

# The Logic of Calvary

by William MacDonald

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting God and following his will, even when we don't know what's ahead, and overcoming our fears and doubts to surrender completely to him.*

**Duration:** 42:15

**Scripture:** Romans 12:1

**Topics:** "Calvary"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of surrendering control of our lives to God. He encourages believers to trust in God's guidance and to present themselves as living sacrifices to Him. The preacher highlights the need to resist conforming to the ways of the world and instead be transformed by renewing our minds through God's Word. He concludes by sharing the example of Francis Ridley Havergel, who made a commitment to give everything to God, and encourages listeners to make a similar commitment. The sermon is based on Romans 12:1-2.

---

## Transcript

This being my last meeting at this conference, I'd like to express my joy at being here with Alan and Carol and their family, their loved ones. It's always a joy to share the platform with Alan. Also to express my thanks to all the staff members of CMML.

I really enjoy working with CMML. They service a lot more than foreign missionaries. They service home missionaries as well.

And I certainly have been the beneficiary of a lot of their help. And I'm just grateful to them. And I certainly want to thank the staff of Greenwood Hills, especially the morale department with Donna in the kitchen and the dining room.

Very important, isn't it? It's just been a joy to be here. Oh, and my long-suffering audience, too. Thank you very much.

Shall we turn to Romans chapter 12 this morning? And most of you could recite these first two verses by heart. Romans chapter 12. But I think it's a good way to bring our thoughts to a conclusion this morning.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. Do not be conformed to this world, but be

transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. We begin our thoughts this morning with a mystery.

I know you like mysteries. The mystery is this. How is it that we Christians can commit our souls to the Lord for eternal salvation, and yet we can't trust Him to manage our lives down here on earth? That's a mystery, isn't it? We can really trust Him to take us home to heaven at the end of the journey.

We believe that. We believe it with all our hearts. And yet to turn over the reins of our lives to Him is another story down here.

Let me go back to the logic of Calvary this morning. It's inescapable. Think again of what God incarnate did for us on the cross of Calvary.

He died as a substitute for you and for me. That's overwhelming to me. The incarnate God died as a substitute for you and for me.

He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. In some way, probably, we don't fully understand. And God took our sins and placed them upon His divine Son, and He paid the penalty.

He shed His blood to buy us back from the slave market of sin. And it's impossible to overemphasize the fact of who it was who hung on that cross. The creator and sustainer of the universe.

And He did it so that we might spend eternity with Him in heaven. The death of our creator is unique. Nothing like it ever happened before in the history of the universe.

And nothing like it will ever happen again. That He would be willing to die for sinful creatures. And I mean sinful creatures.

It just strains the imagination. It's too daring for any human beings to invent. Nobody would have the audacity to suggest such a thing.

And it's really too awesome for the human mind fully to take in. It was love beyond measure. Grace beyond degree.

Sacrifice without limit. It's interesting to me that inanimate creation responded to the awesomeness of what took place at Calvary. The earth shook.

Rocks split. Graves were opened. And there was a pall of darkness over the world for three hours.

And it almost seems that there was only one man in the crowd that had a faint appreciation of what happened. That was the Roman soldier. He said, truly, this was the Son of God.

Compared to Calvary, all other events pale into insignificance. All other deaths were trivial compared to that death. And all other hours in the history of the world were irrelevant.

And it was all for you and me. And God calls on us to make a response to what happened there at Calvary. And really there's only one proper response.

That is to say, O Jesus, Lord and Master, I give myself to thee. For thou and thine atonement hast given thyself for me. I own no other master.

My heart shall be thy throne. Myself, my heart, my life I give. Henceforth to live, O Christ, for thee alone.

So the question is, why doesn't every Christian make a complete consecration of himself or herself to the Lord Jesus Christ? Well, to put it bluntly, it's because we don't think straight. We're really not following the logic of Calvary to its conclusion. Our minds are skewed by fears and falsehoods.

