

Surrender

by Glenn Meldrum

This sermon emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God, showcasing examples of divine encounters where individuals were overwhelmed by the presence of God and chose to surrender completely. It highlights the necessity of ongoing surrender in the Christian walk, acknowledging the transformative power of surrender in aligning our hearts and minds with God's will.

Scripture: Job 42:1, Ezekiel 1:28, Daniel 8:17, Matthew 17:5, Revelation 1:12

Topics: "Surrender to God", "Transformative Power of Surrender"

Description

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Transcript

Mark was helping me and a couple other guys was helping me to put up gutters yesterday and he happened to just ask, he says, what are you preaching tomorrow? And I said, surrender. So there's a divine setup here. And the reason for it is because God loves us enough that he wants to speak truths to us so we understand and can apply them to our life.

We have to understand those truths exist before we can begin to actually put them into practice. And once we understand they exist, then we have to make the choice of what we're going to do. Surrender is a reality of every individual on this planet.

There's no such thing as a self-made man. They do not exist. They're illusions only in the minds of those who think that they are.

Every individual surrenders to something. They surrender either to the devil or to God. They surrender to sin or to self or whatever it is, they surrender.

It's impossible for us as human beings not to surrender. It's impossible. It's just, we have to make the choice of who we're going to surrender to.

And so that's where it really comes down to be. Surrender is the hardest thing that you're going to have to do, or at least one of the hardest things you'll ever have to do in your life, because we are rebels down to

the core of our being. I mean, it's not just something we have a little problem with.

It is the problem of the entirety of our fallen nature. It is what comes out of the fall. It's what comes out of our sin nature.

You can have this outward type of rebellion that, you know, you're going to fight against everybody, or you can have this passive kind of rebellion that you may outwardly look submissive, but inside there's this rebellion, this attitude, this bitterness, this anger that's inside of you because you are still a rebel. And so it's really, are we going to surrender? Are we going to take the path to surrender to who we really should? Otherwise, you are going to surrender, and you need to understand who you're surrendering to. You really need to come to grips with that.

So turn with me to Romans chapter 12, verses one and two. And you know, the thing about this portion of scripture is that it's simple. This is basic Christianity.

This is Christianity 101. And how can we ever go on any further until we get the basics down? There is no true maturing in our Christian life until we begin to understand what this is. And if you want to mature as a Christian, surrender is foundational to it.

You want to become a man or woman of God, surrender is foundational to it. You can't get away from it. It's an absolute.

I mean, now people can be in leadership positions within the church and have nothing of surrender in their life to God. So the position or even the talent is not the issue. General William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, he said, the greatness of a man is determined by the measure of his surrender, not by how big his church is or how famous he is or what he's done or supposedly accomplished, but according to the surrender that he has to God.

And so let me read Romans chapter 12, verses one and two. Therefore, I urge you brothers in view of God's mercy to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you'll be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will. Now, when you look at the book of Romans, you have to understand, of course, this is just the nitty gritty that it was ordained by God.

It was inspired by God, but yet God used a man that had a brilliant intellect that had a systematic way of thinking and could process this, and not everybody has that. So God was able to take this man with a wonderful intellect, with the ability to process all this, and you see this tremendous logic that is laid out in the book of Romans. Chapters one through three, Paul goes through extensive arguments to lay out the reality that we're all sinners.

Everyone, Jew, Gentile, we're all sinners, and we are left to ourselves under the wrath of God. And then he goes on from there, in the next few chapters, to begin to show that salvation is by grace through faith. Then you come to chapter seven, and in chapter seven, Paul shows the struggle of the Christian.

I know some people try to say that is for the non-believer, but it can't be, not the logic of the book. I mean, you do that there and you throw the book all out of whack. And so chapter seven is the struggle that's

within the Christian.

Chapter eight is the victory that comes. And then when you come to chapter 12, why is this here in chapter 12? Why is this? I would think that it would be placed, well, you should do it sooner. You should put it somewhere in the middle of the book where it's about the surrender to God and the aspect of the grace and all that's there for salvation.

But here it's put at more of the end of his arguments, this logical flow of thought, because surrender is so difficult for us, so difficult for us, that we fight against it and we have all these things that just work against it. And here we can be walking with Jesus and still fighting surrendering to him, surrendering enough to become a Christian, surrendering to the place of salvation, but not surrendering to the place of walking in the victory that God wants us to walk in. And so you have this word that begins this chapter, which is therefore.

Now in the original, in the Hebrew and the Greek, there are no chapters, okay? That's 11th century edition. There are no verses. That was probably a 12th or 13th century edition.

And if you look at it, there's no periods, commas, capitals, or anything like that. I mean, so it's a daunting work for people that do translation to go and work through all that just because of the nature of Hebrew and Greek. The benefit of chapters and verses is we can follow and you can tell people where to go and turn in their Bibles and so on.

That's awesome. But the negative of it is that we can sometimes look at a chapter and think a new thought is beginning there and fail to understand that the thought is just a continuation of what's been going on. So the therefore is actually tied into the end of chapter 11.

That begins in verse 33, says, and this is a doxology. Oh, the depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable his judgments and his paths beyond tracing out.

Who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God that God should repay him? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Therefore, all right, you understand that therefore is tied into this doxology of the majesty and splendor of God because of who he is therefore.

And so guess what? The world does not have this knowledge. They don't understand who this God is. This is something that is for Christians.

He's speaking to Christians here, though this truth is very good and very excellent about surrender of how to come to salvation. Yet here he is not speaking to the lost. He is speaking to the Christian.

He's speaking to those who have a knowledge of God, at least to a certain point. And he's saying, look at the majesty, look at the greatness and the beauty and the splendor of this God. Therefore, therefore, this is what you need to do.

