

Hinderances to Commitment vs. total Commitment

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald discusses the hindrances to total commitment to God and emphasizes the importance of surrendering our lives in light of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary.

Duration: 36:56

Scripture: Joshua 6, Matthew 16:26, Luke 6:46, John 3:16, Romans 8:9, Romans 12:1-2

Topics: "Total Commitment", "Redemption Plan"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of music in worship and how it can help us connect with the Holy Spirit. The main focus of the sermon is on the marvels of God's salvation and how it is a wonderful plan of redemption. The preacher highlights the significance of Jesus dying for us and emphasizes the need for total commitment to Him. The sermon also discusses the mercies of God's requirements and encourages listeners to surrender their lives fully to the Lord.

Transcript

I really appreciate the music very much. I appreciate the young people singing, and I did rather playing, both brothers playing on the instruments. My Bible says, let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

Here's an organ that's breathed through, doesn't it? It's really wonderful. You know, music is supposed to be spirituality in the Bible, did you know that? The same passage that says, be filled with the Spirit goes on to describe music, singing in our hearts with melody for the Lord. And we mustn't forget that.

Well, we've been thinking today of the marvels of God's salvation, and how unasked, unheeded, and unsought, he provides that wonderful plan of redemption for by we who, and we've been thinking about the implications of that, how if we really meditate on it, it leads us down a one-way street that just results in total commitment to him. That that is the most sane, reasonable, rational thing that we can do, is bow before him and say, Lord Jesus, I'm yours forever. I love my master.

I will not go out. Breathe. This is what it should be.

It's wonderful to me, I often think about it, how the cross of Calvary, in animate creation, responded to the magnitude of what was happening. The rocks were rinsed, the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom, the sun shrouded its face in darkness, and the earth shook, earthquakes shook. And you know,

only one human being, in a verse of insight, seemed to capture something of the grandeur of what was happening.

He was a centurion, he was a soldier, and he said, truly, this was the son of God. Compared to Calvary, all other events in history pale into insignificance. There was nothing else that ever happened like Calvary, and all other deaths were trivial deaths, and all other hours were absolutely irrelevant.

That is all for you and for me. I think it's wonderful. I say the response of our hearts should be, O Jesus Lord, and Master, I give myself to thee, for thou and thine atonement didst give thyself to me.

I owe no other, Master. My heart shall be thine through my life I give henceforth to live, O Lord, for thee alone. That should be the response of our hearts.

But, if that is so, why do many Christians refuse to do it, to turn over their lives? I'd like to talk with you, first of all, tonight about some hindrances to commitment to the Lord. Why aren't people doing it? Well, to put it bluntly, and because we don't think straight, because our thought processes are all fouled up, and our minds are skewed by fears and falsehoods. Let me go over, let me uncover some of them for you.

Why don't we turn our lives over to the Lord, to do with Him whatever He wants to do with us? Well, the first is fear, fear of what He might require of us. When I talk to you about making a full commitment of your life to the Lord, and you think of what it might be, what's the first thing you think about? Well, I think that is the mission field. The first thing you think about is the mission field.

And when you think about the mission field, you think about spiders, scorpions, nature, and swamps with intolerable humidity. Isn't that right? In other words, the will of God is horrible, bad, uncomfortable, and every other negative word you can think of. You know, it's silly, because that pictures a God with only one idea, and my God isn't that kind of a God.

I have a very innovative God, and a very creative God, and He has marvelous plans for His people. And they're not all, they're not all the same. Some He does call to the mission field, but He never drags anybody there.

You know, it's a wonderful thing when God calls a person to the mission field, and that person finally goes, that person is doing the thing He most wants to do. It is God that works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. First of all, the Lord puts the will in us, and then He gives us the ability to carry it out.

And the people I know on the mission field today are living fulfilled lives. Recently, I had a letter from a very dear young brother in Honduras, and he said to me, Brother Bill, he said, I don't know, I cannot conceive how I could be happier than I am serving the Lord down here in Honduras. And he's a fellow with a good education, degrees and all the rest, and he's just pouring out his life for the Lord down there in Honduras.

It doesn't make sense to be afraid of the will of God. It doesn't make good sense. I'll never forget back in the Mayesh years ago, George Burwell was visiting us.

In fact, he was staying up in the men's dormitory, and he went upstairs one day to the men's dormitory, and there were two fellows in one of the rooms, and they had left the door ajar, and they were on their knees praying. And one of the fellows was praying, Lord, I can't do it. You know I can't do it.