And I'd just like this morning to expose some of those to you. Nothing like picking up the rocks and seeing the beetles flee away. Why don't we do it? First of all, it's the fear of God's will.

We're afraid of the will of God. We fear what he may ask of us. A surprising number of Christians assume that if they say to the Lord, take my life, God will automatically respond, go to the mission field.

To them, the will of God is synonymous with overseas missionary work. They think it's the only calling that God has for those who are dedicated to him. And in their mind, they conjure up visions of snakes and scorpions and spiders and swamps and suffocating humidity.

It's the most formidable life imaginable. And of course, such fear betrays a shallow and dishonoring view of the resourcefulness of our God. It means that he's limited to one option and one option alone.

The truth of the matter is that the Lord has an infinite variety of wonderful things, including the mission field, for yielded people. He is a God of limitless creativity. As someone has said, he has wondrous imagination.

I love that. My God has wondrous imagination. He delights us with his incredible variety.

Alan told the story of John Welch, how the way was blocked for him to go to the mission field, but how God used him in a wonderful way in the years that followed. And I think this fear overlooks the fact that God isn't dragging reluctant people into his service. His soldiers are volunteers.

Paul reminds us in Philippians 2, verse 13, that he works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. And that means that, first of all, God puts in my heart the will to do something, and then he gives me the ability to do it. And by that time, it's the thing I most want to do.

I think that's wonderful. God shapes our minds and our thinking processes so that when we're walking in his will, it's the thing we most want to do. And for a person like that, it's the fulfillment of a dream.

We're afraid of the will of God. We're afraid of what God will take from us. That's number two.

We're afraid of what God will take. Some people think that God comes into our lives at a time like this to rob us of something we treasure. When will we ever come to realize that it's the thief who comes to steal and kill and destroy? But our Lord comes to give us life and to give it more abundantly.

He doesn't withhold any good thing from those who walk upright. I talked to a woman the other day. She's 94 or 96.

I said, what's your favorite verse? She said, no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. That's wonderful, isn't it? Have that on your lips. The Lord Jesus takes away from us only those things that would be detrimental to our temporal and eternal welfare.

For instance, he frees us from the guilt and penalty of sin and the power of sin. He delivers us from this present evil world and from the wrath to come. And for these blessed subtractions, we should be eternally grateful.

It doesn't make sense to be afraid of the will of God. As we read in Romans chapter 12, his will is good and acceptable and perfect. To be afraid of the will of God is to be afraid of a blessing.

I'll never forget years ago at Emmaus, George Verwell was visiting us. He was staying in a room up in the men's dorm. He went up there one day and there was a door cracked open.

There were two fellows inside and they were on their knees. And one of the fellows was crying out to God, Lord, I can't do it. You know I can't do it.

And he was moaning and groaning like that to the Lord. And just then George passed by and George opened the door and stuck his head in and said, what's the matter? Are you afraid of a blessing? I guess the fellow thought it was a voice from heaven speaking to him. But maybe it was.

Maybe it was. Afraid of a blessing. Third, we're afraid of God's denials.

We're afraid if we yield our lives to him, there's something we want that he will deny to us. Something good. And for many young people, marriage tops the list.

They say they want the will of God, but there's something they want first. And that's to be married. There's a string attached.

They want to have a mate. First the marriage altar, then the altar of sacrifice. But the minute we put those strings and attach those strings, that isn't total commitment to the Lord, is it? It means that God's will must be subject to my will.

There's something that must come first. The living sacrifice is incomplete. You know it's interesting because marriage is God's will for the human race.

God's will is that most people should be married. I think this is clear from the fact that most of us come from a long line of married people. Isn't it true? But to make marriage a condition of full commitment to the Lord is wrong.

Bargaining with the Lord shows that a person's will is not subject to him. We must not bargain with the Lord. And it's playing with dynamite.

The obsession for a wife or a husband can become so strong, for instance, that a young woman will plunge into a marriage that could deter her or keep her from ever being on the front line for the Lord. The Lord might grant her desire but send leanness to her soul. This is true of young men also who look for outward beauty rather than for spiritual character in a potential wife.