Now, the next thing that he says is he says, I urge you. The King James version says, I beseech you. The new revised standard version says, I appeal to you.

These are very strong words. Paul is not trying to say, would you pretty please pay attention? He has come to a point in the book, in the logical flow of this book to come to the place and say, okay, here we

are. Listen to what I'm saying.

I urge you. I urge you listen to this because it is of tremendous importance. And so if this was not that important, Paul would have just kind of made it blend in with everything else, but its importance was so great.

He says, listen, I urge you, I beseech you. And what was he doing? And he was doing as an apostle, as a spiritual father, as a man that had a love for the church, a passion for the church. And so this is his heart, but yet ultimately it goes beyond that.

This is the heart of God speaking through Paul, urging us, urging us to understand what's being given here, what's being told. He goes on from the aspect of urging us. He says, I urge you, I beseech you by the mercy of God.

What he shares after this, we must understand can only come through mercy and grace. It's impossible to surrender to God without mercy and grace. It's impossible.

You cannot do it through your own strength. You can't do it through your own ability. You can't do it through your own will.

You can't do it. It is a gift that comes from God by God alone. And he comes to us.

He gives us the offer. Yes, we have to make the choices. Yes, I will submit to you or no, I won't.

But he's calling us. He says, this is by God's mercy. The more we understand the true grace of God, as Peter referred to it, the more we understand the true grace of God, we see the true grace of God as something that is victorious.

And when he offers it to us, he doesn't offer to us so that we can continue status quo. He offers it to us so that we can overcome. So that whatever is in our life, whatever these obstacles are, whatever is hindering us from surrender can be dealt with.

That we can go before this God and have this mountain, this obstacle, this nightmare in our life that we've been subject to. And we go to him through grace and say, help me. And through that act of surrender and crying out to him, he brings this grace to break the chain.

The power of grace is tremendous, but we must become people like Paul spoke to Timothy to be strong in the grace of God. You know, I brought this out before, but that verse is astounding to me. Be strong in divine favor.

How are you strong in divine favor? Well, if you were thinking of it from a presidential standpoint, how do you become strong in a president? Well, we think of it naturally that you kiss up to him kind of thing. You know, you play the politics and try and get your way in, but not with God. You see, how do we become strong in grace, strong in that divine favor? Surrender, dependency.

I mean, it's so simple in that, you know, so you want to overcome. It's not that you have your own ability and strength, but that you have this abandonment to God, this surrender to God. We're told in James chapter 4 that we overcome the devil not by putting on the boxing gloves and trying to go around with him.

We overcome the devil by submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil and he will flee. You see, it all comes down to submit.

What is the submission? It's surrender. It's about yielding to him. It's about giving up the control of our life.

And so he's trying to bring to us the importance of this mercy, of this surrender, and the need to it. I urge you with this because if you don't come to understand the power of divine grace and the way that it is received, then you will never receive it. And one absolutely beautiful verse, beautiful verse, is the very last verse in the book of Ephesians.

Grace to all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love. Phenomenal. You want grace? Love him with everything that's within you.

And if you don't love him with everything that's within you, then you cry out for the grace to do it. Because it can only be done through him. It can't be done through your own human strength.

But he will give you the grace to love him if you'll cry out. He'll give you the grace to want to walk in holiness if you will cry out for the grace because you begin to see the reality of your own weakness in humanity, that you can't do it on your own. You don't have the strength.

You're not smart enough. You don't have enough ability or anything else. There's nothing in you that can do this of yourself.

Nothing. And so it comes through grace. It comes through the place of crying out for God's mercy.

And what are we to do by God's mercy? We're to give ourselves as a living sacrifice. Now, the book of Romans was written to all of us, but ultimately directed to Roman Christians. And so it would be going to those that were Jewish, but also those who were Gentile.

And both Jew and Gentile understood sacrifice. They did animal sacrifices. The Gentiles did it to their pagan gods, and the Jews did it to the Lord God.

Now, those who are just critical of the Christian faith that are in the intelligentsia try to go and say that, well, there's no difference. The Judaism came out of the paganism, and they all kind of do the same thing. And the problem is the difference between the sacrifices of the pagans and the Jews is absolutely 100% opposite to each other.

With the pagans, with the Gentiles, their sacrifices were to appease the gods or to somehow do something that would make them perform what they wanted them to do. With the Mosaic law, the sacrifices were 100% about atonement, not buying some power from God, not buying some blessing, but about the aspect of needing atonement, just like the parable that Jesus gave us of the Pharisee and the tax collector that's in the temple. And here the tax collector's beating his breast, an expression in the Middle East of tremendous agony.

Have mercy on me, have mercy on me, because that man came to understand his need. He came to see that he was a sinner, where the Pharisee, the religious man, was oblivious and blind to it. And when you look at the close of that parable, it's the tax collector that walks away righteous, and the Pharisee walks away in sin, so a living sacrifice.

This is ultimately then a very Jewish thought, even though it was going to a Gentile world, the concept of living sacrifice or of sacrifice was going to be Jewish in thought because of how different it is from the pagan concepts. But there's something different here. It's living.

It's not this dead sacrifice. The only way that we can be holy and pleased in God is by being a living sacrifice. If you want to please God, if you want to bring joy to his heart, you have to be a living sacrifice.

If you will not be a living sacrifice, there's no way you can please God. You cannot please God in yourself. You cannot please God through your own abilities, wisdoms, gifts, talents, or whatever it is.

You could give up Bill Gates' fortune to the church, and you still will not please God because he's not looking for that fortune. He doesn't need it. He's looking for your surrender.

