

Sermon Notes – May 19, 2024

COMPLETELY HIS: THE IMPORTANCE OF SURRENDER

WELCOME to those who are in attendance and those online – bless those who are not able to attend for their various reasons and THANK Pastor Tony for allowing me the opportunity to speak.

This evening, I want to discuss the topic of belonging to the Lord, completely. The title of this message, COMPLETELY HIS: THE IMPORTANCE OF SURRENDER.

How many of us want to be *COMPLETELY HIS*?

One of the primary ways we become COMPLETELY HIS is by surrendering our lives to Him.

To surrender is the release or relinquishing of our will to that of our Father in Heaven – a submission or yielding to His plans and His purposes.

Jesus is our primary example of what it means to surrender – He says to His disciples in **John 5:19**, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.”*

The context of this passage, is Jesus discussing His equality with God which I think makes it that much more powerful a truth; even Jesus being part of the Trinity, is still expressing His surrender to the Father’s lead and plans.

And Jesus is fully committed to His surrendered posture even to the point of giving His own life to be the sacrifice for mankind – **Mark 14:35-36** says, “*And He went a little beyond them (talking about the disciples) and fell to the ground and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by. And He was saying, “Abba! Father! All things are possible for You, remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will.”*” He says, I know You have planned My future and this purpose from the beginning, but I would like to not have to walk thru this – HOWEVER, not what I want, but what you want, be done.

Another example of a surrendered life is Abraham, who, first, left all that he knew to follow God’s leading – I would speculate that Abraham had his own plans and ideas about his future (perhaps growing the family business, starting a family with his wife, maybe he wanted to start a football team, who knows), but he made the decision to surrender to the Lord and left his homeland to go where? He did not even know, Go and I will show you the way was the Lord’s instruction. Later, when God told him to sacrifice his son Issac at the altar, he was willing to surrender that which was most precious to him to be obedient to what God told him to do. For those who don’t know the story, it turned out that God stopped Abraham from sacrificing Isaac, provided another animal sacrifice and praised his obedience for proceeding up to such a defining moment.

The Scriptures are full of faithful examples of those who chose to surrender to the Lord and serve Him in obedience because they desired to be COMPLETELY HIS.

I want to stop to camp on a very important point before we go any further – surrender is a CHOICE we make, we DECIDE to surrender or not to surrender. It is a component of our “free will” God entrusted to us that if we would chose to yield our “free will” to His service, we allow the opportunity to completely be His with all the promises that entails – if we choose not to surrender, then we are our own worst enemy because WE are responsible now for being the blockade between our lives and the blessings and purposes predestined for us by Him.

Think of it like this, Mr. Surrender is the doorman to your building – he can stand there with his arms crossed (surrendering to nothing and no one) and choose not to open the door, leaving all the wonderful things of God outside. OR, he can choose to open the door (surrendering passage into the building), thus allowing the blessings and favor of God to free-flow, empowering the fullness of God’s purposes in our lives.

A question each one of us needs to honestly ponder is which Mr. Surrender is the doorman of your building?

There are some beautiful benefits of our being COMPLETELY HIS in our Christian walk which we will experience if we fully surrender our lives to Him:

- With surrender there is vulnerability – this is being honest about our weaknesses and struggles first to God as well as with others. God’s word is clear, both are important and necessary.

In **2 Corinthians 12:9-10** Paul writes, *“But He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”* Paul shares the realization that this weakness, known as the thorn in his side (which many suppose was some character weakness that had continued to plague him throughout his ministry) was in fact a good thing. Despite this weakness, and in fact one could argue because of this weakness, it caused a much greater surrender to and reliance upon God and manifest the strength of God working IN HIM. Which is stronger, the child walking alone or the child walking next to his dad, holding his hand? Paul is essentially ministering while holding Jesus’ hand in the midst of that weakness giving him the strength to overcome his thorn. **1 John 1:9** is another verse which expresses the Father’s desire for our vulnerability and attaches a promise to it, *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* Vulnerably sharing our weaknesses, failures and brokenness to God allows a humble pathway for His redeeming forgiveness.

Then **James 5:16** says, *“Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”* (THIS IS HEALING FROM WEAKNESS AND BROKENNESS) Why can this prayer accomplish much? Because the power of the Holy Spirit flows thru a righteous man and, a bonus truth, when 2 or more are gathered in Jesus’ name, His word says He will be in the midst of them – without Him, there is no power to accomplish anything.

