listen to the terms that the Holy Spirit gives to us. All to Jesus I surrender All to Him I freely give I will ever love and trust Him In His presence daily live I surrender all I surrender, I surrender all All to Thee my blessed Savior I surrender all We surrender all We surrender, we surrender all All to Thee our blessed Savior We surrender all Jesus loves me this I know For the Bible tells me so Little ones to Him belong They are weak but He is strong The Bible tells me so

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