

Lost Control

by Glenn Meldrum

The sermon emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God's will and letting go of our own desires and plans in order to experience God's power and transformation in our lives.

Duration: 57:29

Topics: "Sin"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the meaninglessness of life apart from God and how Christians can also fall into a state of meaninglessness by chasing after worldly desires. He quotes Leonard Ravenhill, who challenges Christians to prioritize soul cultivation over worldly pursuits. The preacher then discusses the importance of surrendering control to Jesus Christ and allowing Him to dictate every aspect of our lives, including our finances, entertainment, and decisions. He uses biblical references from Luke and Acts to illustrate the need for counting the cost and fully committing to following Christ.

Transcript

For more messages by Glenn Meldrum and in his presence ministries, go to www.ihpministry.com. You are welcome to make additional copies of this CD for free distribution. Mark 5, beginning in the 25th verse. A large crowd followed and pressed around him, referring to pressing around Jesus, and a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for 12 years.

She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better, she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in a crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, if I just touch his clothes, I will be healed. Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, who touched my clothes? You see, the people crowding against you, his disciples answered, and yet you can ask who touched me? But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. When the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth.

He said to her, daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering. Why don't you think about this woman.

Twelve years she had this disease. Twelve years. It says in Scripture that she had spent everything she had on it.

So for twelve years she pursued the answers and doctors and healings and who knows what type of things she went after. I mean, maybe she went after spiritualists in their form in that day or some of the occult practices or whatever. I mean, when people get desperate, they start going desperate ways and they start thinking desperate things.

And so who knows what direction she went to at that time trying to find some form of healing. Now we have to look at this here from a very natural standpoint. We have to see a woman who spent all of her living.

Now she was probably a mother and that means she would be married and maybe she had a bunch of kids. And you have to realize that something was going on in her life that everything from the beginning where this disease broke out, everything began to unravel. Bit by bit, slowly, it began to unravel.

So here's this woman, I mean, maybe in the prime of life thinking everything is great and she has this family growing and wonderful husband and everything's going phenomenal and a disease creeps in and something gets into her life. And now she's facing this particular thing. But it just begins.

And so she goes to a doctor and a doctor says, no big deal. And so, you know, some medication or whatever it is and it's still there. And after a few months, it's still there.

And so she goes to another doctor and tries him and it's still there. And then she tries something else but now it's gone on for a couple years. Then it gets a little worse and it's getting worse.

Now her children are seeing her suffer under it and the tension that's rising in the home makes for some division and some arguments between husband and wife. The children see the stress between the marriages as the disease increases and it causes greater problems in the marriage. She keeps looking and the family keeps hoping for something to happen.

And so they go to another place to find healing. And he's working and enslaving, trying to put money in the bank, trying to save enough to take care of the bills and the death that's accumulating over this particular disease. And it goes on year after year.

And each year that it goes, each thing she goes after to try and find a remedy and it proves fruitless, she grows a little bit more despondent. She grows a little bit more weary. She grows a little bit more hopeless.

She feels a little bit more in her life that is there going to be any answer. And she goes on and her family suffers under it as well. A family wracked by pain then.

You know, children that grow up and see a mother slowly dying before their eyes saying, will she be able to see us get married? Will she ever see the grandbabies? The fear in a family, the anxiety, the pressures upon it all because of this illness and no hope. And so she looks to everything that she could. She turned to Jesus not because she had necessarily great faith or anything else.

She was a hopeless woman. She was hopeless. She had nothing else to trust and no other place to turn to.

But you know, in the midst of everything, she still wanted control of her life. It's really crazy when you look at alcoholics and you look at the life of an alcoholic. An alcoholic, they refer to, if you go to AA, that he has lost control of his life.

The reality is, the problem is he's not lost control of his life. They lie and they deceive the people by saying that he's lost control. He's not lost control.

He has retained control. That's why he has the problem. But he is still controlling his life.

He is still the manipulator of the family. You see, alcoholics manipulate the family. They control it through guilt and condemnation and all the other garbage that goes with it.

But yet a disease can do the same identical thing. It becomes a controller of a family and the one suffering under the disease can be, be in its own, in their own sense, a manipulator, because this outside thing is now causing tremendous problem within the family and it can reap havoc in it. One healer after another healer and still nothing.

Everything that she tried was hopeless. And so she hears about Jesus. She hears the testimony that there's this prophet in town that is touching the blind and they're seeing and healing the lame and touching the bruised and the broken and they're changing it.

And she, in her hopelessness, probably sat there and says, well, he'd never touch me. Who am I? Coming from a, from a desperate situation, she would just say that she'd be, she would just be in a hopeless feeling going, another thing, another thing. Why should I go and try another thing? I've tried so much.

I'm tired of trying things. I'm tired of the effort. I'm tired of it all.

But somehow something was burning inside of her. Something was tugging on her. Something inside was, was different about it.

And so, so maybe she heard Jesus preach out there once. Maybe she saw Jesus do some miracles and it started building a little bit of faith in her, a little bit of hope that, that maybe there's a chance. Somehow or another she came to a point of hopelessness in herself and she was finally at a point where she was willing to do the scariest thing that she could absolutely do, to begin to lose control of her life.

