

I Surrender All

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[0 : 00] All right, y'all, we just sang, you are the same God. And there's no truer words than God is the same God now that he's ever been.

God is capable of all of it. I think the only difference is how much you and I get in his way. So that's what we're going to talk about this Sunday as we conclude our series on new life, a fresh beginning with Jesus.

I'm going to run back through the previous weeks in case you're a guest with us this morning, and you can get a very small summary of what we've covered in this week, beginning with the verse you just saw in the video a moment ago, 2 Corinthians 5, 17, If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away, and see, the new has come. We began our series talking about how God is clearly doing a new thing in our church as we see the evidences of that all around us.

And then we moved on to say we, you and I, have to have a change of mind in that we stop trying and start training and understanding that God is training us to be who he wants us to be.

[1 : 18] When we fail, it's part of the training, not us continually trying on our own strength. Then thirdly, we covered that we do what we do because of what we think of who we are.

Our identity comes from who we think of ourselves, and our identity breeds our behavior. So we do what we do because of what we think of us.

Then we jumped into Hebrews chapter 12 and Philippians chapter 3, and we had a three-part series that said, first of all, lay aside the weights, and the weights can slow us down. We had a very visual foot race that showed just how much the weights can slow us down.

And we said, what are we holding on to? Is there something in our life that is slowing us down that we need to lay down, lay aside? Or is there something or someone that is holding on to us, and we need to forget what lies behind and reach forward to what lies ahead, which brought us into the next portion of that sub-series, which was let us run.

First, lay aside the weights, and then let us run. We had these two statements. First, start moving. Reach forward to what lies ahead, to what God has for you.

[2 : 35] Reach forward to that. Sometimes we just have to start moving, and then secondly, run with endurance, so we have to keep going. Keep going. Don't quit.

The only difference between a white belt in karate and a black belt in karate is the white belt never stopped training until he became a black belt. So we must keep going and run with endurance to see the fulfillment of who God is training us to be.

Then, we got into the third part. Lay aside the weight. Let us run. And finally, look at Jesus. Look at Jesus. We simply have to put our eyes up.

Eyes up. When we look all around us, we get distressed. But when we look at Christ, we are at rest. And then secondly, we press toward the prize.

What is the prize? It is the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Jesus is ever calling us upward. Someday, we'll all go home upward to be with him in heaven forever.

[3 : 37] But until that day, he's drawing us ever upward, closer to himself, more in the image of who he is. The world wants to drag you down. Jesus is calling you upward.

And so we press toward that prize. Then, last week, we said that God is a God of continual change. And he has called us, you and me, to be agents of change. He is changing us from the inside out. If you and I are in the same place with our walk with God as we were last year or six months ago or five years ago or ten years ago, we're not walking closely with Jesus because God wants to change us ever upward, ever more into his image.

So he's a God of continual change. And we must embrace the change that he brings to us, not push back against it, which brings us to where we are this morning.

Now, let me ask you this question. How many of y'all have ever met a celebrity? Would you raise your hand? Anybody ever met a celebrity? There's quite a few. Like a bona fide, been-on-TV celebrity, right?

[4 : 52] Not just that one time they interviewed you on a news station or something. I'm saying like a real celebrity, you know? They got a Wikipedia page and everything, okay?

I met a celebrity one time. There we go. That was downtown Nashville. Anybody have any idea who that is? Yeah. So, I mean, he's not like an A-list celebrity, all right?

But, hey, there was a time when he was on TV a lot. His name is Marcus Limonis. And he was a celebrity for me because I used to really enjoy his show.

So, here's a little thing about that. There's no way you're going to be able to read what those words are. But that's all right. It said, 40,000 businesses want him to come to their rescue.

So this guy was a famous businessman. In short, he started Camping World, which is the nation's largest RV retailer. And became a billionaire doing that. And he got his own show on CNBC about coming in and rescuing failing businesses.

[5 : 57] And he would come in. It was called The Profit. There's a little tagline, My Millions, My Rules. See, that was the thing. He would come in and put up a large amount of money by half of their business.

But he would say, I am 100% in charge. And for the first week, you have to do everything I say because there's a reason you're failing. It's all these bad business practices that you've had.

And so he would rescue business after business like this, except for some of the times, the owners just didn't want to give up control. And Marcus Limonis was non-negotiable about that.

He would say, I am 100% in charge. Since I've bought half your company, technically we're 50-50 partners. But for this first week, it's not going to look like that.

I'm going to be 100% in charge. That was the deal from the very beginning. But inevitably, there would be an occasional owner who would push back. And I literally watched an episode of this to get this back in my mind last night.

