

You Must Surrender

by Robert Ketcham

You must surrender your life to Christ, dying to sin and suffering with Him, in order to be transformed into a new creation and live a life of dedication to Him.

Duration: 32:52

Scripture: Lamentations 1:12, Matthew 16:24, Luke 9:23, Romans 12:1, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 1:29, 1 Peter 4:13

Topics: "Surrender"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the process that a tree goes through before it can be transformed into writing paper. He compares this process to the transformation that believers in Christ must undergo. The first step is to reckon ourselves dead to sin, meaning we must eliminate sin from our lives in order to be useful to God. The speaker emphasizes that surrendering to God will often lead to suffering, which is something believers tend to shy away from. However, the speaker encourages listeners to embrace suffering for the sake of Christ and to be willing to die to sin in order to become a representation of Jesus Christ to others.

Transcript

Now, we've been talking to you on the high cost of writing paper. We have been discussing this from the standpoint of 2nd Corinthians 3.3. Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle or letter of Christ. Letters are for the purpose of conveying a message to an absentee, someone who isn't with you and you've got a message.

Jesus Christ is here and the sinner is over here and he's got a message he wants to get to him. So he writes a letter to him and you're it. You're it.

You are the letter. Not simply a letter bearer, you are that too as well. But you and your person, in your conduct, in your behavior, in your submission to the will of God, and in your whole reaction to the whole matter of obedience to God and living out a godly life, you are it.

You are the letter. God's dear son bought your bodies as well as the fellow who lives in them. And he bought your bodies for a purpose, that he might live in that body and live his life after it.

Therefore glorify God in your body. You are not your own. You're bought with a price.

You have no more right to your body than I have to yours. Not a bit. It's sold out to Jesus Christ.

It's his property. And he bought it for the express purpose of moving in and living out his life through your hands and feet and vocal organs and so on. And let me say again that the only Christ that the unsaved world will ever see until they see him at the judgment seat of the great white throne, the only Christ the world will ever see is the Christ they see in Christians.

Paul said, For me to live is Christ. That means for me to live is Christ to somebody. I, Robert Thomas Ketchum, as Christ lives his life out in me, I am the only representative, I am the only manifestation of Jesus Christ that somebody will ever see.

And that's true of you. What kind of a Christ do they see when they look at you? You're it. You're it.

And they judge Christ by what they see in you. And that may be why he doesn't appear to be too attractive to the world, it's because we're not making a very good image for them to look at. Now, the Lord Jesus Christ bought you and me as standing timber in a great forest of pulpwood.

He bought the raw material, the stock, the forest, there are millions and millions and millions of standing trees in the forest of potential writing paper. He bought us as the raw pulpwood for the express purpose of transforming us into writing paper upon which he can write his message to a lost world. And the initial purchase by the one who is the owner of the whole proposition and the one who is going to manufacture those trees into writing paper, it was a costly deal for Jesus Christ.

Oh, what a price he paid. And now we've been looking at the cost to us. And the first thing I called your attention to was that there are four processes through which that tree has to go before Joe can get a box of writing paper and write a letter to his sweet pie.

Before that happens, something has to happen to that tree. He just doesn't write on that tree and put it in the mailbox, you know. And yet essentially that's exactly what he does, but it has to be transformed from its raw state into its refined state, and then he can write on it.

And there are four things that has to happen to that tree before that can be done. The first one I pointed out to you was it has to be cut down to the place of death. We have to reckon ourselves to be dead to sin.

You can't play around with sin, known sin, in your life and expect to be a good piece of writing paper for Jesus Christ to put his impressions on. You can't do that. I'm not talking about sinlessness.

I'm talking about this business of having victory, which you can have, over known sin. If you know it's sin before you do it, you don't have to do it. Unless you want to, and that's the trouble.

We want to, so we do. But if that's the way you want to live your life, you just don't need to be figuring that somebody is going to read Christ in you, very allegedly. We must be dying out to the whole sin principle in our lives and the renunciation of it and the reckoning ourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God.