And so she was willing to go and run. And she says, if I but touch the hem of his garment, I will be healed. We have this thing inside of us.

It is bred in us naturally. Let me relate it to you from a very natural standpoint. You have a little baby, adorable little thing, newborn, sweet as can be, you know, messy but sweet.

You know, I have a friend that kind of referred to them at that stage as little blobs. You know, they kind of just, they just, they're needy. They're just there until eventually their personality comes out.

And, and they can be cute and adorable, but you know what happens? Boy, we want that old personality to start coming out and then the smiles and the giggles and, and all the other stuff, but also comes out something else with it. You were feeding the little baby and also the first time that little cute thing goes out and grabs a spoon and says, I'm gonna feed myself. She wants to do it herself.

She is in a place where she's wanting to learn independence. She's wanting independence. That is a natural thing.

It's very natural for a child to grow up and want independence. And so how long is it before you want to see that little baby walk? And then after she begins to walk, you're sorry she learned. Because then she's in everything.

Because she's pushing the envelope of independence. And mama's heart breaks the first time she runs down the street and you weren't watching. Because she's getting bigger and now she can run down there.

She can get away from me. And then she keeps pushing the envelope as she gets older and older. And when they hit the teen years, man, they are pushing.

They are pushing hard. I mean they want their independence. They want their independence.

I want to make the decisions for my life. I want to wear what I want to wear. I want the color nails I want to wear.

I want my ears pierced fifty times on each ear. They want what they want because they're growing up and they feel that this is my right as an individual. I want freedom.

I want my freedom. And so they push it until eventually they're supposedly adult at 18. And they're on their own.

You see, everything in the natural pushes us to independence. But everything in Christianity pushes us to dependence. The total opposite.

That's why we have such a hard time with surrender. That's why we have the difficulty of losing control. Because our whole life has been an effort to have control.

Our whole life, from when we were babies, we wanted control. Now you know what even complicates it more? As life goes on and we start getting hurts. You know what we do when we get hurts? We start building walls.

Because we want control. I'm not going to be hurt anymore. I'm going to build some walls.

I'm going to protect myself. And so we start doing these things in our life to try and build all these walls and protections as if we could do such a thing. But we think we're doing it and we block off other people so that we're not hurt because we're tired of being hurt.

And we figure if I have greater control of my life, I will not be hurt as much. The problem is we try to retain control. It wasn't until this woman finally came to the point of hopelessness in herself, hopelessness in the doctors, hopelessness in everything out there, that she came to a point to truly, completely, and in reality say, I'm willing to lose it all.

I'm willing to give it all up. This here speaks about Christianity, about where it is. You see, even as Christians we come and we surrender to a point.

To a point. Maybe to a point that we understand. Maybe we've done our best in surrender, but you see, surrender is a lifelong project.

It's a lifelong thing because he wants to take us deeper into it, because he has more areas he wants to touch and he wants control of. But part of it is because we live in a world that's ever changing. And we are a people that's ever changing.

And because of those two issues, we're always confronted with that issue of surrender. One of the greatest problems I see in the church today is the issue of surrender. I remember hearing some years ago Chuck Swindoll make a statement while he was still pastoring, and he made a statement saying, I will not allow my church to sing to him, I surrender all, because I don't want them to become guilty before God, because I know they will not.

We can raise our hands, we can say, I surrender all, but is it manifested in our life? Is it proved in our life? Have we surrendered all? Have we lost control that he could tell us anything and we would say, yes, Lord, that he could say, go here, we'll go, stay here, stay, if he tells us to do this, we'll do whatever it is, because we are in such love with him that if he speaks, we will obey. And you see, that is actually a very difficult spot to get to. That is a spot where we start really becoming mature as Christians, where the surrender becomes so deep that all he has to do is speak and we say yes, that he begins to speak and we long, we ache for it.

If he tells us to repent, we'll be on our face, because we're at that point where we're losing control of our life. I have seen in my life, every time I try to retain control of an area of my life is where I have the problems, where I have the pain, the hurts, the struggles, everything, because that's what self-control always does. I'm not referring to the fruit of self-control, that's a different issue.

Turn with me to Acts, the ninth chapter. We're going to look at a couple more people who lost control. You see, this issue may not seem like a big deal, but it is such a big deal that until a person loses control, they will never be the man or woman of God that they should be or could be.

It is such an issue, because it is an issue that ultimately comes down to be an issue of Lordship. Who will control my life? My own passions, my own wants, my own cares, or Jesus Christ? Who will tell me what to do? Who will tell me what to spend and how to spend my money? Who will tell me what to do with my life? Who will dictate it? Me or God? Who will dictate my entertainment? Who will dictate to me how I do everything? Me or God? What will it come down to be? The issue is tremendous. You see, for a man of God to come to a place to become a man of God or woman of God to become a woman of God, it is the issue of surrender.

It's the issue that God does not need our gifts and talents. He needs our surrender. When He has our surrender, He can do the supernatural, He can do the phenomenal through us, but until He has surrender, we become an obstacle actually to His move.