[6 : 58] And I literally heard this owner say, I don't care if he's a billionaire or not, doesn't mean he knows how to run a popcorn stand. I'm like, well, he might be able to wrap his head around that concept.

I don't know. And sure enough, that business ended up not doing well. But what I realized is, none of us like to give up control.

It's easy when you're watching that television show, and you know the background of the host, the star there, and you know what he's capable of and all that they're missing out on because you've seen how he's helped these other businesses.

You know all they're missing out on by not listening to his way. But it's really hard to put yourself in their shoes when they started that business from scrap, built it from the ground up, have thrown their lifeblood, their savings, their retirement, borrowed money from family sometimes.

They are completely all in to this business, and they're terrified that somebody else who is not as invested as they are, if it went under, it wouldn't hurt them at all.

[8 : 13] They're scared that that person is going to fail them. So they're scared to give up control. Right? When the money's on the table, and he says, I have to be 100% in charge, they might be willing to shake his hand and say, okay, we have a deal.

But when it comes to, you've got to change this, you've got to fire this person, you've got to stop doing it this way, all of a sudden, they don't want him to be 100% in charge anymore.

That's not the problem. The problem is, I just don't have enough resources. The problem's not with me. The problem's always with somebody else.

So we never want to give up 100% control. In this scenario, First Baptist Church, Henrietta, Texas, you and me are the business owners.

And I don't think God's ever been compared to Marcus Limonis, but in this scenario, God is the expert, the all-time expert, we'll never find anyone who knows more about what we ought to do than our Creator.

[9 : 31] And He's coming in saying, I have to be 100% in charge. Because if I'm not, I can't guarantee the success that I want for you so badly.

It's more than just earthly success. Number one, it's forgiveness of sins. It's an eternal destiny in heaven. And if you're not willing to give up 100% control of that to God, and if you're still holding on

to hope, saying, I think I can get there.

I think I'm good enough. Nobody's perfect, but I think I've lived a pretty good life, and I think I can get there by my own strength. You'll never get there.

You'll never win. You'll always end up falling short. Romans 3.23 reminds us. So, our topic for today is I surrender all.

The business owner I watched last night desperately needed to give up. She didn't need to walk away from the business, but she needed to hand over control.

[10:51] She needed to wave the white flag and stop fighting against the man who was trying to help with all of her business acumen, all of her experience, all of her resources, saying, I'm invested in this as well.

I've now invested a whole bunch of money into this. I want this to succeed, so I get a return on my investment, plus my TV show can look good. But she just wouldn't stop fighting.

You and I might need to surrender something today. Today is the day of surrender.

Throughout our history, surrender has never been looked at as a good thing. Surrender has always been failure. But oftentimes in life, especially the Christian life, surrender is not failure.

Surrender is victory. Surrender is wisdom. Surrender is giving up to someone greater than you who in his goodness, in his righteousness, in his justice, and his grace and mercy says, I want to help you win the victory that you can't win yourself, but you've got to stop fighting me.

[12:02] I surrender all. I read this quote, choosing joy involves spiritual surrender and sometimes we would rather hold on to the pain than surrender our own egos.

Isn't that true? We found ourselves there probably more times than we'd care to admit, but the truth is sometimes our ego just won't allow us to let go and let God.

Now let go and let God is not in the Bible, but the concept of giving up control to God is absolutely there. And sometimes we fight, fight, fight to do it our own way.

We'll justify it. We'll try to twist a verse of Scripture to fit what we want to do, but in reality, we know we're fighting against God Himself. And He says, just surrender.

Spiritually surrender to me. And then you'll find that joy. You'll find that release. You'll find that freedom. And ironically, you'll win the victory that God so badly wants for you.

[13:13] One of the great heroes of our Christian faith, founder of the Salvation Army, William Booth, said, the greatness of a man's power is the measure of his surrender.

Now if you went and polled the men of Clay County, I don't know how many times we would get that answer, right? What's the measure of a man's power? You'd find all sorts of answers, but probably not that one.

But I believe that is absolutely true. And it's biblical. How much you and I, especially talking to you men right now, how much we surrender and bow before God and humble ourselves and admit that we are not enough to our God, then He can make us enough.

Then He can remind us that He is enough. That His Spirit can lift us where we can't go. His Spirit can save a relationship that we can't seem to save.

His Spirit can help us be the parents, the fathers, the dads that we can't figure out how to be. So the greatness of a man's power is the measure of his surrender to God. Let's look at Romans 12, 1 and 2.

