



SURRENDERED FAITH

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We're going back to where we left off before Palm Sunday in Luke 18 and begin in verse 15. Every one of these verses that we're going to look at today have to do with *what it means to follow Jesus with surrendered faith*.

When God looks at your life, He's looking for you to say goodbye to anything that would keep you from following him fully and to say yes to fully following Jesus Christ. Because it's at the point of surrender that he brings revival and renewal and blessing into our lives.

Think about some of the songs that we sing about following Jesus.

The song that says *I have decided to follow Jesus. I have decided to follow Jesus. I have decided to follow Jesus*. What's the next line? *No turning back. No turning back* There comes that moment where we say Jesus, I'm surrendering to you.

Another song that we sing *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*. What's the next word? **All**. That's the only way you can come to Jesus - on terms of surrender. You can't be saved without surrender.

I will tell you this by way of reminder to ALL of us here. You can't follow Jesus. You can't CONTINUE to follow Jesus. You can't experience the *life* and the *blessing* and the *purpose* and the *meaning* and the *revival* that God desires in your life unless you are surrendered to him. Day by day, the Christian Life is a life of daily surrender, and we see that in the passages we will read today. Let's start with

LUKE 18:15-17

Now, as we look at this text, I want you to notice with me the first of **four things that Jesus Christ says about surrender**. Jesus talks to us about

I. THE DEMONSTRATION OF SURRENDERED FAITH

We see that in these children who were being brought to Jesus. Notice what the Bible says in **verse 15**. *Now they were bringing even infants to Jesus that he might touch them*. The word *infant* there can mean

a child who's a newborn baby up to a couple of years old. And so these are parents, or maybe grandparents are they're bringing these children to Jesus just for Jesus to touch them and bless them, because at this point, even if they don't know all about Jesus, they *know that He is very special, and apparently open and loving with others, even children*, and so they want to expose their children to Jesus.

It's a beautiful scene. And in the midst of this beautiful scene, the disciples interrupt it.

And when they saw it, they rebuked them. They did something to stop these children from coming. **Verse 16**, Jesus told them, *let the children come to me. And do not hinder them*. I love those words of Jesus. "Don't you prevent the children from coming to me. Don't do anything to put up a barrier. Don't do anything to stop them. Don't do anything to discourage them. Don't do anything to hinder them. *Let the children come to me and do not hinder them.*"

There's a word here for every parent, grandparent and guardian of a child. Jesus says, "do not put up barriers for them to know me and love me." Jesus is watching....

And then look at the next thing *for such belongs the Kingdom of God*. In other words, Jesus was saying *God's Kingdom* – which we know now is essentially *the rule and reign of God in your life*. God's Kingdom means living with a personal relationship with the God of this universe through his son Jesus Christ. *God's Kingdom*, Jesus says, *belongs to such as these*. He's not just saying that his Kingdom is *only* for children, although certainly his Kingdom is open to children. He's saying *his Kingdom is open to those who come to him, like children*.

So let's talk about that. In **verse 17** he goes further. *Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it. These children coming to Jesus are a DEMONSTRATION of what surrendered faith looks like*.

To come to Jesus with a surrendered faith means coming to him like a child would come to a parent.

When a child comes to a parent there's a **simplicity** in the way that child comes. A child comes with nothing in his hand to help. The child doesn't have to have every question answered. She just comes.

A person doesn't come with a *spiritual resume* of all of his accomplishments and all the things that he's done to commend himself to the Lord, he just comes.

When a child comes, there's **love** in the way that child comes. He loves his parent and he knows his parent loves him.

That's how Jesus Christ calls us to come to Him - with a **loving, humble faith**. So many times when Jesus calls us to come to him we get all caught up in: *Well, exactly what does that mean and how do I do that? And What questions do I need to have answered first, or am I coming in the right way? Am I saying the right things? Have I gotten everything taken care of?*

No, Jesus, just wants you to come. Just start where you are with empty hands and come to him?

Imagine a mother speaking to her little girl and she says *honey, come over here and I'll give you this fruit snack*. Now, what's that little girl thinking about? As soon as her mother says "*come over here and I'll give you this fruit snack,*" the little girl is not thinking about anything other than that fruit snack and her mother.