We can become a hindrance within our own families, because lack of surrender can cause nightmares within homes. The falling apart of families is 100% a surrender issue. If I surrendered to Christ, the old man would begin to die off, and everything that is harmful to my marriage would begin to be transformed by the power of God.

The reason why the breakdowns of marriage is because I am not a surrendered individual. Allowing Him to touch those areas, you see, to be a surrendered individual, I have to want to be surrendered, and I have to want to see the need in my own life. So often when there's marital problems, husband and wife point fingers at each other rather than pointing fingers at themselves.

Change doesn't happen in a marriage because people point fingers at each other. It just makes the problem worse. The marriage wouldn't be like this if you were different.

Marriages change because individuals are transformed by God, because they begin to yield and surrender the hurts, the pains, the sorrows, the struggles, everything that's gone on, that has made us to be the people that we are, that with all of our insecurities and fears and everything else, He can begin to break into our lives and bring transformation to us as we begin to surrender. The problem that we have when we suffer hurts and pains and sorrows and failures, that we build those walls, we build those walls against people, but you know what happens as we build those walls against people? They somehow are built there also with God. It becomes scary.

Why are we so scared of God? Why are we so terrified if He really broken our lives? Because we built those walls up and that's how we deal with relationships, because that's how we deal with relationships. We deal with it, with God also. But what He's wanting is to manifest His love, His goodness, His tenderness, His mercy and kindness, His discipline.

But He can only do it when we come to a point of such surrender that we will allow Him to touch us, that we will allow Him to to discipline us, that He will allow us to touch the places that hurt the worst that we've tried to keep from Him. Well, I've loved people and they've hurt me. What if I love God and here it's me? And so we protect.

We protect ourselves. We say, God, you can come so close, only so close. I can deal with that, O God.

But you get a little too close and you start touching something I don't like to be touched there. I don't want that. And so we stop Him from coming any closer.

Acts 9, the third verse, beginning in the third verse. This is Paul's conversion. In the third verses, as he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.

He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? Who are you, Lord? Saul asked. I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, he replied. Now get up and go into the city and you will be told what you must do.

The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless. They heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes, he could see nothing.

So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind and did not eat or drink. I want you to think about this here.

He is a proud religious man. Go through his credentials, and he listed all of his credentials of what he was as a success in the world. Listen to them all.

He was a proud religious man. He trusted in self. He trusted in his religion.

He trusted in his heritage. He trusted in his family line. He trusted in being a Pharisee.

He trusted in all the things of self. He had everything going for him. Everything going for him from a natural standpoint, from a Jewish standpoint.

Everything was going for him. And God wanted to break into this man's life. But to do it, he had to bring the man to a point of hopelessness and helplessness in himself.

And how did he accomplish this in the life of Paul? How did he do it? In one failed swoop, God knocked a man to the ground, blinded him, and went and attacked the very core of his very being. They have the saying out there that men get their ego from their job, from what they do as their occupation. We get some of our value from it.

Well, here was Paul's value in everything that he did. Everything. Now he was a Pharisee.

He was aggressively, zealously. They were told in Galatians, I believe it is, that he was more aggressive, more zealous than all of his equals. And so God, in one failed swoop, took away everything he trusted in, saying, everything you are living for, Saul, you have been fighting against the God that you thought you served.

You have been fighting and warring against me. And in one moment, he saw the reality of it. And he says, everything I have been doing is a total waste.

Everything I've been living for has been a lie. Everything I've been doing has been false. Instantly, God brought the man down to a place of hopelessness.

Until we are broken, until we're at a point that we really see our need and begin to become so desperate for God because we see our need, we will not abandon everything for him because we will still have that natural self, trust in self, until we lose control. As long as we retain control of our life, as long as we can retain control of the things in our life, as much as we can. And you know, the reality is, we really don't have control.

We just lie to ourselves that we do. We just, we don't have control. You try to grab hold of a person, what do you do? You drive the person farther away from you.

Try to have control. And the reality is, you really don't have it. It's an illusion that, that has been, been, been given to us from the fall.

I mean, our life is so unstable, the Lord puts it in such simple terms, says, you are as the lilies of the field. You're here today, you're gone tomorrow. Boy, that's an encouraging one, Lord.

But what he's trying to do is say, you are frail, you are frail, and yet you trust in yourself. You think you've got tomorrow and you don't even know what tomorrow is. Smith Wigglesworth said, there is no other way into the deep things of God except by a broken spirit.

There's no other way into the power of God. Somehow, in this natural mindset, in this mindset that we have, that comes natural right through, through us growing up as children, we have the mentality that we can somehow do it, that we can somehow do it. We have problems, we can somehow solve them.

Everything falls apart, we can somehow fix it. We have this mindset, especially, especially from the, from the standpoint of men, that, that we have to be self-made men, we have to be strong, we have to persevere. But yet the ways to the deep things of God is not because we've got it all together, but because we learn what it is to lose control and surrender to God, where we come an individual who has ceased to trust in our own works, our own abilities, our own wisdom, our own life, our own experiences, our own

everything.

