

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 as one of us to purchase our salvation by His death* on the Cross. But by *His life, He showed us how to live*, and that **HOM.idea**.

–When *Jesus called out with a loud voice, He gave us 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. The Faith of a Life-Long Pattern of Submission

- A. Jesus had to have an authentic human faith Himself, in order to *legitimately call us to follow Him in that same faith and trust*.
- B. A submissive trust believes another’s word and acts upon it. (His life-pattern was “*into your hands I commit...*”) **He had this attitude...**
 1. before He left 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 [He explained to Mary and Joseph why He’d stayed behind in the temple– **Luke 2:49b** (NKJV), “Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?”]
 3. throughout His earthly 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. Faithful submission is a self-denial of an independent will.
 1. It puts personal ideas, desires and choices aside for other goals. [**Common areas** of self-denial: *marriage, jobs, parenthood, military service.*]
 2. But denying our own will is central to the Christian faith:
 - a. Jesus lived and taught a life of “death to self”– He said in **Luke 9:23-24**, “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. Christians aren't to buy stock in this world, where the markets finally crash. (Jesus gives us a heavenly bank account where all faith-deposits are 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: A life totally surrendered to God is the only one worth living. [His earthly clothing was divided among the soldiers, but John 19:23 says they had to cast lots for his “undergarment” was “seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.] Christ's inner life, like His *inner* garment, had a single strand from start to finish: it was His submission to His Father's will. His last words proclaimed His faith in that life-pattern: “*Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.*” But it also expressed...

II. His Faith in the Spiritual Goals of His Submission

- 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, His focus was on His spiritual life: “*I commit my spirit.*”)
- C. Why so few death-bed conversions? What's holds attention in life is hard to turn from in death [I did nursing care for a dying man who had no use for words about God, but watched TV porn during his final days.] (Jesus calls us to “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.” God's Kingdom must displace all the 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 the world controlling our lives, depends on the kind of faith seen in Christ's last words. It was...

III. A Strong Relational Father in His Father

- A. [Many atheists ignore recent discoveries about the cosmos that support belief in an Intelligent Designer.] But a relationship with God the Father isn't just a belief in God (In saying, “*Father, into your hands I commit my spirit,*” Jesus expressed a commitment of total trust.
- B. Jesus lived and died in a prayerful relationship with His Father. [As He died, He quoted a familiar Scripture often used as a Jewish child's bedtime prayer—similar to our “*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. With His dying breath, Jesus preached that “a life totally surrendered to God the Father, is the only one worth living.”
1. The Father entrusted to Him the job of dying for us; as He did it, Jesus trustingly committed Himself to His Father's care.
 2. This last of Christ's words call all of 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 we are facing life's decline or our final departure from it, 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> ”

—Someday, God will “wipe away all tears” from our eyes. We'll forget painful earthly hardships and remember only our trust in God and our desire to follow Jesus. When we leave here for Heaven, we'll enjoy being united with Him for eternity. His divine life in us is the only life worth living ... forever.