[14:25] We're ending our series kind of with the verse that we've been going back to time and time again throughout this. And it's our text for today. Romans 12, verses 1 and 2.

Would you join me in standing if you're able to? If you need to keep your seat, that's fine. But Romans 12, 1 and 2, if you're able, let's join together and read this. You follow along as I read.

I'm reading from the New Living Translation. And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. That's surrender right there, isn't it?

Because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice. Don't miss that word.

The kind he will find acceptable.

This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world. But let God transform you into a new person.

[15:25] Talked about that last week. By changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Let's pray together. God, I pray that you would show us how to surrender, how to sacrifice, what it means today and give men and women and children in this room the boldness to come forward and

lay something down in Jesus' name.

We'll give you the glory. And it's in your name we pray. Amen. You may be seated. Thank you for standing. A living sacrifice. In your bulletins, if you're filling in the blanks there, that is our first blank. A living sacrifice. This is what it comes down to for you and me. A long time ago, we're not going to spend a whole bunch of time on this, but God instituted animal sacrifices to cover the payment for the sin of his people many years ago.

Now that did not truly atone for their sin. That was simply looking forward to the one final atonement, which was the blood of his son, Jesus, the spotless lamb of God.

[16 : 38] So they would take a spotless lamb without blemish years ago and they would kill it to pay for the sin of all the people. The priest would do this. Well now, since Jesus died, no more sacrifices have to be made.

He was the one sacrifice for all those who came before, all who were alive then, and all of us who have come after. He is the atonement or the sacrifice, the substitutionary replacement covering for our sin.

So God is not asking for a dying sacrifice today. God is asking for a living sacrifice. Just like Jesus laid down his life unto death, God is simply asking you and me to lay down our lives as a sacrifice for him and say, God, my life is yours to control.

I give you my body and soul. Do what you want with my life. That is the secret to victory.

It is surrender through sacrifice. So, there are notes about this sacrifice right here in Romans 12.

[17 : 55] Give your bodies to God because of all he's done for you. Let him be a living and holy sacrifice, the kind that he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.

So, I want to draw these key words from that verse to your attention. Acceptable to God. See, back in Genesis 4, Cain made a sacrifice.

Y'all remember Adam and Eve and their sons, Cain and Abel, and Cain and Abel just couldn't get along, could they? Why was that? Because Cain wanted to do what God wanted his own way.

Abel decided to do what God wanted the way God wanted it done. And so, Abel brought a sacrifice to God of the animal, exactly what God had asked for.

Cain made up his own plan to sacrifice to God. Now, he certainly did. He didn't run away and say, forget God, I'm not going to sacrifice to him. No, he absolutely brought what appeared to be a sincere offering to God of his fruits and vegetables and all that he had labored and he brought it to God.

[19 : 11] But it wasn't acceptable to God because it wasn't what God had asked for. Church people, please listen to me. Church people, non-church people, whoever's in here right now, so many times we find ourselves doing things for God that God, got to be careful, doing things for God that God never wanted.

We try to please God our way. God is very, very plain on how to please him. He's very, very plain on what the church should be.

And often times, the church is not making the difference in the world, it's not being a light in the darkness because we're doing all the things that we think a church should do, not what the scripture tells us God wants the church to do.

And God founded the church to do. I thank God that we're seeing fruits of the labors of this church through parents raising their kids to love and follow Jesus.

Through children's workers, Sunday school class teachers, our children's minister, all throughout this church, people are working together to help instruct our younger generations of God's goodness, His salvation, His grace that's available for them.

[20 : 44] And as they come to this understanding, God opens their eyes, and we've been seeing them making the decision to follow Jesus for themselves, and then they come up here and they testify it through baptism.

That is what the church is called to do. The church is called to fulfill two commands. The great commission, which is go out everywhere and teach the gospel of Jesus to everyone who will listen, and then secondly, the great commandment, which is to love one another as God loved us.

Those are the missions for the church. Those are the two things that God wants us to do.

Sometimes, often, our church is no exception, those are the two things that churches find themselves doing the least.

We'll do all kinds of other things. We'll have all sorts of committees. I'm not bashing committees. They can be valuable. We'll have all sorts of structure. We'll have all sorts of pageants and decorations, and we'll do all the things that we equate with church.

In a reality, those things were always meant to enhance the mission, and not distract from it. So, is our sacrifice for God acceptable to Him?

[22 : 03] Or are we going to be like those who stand before God someday and say, God, I did all this in your name. I did all these things. Look at this. I kept a list. Look at all these things I did for you.