And it's only in the place of surrender that we can begin to be a people that start pleasing God because through surrender we start doing what he wants rather than what we think we want to do or how we want our religion to function. And so the only way we can be holy and pleasing to God is through surrender, is through being a living sacrifice. And then he said, according to the 1984 NIV, he said, this is your spiritual act of worship.

And that's a good translation. Your spiritual act of worship. So Jesus told us that there was a day coming when we would worship him in spirit and truth.

And here's what it is. This is the expression of it. The surrendered life, the place where we surrender to God, and it is a spiritual act of worship.

And if we are not surrendered to him, there is no worship going up to God from us. The worship is going out to something, whether self or Satan, whatever it may be, but it's not going to God. It's only through the surrendered life that we can have the spiritual act of worship.

So you know what that means? You go to work, and if you're striving with everything within you to live and be surrendered, every act that you are doing during that day is an expression of worship. You see, because worship is spiritual. It's what we are on the inside.

It's the life, not just the aspect we come to sing songs. It is who we are. And so one expression of worship in that sense is not greater than the other.

That way there you could look at it that the carpenter can be as, have as great a worship in the life as what they do as the preacher does. Because it's the life, it's who we are in this relationship of surrender to him. So this spiritual worship is what defines us, is what comes out of us, that everything we do is for the glory of God then.

And so it's our spiritual act of worship. But the King James translated that little Greek phrase a little differently. He said this is your reasonable service, and that's a good translation of those words as well.

It can be taken either way. I think both put together really bring out the full picture of it, that this is our spiritual act of worship, but it's also a reasonable service. This is the basic.

What does God expect of every human being on this planet? Absolute surrender. I mean that's the nitty-gritty. That's where it all comes down to me.

That is God's will. Now you either have one of two responses to it. You obey it or rebel against it.

You either submit to him or you rebel against him. And we want these gray areas. We want these areas of in-between, but there's no in-between.

Either we surrender or we rebel. Either we say yes to him or we say no and we do our own thing. And the sad thing is we can do that with a whole lot of religion, say no to God and think we're okay, but all we got is a bunch of religion and not the genuine relationship that comes through surrender.

Only by living the surrendered life can we know God's good, pleasing, perfect will. Across this country when I give altar calls and I'm up there praying for people and I'll ask somebody what's the need and they'll say a generic type of thing. And I don't need to know, but I need to know God's will.

I take them right here to Romans chapter 12 verses 1 and 2. You want to know God's will? Be a living sacrifice. Here's an absolute. The surrendered man or woman will never miss God's will.

The unsundered man or woman will never know it. It's just that simple. You want God's will? Live surrendered.

If you're not surrendered, you will not live in God's will. Go to church, do all your churchy things. You will still not know God's will.

You will not be walking in God's will because God's will begins with that surrender. It begins with that place of giving up the control of our life, of coming to the place that we're at the end of ourselves and all that we want then is to find that beautiful place as what Jordan was bringing out about surrender. The beautiful place of surrender.

And you know what? I'd venture to say a lot of us were really naughty boys when we were young. Some more than others. Rebels in various ways, whether it was the compliant rebel where you're grumbling underneath and nobody knows it or you're the rebel that's just fighting against mom and dad in every way that you can.

We have that rebelliousness in us and that has to be broken because it gets such a hold on us. But yet, you know, all that rebellion never brought us any happiness. Didn't bring us any.

I mean, I know as a drug addict, as a man's just being a hippie, living that life, you think you're just rebelling against the status quo and you've got the great life. You're just living the party and yet inside the thing that drew me to Jesus was a loneliness. I couldn't explain it.

I couldn't tell you what it was, but this ache inside of me that nothing could satisfy until the day I began to surrender. A sacrifice for it to be pleasing to God had to be holy. Israel had a lot of trouble with this because under the Mosaic law, they were required to bring the best.

Their best, not their leftovers. They had to bring the best, the best animal. Now, you know what that means? If you bring your best animals to sacrifice, those are your breeding animals.

Those are like the best of the best and you want to use those to breed so you have really good, healthy animals that come out of it. Yet God's saying, you give me the best. If you give me the best, I'll bless everything else.

But if you don't, I'll curse everything else. You give me the best. You give me the best of your grain.

You give me the best of your animals. And yet time and again, what did they do? This comes out in, if I remember correctly, in Malachi. Rebukes them because they were giving sickly animals.

And he says, go try to give them to your governor and see if he'd accept them. But you think that God's dumb and you can give them the leftovers of your life and that's okay. It's kind of like what we do with our dogs.

Those of you that have dogs, you give them leftovers. Man, you get that tail wagging. They're just so happy.

We used to once have a Lhasa Apso, a kind of like a hairy little pudgy thing with short legs. Cute. I mean, he was cute.

And, you know, you put the dog food out there, he wouldn't touch the thing. You put spaghetti sauce in it, man, he'd just go wild over it. Come up with this orange face, you know, a doggy smile, you know, happy.

Sacrifice had to be holy before it could be offered. So the priest would go and examine the animal, make sure it didn't have any broken bones, that it wasn't diseased, that it wasn't sickly. And if it was approved, then it could be offered up.

It could be offered, then you could take it in. But the Jews were trying to, for a time, to get around that. They gave the leftovers, the sickly, you know.

I mean, God won't take the leftovers. He won't take the spaghetti sauce on the doggy food. You understand? He won't take our garbage.

He's a great king. And he deserves the absolute best we can give. The absolute best that we can give.

And so Jesus is the high priest. And it wasn't the high priest that would go and examine the sacrifice. It would be the, you know, one of the other priests.

But now the high priest, the high priest of all high priests, the highest of all, examines the sacrifice. And so what does he find when he examines your sacrifice? Does he find a sickly animal that you're just trying to give him the leftovers of your life, that you don't really want to give him the best? Or is he finding one that he says, this sacrifice is pleasing? The very aspect that God is bringing these two verses here, that we can know God's good, pleasing, perfect will, means that God will give us the grace to be pleasing to him. It is obtainable.