And that is terrifying, because, you know, we trust in what we trust in, in the things in our life, because it's kind of safe. We trust in our experiences, we trust in that stuff, because it's safe. I know this, but God, don't take me out, don't make my, don't upset my little world, because I've grown comfortable, I can handle it.

And then God breaks in and says, I want everything, I want that thing you've been guarding so hard, I want that. And he gets a little bit deeper. God uses broken men, because broken men become men who are so determined to yield everything to him, that he can pour himself through him and do the miraculous.

And they'll keep pointing up to Jesus, keep pointing to him, and Jesus will get the glory. Turn with me to Luke the 22nd chapter. One reason why we don't want to go the path of losing control, we think that we will spare ourselves much pain if we keep control.

Like I said, we get hurt and we build up walls. And so we figure somehow if we have control of our life, we're going to stop the hurt. We're going to stop the pain.

We're not going to have those hurts anymore. And so we shut down in one way or the other, or we build the walls, or we run away from people. I mean, you have breakdowns in families, and what do men do? They'll go and they'll stay at the office all the time that they can, to get as far away, because they're tired of being in the contention and strife of the home.

Or somehow or another, they go and they build a wall around them, to protect themselves, because they think it's going to be safe. But you see, until we really lose control, it's not safe. We're actually in the safest place when we lose control to God, not when we try to keep control of our life, because that's where the hurts and pains really come from.

I want you to think about this from a natural standpoint again. Think of what it would have been to be a disciple of Jesus. And from their standpoint, they did not understand what Messiah meant.

They did not believe he was God incarnate in flesh and blood, okay? They did not believe that. Not until after he rose again from the dead. It was beyond the conception or even something that was even a possibility from the Jewish mindset.

Not even a possibility. They believed he was a Messiah, but they still had a very Jewish mindset that he would be some kind of great deliverer to the children of Israel from the bondage of Rome. One way or the other, here's this man with phenomenal power.

Phenomenal power. The most popular man in Israel. The talk of the nation.

What would you think it would be like to be one of those twelve men around the most popular man in the nation? What do you think it would be like to be around the man that you thought was going to be the ruler of the nation? And you're one of his twelve. Do you know what that would be, man? These guys, that's why they were arguing who'd be the greatest in the kingdom, because they thought they were going to be part of the cabinet. They'd be part of the rulers of this kingdom.

They would have their own little thrones and he'd have his big throne. I want you to imagine, here's the situation. Here they're all walking along, Jesus walking along, disciples are all around him, and this woman is trying to touch the hem of his garment.

I want you to think about from a natural standpoint. What were they doing? Why were they having to walk so close? They thought they were Jesus' bodyguard. We're gonna protect Jesus, as if Jesus needed protection.

And here they go, stay back, back, back, back, back. I mean, it was just, from a natural standpoint, it was a very proud position. Think of you being one of the closest people of the most popular preacher on the planet.

And tell me that it'd be easy to walk in humility. I mean, there was pride oozing from their bones. And then all of a sudden, in one second, in one moment, everything they trusted in was ripped from them.

Everything. I want you to think, here's Jesus looking at these men, saying, if we were to look at it from just a carnal standpoint, we'd say, how in the world am I gonna start a church with this? I mean, these men, the things that were in them, it's like, what hope is there? But Jesus understood something that was going to be so important, because the making of the men of God was going to be that they went to the cross also. When he went to Calvary, he did not go to Calvary alone.

It was not a private issue. It was not that he just went there for the sins of humanity. He was going to take 11 men.

One man didn't want to go to the cross. He'd take 11 men with him, because he knew the only hope of Christianity to exist was that he had to break the self-will, the selfishness, the self-life of an individual, so that they would cease to have control of their own life and begin to lose it to God. And this was a difficult one.

This was a difficult one. In Luke 22, in the 60th verse, it says, Peter replied, he denied the Lord twice, now he just denied him the third time. He's denying him the third time.

Peter replied, man, I don't know what you are talking about. Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed, and the Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him.

Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times. And he went outside and wept bitterly. The most agonizing thing that I could imagine would be, here you are, you make your boast that you'll do anything for Jesus, and the reality is, is he wasn't a surrendered man.

The reality was, is he was not a man that God could really do what he wanted to do through until he'd been to the cross, until his own desires were dead. And so here he is at a point, and he denies the Lord, and then Jesus looks at him. You know, I don't believe Jesus looked at him with hate.

I don't believe he looked at him with anger. I believe he looked at him with eyes of such tender compassion that he probably wished Jesus looked at him with anger. It would have been easier to deal with than to have them eyes.

Look at you with this divine pity, with this divine love. And it burned in his soul, and he went out and wept bitterly. The breaking of a man for three days, in the greatest agony that his soul ever went through, while he was beginning to die to the selfishness, to the self-light, to the arrogance, to the self-will, to all the fears, to all the things that was the obstacle.

God was, while he was defeating Satan in hell, he was allowing a man to be made. The making of a man is the undoing of his control, the undoing of the control of his own life, the undoing of his own self-life, that he comes to a point and he begins to die to the old nature, and he becomes a broken man. And a broken man, or a broken woman, is an individual who has come to a point to cease trusting in themselves, because they see to do so is hopeless.

To do so is hopeless. And you know, that's a hard place. That is a hard place.

