

I SURRENDER ALL

INTRODUCTION

At this time of year we celebrate Jesus birth. It's a wonderful time of year where we eat lots, get presents and enjoy family time. If Jesus had not come, we would experience none of this.

We link the coming of our Saviour to hope, hope of forgiveness, hope of eternity with Him even though we don't deserve it. It's a time for great rejoicing. Isaiah 9 describes it this way:

Isaiah 9:2 (NKJV) The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined.

Isaiah 9:6 (NKJV) For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

It's seldom though that we think of it in these terms:

From the Elvis song, "If that isn't love":

*He left the splendor of heaven
Knowing His destiny
Was the lonely hill of Golgotha
There to lay down His life for me*

Or like this:

Philippians 2:5-8 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

When we look at the Christ Child being born, we seldom realize what it cost Jesus to leave heaven, and what He had to give up. This is not only a picture of love and humility, its also a picture of surrender. Jesus gave up everything, He surrendered the glory of heaven so that He could come to earth and reveal the Father's love for us as He hung on the cross, paying the price for our sins.

If Jesus were to be asked, how much are you willing to surrender to do the will of the Father, He would stretch out His arms from side to side and say, "this much". Jesus surrendered all! The question I want to address this morning is this: If Jesus surrendered all, how much am I willing to surrender?"

MESSAGE

We love to sing the song, "I surrender all" – it starts like this:

*All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live.*

*I surrender all,
I surrender all.
All to Thee, my blessed Saviour,
I surrender all.*

Do we really understand what we are singing, or are we just repeating nice words connected to a shallow understanding of surrender?

To surrender means to give up completely or agree to forgo something in favour of another. It means to submit, or to hand over control.

In a time of war. When an army surrenders, they give up all their weapons, their provisions and their rights and are at the mercy of those who have defeated them.

In a wrestling match, once your opponent pins your shoulders to the ground, you surrender, it means you stop trying to fight back.

Jacob wrestled with the Angel of the Lord and said, "I won't surrender until you bless me!".

One of the greatest examples of surrender in the Bible is found when Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane: **Luke 22:41-42** ... and He knelt down and prayed, 42 saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

That's absolute surrender, that's the example Jesus set. He left the splendour of heaven headed for dark Calvary. It was not easy, it was a huge sacrifice when He said, "I will do your will Father, not My own".

Do we realise that we are called to imitate Christ. John said, "He must increase and I must decrease. This speaks about continual surrender until we become like Jesus Christ.

Let's have a look at some Bible scenarios about surrender.

MOSES STRUGGLED WITH SURRENDER

Exodus 3:9-11 (NKJV) Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the

Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”
 11 But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

We know that Moses did lead God’s people out. He also had the most amazing relationship with God. The Bible tells us that The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, the way a person speaks to a friend, but when God called Moses at the burning bush, Moses had all the excuses in the world, “Who am I”, “They won’t listen”, “I am not eloquent, and finally he said, “please send someone else”. But God didn’t want anyone else, He wanted Moses.

The first way to check if our attitude toward the Lord is one of surrender, is to check our excuses!

- ***Are we making excuses when God leads us to do something for Him? “I’m too busy”, “let me just finish this first” etc.***
- ***Are we running away from the Lord?***

Today is the day to stop with the excuses of why we can’t serve the Lord and to ask the Holy Spirit to remind us of all the reasons we should serve Him. Let us surrender even our own excuses!

ELISHA KNEW HOW TO SURRENDER

Elisha took over the role of Prophet to Israel from Elijah. He was a powerful man of God who asked God for a double portion. God honoured him, and the number of Elisha’s miracles recorded in the bible are exactly double the number recorded for Elijah.

1 Kings 19:19-21 (NKJV) So he (Elijah) departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him. 20 And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, “Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.” And he said to him, “Go back again, for what have I done to you?” 21 So Elisha turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen’s equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant.

When Elijah threw his mantle on Elisha, Elisha knew exactly what to do... he surrendered ... he cut off all ties to his occupation as a farmer, destroyed the tools, using them for the fire on which he offered his oxen as a sacrifice.

This is total surrender, this is not holding back, or saying to the Lord, “Please wait lord, I’m still busy here”.

- ***How have we responded to the Lord's call?***
- ***Have we said, "wait Lord, I'm still busy here, I will come later".***
- ***Are we willing to say, "Lord, here I am, I surrender all?"***

UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER

Mark 9:35 (NKJV) And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."

The disciples had been arguing about who was the greatest. Jesus made it clear that greatness was not about position but about attitude of heart. He then gave examples of simple things that people could do which God would acknowledge:

- **Mark 9:37** (NKJV) "Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me."
- **Mark 9:41** (NKJV) For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

Simple things like acknowledging a child, (and children were not seen in high regard in those days) who or giving a Christian a glass of water are examples of being a servant of all. This kind of heart attitude God can bless.

- ***Is there an "if" linked to our surrender? Are we only willing to surrender to the Lord on condition that...?***
- ***Is our personal will and preference linked to our willingness or availability to be used by the Lord?***

Let our prayer be this, "Lord, help me to walk in unconditional surrender?"

COMPLETE SURRENDER HOLDS NOTHING BACK

Mark 12:41-44 (NKJV) Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. 42 Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. 43 So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; 44 for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood."

When it comes to surrendering to the Lord, our finances are a good indicator of our attitude of heart. When the rich give much, they can afford it, so it's not too difficult, but when the poor give the little they have it's an act of sacrifice and complete surrender.

Surrender is not just about money, it's about what we are willing to let go of for the sake of knowing the Lord.

- ***Are we walking in complete surrender or are we still holding on to some things that are too precious to let go?***
- ***The rich young ruler could not give up all his riches, instead he walked away sad.***
- ***Do we say we are surrendered but we are holding on to some unforgiveness, some kind of sinful habit, or some kind of prideful expectation?***
- ***Like the widow who gave all she had, Jesus also gave everything for us, let us ask the Holy Spirit to help us walk in complete surrender.***

SURRENDER IS NOT ABOUT US!

We attended a nursery school concert this week. They put up some of the children's favourite things to say. The shocking part was that for the 1-2 year olds who are still learning to speak a number of their most used words are: "Mine", "myne", "my turn"... Even at that baby age it's all about "ME".

Mark 10:45 (NKJV) "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

As we celebrate Christ's birth, we must remember that He was fully God and He came in a lowly manger. His purpose for coming was not to gain fame and fortune, but to humbly serve and give His life for us.

Mark 10:43-44 (NKJV) Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. 44 And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all.

As Jesus came to serve, let us choose to serve. He made no demands, it was never about Him, but rather His Father's will and His love for us. Let us pray for grace to get over "I", "me" and "my", so that we can humbly serve "all" as we imitate Christ.

Are we willing to give up the "I", "me" and "my" in our life and surrender completely to Jesus? Are we willing to say today, Lord, not my will be done, but yours".

Then we are in a place of true surrender. .

CONCLUSION

What do we need to surrender today. Is it a prideful attitude? Is it our sense of offense that has kept us from being able to forgive? Is it the things that we

have placed higher than God's call upon our lives? Is it indulgent sinful pleasure.

What I know is this. Jesus wants more of us. Let us begin to follow James instructions and draw near to the Lord once again in an act of surrender and He will draw near to us.