

42-23-03 -Last Word #7: Surrender

Cross, Lent, committal, surrender, spirit, faith, death

Luke 23:46

A life totally surrendered to God is the only one worth living.

INTRODUCTION:

–**text: Luke 23:46**, *Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last.*

–God’s Son entered this world to identify with the human condition. He was born to purchase our salvation by His death. But by His life, He showed us the best way to live: **HOM.idea**.

–When *Jesus called out with a loud voice*, He gave the last message of His earthly ministry: “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” It expressed the faith by which He had lived and by which He was ready to die. It was....

I. A Faith in a Life-Long Pattern of Submission

- A. Jesus had to have authentic human faith in order to *legitimately* call us to follow Him in such faith.
- B. *Submission is trusting another’s word and acting upon it.* (His life-pattern was “*into your hands I commit...*”) **This was His attitude...***
 1. while still in Heaven– **Phil 2:5-8**, Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!
 2. (*) as a boy of 12 [to explain to Mary and Joseph why He’d stayed behind in the temple– **Luke 2:49 (NKJV)**, ...He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?”]
 3. (*) during His ministry– **John 5:30**, By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.
 4. (*) just before His death– **Luke 22:42**, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”
- C. *Submission is a form of dying to one’s own will.*
 1. It sets personal *ideas, desires* and *choices* aside for other goals [This submission happens in *marriage, jobs, parenthood, military service.*]
 2. Dying to one’s own will is central to the Christian faith:
 - a. Jesus lived and taught a life of “death to self”– **Luke 9:23-24**, Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny

himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.

- b. The alternative yields limited returns for those who buy stock in this world [*“I commit”* = a business term: *“I deposit, I invest”*]. (Jesus says to deposit faith in eternal investments— Mat 6:19-21, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

TRANS: Notice the *detail in the crucifixion story*— John 19:23. When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This **garment was seamless**, woven in one piece from top to bottom. Christ’s inner life, like His *inner garment*, had a **single strand that ran from start to finish: it was submission to the Father’s will**. His last words *exclaimed His faith in that life-pattern*: “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” But it also expressed...

II. A Faith in Submission’s Spiritual Goals

- A. Christ’s *words of committal* pointed beyond the world of visible physical reality to the invisible spiritual world: “*I commit my spirit.*”
1. As body-spirit beings, all our *human activity is spiritual*, whether it concerns jobs or households, politics or finances.
 2. *Successful living* in a world of inevitable physical death is ultimately measured only in terms of spiritual victory.
- B. *In the midst of physical realities*, Jesus told us to place our major focus on the spiritual realm— Mat 6:31-33. So do not worry, saying, “What shall we eat?” or “What shall we drink?” or “What shall we wear?” For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (As He faced physical death, He focused on His spiritual life: “*I commit my spirit.*”)
- C. Why so few death-bed conversions? What’s held foremost in life is hard to turn from in death [I once attended a dying man who had no use for words about God, but watched porn on TV during the days before he died]. (Jesus calls us to “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.” God’s Kingdom must displace all other little kingdoms in our lives.)

TRANS: [A frightened woman came to Ralph Waldo Emerson reporting a rumor:

“*They say the world is coming to an end! What shall we do?*” He told her not to worry, saying, “*We can get along without the world.*”] We can, and someday, we will, but how well we get along now, without being *dominated* by this world, depends on the faith contained in Christ’s last words; it was....

III. A Faith in His Relationship with His Father

- A. [Atheism ignores multitudes of questions about the universe that make belief in an Intelligent Creator easy.] But a relationship with God the Father is not just a belief in God (In saying, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit,” Jesus expressed a commitment of total trust in His Father.)
- B. Jesus lived and died in a prayerful relationship with His Father. [He quoted a familiar Scripture used as a Jewish child’s bedtime prayer, similar to “*Now I lay me down to sleep...*” (Psa 31:5, Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O LORD, the God of truth.)]
- C. Jesus preached, with His last dying breath, that “**A life totally surrendered to God the Father, is the only one worth living.**”
1. The Father had committed to Jesus a certain trust; having kept it, Jesus confidently committed Himself back to the Father.
 2. Christ’s final words calls us to the same commitment— 1 Pet 4:19. So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

CONCLUSION:

—Whether facing life’s decline or departure, **total surrender to God is the only life worth living**. [The 1st Christian martyr learned this— Acts 7:59.

While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”]

—R. Browning’s poem “Easter-Day” recounts the story of one of the early martyrs:

I was born sickly, poor and mean,	I was some time in being burned,
A slave; no misery could screen	But at the close a Hand came through
The holders of the pearl of price	The flames above my head, and drew
From Caesar’s envy; therefore twice	My soul to Christ whom now I see.
I fought with beasts, and three times saw	Sergius, a brother, writes for me
My children suffer by his law;	This testimony on the wall--
At last my own release was earned:	For me -- <i>I have forgot it all.</i> ”

—God will “wipe away all tears” from our eyes in Heaven. We’ll *forget* all our surrenders to suffering and pain. Only our submission to God —the life we surrendered to Christ, will be remembered, for it’s a relationship that will last for eternity.