And heaven forbid, God look at us and say, I never knew you. Or at the very least, do you look at us and say, it's not what I told you to do. It's not what I gave you to complete.

That was never the task. The task was love your neighbor. The task was tell others about the only way of salvation. That is how we truly worship Him.

We can come and sing the songs. We can set our radios in our car to Christian radio. We can worship Him on the surface as much as we possibly can, as often as we possibly can.

However, John 4 will not go away. John 4 is still in the Bible and it says, true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

[23 : 12] The Father is looking for those who will worship Him that way. You know why He's looking? Because they're hard to find. True worshipers are hard to find. Y'all look around this church.

So many of us struggle with true worship. What is true worship? God is spirit. So those that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Spirit and in truth. What are we talking about when we say spirit and in truth? Worshiping God in spirit and in truth involves giving the heart over to God's spirit and then letting the light of His truth shine in the dark places of our life.

That is worshiping in spirit and in truth. Spirit deals with the heart. And then light deals with truth. The truth of God's word will expose what's wrong with us. What we're doing wrong. That might mean you need to quit going out and getting drunk.

[24 : 12] that might mean you need to quit running around on your wife. That might mean you need to get off social media. Or it might mean you need to stop being so grouchy.

It might mean you need to stop giving in to fear so much and rest in God's power and His goodness. Whatever it is, the light of God's truth will reveal the dark places in us that He wants to change.

And when we turn that over to Him, when we shine the light, that is worship. That is an act of worship. Saying, God, I know that I am not there yet. I know that you're training me.

So shine the light in and show me what I need to change. What needs to change in me. So, acceptable to God, that's our true worship.

Number two, a new person. a living sacrifice and a new person. Verse two of Romans 12.

[25 : 19] Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Y'all, do you think that maybe it's time for a new you?

Maybe we should ask your spouse that question. Ask your kids that question. Ask your friends or coworkers or boss or employees that question. Maybe it's time for a new you.

Maybe a less selfish, maybe less self-absorbed, self-centered you. Maybe God wants you, he wants to train you to fit his plan instead of you trying to fit him into yours.

God can change you. He's changed way harder cases than you. Case in point, me. God's changed me and if he can change me, he can change you too.

What does this look like? God's will versus the world's way. That's described right here in Romans 12. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world.

[26 : 27] Now we do that and maybe that's going out and just living for yourself and living all wild and crazy and you're the talk of the town because you're such a mess. But more likely it's not that extreme.

More likely it's internal as opposed to external. What are we talking about? Sometimes worldliness is more inside, hidden, but the fruit of it comes out.

You might look like you're all cleaned up, buttoned up, you got it all together and you're a Jesus person, you know? You're one of them church people. You might look like that, but the reality is you and I are rotten to the core.

The encouraging message you came to church to hear today. You're rotten to the core and so am I. In our flesh there is no good thing. The only good that is in us comes from our Father.

So the closer we fly to the sun, the more of his light we reflect. The closer we walk with Jesus, the more closely to his will we find ourselves.

[27 : 35] So, Proverbs chapter 3. My dad drilled this verse into me growing up. My dad was a pastor and this was a verse that he would just not stop with over and over again.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct or make straight your paths. Jeremiah chapter 29 and verse 11. I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord. Plans to prosper you, not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future. So, if you trusted the Lord with all your heart, if you acknowledge him and you don't lean on your own understanding of things, then he will make your paths straight. He will prosper you, not harm you. He will give you a hope and a future. That is God's will versus the world's way. The world's way never ends in a straight path.

The world's way never ends in hope and a future. The world's way always ends in destruction. It always ends in grief. It always ends in heartbreak, dissatisfaction, bitterness.

[28 : 49] God's will always ends in prosperity, hope, and a future. That doesn't mean your bank account's going to look as prosperous as you want it to look. It means your heart will be filled with the joy of God.

That's the prosperity we're talking about. That's the fulfillment that nothing will be able to rattle you. Nothing will be able to come between you and God. You might experience sadness.

You might experience grief. You might experience tears. But Jesus wipes those tears away. Joy comes in the morning. joy comes in the world. So, that's the joy.

Let's turn over to Luke chapter 9 and we'll be done. For sake of time, I'm going to go ahead and read. Luke 9 and verse 23. Jesus is speaking to the crowd.

He says, if any of you wants to be my follower, just imagine him up here speaking to this crowd today. It's Father's Day. we've got a good crowd here.

[29 : 51] Jesus is standing up here in place of me. How great would that be? And he says, if any of you, First Baptist Henrietta, whoever else is in the room today, if any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways.