God should call a person to a life of singleness. Singleness, he'll give grace for it. That's the exception.

That's definitely the exception. And this enables, of course, Christians to give themselves without distraction in a special way to the service of Christ. It grants mobility that they might not otherwise have.

It frees them from the many cares in this life. Singleness is better than marital misery. For most people, singleness will not be God's choice.

Why worry about it? But the final decision should be left to him. His will is what is paramount. Why stubbornly choose a spouse according to his own will, outside God's will, when he probably would have given you a better one in his own time? Somebody said those who want to get married in the worst possible way usually do just that.

Next, there's a fear of the loss of independence. This is why we don't want to turn our lives over to the Lord. A fear of loss of independence.

It's, for instance, a fear that God's will might conflict with my ideas of what my career should be. A home in suburbia. Hot and cold folding doors.

A car too loaded with the latest gimmicks. All of those things. Too often what we really want is to give the best years of our life to the world and give the end of it to the Lord.

Frankly, he doesn't want it. Use God's best chance with the soul. That's when the metal is molten.

That's when he can work it out. He doesn't want the burned out end of a wasted life. Can you blame him? You can't blame him.

Then there's the fear of the unknown. This is very, very real. Some persons suffer from this, from the fear of the unknown.

They don't have the faith of Abraham. When he was called, he went out not knowing where he was going. He said, in effect, I'd rather walk in the dark with God than walk alone in the light.

That's the kind of faith that the Lord wants. That confidence in him. That he knows what he's doing.

That his choice is the very best for my life. That he will give the very best to those who leave the choice with him. Then there's the fear of the loss of security.

Some of these are really rather ridiculous if you stop to think of them. People think that if they just follow the Lord, they might suffer a loss of financial security. I might not have a visible means of support.

I might have to depend on the gifts of others. I might have to go on welfare. When will we ever learn that we only have one security in life, and that's the Lord? All the security that man can offer can be wiped out in a moment of time.

But it's wonderful just to be dependent upon the Lord. Just by way of personal testimony, 50 years ago, I stepped out in faith with no visible means of support. All I was sure of was that God was calling me.

For 50 years, I have never made a need known. For 50 years, I have never suffered in the life of faith. God has always provided.

He provided liberally. My problem has been not where my food was going to come from. My problem has been how to be a faithful steward of what God sent to me.

I worked as an investment banker before I came into the work of the Lord. I've had more opportunities to invest than I did when I was working in the bank for eternity. Then there's the fear of hardships.

This is a very great fear in some people's minds. The fear of loss of comfort. And we don't realize how real that is in many of our lives.

Our vivid imaginations race with pictures of outdoor toilets and only occasional showers. Isn't it so? To say nothing of hand-me-down clothing, early Salvation Army furniture, and second-hand everything else. What a picture, huh? While our friends are living high off the hog, enjoying what actually turns out to be those soft effeminate luxuries that kill the soul.

Then there's the fear of inadequacy. Isn't it wonderful the fears that can arise when God calls? The fear of inadequacy. Some may sincerely and humbly feel that they're nothing.

They have no particular talent. They have no particular gift to give to the Lord. They consider themselves inferior, even worthless.

I don't think the Lord appreciates that. I really don't think the Lord appreciates that. It says in effect that he's made a mistake in making you the way you are.

That's not good. God knew what he was doing. He hadn't made his first mistake yet.

The saintly F.B. Myers said, I am only an ordinary man. I have no special gifts. I am no orator, no scholar, no profound thinker.

If I've done anything for Christ in my generation, it's because I have given myself entirely to Christ, and then tried to do whatever he wanted me to do. Isn't that good? I like that. Our part is to give ourselves entirely to Christ, whoever you are, whatever you are, and his part is to use us for his glory.