* There was a season of my life where I was battling addiction – my life revolved around getting those addictive needs met. Deception, dishonesty, lack of integrity, shame, guilt, fear, they were all on full display – long story short, I was a captive slave to its authority I had allowed in my life! I was not vulnerable to God, my wife, my friends and family, my pastor – I made the decision to hide this destructive sin. The day came that sin was brought to light and I had 2 options: continue to live in the sinfulness and to deceive those around me including myself, OR surrender to the fact that this oppression was greater than my capacity of strength to fight it. By my standing here today, I think you can figure out the decision I made was to surrender, but, when I was walking in that season of life, I was not COMPLETELY HIS, I was in complete servitude and ownership of the demonic power of addiction – with no one to blame but

myself as I was in that position BY CHOICE when I chose not to surrender!

- With surrender there is intimacy – this is our personal relationship with God. He wants us to grow in Him and with Him and to know Him as intimately as He knows us. In **Isaiah 65:24**, he writes, *“It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.”* That is extremely intimate – that the Father and God of the universe answers us before we even ask because He is all-knowing and He knit us together in our mother’s womb, yes, we get that. But remember we have that free will we talked about earlier, He knows our hearts in such an intimate way that He knows what we are going to desire or say. Have you ever started to say something and your wife or close friend literally finishes your sentence – why can they do that? Because you know one another so intimately, you literally know what the other person is thinking. He desires us to know His heart in the same way and this is the kind of intimacy we desire to have with Him – we want to be COMPLETELY HIS, but, at the same time, we want Him to be COMPLETELY OURS!

Another great example is in **Joshua 1:9**, *“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”* This is God

speaking to Joshua about his preparing to lead the people of Israel into the promised land and it is like God is saying, “we have already talked about this, I told you to lead them into the land and don’t be scared or worried about anything, in fact, be confident because I promised you that I will be right there with you.” This is a directly stated dialogue between two who know each other well – there is an intimate relationship position from which God is speaking to Joshua. And this is a truth for us all – God has called each one of us to significant purposes in His Kingdom, He does not want us to be afraid, but, instead, to be courageous (Why?) because He is with us wherever we go. We too can take a posture of strength and confidence as we follow His lead into whatever He has called us to do.

- With surrender there is true love – the love of the Father for His children. **Jeremiah 31:3**, *“The Lord appeared to Him from afar, saying, “I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.”*” It is such a sweet picture of the love God has for His children, patiently waiting and then exuberant about our return to Him. The story of the Prodigal Son in **Luke 15** is arguably one of Jesus’ most well-known parables where He describes a son leaving his home, disgracing himself and his family’s name and then when life was so bad he could not go on, he makes the decision to return home to his father

to work as a slave for him because he does not feel worthy of being called a son anymore. What happens when the father sees his son, coming from afar off and returning home, he runs to his son, hugging and kissing him and welcomes him with such unconditional love, not only restoring his place as his son but even throwing a banquet celebration for his returning home.

In contrast, if we do not surrender our lives to Him, if we do not return home to Him, His love remains unchanged, but we separate ourselves from Him and His love – not the other way around as He will never leave us or stop loving us and pursuing us.

In **1 John 4:16** it says “*God is love...*” (that is He embodies love) and throughout the love story we call the Bible, there are countless expressions of how God is love, some examples are:

- Protective love (**Psalm 36:7**)
- Un-breakable love (**Romans 8:35-39**)
- Sacrificial love (**John 3:16**)
- All-encompassing love (**Romans 5:7-8**)
- Steadfast love (**Isaiah 54:10**)
- Never-ending love (**Lamentations 3:22-23**)
- Gracious love (**Ephesians 2:4-7**)

These are only a few of the hundreds of times God mentions love in His Word – 348 times in the North American Standard Bible to be exact.

His love is also expressed thru the consequences of our bad decisions – **Hebrews 12:6-7** says, *“For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom he receives. It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?”* I want to be clear what the biblical term discipline means because it often carries a negative connotation – the first thing I used to think of when I heard the word “discipline” is a good whoopin’. That’s not actually what is meant here although I have felt a few times like the Lord gave me a spanking – the definition here is actually for instruction and training, correction and consequences can be part as well, but it is all for the purpose of helping to guide us along in His ways.

Again, in **Revelation 3:19** it says, *“Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore, be zealous and repent.”* (which simply means to turn away from our sin.) It is like I tell my girls when they are getting disciplined, I do it because I love you enough to NOT want to see you make the same mistake again and to make better choices in the future – not because I am a mean daddy but because I want you to have the very best life possible. That is what our heavenly “Daddy”

wants for us too!!

- With surrender there is His grace – surrender actually prepares the way to receive His grace and forgiveness offered to us as His children. A scripture I am intimately familiar with (because I have had to revert it more times than I would like to admit) is **Hebrews 4:12**, *“Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need.”* It takes the willingness to chose to acknowledge our sin, surrender any pride of bringing that to Him, and, when we do, we are able to receive His grace. Just because we may have received Jesus and we are walking in renewed life with Him, it does not make us impenetrable or free from ever making a mistake again – let’s be clear, there was only one who was perfect on this planet and that was Jesus himself, the rest of us are fallible and will mess up. We need to repent, turn back to Father and then walk in His strength not to make the same mistake again – we are literally His children and He is a good Daddy who does not hold our mistakes against us, He wants us to be free from the bondage of our sins and for us to be COMPLETELY HIS.