We can do it. Now, God expects of us what we're able to give. And the expectation of what a parent would have for a newborn babe or two or three-year-old child is different than what we'll have for a 20-year-old.

To go and put on a three-year-old child what you'd expect of a 20-year-old would be cruel. And to expect of a 20-year-old what you expect of a three-year-old would be cruel just as well. God has put before us the ability to please him.

He's made it obtainable for us. But it comes only through the mercy of God, through the grace of God. It only comes that way.

There's no other way. No other way it can happen. And so, just like Jordan brought out with Psalms 139, search me.

I want to be a clean sacrifice. I want to be an acceptable sacrifice, God. What's unacceptable and what is stopping me from being an acceptable sacrifice? Now, you know, the thing about this is when you go to offer up a sacrifice, you give a control of it.

And it's not like you could go up to the priest after he's examined it and you're kind of trying to negotiate with him. He says, well, I'll tell you what. How about if you take the front half of the animal and I'll take the back half? And he says, no, no, it has to be the whole thing.

Can I have just the leg? Just the leg. Just let me keep one leg. He says, no, the whole animal.

Either you give it all or you don't give any of it. We want to negotiate with God. What can I give? Can I give you this, this, this? Is that acceptable? Is that enough? And he says, no, I got on the cross completely, absolutely, totally for you.

And I demand of you your absolute surrender to me. You see, there's not a compromise. We try to make it that way.

We try to even twist scripture to try and say that, but it's not able to be done. 1 Corinthians chapter 6 verses 19 through 20 says, do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own. You are bought at a price.

Therefore, honor God with your body. You don't belong to yourself anymore. If you are a true follower of Jesus, you do not belong to yourself anymore.

That means you have no say over your life. And if you want the say over your life, you want to do what you want to do, then you are going to have to make the choice to rebel. Do you understand? Because if you're going to follow him, it's about obedience, loving obedience.

Do we want that? You see, in American Christianity, we have gone to great lengths to try and soften the whole message, water it down, make it palatable so that people will supposedly accept it. And then you have this concept, well, if we can bring them somehow in the faith, then maybe they'll really come to salvation or they'll really come to a place to start walking with Jesus. And it's not how it works.

We're rebels. I mean, do you make, how does it work with an anarchist? You know, what's an anarchist? An anarchist is an individual that has one goal, to overthrow the government. And what do you do? You make best friends with an anarchist, like he's going to overthrow your family and everything you love, and you're just going to become good buddies.

There has to be a breaking, a severing of that, that you can't be a partial anarchist against God and then a partial lover of God. There has to be a choice that either we forsake the anarchy or we forsake Christ. We don't like it that black and white, but I hate to say it.

It's what the reality is. Because this aspect of being a sacrifice is a living sacrifice, it's very different than a dead sacrifice. A dead sacrifice is done, okay? You slay the animal, you pour out the blood, you put it on the altar, it's done.

But under the Mosaic law, you have to do it again and again, because the blood of bulls and of goats could not cleanse of sin. There had to be a perfect sacrifice, which was Christ, of course. But a living sacrifice, I mean, it gets up on that altar, and if the heat gets too hot, well, I think I'm going to get off.

Is there a jacuzzi nearby or something I can cool off in? You see, we don't want it that hot. There has to be this lifelong choice to be on that altar, this lifelong choice, and I guarantee you that the voices of this world, the voices of hell, the voices of your own flesh life are going to try and get you off that altar. Because if you get off that altar, then you're not in the place of surrender anymore.

You are then outside of that fellowship with God. But yet, there's a greater, there's a greater, one who will give us the grace and strength to stay on that altar, even when it gets hot. But yet, living that life of surrender is tremendous joy.

To stop fighting, you know, fighting against God is hard work, miserable work, miserable. And to finally just come to the point and say, I give up, I give up. You can have this man, this 350 pounds of muscle, you know, and he's going to wrestle this 100 pound guy that's just, you know, just sticks, basically.

And, you know, what is it? How long does it take before the little guy's on the ground and the big guy's sitting on top of him? And, you know, if you just kind of get a cartoon picture of this, you know, you got this little skinny guy, this big, huge, muscular man sitting on top of him. Oh, you see his legs and arms fighting. He has conquered, but yet he doesn't even understand it.

You know, it's like, it's just, his life is miserable. And here this big old guy drinks his latte and has a apple fritter or something, you know, it's this little guy just fighting and he can't get anywhere, you know, we just ridiculously keep fighting and fighting and fighting. And we fail to understand who you're fighting against because you're not going to win.

I mean, you're not going to win. And so surrender is the easiest, the best, the most joyful thing where we come to that place of surrender. But, you know, one of the, one of the things that Martin Luther said, the founder of the great reformation, he made this interesting little point.

He says, God creates out of nothing. Therefore, until a man is nothing, God can make nothing out of him. As long as we have that fight against God, we are stopping the very work that God wants to do in our life.

One of the wonderful and powerful expressions of surrender is true repentance. And you know what repentance really is? Okay, we're having this battle with God. There's this thing in our life and we're wrestling with him and lo and behold, bam, there we are on the ground again.

There he is sitting on top of us and we're going to, for a time, have our arms and legs fighting against him and trying to resist him until eventually we come and stop fighting. And what we finally do in that stopping fighting, we say, you are right. I am wrong.

Have mercy on me. Why do we have to go so far, fight so hard? Why do we have to go through all the craziness to finally come to the place of this beautiful act of repentance? Because it's that rebelliousness that's in us. Now I know as a, as a boy that I used to hate it when, even when I did wrong and I was disciplined for it.