That is a difficult spot. Why do you think it took Moses 40 years being in the wilderness? For 40 years, he was trained in Egypt. For 40 years, he was under the best Egyptian teachers that existed.

He had the best religious training from an Egyptian standpoint. He had the best military training. He was a warrior.

He knew war. He knew how to lead armies into battle. He had the best philosophy, the best mathematicians, the best everything of that day.

He was a prince of Egypt, taught by the best. Talk about pride. You walk along and people bow down.

You want to talk about getting proud? You walk on, people start bowing to you. Somebody says something wrong, poof, they're off with their head. I mean, there's some arrogance there.

They have an old saying about the Caesars of Rome, where they says power corrupts and absolute power absolutely corrupts. Because the Caesars of Rome had absolute power. They were absolutely corrupted by that power.

And so here he is for 40 years being made, mold and shaped as a man. And it took God 40 years for the breaking of a man, for a man to say, I cannot do it. I do not have the ability.

I do not have the power of God. And then God says, finally, boy, if you had done that 20 years ago, making of a man, making of a man of God, we want our Pentecost. We want the power of God made manifest.

We want the signs and wonders, but we don't want to go through Calvary. But the only path to Pentecost is through Calvary. That's the only path.

To have the power of God comes down to be a people who come to a point and they're willing to get on the cross, in essence, to be crucified with Christ. To die to that old nature. To die to the ambitions, the self, the wants, the cares, everything.

To die to the hurts, the pains, the sorrows. To open up the closets in our life. There are all the scary things that we have hid from the face of everybody in God.

And to open them up and say, God, get in there, clean it out. To lose control. But that is a terrifying place.

I remember just a silly little thing, a silly little thing with with Jesse and I, but actually it's not a silly little thing. It was a long process. I wish I would have learned it earlier.

But you know, God was good knowing that I was not willing to surrender to that point. I thought I would. I would have even said so.

But he knew I wasn't. Pastored in Detroit. Resigned the church in Detroit, went to grad school, went through all that.

Don't need to go through the whole history, but took a pastor then pastored finally in Wisconsin. When I took a pastorate in Wisconsin, we went and had a garage sale. Sold all kinds of our stuff.

Well, all the leftover stuff we load up in a in a big OU hall and and we we take it over to Wisconsin. Well, we resigned the church in Wisconsin. And what do we do? We have another garage sale.

So we sell more stuff. And then the call came as an evangelist. And so we went and had our little car.

We got this little trailer loaded in just enough stuff to live on. And we went to Pensacola, Florida, saying, God, you've called us. This is where you know, this is where we feel you want us to go.

And we're going to go down there. And we have this much money. We need a little trailer and we need a little minivan to tow it.

And so we go down there and in four days we have it. And a bunch of miracles took place and everything else. And and God established us there.

We got this little repossessed piece of property that had a dumpy, dumpy trailer on it. We ended up looking for a house to try and move on. I don't want to go through all the reasons for it.

Part of it is codes and everything else. We couldn't find a house, but we found an old school building. So we moved this old school building on and and converted it to a house and probably about two weeks before we have occupancy permit.

And it was probably about two months for Jesse. But I wasn't ready yet. I was still I'm going to be living in this thing.

And Jesse's trying to prepare me, says, well, what if God doesn't have us live here? No way. I'm not doing all this work for nothing. And two weeks beforehand, God says, you will never live here.

And so we were getting so busy, we couldn't live in this 16-foot trailer anymore. We went and decided, well, we'll make the plunge, rent the place out and a fifth wheel and a truck. And you know what we did then? Had another garage sale.

But this time it's all gone. And God, why didn't you tell me up in Detroit? Why did I have to haul that silly stuff all over the place, pay the expense of one place after another? Because I wasn't willing. Now I could lie about it.

I could say, I'll give all kinds of spiritual things. Yes, it would have been. I would have done anything for Christ.

But the reality is he knew I wouldn't. And in his mercy and tenderness, he was going to take me on that path of surrender. So that one day it didn't matter anymore.

It didn't matter if it was walking away, all the keepsakes and all the little stuff. It didn't matter anymore if it walked away. That dying process can be very painful, that surrender process.

But until that happens, we become a vessel that cannot be used the way that God wants to use us. I want to take you on a very, very difficult section of Scripture for a minute. Turn to Luke 14.

It's interesting how we can make the proclamations about the Word of God. We believe that the Bible is God's inspired Word, that we believe that he gave it to us, every bit of it, that is all authoritative. It is absolutely the Word of God.

No part and portion of it is not the Word of God. It is complete, completely the Word of God, a complete and beautiful revelation of God. And then in the very next word, take something Jesus says or something in Scripture and say, well, he didn't mean that.

That's really bizarre, isn't it? I believe it's all inspired, except let me redefine what he said here. Let me give a different interpretation of what he meant. Well, if he said it, if it was inspired, he said that, then that's the truth.

Why don't I just go and take it what it says? That's what makes my preaching unpalatable to some people, is that they just don't want the Word of God saying, this is what it says. Let's just believe it. Let's live it like that.