If we can only qualify as weak, base, despised nobody, foolish, that's the kind of people God uses, instead of those who aren't somebody. And then another fear is the fear of loss of status. The fear of loss of status.

Sometimes I think that the biggest hindrance to full consecration to the Lord is pride. What Jim Elliott called, rotten, stinking pride. As only he could.

If we are going to be honest with ourselves, we have to confess that we think ourselves too big for that kind of a life. Too important for the kind of life that we equate with Christian service. And we think that for our children too.

It's alright for others and for other people's children, but it's below our dignity. We covet a name for ourselves in the world. And I tell you, anyone who holds that fatuous attitude should consider the following.

We may climb the ladder of success. And when we reach the top, we may find that the ladder was propped against the wrong wall. We may barter God's best for his first, second, third, fourth, fifth best.

We may spend our lives on things of no eternal consequence. What an awful thing to do. Saved by the grace of God.

Made fit for heaven through the work of Christ. And wasting our lives down here. We may end up with a saved soul.

And a lost life. And I think that's what the Lord Jesus was saying to the disciples when he said, What shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul? His own life, really. And he looked into the eyes of these young Jews, fishermen many of them, and they had found that wonderful alchemy where they could take fish out of the Sea of Galilee and convert them into cash.

And I think the Lord is saying to them there, Supposing you could take all the fish in the Sea of Galilee and convert them into cash and in the process lose your life, what good would it be? What good would it be? We may go to heaven empty-handed or all of the above. These are some of the fears that we cherish when the Lord would seek to have us turn completely our lives over to him. And then there's what we might call faulty surrender.

Faulty surrender. And everybody, I think, probably knows something about that. And when we point the finger at biblical characters who were deficient in this regard, three fingers are pointing back at us as well.

Peter is known for his three refusals. He used the word Lord lightly. He wasn't thinking what he was saying.

Despite his love and zeal for the Lord Jesus, Peter is somehow remembered for his three refusals. When the Lord Jesus predicted his death, burial, and resurrection, especially his death, Peter said, Be it far from you, Lord. Listen, when you use that word, Lord, you don't rebuke him, do you? Be it far from you, Lord.

You don't call him Lord and then contradict him. Another time when the Lord Jesus kneeled down to wash the disciples' feet, Peter said, You will never wash my feet. Never.

He said, Lord. Listen, those two words don't fit good on the same line. Lord and never.

Only God can say never. Isn't that true? And then when Peter saw that vision of the great sheet let down from heaven with all manner of creeping things, four-footed beasts and all, and the Lord said to him, Rise, Peter, kill and eat. The apostle said, Not so, Lord.

Not so, Lord. I've never eaten anything common or unclean. Those words don't fit together.

Not so and Lord. Anyone who talks like that has to make a choice. It has to be not so or it has to be Lord.

It can't be both. Jesus said, Why do you call me Lord and do not the things that I say? And what he was saying, in effect, is either stop calling me Lord or do what I tell you to do. That's what he was saying.

It makes me think of Graham Scroggins one time at the end of a meeting. He was talking to a young lady and counseling her. She was in great soul trouble over the matter of lordship.

And he told her the story of Peter at Joppa, how the Lord told her to rise and eat. And three times Peter said, Not so, Lord. And Scroggins said, I want you to take the Bible and go into the next room and I want you to cross out not so or Lord.

And she went a little while later. She came back and she was sobbing quietly. And she had crossed out the word.

Not so. I've left the word Lord there. And Scroggins said, Such is the stuff of holy obedience.

And so it is. Then, of course, is what we might call hypocritical surrender. Ananias and Sapphira.

They were caught up in a great moving of the Holy Spirit of God. No question about it. In the early days of the church, we would call it revival today.

And how I pray for revival in the church. They pretended to give everything to the Lord, but they kept part of it back for themselves. They weren't the last ones to commit this sin.

How often we sing all to Jesus, I surrender. I wonder how often we get a lump in our throat when we sing it. Our surrender is incomplete.