I mean, it's just crazy today. You have, you know, it's a human nature. So, you know, a guy breaks into a house, the police catch him and they're angry at the cops for catching them.

You know what I mean? It's like, you're the criminal, but you know, you're angry at, at, at everybody else, you know, and you know, it's just, it's how we do it. It's just crazy. Instead of coming to the place of understanding the joy of repentance, there is the agony of repentance as we are going through repentance.

It can be there. Psalms one, Psalms 51 is a perfect example of it, but it's at the end of repentance that joy is found. The end of that act of surrender, William MacDonald said, the broken man is quick to repent.

He does not try to sweep sin under the carpet. He does not try to forget it with the excuse, time heals all things. No, he rushes into the presence of God and cries, I have sinned.

Maturity in the faith, I wish I could say is where the point where we no longer sin, that's not going to happen until we're in heaven. As we mature, we'll sin less and less. But an aspect of maturity is that when we sin, we learn how to run faster to the foot of the cross.

That when we're fighting against God and he nails us to the ground, that we are quick to understand what's going on. We say, forgive me, forgive me, have mercy. Because what really has to be the underlying thing behind it all is not the aspect that we're suffering for our sin, but that our sin is hiding the beautiful face of Jesus.

And that we want anything that separates us from him out of our life. You see, that's maturing in the faith where it's no more just going, I'm tired of suffering from my sin. Now it's the aspect, I'm tired of breaking his heart.

I want the fellowship, I want the nearest, it's not worth it. The sin is just not worth it because it breaks this beautiful relationship that I've grown into that I begin to understand, God, I want to be holy because I want that relationship with you. Because repentance comes out of brokenness, out of poverty of spirit, like has come out this morning as well.

And until there's poverty of spirit, we're going to be like that little man under the big, huge wrestler. And we're going to be fighting because we still think somehow we can do it. Somehow.

You are pinned to the ground, you have this massive man on top of you, you are not going to get out from underneath until you finally say, mercy. And yet you keep fighting and fighting and fighting, and you fight your counselor, you fight everybody, you fight with your wife, whatever, you just fight. And it's like, why? Why? What is it getting you other than more sorrow and more pain? And yet you miss the whole thing, the joy of surrender.

To finally come and say, forgive me. And you know, he doesn't have to forgive, but it's his nature to forgive. And we can rely on that nature that he forgives.

What a phenomenal God. And so John the Baptist told us in Matthew chapter three, verse eight, produce fruit in keeping with repentance. Who do you tell this to? The religious people, religious folk that had a form of godliness, but did not have the real thing inside of them.

Produce fruit, give evidence of the reality of it. When repentance is real, we stop the fighting. We stop the fighting.

We begin to learn the joy of what it is to truly surrender to him. You know, there's this concept in scripture that is absolutely contrary to the world, and everything the world promotes, and everything of American life. American life is that if you want life, go for the gusto.

Pursue whatever you want. Pursue your truth. Pursue your desires.

Pursue whatever you want, whatever it is, because you have the right to do it. But yet the word of God says you want life. Die.

We don't like that one. We want to go to God and say, bless the socks off me, and just let me stay the way I am. Right? I mean, we want to go claim these promises, but we don't want to surrender.

We don't want to submit. We don't want to do it his way. But we get angry at him when he doesn't bless us when we ask for those promises.

And we say, I'm claiming it. But yet we haven't surrendered. We haven't come to the place of becoming a life that he will bless.

And so Jesus told us this. Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. And I happen to think that Jesus knew what he was talking about, and that he meant it.

A criteria of salvation is you've got to die yourself. That you've got to come to the place where you're stopping the fight. He's sitting on top of you.

You have been conquered. You just haven't realized it. You don't even acknowledge it.

And you're still fighting. Your arms are still flying, and you're arguing the words coming out of your mouth and the things in your heart so hostile to God. You're fighting against him.

And yet, he has been so good to you, and you can't even see it. So good. You may be angry at him for even being here, and yet you fail to understand how good he has been to give you this opportunity.

To give you a place for nine months to sit at the feet of Jesus and begin to learn, and have some wonderful counselors deal with the reality of your sin and your sin nature and all that's behind it. And they're going to sometimes point out things you don't want to deal with, but you're given the opportunity to begin to deal with things you never chose to deal with in the past that you might begin to overcome. You can either submit or rebel.

Why rebel? I mean, you're nine months here, and you're still a rebel at the end of them. What a waste. Instead, you should be making the most of this opportunity.

Say, God, I made a mess. And you and your mercy has given me another chance to bring me here. God, help me to surrender to the best of my ability that at the end of those nine months, I am a new man.

Never, ever, the same. Never to go back. You know, God gives all of us, in one way or another, some kind of gift.

Natural, and when we become Christians, he does give us spiritual gifts. There's, you know, in various expressions of it. You could have talent oozing out of you.

I mean, oozing out of you. And yet, it's all absolutely worthless unless you learn surrender. Worthless.

It's worse than worthless. It can be detrimental to you. Your very gifts can help damn you to hell.

When God gave you them for his glory, you use it for your own glory, for your own self, for your own ambition, for your own dreams. And you do it because you think this is what you need to be happy, but yet it makes you more and more miserable. Fulfillment and usefulness doesn't come because you have it all together.

Because you have the doctrine down pat, and you have all your ducks in a row. It happens because you learn the power of surrender. And through the surrendered life, God can do what he wants and accomplish his work that may be totally different than what you've ever imagined.

You want to be a man of God? You've got to surrender. And it can't be something, a one-time event. That's not how it works.

It's a lifetime event. And it's an event that goes on constantly in a host of different ways. You may have the big crisis where you have to make the choice to surrender there, but you have the small little things in your life.

