

Unless They Are Sent

by Dick Brogden

The sermon emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God's will in order to achieve His mission and glory, and to overcome the spirit of fear that controls the Muslim world.

Duration: 46:06

Scripture: Genesis 22:2, Matthew 6:33, Mark 10:23-24, Mark 10:27, Mark 10:29-31

Topics: "Missions"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on a personal experience that led him to contemplate the sacrifice of Abraham and the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus. He emphasizes the need for surrendering oneself and one's children to God, acknowledging that they belong to Him. The speaker also discusses the primary spirit controlling the Muslim world, which he identifies as fear. He concludes by sharing a difficult conversation he had with his daughter about giving up her toys, and how it led him to have a heartfelt conversation with Jesus about his family's struggles.

Transcript

Mark chapter 10, verse 23. Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, how hard it is for those who have riches to do missions. And the Latinos were greatly astonished at his words.

But Jesus answered again and said to them, children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to do missions. And they were greatly astonished, saying amongst themselves, how then can the nations be saved? But Jesus looked at them and said, with Americans it is impossible, but not with God. For with God all types of mission are possible.

Then Pedro began to say to him, see, we have left all and followed you. So Jesus answered and said, assuredly I say to you, there is no one who has left house, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospels, who shall not receive a hundredfold. Now in this time, houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come, eternal life.

But many who are first will be last, and the last first. I am theologically and experientially convinced that the absolute priority of the global Church in mission is to plant the Church amongst unreached people groups through multinational teams. Tonight four of my team are going to help me share on surrender.

For no matter what culture you come from, we must all surrender something. And no matter what the Lord restores to us, houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, lands, we cannot escape the strange phrase in this text that all things are restored with persecutions. We cannot ignore the reality that often the pain comes along with brothers, that younger brother has not been persecuted by his older brother, that older brother has not been mocked or resented by his younger brother.

Fidel Monzon is from the Philippines. He is a medical doctor, as is his wife. He left his house for Jesus' sake.

We say that every man is a king in his own castle. But when you go to the field, you own no house. And often you are under the authority of another.

And sometimes the one that leads you is from a different culture. And if the nations are to be reached, we must surrender our pride. King David said, Behold how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity.

Another king said, Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste. No city or house divided against itself will stand. One king highlighted the fruit of unity.

The other king, the danger of division. Unity will bless a kingdom. Division will destroy that same kingdom.

And often what destroys unity is pride. On the field, one of my greatest challenges was surrendering my pride. There was a time when I was confronted by our field leader.

He was from a different country. During one of our meetings, he asked to talk with me in a separate room. He requested another worker to join us.

In our meeting, he asked my opinion regarding a particular issue. My opinion differed from his. That's when the trouble began.

He said I was wrong in my understanding. And then accused me of not knowing how to submit to leadership. The other worker was silent.

I responded explaining I would gladly submit to leadership. But the issue was not submission to leadership. The issue was proper procedure, proper protocol.

He was very, very irritated with me. And was sure that I was at fault. We then agreed to wait for our regional leader to explain to us what should be done.

After a few weeks, the regional leader arrived. He clarified with us that my understanding was correct. It was the right thing to do.

It was very encouraging for me and for my wife. But I have to admit I was hurt. Because our field leader, who accused me, never apologized.

I could have responded no longer to work with them. I could have allowed my pride to prevent me from fellowshiping with them. But later I realized that in God's kingdom, what's more important is not my pride.

It's His will. His work. God's work is massive.

It is impossible for only a few people to accomplish His work. I believe that is why Jesus Himself exhorted us to pray for laborers. He did say the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few.

The truth is these laborers will be coming from different cultures, from different countries, different backgrounds, different preferences. And if I come with my pride, I will never be able to unite and work with others for the harvest. If I don't surrender my pride, I will always be offended.

I will always be frustrated because they don't think like I do. They don't dress like I do. They don't eat rice like I do.

I have to keep in mind for God's people to bring God's kingdom to the different unreached regions, nations and tribes for the harvest to happen. There can be no room for division. God's people have to unite and to unite, I have to surrender my pride.

God bless everyone tonight. Majid Benjamin is from the Arab Republic of Sudan. He is married to the daughter of a chief.