It's easier if we take it and say, well, how does it work in our day and age and how do we make it all nice and easy for us? But he didn't do that for some stuff. And we're going to read one section he did not make easy. So turn to Luke 14 and the 25th verse.

I'm just going to briefly touch on these points. 25. Large crowds were traveling with Jesus and turning to them, he says, if anyone comes to me.

And does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. Is that true or is that not true? Is that what it means or does it mean something else? But you know how we go and we take those and we twist them and we try to alter them to fit into our lifestyle.

Now, there is clarity that is given to us from that. In Matthew 10, 27, he refers to it that if anyone loves them, whether things or people more than me, they're not worthy of it. So he does give a little clarification with that.

But we have to understand that he's talking about something that is very radical here. But what is he saying in this situation? He's saying you must so abandon yourself to me that you love me more than anything in this world. And if you don't, you are not fit for the kingdom of heaven.

Now, I didn't say that. He said that. So if we don't like it, we got to take up the argument with him.

But he said it. And so what do we do with it? If we believe it's scripture, we believe it's true. What do we do with it? Let me touch a moment on the women.

How about the babies? How about the babies? You know what Rhys Howes did? How many of you are familiar with Rhys Howes? Rhys Howes, man of God. You can read his book. Rhys Howes is called Intercessor.

God calls him and tells him saying, if you give me your baby boy, I will give you ten thousand souls. What would you do? Would you say yes, Lord? And so he gave up his baby boy. Him and his wife gave up the

baby boy.

Hardest thing in his account that you read. Hardest thing he ever did. He gave it up to a relative to raise.

And he went to Africa. And God gave him way over the ten thousand souls. And then you know what? One day his son comes and labors right next to him.

Because he knew his dad was a man of God, the real thing, not something fake and phony. Is it that we're at that point, says Jesus, I really love you more than my baby. I really love you more than my house.

I really love you more than everything. Is if you take it all, dear God. If you take it all, I'll still love you.

As Job said, though you slay me, yet will I praise you. Is our surrender to that point, that it's that it's real? Touch anything, God. Touch anything.

Look at Job, man. His surrender to God was so tremendous. Every possession he had, family was taken, everything.

I don't say this in a derogatory manner, but a nagging wife was the only thing left behind. I don't, I didn't mean that derogatory. I do not have a nagging wife.

I do not. She's, she's a gift from God. This particular one was a nagging wife.

It's all that's left. And what is it? It says, it says, Scripture says he did not sin with his lips. Why? Because he was a surrendered man.

He was radically abandoned to God. He had lost control of his life to God. And so God had seized control of it.

And he was able to be submissive, even through something I cannot comprehend. I cannot comprehend such a thing like that. I cannot comprehend the sorrow and the agony and the loss of such a thing.

And, and to do such a thing, to go and say, Lord, be it unto you. What phenomenal surrender to God. But then you can see why God was able to do and work through the man the way that he did.

Let's look a little further then. This comes down to refer to the costliness of surrender, the costliness of following Christ. Cause he tells us that if we don't pick up our cross, we're not worthy of him.

And you know what? He hadn't died on the cross yet. And this was a term they did not comprehend when he said this. I don't believe they comprehended it.

Died on the cross. What are you talking about? It wasn't until he died and rose again from the dead that it probably pierced their hearts. You're calling me to that same path, to the same path, to the same lifestyle.

You're calling me to do the same identical thing, but that doesn't always fit in our American Christianity. Now let's look at verse 28. Suppose one of you wants to build a tower.

Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation, is not able to finish it, anyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying this fellow began to build and was not able to finish. Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able, with 10,000 men, to oppose the one coming against him with

20,000? If he is not able, he will send out a delegation while the other is still a long way off and ask for terms of peace.

In the same way, in the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple. In the same way. The same way as what? The same way as what? As the same way as the man is saying, how much is it going to cost me to build that tower? And in the same way as the king says, how many men will it take for me to defeat that army? In the same way, he says, we must count the cost of our Christianity.

Surrender is not an emotional issue, because an altar is opened up does not mean that surrender is a complete work. It may begin at an altar, but that does not mean that surrender is really taking place. Surrender is a choice that we choose to.

We choose to surrender in a situation. We choose to give up. We choose to relinquish control.

God isn't going to come into our life and rip it out of us. We have to choose to let go of control of our life. If we don't choose, he's not going to kick the doors down.

If we don't choose to open up those closets that we've never let him into, he's not going to come in and rip those doors open. We must choose to do it. If we don't choose, they will not be opened.

If we don't choose to relinquish control, we can keep control of our life. We can have it and we can have the sorrows that's going to be there and all the fears and insecurities and all the other stuff that goes with it. But most of all, we will lose the treasure of treasures.

What it means to walk in a surrendered life and see God work and operate through us because we want to retain control. In the same way, what Jesus is asking for you is not to come to some emotional situation. When I work it up, when I work it up, when I work it up, I'll surrender.

When the preaching is just right, then I'll surrender. What he's actually saying is you come to the point, you count the cost. You weigh it out.