Somebody says, go do this. And you have the choice to either lovingly submit or rebel. You understand? It's all these little things in our life that produce the big aspect of surrender.

And when we learn how to start surrendering in all these little things, they amount to a whole big thing at the end. It's not just these big crisis that we surrender. We're not going to surrender right at the big crisis unless we learn how to surrender to all these little things and begin to deal with all the expressions of rebellion that's so deep-rooted in us.

The deeper our life is defined by surrender in the small things, the easier it will be for us to surrender when the big things come. Because that's what we are becoming. That's who we are then, not just something we're trying to be at a crisis in our life.

Now, I tell this not to be conformed to the world. And so we have a choice, either Christ-likeness or worldliness. And Christ-likeness and worldliness are heart and mind issues.

It has to do with how we think and what we love. As long as you love the world, you'll think like the world. As long as you think like the world, you will act like the world.

You want to think like a Christian, you have to love Christ supremely. And if you don't love him supremely, you have to pursue that in your life. Because I don't think anybody on this planet loves him supremely.

We should be striving to. And only when we pass through death's door and end up in his presence will we have the ability, no more sin in nature, to love him supremely. Then we will do it.

Until that time, we are to be in pursuit of that with all that's within us. So this is a heart issue. It's not worldliness.

It has nothing to do with being separate. You could be put on a desert island all by yourself, and a worldly heart is still going to be a worldly heart in that desert island. It's a heart issue.

It's who we are. A Christ-like character comes out of that place of relationship. It's who we become in Christ.

It's that he's doing this work because we're learning the power of a surrendered life. We're learning how to yield to him, to say yes to him. P.J. Madden made this little point.

He says, before we can be reshaped, certain things have to be broken. Our own abilities, our own ideas, our own ways. In fact, everything that is our own and not his own.

Well, that's what brokenness is. All these things start getting broken. They're being broken out of our life.

We're finding deliverance from them, at least in a part as we continue to progress and mature in the faith. You see, there's this doctrine in the church, there's some various expressions of it, called sanctification. Sanctification is the process by which we are made holy.

The way that I understand it, according to the word of God, is the aspect that it's instantaneous and progressive. So when a person is truly saved, they are set apart, they become gods. But then there must be this constant growth, maturing in sanctification and holiness, as we mature.

Guess what? The same is true with surrender. A person to be saved has to come to the point to surrender enough to be saved, to say, God forgive me, I'm a rebel, I come to you. But from there, it has to mature, it has to continue growing as part of that sanctifying process of the Holy Spirit, where we become more and more like him, but we become more and more like him as we learn to surrender, as we learn to yield to Christ.

In Proverbs chapter 23, we are given an astounding truth, and it should be just so plain before us, but yet we need to be reminded of it. He said in verse 7, and this is with the New King James Version, for as he thinks in his heart, so is he. As he thinks.

You see, angry thoughts come out of an angry man. I don't want you to raise your hands, but how many of you men are still very angry? And you know, we have an anger, a rage in America today, that people don't even understand where it comes from. They're angry, they don't even know why they're angry, they're just angry, and they're looking for some outlet to express that anger.

But the root of it all is sin. Until the sin issue is dealt with, the anger can't be dealt with. As a man thinks, so is he.

A lustful man thinks like that, you're going to be a lustful man, it's going to be acted out in some way in your life. Proud man, whatever sin you want to say, but so is the aspect of righteousness. Guess what happens when the transformation is going on in our life? Our minds start to change, our hearts start to change, we start thinking and loving things that we used to maybe at one time hate.

We start loving Christ, we start loving what is good and pure, when we used to love what was sensual, now we begin to love what is innocent and good. Everything changes, it's just this radical thing, because now I'm thinking more like God wants me to think, like He created me to think. It's what starts coming out of me.

And I start seeing the benefit of it. I start seeing how it affects not just my life, but everyone in my life. It affects our marriage, it affects how we interact with children and one another.

And then Paul told us to be transformed. Well, this is an impossible mission if left to ourselves. Impossible, absolutely impossible.

You can change yourself for worse, you can go from bad to worse and worse to worse. That's what we can do, but you can't make yourself any better. You can go and exchange one sin for another sin, so you stop that sin and all you're going to do is replace it with something else, because this sinful man is going to be sinful and he's going to practice sin.

There's no way that a leopard can change his spots without divine intervention. You see, only God can change the spots. No man can.

We cannot change who we are by ourselves. So to be transformed, we must go back to the mercy of God. I beseech you by the mercy of God, be transformed.

How are you transformed? Through the mercy of God. How are you transformed? Through that grace and understanding the reality of repentance and the gift of repentance and surrendering to this God. And so he tells us in such a beautiful way in Colossians chapter 3 verses 1 and 2 to set our hearts and minds and things above.

You know, it just doesn't happen. You don't begin to think differently and love differently just because you say, I'm going to think differently and love differently. You have to begin to shut the garbage off and you've got to open up the door to what is good and pure and lovely.

And it has to be the choice. You have to say, I'm stopping this, I'm stopping this, and I'm going to start thinking like that. I had an app on my phone to boost the cell signal and it was doing okay, helping a little bit.

And I can't remember if it was yesterday or the day before, I had turned it on to try and boost my signal because where I'm at, sometimes I have just a terrible signal. And I came back to it and all of a sudden from that app, there's a full page dating thing on it. Within 15 seconds, that app was off my phone going, you're not going to do that to me.

I'm not going to open the door. I'm not even going to let you come. See, I don't want to think like that.

I don't want to think like the world because if I do that, I'm going to act like the world. I don't want it. I won't even open the door.

And so, okay, I don't have as good a signal. So what? It doesn't matter. He wants to change how we think.