He knows the emotion of leaving family and losing children. Majid knows that if the nations are to be reached, we must surrender our children. About seven years ago, we had a house group of Muslim converts.

It's too dangerous for them to attend church. We had to do the meeting and we were doing it in our home. We had to do the meeting and we were doing it in our home.

There was one of them who was a 20-year-old lady. She came to Christ and she was part of the group. Her family started after they found out that she is a Christian.

They kind of followed her and knew where she goes and then they started to beat her really bad. One day she came to our house and the white in her eyes was red. When I say red, it's red, red, red.

She said her brother had beaten her with a chair on her head. We tried to convince her to go back and try to be a bit quieter and not to irritate them or challenge them. We succeeded two times to return her home after she was beaten.

The third time, she made up her mind. She said she was not going back. She said that she found a Catholic family that would help her to go outside the country.

We asked her not to tell us anything about this family or where they live because we knew that her family would help her. We gave her a little bit of money to help her. We prayed for her and said goodbye.

The family came to the house and to the church. We just told them that we saw her but we don't know where she is. They tried many times to come to our house and talk to the members of the church.

But then after that, we started getting phone calls. We didn't recognize the voice. They were telling us who was speaking in Spanish.

There was some fear but one day, fear broke into my heart. The school bus that takes our kids to school was late for about an hour and a half. I forgot all the preaching I have preached about the love of God.

I panicked. These are my four kids. I was born as one child.

I had no brothers and sisters. They were not only my kids. They were my brothers and sisters also.

Later on, the bus came. It was just a traffic jam. What increased our fear at the beginning was that the driver didn't answer his cell phone.

After that, I started to think what happened to me. How could I forget all that God taught me? I started thinking about Abraham and his son Isaac. After God asked Him to send away the oldest son, Ishmael, I thought He told him to give him the other one.

But I didn't stop there. Abraham is a great example. I started thinking about the Father giving His son for me.

I'm unworthy. I don't deserve any human being, any sinner to die for me. How much the Son of God, the Father gave His son for me.

I broke into tears. I started to repent. I surrendered my heart to God.

I surrendered my four kids to God. I still love them. I don't want any harm to happen to them.

But I want God to decide what happens in their lives. They are His, they are not mine. Amen.

God bless you. Alberto Sosa is from Paraguay. Alberto has been kicked out of two different countries in the Arab world.

He and his family have been lost their possessions two different times. Alberto knows that if the nations are to be reached, we must surrender our possessions. Working in multinational teams, I've had to learn to surrender many things.

For example, I had to learn to surrender many things. For example, I had to learn to surrender my language. As Latins, we have to communicate everything in our second language with our team members.

And in our third language with the national community. I had to learn to surrender my rest time. I had to surrender my weekends.

I had to surrender my family. I had to learn to surrender my knowledge. I had to learn to surrender my abilities, my skills.

I had to learn to surrender all of my possessions and I said, Jesus, my things are your things. After working hard enough to make my small business run well, I abandoned everything to follow what Jesus asked me to do. So there we were with my family in North Africa.

And after we lived there for one year, we received an order to leave the country in 48 hours. We received the police's order to leave the country within 48 hours. In all this crazy process we lost a lot of money.

We tried to sell all the things from our home as quickly as we could. But this process resulted in a very tight economic situation for us. But it just got worse when we found out that if we wanted to carry any extra kilos or pounds in our luggage, the airlines were going to charge us \$25.

To be clear, we couldn't afford to take our basic things to our next country. It simply meant that we wouldn't be able to pay that money so we couldn't take our very basic needs or things to our next country. We only had 23 kilos for each person.

But probably the most difficult part was that we didn't have space in our luggage for many of our things. And many of her toys and her dolls and her princess dresses couldn't go. It was really difficult for my little girl but finally she understood and she told me, if I give up my toys and my things, Jesus will provide more toys for me.

After that conversation, I went very quickly to my bedroom to have a serious conversation with Jesus about Zoe and my wife's broken heart. I remember I told Jesus why are they suffering like this? And I don't have enough money to pay for their things because I've lost almost 60% of everything I own. I don't have enough money to pay for anything.

They are really suffering. After a few minutes of complaining, I gave up and I prayed. Jesus, I give you everything because you called me to do this.