Are you willing to take your whole life and lay it on the line? Are you willing to give up everything? Are you really willing to let me grab hold of your future and put it in any direction I want it to go? Or do you want your own ways? If we really get down and we deal with it in such a way, that becomes very difficult if we're honest. Because then we got to start dealing with all of our fears or insecurities, the things we love and have clung to. We have to deal with it from a logical standpoint.

We have to then stop lying to ourselves. You realize if I would not have lied to myself up in Michigan, I would have been able to sell everything and it would not have bothered me. But because I was not willing to accept that truth, God was kind in bringing me through the journey that I would let go of it.

But it's the same thing with so many issues in our lives. I look at what God has done in my life. I'm not special.

I'm not unique or anything else. But I see what God has done in my life has been a journey that he's brought me on to bring me more and more to a place of surrender. More and more to want to surrender.

More and more to see surrender not as a cuss word, but to see it as a gift. To see it as a gift. To see this God who loves me so much and says, I know how to take care of you.

I know how to do it right. Can't you see that for the years you've made messes every time you grab control? Can't you see all the hurt and pain that you called yourself every time you grab control? And if you just let me. And then we fight and we kick and we scream and we rebel because we still want control of our life.

It's not until we come to the point in that issue of blood, 12 years that we fought and warred to try and have some kind of healing in our life. And we come to the point we say, geez, the only hope is touching you. Or until we're in our rebellion and our arrogance and everything else we're chasing after.

And God brings us to a point that says, can't you see the worthlessness of your own self endeavors, of your own chasing after the wind? And, and Solomon did a wonderful job by saying the meaninglessness of life apart from God. Can't you see it? And it's not just the meaninglessness of life apart from God in some dimensions, but we as Christians can have our lives in dimensions total, totally meaningless as we chase after the things of flesh, of self, of the wants, of the cares. Leonard Ravenhill made the statement that's a difficult one.

He said, friend, if you were as good at soul cultivation as you were in developing your business, you would be a menace to the devil. But if you were as poor in business matters as you are in soul, you would be begging bread. Now let's look at a couple of more verses, 34 through the end of the chapter.

Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile. It is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

For us to be salty, that means that I have to become an individual that is abandoned to God, a man who is surrendered because the saltiness in my life is not my ability, not my wisdom, not my schooling, not my ability, nothing of myself. It is what is given to me by God. And if I want to be salt in a world, it is not because, you know, I'm aggressive or zealous, because we can have unwise zeal.

It's because I become the salt that God called me to be and I have tremendous saltiness. And what was the purpose of salt? To preserve from decay. And just briefly, you look at this.

If it's to preserve from decay, and if the church is to preserve society from moral and spiritual decay, what does that say about the church when the society is in moral and spiritual decay? It says that the church has lost its saltiness. Can it be made salty again? And that is the question. He says, salt that has lost its saltiness has only one value.

It's not good for soil. It kills the soil. Nothing can grow.

You see, if we lose our salt, we will stop the loss from being saved, because souls, a harvest cannot happen in salty ground. Cannot. It's not good for the animals to eat.

There's only one thing good for it. To be put underfoot and trampled. That's it.

If we lose our saltiness, it's because we have come to a point where we have not lost control. Because we wanted to retain control, we figured we could do the work, we could do the evangelism, we could we could change the world, or we could build our own personal kingdom, or we could have our own little life and our own little houses, our own little possessions, and do our own little thing and it'd be no big deal to God. But you have to see that he's calling us to this surrender.

And surrender is a hard issue. To begin right is not enough. He says, if you are salty and you lose your saltiness, what good is it if you began being salty and you've lost it? The beginning of the race is not what matters, it's how we finish.

It's what we do. Sincerity of heart is not a criteria for heaven. We can go and say, well, God knows my heart.

Yes, he does. Be terrified by that reality. You know, sincerity.

Jehovah's Witnesses are sincere and they're sincerely deceived, they're sincerely going to hell. I mean, sincerity is not a criteria. It's whether we are walking in obedience and loving obedience to God, whether we're in that place where we have surrendered and we've yielded our life.

Because the very idea to love the Lord with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength means that we are to love him with every dimension of our life. And we are to love him more than our children, more than our possessions, more than anything in this world. And that comes down to be an issue of surrender.

This woman, Irma Booth Tucker, she was one of the children of General William Booth, the founder of Salvation Army. She made the statement that is a very stirring statement. I mean, this is a woman who understood what it was to abandon her life to Christ.

She was a phenomenal woman. The portions of my life which have given me the most satisfaction are the seasons when I carried the cross for Jesus. And the one regret which fastens down upon my spirit at the thought of turning from earth and entering heaven is a realization that I shall never again be able to companion with Jesus by bearing his cross, by suffering with him for the salvation of sinners, and by ministering to him, by ministering to the sorrowing, suffering multitudes for whom his blood was given.

She said the greatest sorrow I have in thinking about death is that I will not be able to bear the cross of my Lord anymore to reach a perishing world. What a phenomenal woman to come to the point to say I have counted the cost of it. I have counted the cost.

I don't care if I have poverty. I don't care if I have wealth. I don't care if I have a big house, a little house.

I don't care. It does not matter. What matters is that I have surrendered my being to Christ and that this God is now working through me and giving me the privilege to be crucified with him.