He wants to transform us. And what does a transformation look like? Mark chapter 12, verse 30, love the Lord your God with all of your heart, mind, soul, and strength. Why do we fight that? Isn't that strange? God gives us this command, love me with everything.

And here we are underneath the weight of God, fighting still against him, fighting because we said, I don't want to love you. I mean, it's crazy. We fight against the greatest love that there is, the author of love.

We fight against what we want, we really need on the inside. And yet we resist it because we think something else can meet our needs. Something else can satisfy us.

And yet the whole time we fight against that. We hurt ourselves, we hurt everybody in our life. And here's the sweet, wonderful, beautiful command that he'll give us the grace to live out if we cry out to it.

If we cry out to him, he will give us all the grace necessary to love him with everything. But what's he saying? Surrender, child, surrender. Come to me.

Stop the war. Stop the fighting. Stop resisting me.

And then you will know my goodness in ways you have never understood. You know my tenderness. You know my nearness.

He makes it worthwhile. Now I'm going to switch gears here. And really, if I could have, I would have started at this point right here.

But this is so important. And I may have in the past sometime shared something similar in a message, but I just really want to share this. We got to come to grips with this.

Who is it that demands our absolute surrender? Who is it, if he's just a mere man, all he is is a megalomaniac, megalomaniac, insane individual that believes he's something that he's not and that he deserves worship and adoration and total, complete obedience. And if I went to any of you and said, you need to obey me absolutely, you'd be a fool to do so. Right? I mean, we just, that's ridiculous.

Who is this that demands absolute obedience? We're to give absolute obedience to nobody on this planet, not to governments, not to a spouse, not to a church, not to a pastor. We're not to give that to anybody. It belongs to only one unquestioning, absolute surrender and obedience to God.

Who is this that demands our surrender? And we've got to come to grips with this. I wish I could take this thought and make it so much more real that I could present it in such a better way. In the book of Job, you have this man that is told to be the most righteous man on the planet.

He had a real relationship with God. So much so he wanted his kids to be right and would do sacrifices for his children in case they sin. And Satan hated the man, wanted somehow to bring destruction to him.

And so he was allowed to touch what that man owned. And in a day, his life was devastated. His wealth taken away from him, you know, a large portion of his family taken away, dead.

I mean, ruin came upon him in a moment. Agony, misery, and yet he did not curse God. He worshipped and adored.

It wasn't enough. The devil wanted the ruin of this man and so asked to be able to touch his body, to touch his life. And the Lord says, you can touch his life, but you can't take his life.

You can touch his body, you can't take his life. And then sore boils came upon him. Just the misery, the pain of it.

His whole body, one ache from just miserable. And probably I can just imagine itching and hurting at the same time. And he's taking a broken pot and scraping himself, that causing oozing and pussing.

And yet it's hurting more and more. And just there's no relief. Nothing is bringing relief.

And after seven days, he had four men that had come alongside of him. Four men came there. Three of them were miserable comforters.

One, the youngest of them all, was the wisest of the four. And then Job starts to complain. And from there comes the whole book of Job and the arguments that go back and forth where the three miserable comforters attacked Job saying, well, this happened because of sin.

And they were off base. They were wrong. It wasn't because of sin.

It was a satanic attack against a man. But yet in the midst of it, Job did sin because he tried to justify himself. And by trying to justify himself, he blamed God.

And now God steps on the scene. And just imagine these five men that are there. And they see from a distance this unnatural storm.

This unnatural storm coming at them at a speed that no storm comes, looking like nothing they've ever saw. And so they speak of it as a storm because they probably had no other words to explain what was coming at them. And here was God coming at them.

Here was God showing up. And all of a sudden, the Lord goes to Job in chapter 38 verses 1 through 4. Then the Lord answered Job out of the storm and said, who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man. I will question you, and you shall answer me.

Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me if you can. And God continues to question him. And all that is done is Job is undone in the presence of God.

Undone to see the smallness of who he was compared to the massive greatness of this God. The three miserable comforters, I don't know what would have happened to them. God's wrath would have been on them or something.

I don't know. But the only way that it was turned from them was the mercy that God was working through Job to pray for them. And so God restored Job.

What a terrible, miserable, agonizing situation. But what happened? You see, this big, massive God came and sat upon Job, and he laid there and did not fight. You are right, God.

The beginning of the book of Ezekiel, the first few chapters, is just phenomenal where he sees the glory of God. And some people have come up with the craziest ideas of what this is. Some even trying to say it's flying saucers and just what a joke.

Ezekiel is trying to explain something that is unexplainable. There are no human words for it. So he's just trying to say, it's like, and he uses that word like, it's like, because he didn't know what to do.

How do you describe what he was seeing? But yet he's seeing the glory of God. And how long this took, how much it was, whether it was a second or five minutes, whatever it was, we're not told the time of it. But then he says in chapter 1, verse 28, this was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.

When I saw it, I fell face down and I heard the voice of one speaking. He was in a moment undone before this God that was breaking in his world. He came and sat upon Ezekiel and Ezekiel laid there, learned the joy of surrender rather than being crushed under the weight, being awed by the goodness of God, the

kindness of God.

Daniel, he saw the glory of God a few times. In chapter 8, verse 17, he says, as he came near the place where I was standing, as Jesus came near the place where I was standing, I was terrified and felt prostrate. You see, I'd rather have that than for God to have to sit on me.

You know, much better to throw yourself at his feet than for us to be the rebels and he has to come and plop down on us and feel the weight of his discipline and all that stuff. It's just much better when he begins to speak and show himself. We throw ourselves and say, God, you are good.

Thank you that you would reprove me. Thank you that you would warn me. Thank you, whatever it might be, that you'd encourage me because he loves doing that just as much.

And then you have in chapter 10, verses 7 through 9, it says, I, Daniel, listen, this is astounding here. I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision. The men with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves.