Now, yesterday morning we dealt with surrender. The next thing that has to happen to that tree I know in the forest, all of its pretty branches and foliage has to be cut off and it lies there naked and stripped of everything that made it a thing of duty. It must surrender.

And so yesterday we talked about surrender. And I don't know to whom I should be speaking about this, but I sincerely hope for the benefit of the team and those who are with them that the tape, the message yesterday morning, may be played back for their benefit. I said some nice things about you yesterday,

fellas.

You're a whale of a crowd. And I spoke about surrender. God will never take anything away from you except that which he sees will hurt you if you keep it.

And he just may have seen that victory down there might have hurt you. It might have. So he just let it go the other way.

And we had a precious time together yesterday morning on this matter of surrender. And I don't know who I should speak to, so I'm speaking to you now. Why not arrange some morning to have that tape played back here for the whole chapel? Those who heard it yesterday won't hurt you to hear it again.

But I do want the team, for their own encouragement, to hear that message that we gave yesterday morning on surrender. Now, the next thing that has to happen to that tree that's been cut down and trimmed is loaded on a car and taken over the railroad up to Lockheed in Pennsylvania to the pulp wood mill, a paper mill. And there it is put into a thing they call up in that part of the country, the hog.

It gets that name because of the racket it makes up and down that Susquehanna Valley when it starts chewing up one of those logs. But a derrick is here and lays hold upon one end of a log and it's swung out over this great big... Well, have you ever seen the old-fashioned family coffee grinder? About yea square, open top, and you pour a pound of coffee in one and you crank it up and grind it? Well, that's exactly what the thing looks like, only several hundred times bigger. It's a mammoth thing and this log is upended and dropped down into that hopper and hurling knives and bits and augers, grab it and twist and turn and suck it down in and chew it up into little pieces of wood like that, just rip it and tear it and shred it and break it up into little chunks of torn and broken wood.

Well, it has to do that if it's going to be a writing paper. And so with you and with me, if we're going to be a writing paper upon which Jesus Christ can write, there must be the fellowship of his suffering. We must know what it is to suffer with Jesus Christ.

Now, that's the thing we don't like. That's the thing we shrink from. Anything that gives us suffering and uneasiness and unpleasantness, we don't like it.

So we shrink away from it and we back away from it. Okay, go ahead if that's the way you want it, but you'll never be writing paper for Jesus Christ. Never, never.

There's got to be a broken life, there's got to be a life that knows what it is to go down into the black, awful shadows and fill up that which is behind the sufferings of Christ. We've got to know what it is to fellowship with him in his sufferings. And so often that is done by personal suffering, by going down into the valleys of the shadows where a heart is ripped and torn and broken, where loved ones are snatched away, where help is taken away and the victim may lie for years upon a bed of pain and twisted out of shape.

All of this may happen, and it can be the most blessed thing in the world to you, if you take it as from him. And then beside that there is this blessed ministry of living so close to him, with your head pillowed upon his precious bosom, until you catch the great pulsating heartbeat of the love of Jesus Christ for a lost world. As you hear the inner sobs that must still rise from the heart of our ascended and glorified Lord as he looks out over the world, prancing by his cross and paying no attention to it.

Lamentations 1 and 12, while it refers to Israel, I know, it doesn't take too much imagination to transfer those words from the lips of the prophet concerning Israel and put them into the lips of the Lord Jesus, born crowned, blood soaked, split bedraggled, nailed fast to a bloody cross, and saying to all who pass by, Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow which is done unto me. When the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger, Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto mine. The Lord Jesus is still saying it, not only to a lost world who go giddily by his cross, paying no attention to it, but he's saying it to born again Christians this morning.

Hear me, is it nothing to you? You've let me save your soul, you've brought your poor miserable soul to me, and let me save it to get it out of hell and into heaven, and you've put the period there? You've never tarried at my cross, you've never waited there to hear the great sobbings of my heart, as I still weep and yearn over a lost world? You know nothing about it. You let me save your soul, and then you've taken your body and your interest and all to go with it, and you've thanked me for saving your soul, and then you'll run the rest of the show yourself. You'll go where you want to go, you'll be what you want to be, you'll marry who you want to marry, you'll buy what you want to buy, you'll work where you want to work, and you'll never ask me, never once, have you come and said, Lord, you brought this body of mine as well as the fellow or the fellowess who lives inside it? I want your will, tell me what you want me to do, where you want me to go, and where you lead.