And George passed the room at that moment, and he just pushed the door open a little, stuck his head in, and he said, what's the matter? Are you afraid of the will of God? And the fellow thought he'd been struck by lightning, you know, or a voice of God from heaven coming down to him. What's the matter? Are you afraid of the will of God? You know, the will of God is always good and acceptable and perfect. That's what Paul says in Romans chapter 12 and verse 2. We're afraid of what God will require.

God doesn't drag reluctant people in his will. God's looking for volunteers. He's looking for people who want to do his will, and he makes it the greatest thing in the world.

And he's very innovative, I say, very creative, and his will is all. He does the very best for those who leave the choice with him. And then another thing, another reason we don't commit ourselves to the Lord is the fear of God's denial, what he will deny us.

And for many young people today, that fear is the fear of not being married. The fear, I want to do the will of God, but I want to be married first before I do the will of God. Well, what shall I say? Marriage is the general will of God for the human race.

It really is. God's will is that most people should be married. God calls a person to a life of singleness.

He gives grace for that. I would say it's the exception, not the rule. But I want to tell you that it's wrong to put the marriage altar before the altar of sacrifice.

Wrong to do that. Let God make that choice for you. If he makes the choice for you, it'll be a good choice.

It'll lead you to the exact right person. For most people, as I say, that will be God's choice for you, because that is his will for the human race. Then, of course, there's the fear of interference.

We're very, we tend to be very independent creatures, don't we? And we don't want anybody interfering. We have our own plans. We have it all mapped out what we want.

We want to be married, want to have a house in suburbia with hot and cold folding doors, two cars, you know, a good-looking family, and a nice job, of course, and a nice home and all the rest. And oh, yes, we want to give the Lord the closing years of our lives. Yes, the closing years of our lives.

It's not his way. You know, youth is God's best chance with the soul. It's really his best chance with the soul.

While the metal is still molten, while it's still pliable, God wants to do something with it, then give him the best of your life, not the burned-out end of a wasted life. And then there's the fear of the unknown, and this is very, very vivid in people's minds. People have very vivid imaginations, so they think of the fear of the unknown.

What would it be? They don't have the faith of Abraham. That's really marvelous when you think of God appearing to Abraham. He was just pagan idolater, you know, but he exhibited faith in the Lord, and God led him out, and he went out not knowing whether he went.

And he was saying, in effect, I'd rather walk in the dark with God than walk alone in the light. And you know that's pleasing to God when we have that attitude. I don't want to be my own pilot.

I want someone who's unerring to lead me onward. So that was Abraham's experience. Then we have the fear of the loss of security.

I have a very dear brother, and God was calling him to full-time service for himself, and his wife held back. She said she didn't want to live on the dole. All she could think of was a total loss of security.

And what that really means is we fear, we feel more secure with a big balance in a bank book than we do in the promise of God. God pays for what he orders, and I want to tell you he pays well too for what he orders. And if you're doing God's will, you don't have to worry about God's provision.

God takes care of it. God knows that you want three meals a day, and he'll give you that and more as well. You say, well, I'm an independent sort.

I don't want to depend on the gifts of others. God can change your heart, change my heart. When I stepped out in 1947, it was very hard for me.

I'd always paid my own way, you know, never depended on anybody else financially or anything like that. I found it hard to receive gifts from Christian people working hard for their money. And a sister gave me a little three-by-five card one day out there in California.

She said, I hold him great who for love's sake can give with generous earnest will. But you take for love's sweet sake. I think I hold more generous still.

That's great. I hold him great who for love's sake can give with generous earnest will. But you take for love's sweet sake.

I think I hold more generous will. It's never been as hard. It's never been so hard to receive the gifts of God's people since she gave me a little three-by-five card.

Then there's the fear of hardship, the loss of comfort. And this will make you laugh, I know, make you chuckle anyway for yourself. For Americans to commit themselves to the will of God, all they can think of is outdoor toilets.

I knew you'd laugh, but you know, it's real. We're so accustomed to our facilities in this country and our minds raced with vivid pictures of outdoor toilets and occasional showers to say nothing about hand-me-down clothing and early Salvation Army furniture and secondhand everything, while our friends are living high off the hog, enjoying those effeminate luxuries that kill the soul. And then there's the fear of inadequacy.

Some people say, you know, I'm just a nobody, and I really don't have anything to give the Lord. I have no great talents or anything else. I can't play the piano like Shoal or the organ like our brother Pam Carp.

And a lot of people humbly feel that way, too. And you know, that's the kind of people the Lord wants, too. He likes to take people like you who don't think you have anything to give to the Lord if you feel yourself inferior and almost worthless.