At this point, there may be some of you who are getting stirred inside about what this all means or you do not have this relationship with God and you desire to be COMPLETELY HIS – that is great and there is a reason you must have been listening to this message. If I am talking to you, there is a simple process I would be happy to walk you thru.

First, we acknowledge we are a sinner – this means being vulnerable with God that we have brokenness, that we mess up, that there are things we do that are hurtful or wrong. Then we share those sins with God – this is the beginning of intimacy by being willing to trust Him with the specific details. To be clear, the debt for our sins is eternal death – it is serious business. Now the good news, we acknowledge we cannot be “good” on our own and that we need a Savior to help us – this is why Jesus died on the cross. God sent Jesus, His only Son, to die on the cross to fulfill this pre-planned mission to pay the debt of our sins that we would be restored to relationship with God and redeemed from eternal death to eternal life in Heaven with Him. This is the expression of true love to us by our Father – we, by accepting Jesus as Lord of our life, are adopted into His family and can receive the promised grace of a renewed life in Him. Do you see how this all ties together? We must lay down our pride that we can do this life successfully on our own and SURRENDER ourselves to Him in humility, and,

when we do, there is a new, real, abundant life! Which perfectly segways into the last point.

- With surrender there is real life – this is both the abundant life here on earth that Jesus talks about in **John 10:10**, “...I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.” as well as everlasting life in eternity with Him in **Ephesians 2:5-6**, “even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and having been raised up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

We can go on in **John 15:4-5** which expresses the kind of life we can have with him as Jesus describing Himself as our central vine and we function as His fruitful branches so long as we abide (to remain or reside) in Him and He abides in us, because without the life source, there is no life – it is as simple as that. Have you ever seen a branch on the ground, attached to nothing, that is sprouting new fruit? Of course not, it lies there either dying or already dead; however, the branch that is attached to the healthy vine or tree is budding, vibrant, fruitful, and full of life.

Jesus expresses clearly in **Luke 9:23-24**, “...If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.” He was

sharing this truth with the crowd at the time He was alive on earth and now with us through the Word, that if we choose Him, we must surrender our selfish desires and take our part in following Him without abandon – giving over our will and desire to serve ourselves and this world, instead choosing to serve Him and others. Again, faithfully, He shares a promise with those of us who are willing to make this sacrifice, that by making the decision to surrender our lives to Him, we in turn will receive eternal life.

And when we walk in His real life through our surrender, we open the opportunity for God to give direction in our lives here on earth. **Proverbs 23:26** says, *“Give me your heart, my son, And let your eyes delight in my ways.”* The word GIVE here is translated “natan” (Naw than) which is to entrust or yield – it is this idea that we are entrusting and SURRENDERING our hearts to Him and then studying what He is doing so we too can imitate His ways. His ways will teach us things like: how to be a husband, how to be a parent, how to be a friend, how to serve others, how to serve God, how to perform our work, how to prepare in lean times, how to steward monies, and so on. And the sweetest part of our loving Father’s ways is that by following them, He rewards us with the expression of the fruits of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control.

He says in **Proverbs 3:5-6**, *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight.”* I don’t know about you all, but after having chosen to spend plenty of my life on the winding, bumpy, painful off-roads; I am perfectly happy with some smoother, straight paths in my life for a while!

To wrap this all up, being COMPLETELY HIS is not difficult to do, it is a decision to be made. Again, we must CHOOSE to surrender daily to Him and walk not according to our selfish desires but according to the direction of the Holy Spirit. **Galations 5:24-25** says it so perfectly, *“Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with it’s passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.”* The truth is, as desperately as I want to be perfect at this, I am still learning and growing – I daily make mistakes that wish I had not committed. Thankfully, for the most part, they are not the catastrophic mistakes I used to make, but they are not the imitation of Jesus that I would like to portray all the time. However, thru this message, that was as much for me as it was for you, my prayers is we are all inspired to want to be COMPLETELY HIS, to be vulnerable with God, have an intimate relationship with Him, receive His expression of love and receive His grace so that we can continue to live the life He has in store for us.

Thank you all for coming tonight and for those of you who watched online – we appreciate all of you being with us.

Please, if you made the decision for the first time to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior or you just want to discuss further, let us know. Either come talk to me after the service or if you are online, go to the Giving & Contact tab on the main page at www.churchalivenwa.org and click contact – you will be able to share your name and email as well as any specific message for us. We would love to hear from you!

Pray and dismiss...