And then, the Lord was quiet. No angel came to my room. There were no messages on the wall.

Just nothing. But Jesus, and my wife Diana were in peace and security with the next step we would take. And it didn't affect them what we asked for.

Finally, we arrived in Sudan with a new life, new equipment, new everything. At that time, no one knew about our economic situation. But after a few days, Dick, our team leader at the time, said to us, in the team storage room you'll find things that another family has left just a few weeks ago.

Anything that you might need, take for yourself and for your new home. So we went to this storage room and you know what? There was all kinds of things for our new home. We shared this joy together with Diana and we said, this is a miracle.

But my little girl Zoe disappeared among the furniture and the things for the house that was in that room. Suddenly, she started to call me saying, Dad, Daddy, Daddy, look what I found. It was a giant pink bag with a lot of things in it.

It was a big pink bag with all kinds of things inside. Can you guess what was inside? There were new dolls. There were dresses, princess dresses.

Everything that she loved. That was a joy like never before. I learned something that day that we continue to apply in our home.

We opened our hearts and we recognize that God is in charge of every little detail. Glory to God. When we give our little things to God, when we give up our things, when we surrender our skills, when we surrender our opportunities, when we surrender our human possibilities, when we surrender our decisions, when we surrender our work, Jesus is everything.

He delights even in the midst of our needs. Zoe, my daughter, can tell you about it even better. Thank you.

Milward Mamvani is from Malawi. Milward has been my right hand and most of my brain for more than a decade. We have laughed together and cried together.

We have fought, we have prayed, we have played. Milward and I have some successes and many failures. And Milward knows that if the nations are to be reached, we must surrender our fear of failure.

I could stand here today and talk to you about my surrendering my family to the Lord when I needed my daily food or surrendering myself to the will of the Lord during the times of uncertainty when I even feared for my very life. But as Dick has said, I want to share with you about surrendering my fear of failure. When you are sent out to the mission field, there are high expectations by those that send you.

People want to see results. And when I left for the mission field when I went to Sudan, I was very excited about what I would see and what God would do in that nation. But a few months down the road, I realized how hard it was going to be.

I realized it was going to be a very long journey. And by the end of the year, I was getting frustrated and I feared what my senders would say until I realized that this work was for the Lord and not for those that sent me. And I surrendered that fear to the Lord and He freed me.

The other fear that I had was the fear of failure in my responsibilities in the team. You know, I was the only differently colored person in this multinational team and coming from a very small, insignificant country. And my fear was if I do not perform, I will be rejected and regarded as a lesser member of the team.

So I need to work hard so that I perform well so that I can be recognized in the team. But I realized that it was not that. It was not my performance.

I found out that my leader accepted me just as I was and my team accepted me just as I was. And that God had accepted me just as I was. With that realization, I surrendered my fears to God.

My fears of failure and that gave me freedom. With that surrendering, I served with those that had the mind like I did, those of like mind to the glory of God. And I am thankful to the Lord that He took control.

And He took control and He has let me minister without fear of failure. Fully accepted by Him and fully accepted by my team and we serve together to the glory of the Lord. Not only must we surrender our pride, not only must we surrender not only must we surrender our possessions, not only must we surrender our fear of failure, we must also surrender our brothers.

Brotherhood is stronger than friendship. We choose our friends. God chooses our brothers.

My brothers and I love them with all my heart. And they have led me in so many things. And these are men with their families that I know we can go to war with.

But I've also had to surrender them. I've learned that I cannot protect them all the time. I've learned that one of the young men in Sudan that I have invested much of my life in he was arrested a few months ago.

He was tortured. He was forced to watch other men being tortured. He was taken into a room with two other men and they were butchered in front of his eyes.

He has gone through so much torture that now he needs to receive extensive medical attention. And in the last six months of my life I've had to work with several brothers who have been tortured or imprisoned or suffered and some of it was because they were connected to us. Gladly would I have suffered in their place.

It is much more painful to watch your brothers suffer than for you to suffer yourself. And yet it is necessary to send our brothers into battle and when they suffer we must protect their wounds and then send them back to the fields where they must bleed and die. We must surrender our desire to protect one another

from harm.

We must surrender our desire to protect one another from harm. We cannot win this battle. We cannot win the nations unless we are willing for our brothers and our sisters to suffer.