I'll follow, oh, that the people of God, those who have been saved by his grace, may know something of what it is not to just prance along with the consciousness of eternal salvation and be saved and enjoy all this not, but oh, that we might linger at his cross and hear the sobbing of his heart today over a world that has rejected him, and the sorrow which is still added to his heart because of his own saved ones who are ignoring his lordship in their life. If you're going to be good writing paper upon which he can make his image, and you can be Jesus Christ to somebody, a representation of him, his letter, then you're going to have to know what it is not only to die to sin and surrender to him, but you're going to have to know that this surrender will take you often into the valley of suffering, and that's what we don't like. We shrink away from it.

Don't do it! Don't do it! Don't do it! Don't back away from suffering. Don't detour the hard spots in life. For I give you my witness after 54 years of walking with him, and Mrs. Ketchum would stand here on this platform and bear witness with me this morning that the most lovely things, the dearest, the sweetest things that we have ever found out about Jesus Christ, we found them out in the shadows.

All the beauties of his person and all that we have found up in the great mountain peaks of the blaze of sunlight, of happiness and what have you, but there isn't enough money in all of this universe to buy one hour of what we found out about Jesus Christ down in the deep, dark, black night of sorrow and suffering. You all are so many lovely things in Jesus Christ that you will never know we're there until the experience of suffering with him elicits them and brings out that ministry of his to you. So don't dodge the suffering.

Don't shrink away from the unpleasant things. You say, well, I still, I still guess I just still don't know. No, no, that's not what? Oh, that's not for me.

That's not for me. Okay, if that's the way you want it, I'm not a good, I don't Christian you, but I wouldn't give you 10 cents a box full for your writing paper. No, I wouldn't.

Look, my dear friend, is the servant above his Lord. Just a few days before Irene Farr was killed and Ruth Heggie bitterly so, it was my joy to read a letter out in California that Ruth had written just about three days before the massacre there on the station to a friend of hers in California. And she said, we don't know what is coming to pass around us.

Things are getting pretty serious. And she wound up her letter with this statement, but may the dear Lord help us to glorify him, whether by life or by death, sign Ruth. How little she knew then, how close she was for having to demonstrate that.

And she did. She did. Who are you and who am I to say we will not suffer? Who are we anyhow? Are we above our Lord? Are we to let him take the path of suffering and then we trance along up on the sunny hill while we watch him down in the valley going through the sufferings and we refuse to fellowship with him down there? We refuse to take the path of obedience which we know if we take it will cost us something.

It will cost us friends. It will cost us loved ones. It may cost us our betrothed.

It may cost us a pension. It may cost us our job. It may cost us the love of some of our family.

And we know it's going to do it if we follow him in obedience and therefore we won't do it. Okay. But you won't be very good writing paper, no.

But oh, the soul, the man, the woman that's willing to go down there and walk with him through the black shadows. Oh, the purifying, the sanctifying ministry of suffering with Christ. I don't know what to say.

Well, it's not for me. Not for me. Hear me again.

Are you above the Lord? Listen to me. If all of the black darkness that has covered the earth since darkness covered the earth back there in Genesis down to the last total eclipse of the sun if all of this awful black darkness could be gathered together in one awful ball of darkness massed all in one terrible ball of darkness it would be gleaming sunlight compared to that awful black night that wrapped itself around my Lord when he went down with my hell in his body.