To be crucified with him. I want to give you the story of John Hus. How many of you are familiar with John Hus? How many of you know who he is? We would not be here if it was not for John Hus.

John Hus was one of the pre-reformers that opened the door to the Great Reformation where Martin Luther and John Calvin came on the scene and brought tremendous change to the church and we are byproducts. We are byproducts of it. This man was a man of God.

The Moravian Revival is a byproduct of John Hus because John Hus started the movement of the Moravians and they were tremendous followers and they died left and right and martyred them because their love of God and the fire that was set because of John Hus. The bishop appointed by the council stripped him of his priestly garments, degraded him, put a paper miter on his head on which was painted devils with this inscription a ringleader of heretics.

When he saw it he said my Lord Jesus Christ for my sake did wear a crown of thorns why should I then for his sake wear this light crown be of it ever so humiliating truly I will do it and that willingly when the chain was put about him at the stake he said with a smiling countenance my Lord Jesus Christ was bound with a harder chain than this for my sake and why then should I be ashamed of this rusty one and when the wood was piled up to his very neck and the Duke of Bavaria was so efficacious as to desire him to recant he says no I never preached any doctrine of an evil tendency and what I taught with my lips I now see with my blood and the flames encircled him began to consume him and as the flames went up the testimony is that he sang joyfully at the top of his lungs unto his God until

he was heard no more people that I've thought of and going God how will I ever be able to sit at that dinner table in heaven with him how can I ever do it a man who knew what it was to surrender his will how is it that I think I could even grace the table that he sat at when he laid his whole life down and I am consumed with my own wants and cares I'm consumed with my own selfishness my own ambitions my own my own prosperity and how is it that I think that I would have a right at such a table with him I thank God that there's grace but you have to see that he calls us to a place of such surrender Jesus does not need your ability he does not need your wisdom he does not need your money he does not need anything from you but your surrender and when he has your surrender everything else will

follow everything else will cease to be an issue it will cease to be an issue because your surrender will be complete and then you become a vessel that he can do the phenomenal through I want to close with one final thing and I'll just read this in Luke 23 in verse 39 through 43 this is one of the criminals who were hanged railed at Jesus saying are you not the Christ save yourself not but the others rebuked him saying do you not fear God since you are under the same sentence of condemnation and we indeed justly for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds but this man has done nothing wrong and he said Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom Jesus said truly I say to you today you will be with me in paradise two thieves one kept control of his life and went to hell one at

the last minute finally lost control of his life and went down even on the brink of hell one refused to give up control to God even on the brink of hell if you're here and you're not a Christian I want you to think about that you are right now confronted with the reality of Jesus Christ reality of the cross a reality of sin the reality that there is a God and what will you do with that now it's as if you are standing before him and you have the choice of either crying dear God may I be with you in paradise or to rail upon him and say I don't want you out of my life leave me alone you can keep control of your life that's your your your choice you can do that you can choose to retain control and say I'm gonna do it I'm gonna I'm gonna sleep who I want to sleep with I'm gonna drink if I want

to drink I'm gonna party I'm gonna do smoke dope I'm gonna do drugs I'll do whatever I want I'll go to school if I want or not to I'll do anything I desire because that's my right and that's what I can do and you can you can make that choice but I guarantee you you keep control of your life you will have nothing but pain and sorrow and hurt and agony because that is what sin always produces and then in the end you will have death and separation from God because you wanted to keep control of your life and we're too proud and too stubborn to come to a God who purchased you with his own blood and says here's the reality of my love here's how deep and powerful is my love and you went and said I don't want you and so railed upon him before you stand at the judgment seat what will you do with

Jesus today keep control of your life like I said you will suffer I guarantee you you don't believe it there's a lot of people in this room who can tell you the pain of their life before they became Christians they can give

you some stories I bet you there's some serious stories in this room I got stories in my own life and so you can retain it you can keep it and that's your right well you can come to a point and say Jesus I've been living so long dear God trying to find some purpose in my life I've been chasing after things and and years I've been doing it if I could only touch the hem of your garment if I could only touch the hem of your garment I will give you a chance if you want touches him if you want to come to Jesus tonight and you're not right with him you're not right for me

you want to get right with him you want to yield your life to him I'll give you a chance I can't save you no man can save you nobody but Jesus can he's the only one what I'm gonna do is give you the opportunity that if you desire him that you will give him a chance you will make a choice if you're not a Christian you are right now making a choice you are either gonna be as a thief railing on Jesus or you're gonna be as the other thief that says be merciful to me which will you be what will you do you cannot become a Christian till you come to the point to see the reality that you were a sinner that your sin has placed you at war with God sin is not a small issue it's not some little thing you sweep under the rug it is a reality of why Christ died on the cross your sin is so exceedingly

wicked the only remedy for it was that God became a man and died on the cross for you taking your punishment he died in your place of what you deserve and you cannot become a Christian until you understand the reality of your sin and that the only Savior is Jesus there is no other Savior there is no other hope that woman went 12 years trying to find some hope and there was nothing out there until she finally touched his hand and finally you have to see that Jesus wants to save you and he's asking you to give everything to him

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