If God struck dead all of those who sing that song and failed to do it, the church would be decimated. And then, of course, in Luke chapter nine, you have those three men that met the Lord Jesus. And the first man, he was enthusiastic.

And he said, Lord, I'm going to follow you wherever you go. And the Lord Jesus said, Now, think carefully before you say that. Foxes of holes and birds of the air have nested.

But the Son of Man has not where to lay his head. Commitment to Christ does have costs attached. The second man heard the call of Christ saying, Follow me.

He said, Lord, let me first go and bury my father, which is at home. Well, frankly, I don't think the father was sick. I don't think he was running a temperature, even.

I think he was saying, Let me go home and wait till my father dies. And then I'll follow you. You see, he was putting something before the will of God.

He was saying not now, but later. What kind of surrender is that? And the third man came and he also professed full dedication to the Lord. He said, Lord, I will follow you.

But first, but first, let me first go and bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. Now, you know, I'm sure if he had just gone and said, Goodbye, folks, I'm going to follow Jesus, that would have been all right. But, you know, farewells in those days, they were they were they could extend over several days.

You know, it would be a time of real feasting and fellowship. And he put that ahead of following the Christ. He gave social conventions a higher priority than the will of God, than Lordship.

Years ago, this prayer appeared in the daily notes of the Scripture Union. They impressed me. And the prayer is still apropos.

Forgive us, O Lord, for so often finding ways of avoiding the pain and sacrifice of discipleship. Strengthen us this day to walk with thee no matter what the cost may be in thy name. Amen.

So what does it come down to? It comes down to making a commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ, not only coming to him for salvation, trusting him as the savior of our souls, but turning our lives over to him for whatever he might have for us. I'd like to give you the example of how some people have done this. And maybe you'd like to make these words your own today.

Francis Ridley Habergel said, O son of God, who lovest me, I will be thine alone. And all I have and am, Lord, shall henceforth be thine own. Spurgeon put it this way.

O great and unsearchable God who knows my heart and tries all my ways, with a humble dependence upon the support of thy Holy Spirit, I yield up myself to thee as thy own reasonable sacrifice. I return to thee thine own. I would be forever, unreservedly, perpetually thine.

While I am on earth, I would serve thee. May I enjoy thee and praise thee forever. Amen.

Hudson Taylor's commitment was somewhat similar. He said, Well, do I remember as I put myself, my friends, my all upon the altar, the deep solemnity that came over my soul with the assurance that my offering was accepted. The presence of God became unutterably real and blessed.

And I remember stretching myself on the ground and lying there before him with unspeakable awe and unspeakable joy. For what service I was accepted, I knew not. But a deep consciousness that I was not my own took possession of me, which has never since been effaced.

William Borden, I mentioned him last night, Borden of Yale. He said it this way, Lord Jesus, I take hands off as far as my life is concerned. I put thee on the throne in my heart.

Change, cleanse, use me as thou shalt choose. I take the full power of thy Holy Spirit. Amen.

You know, as you read the story of these men and women, it's a familiar refrain, isn't it? It's a familiar refrain. They all went through the same experience and they all made history for God. Jim Elliot said, Father, take my life, yes, my blood, if thou wilt, and consume it with thine enveloping fire.

I would not save it for it's not mine to save. Have it, Lord, have it all. Pour out my life as an oblation for the world.

Blood is only of value as it flows before thy throne. That's something, isn't it? Blood is only of value as it flows before thy throne. And God took him at his word, didn't he? And Jim Elliot went home to be with the Lord Jesus with colors full flying, didn't he? Better to do that than to come to the end of life and make shipwreck of it all.

A young woman in South Carolina was testifying as to how she had turned her life over to the Lord. She said, I just took a piece of blank paper and I signed my name at the bottom and I let the Lord fill in the details. That's good, isn't it? I just took a blank piece of paper, I signed my name at the bottom, and I let the Lord fill in the details.