And when our brothers suffer God's primary plan is not their escape. First God's primary God is concerned with His glory. God must be glorified in our suffering, in our prisons, in our pain, in our trial.

Second, God is concerned with the defense of the Gospel. Is the Gospel true or not? Is what we preach true or not? Is Jesus worth it or not? Is heaven real or not? Are the things we have taught to converts real or not? Our converts are watching us suffer and they will have to suffer one day as well. Can they learn to suffer from us? Do our lives matter to them? Do our lives match our sermons? Muslims who persecute are watching us.

Will our suffering call them to Jesus? The Gospel is at stake. Is the Gospel true or not? Third, God is concerned of our character in suffering. Suffering can make us like Jesus.

God uses suffering to remove sin and to make His image shine only after these priorities of God are considered. Only after His glory is revealed. Only after the Gospel is defended.

Only after His character is manifested in us. Only after His glory is revealed. Does God want to deliver us from suffering? And God's deliverance sometimes is escape.

He takes us out. And sometimes it's endurance. He takes us through.

And sometimes it's eternity. He takes us home. But I am learning that I have to surrender my brothers and I to suffering.

We are reconciled to suffering. We know that it's coming. And while we wonder if we will be found faithful in our time of testing, we are more worried about you.

What will our fathers do? What will our mothers do? What will our senders do? Will you surrender us? Will you surrender more of our brothers and sisters? When missionaries are raped, when missionaries are beaten, when missionaries are imprisoned, when missionaries are killed, when grieving family members beat on your altar, when grieving family members knock on your office door and take you to court, when the press blames you for making Muslims angry, when your culture screams at you that you should be cautious, when your own emotions demand that you try and protect your sheep from pain, when your intellect advises you that the cost is not worth it, when you stand around the caskets of your children, when you watch them shot or beheaded on Jezero TV, when the ones that you send do not come home, and there are widows and orphans on the field weeping, what will you do then? What will you surrender next? Will you surrender more? What will our fathers and our mothers do when the children they send to the field are eaten by lions and beheaded by emperors and stoned by religious zealots? What will you do then? Yes, the sent must be sent surrendered, but also you who send must surrender. You must surrender more of your children when your firstborns fall. Only this life and this level of surrender the surrender of the sent joined with the surrender of the senders will propel us to the end God's great glory amongst every people.

The primary spirit controlling the Muslim world is fear. Yes, there is deception. Yes, there is violence.

But at the heart there is a spirit of fear. Perhaps you have felt it. Maybe even tonight in these few moments as I have talked.

A question, a doubt in your mind, a worry in your spirit. What will happen to me if I surrender? What will it cost me? Maybe there is a fear of death. Maybe there is a fear of violence.

Maybe there is a fear of pain. Maybe there is a fear of Muslims. Maybe there is a fear of losing your children.

Maybe there is a fear of losing your mind. Maybe there is a fear of losing your safety or your health or your security or control. You are not alone in your fear.

Fear is ever with me. I am a coward at heart. I try and hide my fear as best as I can.

But the coward inside me is always fighting fear. I too am afraid of dying. And these are my boys, Luke and Zach.

What happens to them when I die? I am afraid of dishonor. I am afraid that under pressure I will disgrace our Lord. Oh, that tonight we would surrender our fear.

Oh, that tonight we would surrender at the altar the fear. The thing or the person or the possibility or the idea that has control of us because we are afraid of it. The thing, the person, the identity the thing that controls our mind that we can surrender.

And taking the gospel to unreached people. What is it that you fear? What is it that you fear? Tonight I want us to close by coming to the altars to pray. Tonight I want us to close by coming to the altars to pray.

And I want to ask everyone to surrender something. I want you to take a few minutes to think about what you need to surrender. And then I want you to bring a symbol of that and put it on the altar.

You might want to put a belt on the altar I'm giving up control. You might want to put your shoes on the altar. I'm giving up where I will go.

You might want to put a picture from your wallet of your children on the altar. Jesus, I'm giving up fear of my children. You might want to put a mirror from your purse on the altar.

You might want to write something on a piece of paper and put it on the altar. So would you close your eyes? Would you bow your heads? And as the Holy Spirit speaks to you would you come and put a symbol of your surrender here on the altar.

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