If all the floods of all time from the time when the waters covered the face of the earth in Genesis 1-2 down through Noah's flood and to the last great tidal wave if all of these floods could be massed in one great towering crashing wave coming blazing and blasting its way all in one it would be but the gentle lapping of a little wavelet on the sandy shore compared to that hour when all the waves and the billows of the wrath of God against the sins of the world went crashing over the head of my beloved and from its depths I hear him crying all my waves and my billows have gone over me in the belly of hell cried I and said that's all right for him but excuse me there's a passage in Philippians it says it's not only given to you to believe on Christ but to suffer for his name's sake what's

that? yeah that's right that's part of your inheritance this business of suffering with Christ is such a wonderful thing that is part of your inheritance well we are so grateful and so thankful that he saved us because we believe on him but the rest of that is our inheritance too you know it's given to us not only to believe on him but to suffer don't judge it don't judge it dear friend don't stay away from the hard place because it's going to hurt you for down there in the shadows you'll find out things about Jesus Christ that you never knew existed and you would never need to know apart from the shadows down there oh how wonderful he becomes when the black night gathers around you and perhaps pain is racing through your body like lightning expresses laden with the cargo of sharp

agonizing pain or whether it may be distress of mind and heart and concern is tearing at your very brain oh how sweet just to turn and see him standing there in the shadows and as we cast ourselves upon him to give his arms around us and drawing us close to his own great heart and saying when thou goest to the waters they shall not overflow thee when thou walkest through the fire it shall not kindle upon thee for I am the Lord thy God the Holy One thy Redeemer and if you don't want to go into the path of suffering you miss all of that now there's one further process and just with that we'll close this particular subject when this broken twisted torn little bits of wood are through with the suffering doctor they're spewed out into a great vat of acid you put your hand in it and hold it

there a minute and you wouldn't have any hand to bring out in these acid baths these little chunks of broken twisted wood are reduced to the finest pulp you can imagine farther down the line of vats where the process is about completed you can pick that stuff up and you never had flour in your fingers or butter that is finer than that then it goes on into cleansing baths where the little hard pieces that may not have yet been actually reduced to this smooth pulp are strained out and cleansed out until finally way down at the end of that long paper mill miles and miles of great gleaming white paper without a flaw in it anywhere they're rolling up on great rollers they're grabbed by derricks and whisked into boxcars and off to philadelphia they go and in a couple of weeks you go over to the

drugstore and pick it up in the saturday evening poster the ladies home journal printed and written all over it some of it is shunted off into a special track of special refinement and coloring and what have you and it's put up in nice little stationary boxes and stacked up on the counter at the drugstore and joe goes over and buys a box of it and writes to his sweetie pie yeah so not only dying out to sin surrender to his will for your life knowing what it is to take the path of obedience even though that takes you into the darkest deepest shadows of your life suffering with him but this life of daily cleansing daily cleansing hour by hour the blood of jesus christ keeps right on cleansing keeps right on cleansing keeps right on cleansing so that in your body men and women around you may

see the writing of jesus christ in your life all of this all of this is a costly business it's a costly business my friend but the greatest price of all that was paid was paid for the raw material when he bought not only your soul but your body in which your soul is at the awful cost of calvary and now the cost to you and to me the cost to you and to me of coming into a sober solemn life of dedication to him in the matter of the forsaking of known sin in our life the thing that you know to be wrong i'm not talking about the things that you don't know i'm talking about the things you do know to have that surrendered to him and put to death and then to say lord whatever i have whatever i am i now put into your hands in total complete unconditional irrevocable surrender i walk out of the

throne room of my life and renounce my right ever to walk back into that throne room thou shalt be lord and king and ruler of my life thou shalt have the preeminence and lord this is going to take me again and again and again and again into a place where it's not going to be pleasant it's going to be rough and tough it's going to take me into places where i'll cry myself to sleep at night it's going to take me into places where my face will be fleshed with the shame of humiliation as people make fun of me i know, i know, but dear lord is nothing compared to what you went through for me and i'm not above my master teach me, help me lord as i follow you and fellowship with you in your sufferings keep me so close to your own great heart dear lord that i may catch something of the inner sobs

of it as i hear you weep over a lost world and teach me how to weep with you and then lord this life of mine as i travel through this world of contamination on every side i know, i know, i know there's contamination

everywhere but lord will you just keep me clean keep me clean in my thoughts keep me clean in my desires keep me clean in my affections keep me clean in my deportment so that no one will see anything in me that is unlike christ then my friend it can be said of you ye are manifestly declared to be the letters of christ father in heaven make it sure in all of our hearts for jesus sake amen

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