So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision. I had no strength left. My face turned deathly pale and I was helpless.

Then I heard him speaking and I, as I was listening to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground, surrender, surrender, the joy of surrender. Now, of course, these were unique situations where God was speaking to Daniel, giving him visions of what was to come. But yet it was the aspect that God could come to a man that knew surrender and knew that he would surrender and knew that the man would respond right.

The others fled. The terror of God was there, but grace was given to Daniel to be able to endure the presence of God. Because without that grace, he would have fled with the rest.

I think it was C.S. Lewis that says, God is so infinitely good and we are so ungood that if he showed us his goodness, we would flee from it in terror. That's really what happened here. This good and holy God showed up and people fled from it.

But this man, this Daniel, this man that, if you look in the word, he has no fault in his life. He was a sinner. It's just, he's a type of Christ that's there.

But yet you see this surrender, this phenomenal expression of surrender. Then you come to the New Testament. You see the same God, the same God, not a different God, the same God.

Jesus goes to the Mount of Transfiguration of what we call it, takes with him Peter, James, and John. Whatever the exact purpose of that was, I can't tell you. But I know one of the great purposes that came out of it is what happened to Peter, James, and John and the account that we have.

And so there's Jesus up there and Moses and Elijah there communing with him. It says in Matthew chapter 17, verses five through six, while he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them and a voice from the cloud said, this is my son whom I love. With him I am well pleased.

Listen to him. When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground, terrified. I wish I was there.

I'm not going to go through experiences I've had. I've had some phenomenal experiences with God, times where I have been terrified. And it is so good.

It is so good. It is so wonderful because it's not this tear of hell. It's this beautiful, holy, clean tear that comes upon you.

And as you are like Peter, when he caught that great amount of fish, he went and fell at the feet of Jesus and said, depart from me. And all I can imagine is serious cling to Jesus. At the same time, he said, leave me.

It was hurting the goodness. The holiness of God was hurting him, but yet it felt so good. It felt so good because this God was revealing himself.

The final verse I'll share with you is in Revelation, the first chapter, verses 12 through 17, where John gets a vision of the glorified Christ. I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands and among them, among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe, reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest.

His head and hair were white like wool, white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand, he held seven stars and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword.

His face was like the sun shining in all of its brilliance. When I saw him, I felt at his feet as though dead. This is the God that demands our absolute surrender.

This is a God we're surrendering to. This is a God worth obeying. I mean, we have had and through the ages past kings that would have their knights and a knight would come and kneel before the king and swear fealty to him.

I swear to you my possessions, my life, my blood in service of you. And yet that was a mere mortal, it was a mere king. And a greater king calls us to obedience.

A greater king calls us to absolute surrender. The king of kings gives us the privilege of being one of his. And what is he calling us to? Surrender.

Life of surrender. And you know that surrender does not ever stop. Because you go into the book of Revelation and you see many times there, but one account is like in Revelation chapter 4 verse 10 where the elders throw their crowns down before the Lord and throw themselves down themselves.

Again and again overwhelmed. In my mind's eye, when I think of heaven, I think of all these times, these epics, best using human terms and time bound terms, but these epics where God will show himself in one way and then down the road another where he will make a new heaven and new earth. And then how long will it be before he makes another new heaven and new earth again and again and again.

This God showing the wonder and majesty and infinite power of who he is. And those people that belong to him, those angels that are in heaven with him get to behold the beauty and the majesty and the splendor of who he is and to be awestruck by him once again throughout eternity it will take place. But the surrender up there will be complete.

It will be then absolute. I long for that day. I am so weary of me.

I am weary of me. I long for the day to have a completely finished blend. Standing in the presence of this God and knowing this God that I've been trying to share here.

Father, we come before you now in the precious name of Jesus. Who are we that you would come to us and give us the offer of surrender. You have the right as a holy God just to slay us all right.

We deserve your justice. We deserve your wrath, oh God. But instead you offer us mercy.

You could in one moment with one word conquer mankind and they would be done. One word and all of hell is in prison forever. But yet Lord you are working for our salvation, laboring in ways we can't even understand.

And what do you want? You're looking for our surrender. Sweet surrender, God. How long it takes for us to begin to understand how good it is.

How long it takes for us to begin to comprehend that you are not trying to ruin us and destroy us. But Lord through the surrendered life you are making us to be what we should be, what we should have been. And what we one day will be finished in heaven, Lord.

God I'm asking for your work. Holy Spirit that you do work in this chapel this morning, Lord. Taking us where we cannot go by ourself.

That we don't have enough strength and ability to do it ourselves. So God we're asking for mercy. That we become strong in divine grace to surrender to what we've not been able to surrender before.

To begin to love you like we've never loved you before. And to find that whatever you do, whether it's discipline or whether it's you wrapping your arms around us, Lord. That you are doing it for our well-being because you are truly a God that is good.

We ask this in your precious name. Just like I said a few minutes ago about sanctification that it's instantaneous and it's progressive. And that surrender is the same.

I'm going to open this altar up. And so this altar is not a cure-all. It's just a beginning, a milestone.

And people that they can go and say, God I've got to begin. I've got to go deeper. This I've, God there has to be this mark in my life where I begin to say, now God, now I'm going to begin to surrender.

Now help me, oh God. And don't be mad at him when he starts helping you. Because he will help you.

And some of those lessons will be very painful. But I'll tell you what, if you'll walk through them and you'll surrender through them, you will find them to be so good. And lessons you'll say, I never want to forget because the prize has been so good.

Would everybody please stand? This is between you and Jesus. If you need to be at this altar, if you need to deal with this message, then I want you to find a place up here right now. Come and throw yourself at his feet.

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