The St. Lee F. B. Meyer says this, I am only an ordinary man. I have no special gifts. I am no orator or scholar, no profound thinker.

If I've done anything for Christ in my generation, it's because I have given myself entirely to Christ Jesus and then tried to do whatever he wanted me to do. I have given myself entirely to Christ Jesus and then tried to do whatever he wanted me to do. And you know, F. B. Meyer's name is fragrant in evangelical Christian circles even today.

It's been gone a long time. We still love to read his books. Our part is to give ourselves entirely to Christ, and then his part is to take that burnt offering and use it for his glory.

You know, sometimes I think that the greatest hindrance to full commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ is that he cries, cries. You know, we think ourselves, we think we're too good for that. Then, who do you think we're too good for that? That's okay for somebody else, not okay for me.

That's okay for other people's children, not for my children. Isabel Kuhn, you know, her mother was in charge of the missionary, the missionary activities in the church, encouraging people to support missions, send clothing to missions, to do everything for missions. One day, Isabel came to her and said, Mother God has called me to the mission field.

And she said, over my dead body, Isabel. And that's the way Isabel went. I remember Harold Harper, I remember hearing that Harold Harper was in a home one day, and the lady was getting the meal out in the kitchen, and the daughter was sitting in the living room with Harold.

And Harold said, what do you see in your future? And he said, well, I'd like to be a nurse. And he said, well, I hope you'll keep in mind the mission field, because there's such wonderful opportunities for nurses on the mission field. And a voice came booming from the kitchen that said, don't talk like that to my daughter.

That's not what I have planned for her. Pride, loss of status, you know, lost status. We need our dignity to just commit ourselves to the Lord and let him choose the way for us.

It's all right for others, but it's not for me. We really covet a name for ourselves in the world. You know, anybody that has this fatuous attitude should consider the possibility of climbing the ladder of success and finding at the end that the ladder was propped against the wrong wall, of bartering God's death for his second, third, fourth, fifth death, of spending our lives, as Brother Ault said, on things of no eternal significance.

My dear young friends tonight, don't spend your life studying the sediments of Chesapeake Bay, or the mating habits of Wyoming antelopes, or the sleeping habits of Puerto Rican lizards. Is that all there is to life? There's a lot more than that. Souls are dying, and people need to be reached for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not very long ago, two young fellows sat at my table. Coincidentally, I do my best count at the breakfast table, and one of those fellows had just received his Ph.D. in some kind of mathematics from the University of California, Berkeley. And my other friend that was there said, Paul, what did you write your thesis on? So, dear friends, I couldn't tell you.

I mean, the words, I never even heard those words, and they just went on and on like that. And then, in my usual undiplomatic way, I said to him, what difference does it make? He's a guy that has just received his Ph.D. in, you know, oil sports. I said to him, I said to him, what difference does it make? You know what he said? It was a long pause.

And he said, it's my inability to answer that question that's taking me out of that field. I said, come on. He had worked hard, years, money, to get that degree, and in the end he realized it didn't make any difference.

It didn't really count for eternity, and now he has set his sights on higher dividends. I wish I could recite the title to you. It wouldn't mean a thing to you.

It doesn't mean a thing to me, the name of this thesis. We may end up with a saved soul, and a lost life. And, Paul, isn't that true? In fact, I think when the Lord Jesus said that, what shall a prophet, a man, if shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? We use that in the gospel, and it's a legitimate use in the gospel.

But, I think he was speaking to believers when he said that. I think he was looking into the eyes of those young Jewish fishermen, for instance, and as they thought of the Sea of Galilee, and the fish that were in the Sea of Galilee, and they thought of the marvelous chemistry that could take those fish and convert them into silver money. He said to them, in effect, suppose you could fish up all the fish in the Sea of Galilee.

And convert it into money. What would it profit you to lock your own life in the pot? We may go to heaven and see the end of it. This is the awful possibility of choosing the wrong way in life.

There are certain things that each of us should remember as we go through life. It's possible to trust the Lord Jesus for salvation. Yet not to render ourselves to him for service.

We can trust him. This is marvelous. We can trust him for our soul's eternal salvation, and yet we can't trust him to manage our lives down here.

Isn't that a kick? We can't. We can trust him, and we do. Yet, in a sense, we're betting our whole eternity on him, on the word of God, in a sense.

And yet, we can't trust him to control our lives down here. We gladly acknowledge him as the Savior of our souls, but we hold back from crowning him King of our lives. So, we want to face some inescapable facts and consider their logic.