And you're looking at my selfish ways? You don't know me very well. Oh, I dare say he does. You must turn from your selfish ways, Sam Bunnell.

Take up your cross daily. It wasn't just enough for me to take up my cross and say, okay, God, you want me to be a pastor? I'll be a pastor. There, I took up my cross. I've got to take up my cross every day.

So do you. Take up our cross daily and follow him. What does it mean to take up your cross? It means be willing to endure whatever comes your way just like Jesus did on that cross.

It means understanding it's not always going to be easy. There is going to be hardship. But he said, take up that cross daily and you'll be able to make it through whatever I have for you and trust me, it's going to be worth it all.

[31 : 02] Verse 24, because if you try to hang on to your life, if you're not willing to surrender, you're not willing to sacrifice, you're going to lose it. But if you give up, if you give up your life for my sake, you'll save it.

Jesus said if you give up your life for his sake, you'll find new life. You'll find better life. You'll find that salvation.

salvation. First, that means salvation from your sins. But then after that day, it means finding that new salvation in God that saves you from who you will be without God.

Every day, we've got a choice. Am I going to take up my cross? Am I going to surrender and sacrifice? And then where's God going to lead me? Down that path today.

Or am I going to run on the much wider, much more populated path with everybody else out trying to live for themselves? Too often, you and I as followers of Jesus find ourselves on the wrong path and Jesus is always calling us back.

[32 : 20] He's saying, no, no, no. You left your cross over here. Go pick up your cross and get back on that narrow way because God has something great for you, for this church.

So, it's better to lose your life than to waste it. John Piper, one of the great pastors that our country has right now, says it's better to lose your life than to waste it.

He even wrote this book called Don't Waste Your Life. It's so much better to lose your life for Jesus sake than to waste it on the pursuits of this world.

Let's read it one final time. Can we read it together? Father, don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.

Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. Now, this time, I'm going to have us read this verse second.

[33 : 22] Dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give, let's pause, up. I put that in parentheses there because up is not in the text.

So I looked up the Greek word for, you know, the Bible, the New Testament was originally written in Greek, so I look back at that Greek word. What's it talking about when it says give, or your Bible might say present? It's talking about giving an offering, making an offering, offering something up to someone who deserves it.

So I just took the liberty of putting that in, saying that's me, that's not the Bible, but I think it's consistent with what the message is trying to tell us. I plead with you to give up your bodies.

Give up yourselves. Give up your bank account to God and quit being so stingy. Let God pass that money on to bless somebody else.

Quit being so stingy with your time, your energy, and let God use the breath that he gives you to bless somebody else and further his kingdom on this earth. Give up, fill in the blank.

[34 : 29] Give up, fill in the blank. Surrender, sacrifice it to God because of all he's done for you. Let these things be a living and holy sacrifice, the kind he will find acceptable.

This is the way to worship God. So here's our takeaway for today. God, teach me the joy of surrender and sacrifice. God, teach me the joy of surrender and sacrifice.

Y'all, would you bow your heads with me? I'm going to challenge you to do something today. I'm not always going to push this hard, but today I believe it's appropriate.

If we have the front of this room filled with families who are praying for God to show them how to surrender and sacrifice. Men, I'm going to challenge you on Father's Day to lead your sons, daughters, even your wives down to the front and kneel down here before God and just say, God, I surrender and then you fill in the blank.

God, I sacrifice, then you fill in the blank. A long time ago, God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. Of course, he didn't take Isaac's life, but he wanted to show Abraham, are you willing to give up everything in your trust of me?

[35 : 48] I believe that I will take better care of what you have, what I've given you, than you can. How's your faith this morning? Are you willing to give up?

Are you willing to surrender? Are you willing to sacrifice? I've got to ask myself that every day because you and I always hold something back. So God, in this moment right now, when you've taught us from your word, God, this isn't the opinion of Sam Bunnell, this is the words of God, and I pray that you would instill those deep in us.

I'm going to ask just the organ to play right now, very softly. Y'all don't need to sing. We might join in in a little bit, but I'm going to sing the words to this song over you.

All to Jesus I surrender, I surrender all. All to him I freely give. I will ever love and trust him. In his presence I will daily live.

Would you take this moment to pray? And I pray that there's somebody who would be the first to stand up and come down here. There's nothing special or magical or holy about kneeling down here in the front, but I think getting up and leading your family down is an act of worship before God and instills in our younger generation what it means to humble yourself and bow down before God as a family and pray.

[37 : 11] So I challenge you families across this room, make use of this open area at the front of the room as I begin to sing. Thank you. Thank you.