What will happen when a person makes this great renunciation? Will the bells ring? Will the lights go on? Will they feel nervous shivers in their system? Not necessarily so. Some might have an emotional experience, but it doesn't necessarily follow. But there should be a tremendous sense of relief that a person has done what he or she knows should be done.

There should be the assurance that God has accepted the sacrifice. And beyond that, our feelings are not important. What really matters is that we know we have made a commitment.

I love my Master. I will not go out free. And you know, the interesting thing is that when you do that, it'll never occur to you that you've done something extraordinary.

That you're a great hero, that you've now reached the summit. In light of the cross, we've never made a notable sacrifice. We will be able to say, poor is my sacrifice whose eyes are lighted from above.

I offer what I cannot keep, what I have ceased to love. And I think that's true. When we offer our lives to the Lord, we offer what we have ceased to love.

And then we realize that anything short of that, anything short of full commitment to the Lord Jesus, is only polished sin. I like what Mrs. Trench wrote in that regard. She said, So break, whatever it may be, that holdeth back my heart from thee, who died my heart to win.

All other love, however dear, however old, or strong, or near, of which thou art not seen and sphere, is only polished sin. You know, there's a fable, and probably you've heard it, that a party was traveling through the countryside, and they came to a river. And a voice said to them, Stop, stop before you cross the river, and pick up stones from the river.

You're going to be glad, and you're going to be sorry. And they stopped, and some of them said, I've already got enough gear. You know, what do I need? A few more stones.

And some of them picked up a good amount of stones, and some of them picked up quite a bag of stones. And as they traveled along, the stones became emeralds. They were glad they had picked up some.

They were sorry they hadn't picked up more. Sorry they hadn't picked up. That's the way it is with commitment.

We'll be glad for the measure in which we committed our souls to the Lord, and sorry that we didn't give Him more. By and by, when I look on His face, beautiful face, thorn-shadowed face, By and by, when I look on His face, I'll wish I had given Him more, more, so much more, more of my life than I ever gave before. By and by, when I look on His face, I'll wish I had given Him.

I think I've told this year before, I'm not sure if some of you have heard it, I know, but during the war years in the Navy, a lot of our planes were lost, not in combat, but in operation. They would go up, for instance, to Alaska, and here a pilot takes off in his plane, and the fog swoops down and just covers the field, and there's no way he can land. And when the fog comes, it doesn't come for a few hours, it comes.

And some of those dear guys had to just fly away until their fuel was gone, and then radio in so long, and then crash. Couldn't land. And so the Navy was desperate about this, and they developed a ground control approach, where, for instance, with an aircraft carrier, they would tell the fellow to do a figure eight, let's say, and by radar and all, they would line him up with the flight deck of the carrier.

And the carrier would be, you know, in a wild sea, the carrier would be moving forward and backward and sideways. Never mind, the plane was synchronized, the movement of the plane was synchronized, so that whichever way the carrier was moving, the plane moved just that direction. And then they would tell the pilot the rate at which he would descend, and then the man in the tower would say, take your hands off the controls.

That's it. Take your hands off the controls, and they would bring the plane safely down on the deck. And you know, the Lord today is saying to us, those of us who've been bought by the precious blood of Jesus, take your hands off the controls.

I'll bring you in. I'll bring you in safely. I'll bring you in with a full cargo.

You'll never be sorry. But we're afraid to take our hands off the controls. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, or spiritual worship.

Be not conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will. Father, when we just stand here and talk about it, it seems so reasonable, and we wonder why we would ever have these terrible, torturing fears. We trust you for salvation, with every confidence of a home in heaven, and yet we can't trust you to run our lives here.

Today we hear you saying to us afresh, take your hands off the controls. I know what I'm doing. I haven't lost a case yet.

I want you to come home to heaven with your colors flying, and with a full cargo. Lord, speak to our hearts. We live in a desperate day.

A desperate day. You're looking for men and women who will go all out for you. We pray that we might be found among the number.

In Jesus' name, amen.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/7/SID7809.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/william-macdonald/the-logic-of-calvary/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**