Did you know that every indicative in the word of God carries with it an imperative? Every statement of fact carries with it a command? Decisions inevitably lead to destiny. We've got to respond to things that decisions you could make here at this conference could affect your whole future. Decisions lead inevitably to duty, and we have to face the daggering facts of Calvary and then make our decisions on the basis of that.

What is the rationale of full surrender? Well, the first of all is what I started with earlier in the day, and I hope that we don't go away with anything else from what I've said at the conference. We'll go away with this. The one who dies for you at the cross of Calvary is God incarnate.

To me, that's absolutely overwhelming, absolutely overwhelming. Not the man of Galilee, not the carpenter of Nazareth, although he was all that is. The creator and upholder of the universe.

The word by him are all things made without him, but not anything made that was made. The word became flesh and dwelt among us, beheld his glory as the only begotten of the father, full of grace, and

whose peace among you went to Calvary. I tell you, that just fills my heart with amazement when I think of that.

It was the creator dying for his creatures. It was the judge dying for the guilty. It was the holy one dying for the unholy.

The sinless one dying for sinners. When God's son died, the lover died for the unlovely one, for his enemy. The guiltless for the guilty, the rich for the poor.

Once we really come to grips with this, we can never be the same again. We'll be utterly overwhelmed. And anything short of full surrender to the Lord Jesus is a denial of the meaning of Calvary.

It really is a denial of the enormous meaning of Calvary. Let it burn into our souls tonight that someone died for us. That someone was God in a body of flesh.

The one who designed the universe and who upholds it right now and holds the stars in their courses. He's the one who died for us. And then let us say again from our hearts, Thus might I hide my flushing face while his dear cross appears.

Dissolve my heart in thankfulness and melt my eyes to tears. The drops of grief can e'er repay the debt of love I owe. Dear Lord, I do not want to wait.

This is all that I can do. Then the second consideration is the mercies of God require it. The mercies of God require hope.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God. And you know, Paul has just spent 11 chapters. Before he said that, he spent 11 chapters describing the mercy of God.

Way back to Fornone in the beginning. And he left it in Paul and all the things that have flowed from it. Salvation, hope, and free our position in Christ and eventual glory.

At the end of the journey, Paul said, I just need you by these mercies to present your body, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. Not only that, but gratitude demands it. Imagining ingratitude of coming to the cross and seeing what happened there, and then not being thankful for it.

Thankfulness is appropriate if somebody should save you from drowning. For continued life on this earth, it's not so how much more appropriate it is for gratitude and thanksgiving to the one who saves us for eternity. And as I said before, it's the most reasonable, rational, sane thing we can do is to let him, who has infinite wisdom, infinite love, infinite power, to render our lives to him.

Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all. And then another great consideration we should set, we should remember we're not our own. We remember, we should remember that we were bought with a price at the cross of Calvary.

What is Christ? Brother Aldous is speaking about a precious blood of Christ. And it really seems that I was bought with the blood of Christ at Calvary's cross. Yes, it can be.

That's the fact. An enormous price. And dear friends, if we've been bought by him, we belong to him.

We don't belong to ourselves anymore. And if we take our lives and do with them what he, what we want to do with them, we're a thief. A thief.

C.T. Studd said it well, and this really had an influence in my life. I had known about Jesus dying for me, but I had never understood that if he died for me, then I didn't belong to myself. Redemption means buying back, so that if I belonged to him, either I had to be a thief and keep what wasn't mine, or else I had to give up everything to God.

When I came to see that Jesus died for me, it didn't seem hard to give up all for him. He bought me there at the cross. Oswald Sanders tells the story of a church organist in a little village in Sherman.

And this church organist, he had one of these great type organs, you know, and he was very, very careful with his organs. And one Saturday he was practicing there, and he had a piece, he had a piece by Mendelssohn, and he was really having quite a bit of difficulty with it, you know. And it wasn't getting better every time he played it either.

He didn't notice, but somebody came in at the back door there, at the door, and just slipped into the shadows there by the rear pew. And pretty soon the organist was gathering up his papers together, his music together, and he was getting ready to leave. As this gentleman walked down the island, he asked if he could play the organ.

And as I say, this organist was very possessive of this organ, and he didn't want anybody else playing with it. He didn't know what might happen if they played with it. But they talked for a while, and then again the visitor asked if he could play.

He said, I'd really much like to try your organ. And he answered the second time, no. But the third time, finally the organist capitulated and allowed him to play.

And he started, and that church building was filled with heavenly music. When he finished, the organist said to him, who are you anyway? He said, my name is Felix Mendelssohn. He said, what? He said, and I refuse you permission to play on my organ.

Dear friends, where goes God's word? We belong to him. Are we going to refuse him permission to play on his organ? I tell you, it speaks very loudly to me. Then we mentioned this afternoon another reason why we should present ourselves to him, Jesus is Lord.

That he's Lord, he has a right to all. I gave you some wrong statistics this afternoon. The word Savior is found 24 times in the New Testament.

The word Lord is found over 650 times. You know, we call Jesus Lord all the time. The name is common in our vocabulary.

You know what the Lord is saying? Either do what I say, or stop calling me Lord. Why call you me Lord, and do not the things that I say? Stop calling me Lord, or do what I tell you to do. I don't know whether Brother Hall would get this far in the book of Joshua, but I love that story of Joshua preparing for the assault on Jericho, and a man comes by, like that man that came into the church that day.

A man comes along, and Joshua doesn't know who it is, and he looks at him and he said, are you for us or against us? The man said, I didn't come to be for you or against you, I came to be commander in chief.

Now that's a paraphrase, but that's what it was. That's a paraphrase.

And that's what the Lord Jesus is saying to us tonight. I didn't come to be for you or against you. I came to be your Lord.

I came to be your captain. I came to be captain of the host of the Lord. I came to be commander in chief.

Another reason I should give my life to him without reservation, unconditionally, he knows better than I know. He knows what's best for me. We act as if we knew what was best.

We don't. We choose our occupation, we set our goals, and we proceed with our own ambitions, and we overlook the fact that God has something infinitely better for us if we let him choose it. He only wants the best.

God has a blueprint for every life, you know. I really believe that. God has a blueprint for every life.

He's going to compare it with the life, the way we've lived it. I want to tell you, there's nothing better. I can't think of anything better than to have the nail guard hand of Jesus placed on your shoulder, and hear him say, well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord, giving that success in life.

That happened, you know, when the Brooklyn Bridge was being, was built, and the architect had an accident. So all the time it was being built, he would lay the sides, you know. But by the time it was finished, and to be dedicated, he was able to come, and they were able to put him on a stretcher, a gurney or something, take him by the side of the river there, and he saw the bridge.

You know what he said? It's just exactly according to plan. It would be wonderful if the Lord can say that. It's just exactly according to plan.

He knows better. I think this is brought out nicely in a little poem, because I counted dollars while God counted crosses. I counted gains while he counted losses.

I counted my worth by the things gained in store. He sized me up by the scars that I wore. I counted honors and sought for degrees.

He wept as he counted the hours on my knees. I never knew till one day by the grave how vain are the things he spent life to save. R.A. Laidlaw said it was a great contradiction to be able to trust the Lord for your eternal salvation, lack of sincerity, and committing your soul to God for salvation, and refusing him the moral, the mortal life.

We dare to trust him to save us from hell, to take us to heaven, but we hesitate to let him control our lives here and now. And Lady Powersquirt said, you know, she said, it seems an insult to that love which gave all for us to say we love, and yet stop to calculate about giving our all to him. She said our all is but two mice.

His all is heaven, earth, eternity. It's better not to love at all. It's better to be cold than lukewarm.

You know, to refuse, and I'm going to close with this, to refuse Christ's throne right in my life is blasphemous. You know what it is? It's like standing before the cross of Calvary, and looking up into his face and saying, you haven't done anything for me that merits my giving my life to you. Your redemption is not of such consequences that I should make a full commitment to you.

But I want to tell you, friends, that blasphemy, and that's what it means to refuse him full throne right. Permit me to close just with a quote from a Keswick speaker. In addressing young people, he said, people will call you nutty if you're fully committed to Christ.

I say, be as nutty as you can be for Jesus Christ. I'll tell you who the nutty ones are. There are those who stand in the shadow of Calvary, who look into the face of the dying Redeemer as he purchases them with his blood, and then they go out to do the things they want to do, to live the way they want to do.

Those are the nutty ones. This, then, is the logic of full surrender. What shall I give thee, Master? Thou who has died for me, shall I give less than all I possess, or shall I give all to thee? Jesus, my Lord and Savior, thou hast given all for me.

Not just a part or half of my heart, I will give all to thee. May the Lord give everyone in this room tonight the grace to do exactly that, to give all to him. I like the story of that girl, and to indicate her full surrender to the Lord, she took a blank piece of paper, and she just signed her name at the bottom, and let the Lord fill in the details.

You know, at the end of a meeting, somebody came to me recently, and they said, I signed the blank piece of paper. That's good, isn't it? Maybe somebody tonight will sign that blank piece of paper. Lord, bless this word to our hearts.

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