She's not thinking about: How am I going to get over there, she'll get over there. If she's able to walk, she'll walk over there. If she's still a toddler, she'll toddle over there. If she falls down, she'll get back up and she'll keep coming.

And she's not thinking about , *am I coming in the right way?* Moms offered something, the child wants it, and she comes and gets it. Simple. No entanglements.

When you come to Jesus. When he calls you to come, don't think about how you're gonna get there. (He did all the work to get to you.) Just think about the fact that the one who loves you with all of his heart has called you to come and come. No step we ever take toward Jesus is a wrong step. Every step we take towards Jesus is a right step. So you just come.

Or we say, "*Well, you know, I'm. I'm not sure if I'm saying the right things or I'm not sure if I'm coming the right way.*"

I've heard people who say, "*I need to turn to Jesus, but I don't want to do it just because I don't want to go to hell.*" Can I tell you something? There's plenty of great reasons to turn to Jesus beyond not going to hell, but *not going to Hell's a great reason to get saved!* Hell is an awful eternal reality. Whatever reason you come to Jesus, you come.

And if that's true for salvation, it's also true for every part of the Christian life after that. Jesus calls you to come, and you may come stumbling and you may come with mixed motives you, but you just come to him - and like a loving parent, *better than a loving*

parent, he'll take care of everything else.

He'll take care of the mixed motives. He'll take care of the things you don't understand. You just come to him. That is *simple, childlike faith*. That's a demonstration of surrendered faith.

Secondly, as we look at this text of Scripture, Jesus talks to us about in

Luke 18:18-22

II. THE DEMAND OF SURRENDERED FAITH

Look in **verse 18** of the text, the Bible says *a ruler asked him* Now we usually call him *the rich, young ruler* because His story in Matthew tells us that he was young. Luke tells us that he was a ruler and that he was very rich, and so we usually call him the rich young ruler.

He was a *ruler*. What does that mean? That means he had some type of position of authority in/over the Jewish community, in the synagogue or in the Jewish Sanhedrin. Or maybe a Roman.

Point is, as a *rich, young ruler*, he was successful in the culture's eyes. Someone recognized his leadership ability.

This rich, young ruler comes to Jesus and says *good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?* Man, that was a great question. *Jesus, I recognize that you're a good teacher. So if you're telling me that I can't enter into the Kingdom of God unless I'm like a little child, what do I need to do in order to inherit eternal life?*

And Jesus, before he answered, asked him a question. He said **verse 19** *Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone?*

And Jesus was asking that question for a couple of reasons. One to show him that "*when you call Me good, when you recognize that supernatural goodness in Me, Jesus was saying. you're seeing God in Me.*" He was identifying himself as the Son of God.

But then also in saying *no one is good except God alone* He was reminding this rich young ruler that when you surrender yourself to God and his Kingdom, you are surrendering yourself to one who is *absolutely and perfectly* good.

Listen, it is a blessing and a joy to surrender ourselves to our God because our God is so good!

Psalm 34:8 says, *Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.* So we come to the Lord on terms of full surrender, knowing that God is good.

And then Jesus begins to *challenge this rich young ruler about his own goodness*. He says *you know the commandments. Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honor your father and your mother*. He gave him 5 of the 10 Commandments and the rich young ruler said, *all these I have kept from my youth*. Some have looked at that response and said, well, the rich young ruler was being prideful - but Jesus never contradicted or corrected him. He just took him further.

And then when Jesus heard this He said to him *One thing you still lack*. Now here's what Jesus was doing. He was probing into a good man's *moral unsureness*. Here was someone who was good, who kept God's commandments, but still lived his life on his own terms, and Jesus looked into this man's heart and he honed in on the *one part of his life that was unsundered*.

Can I stop and say this to you? When Jesus looks at you, He sees that part of your life that is unsundered. He sees it. And not only does he see it, He's after that. He demands it, because until you've given him that one unsundered part, maybe two or three unsundered parts of your life - until you've surrendered to him *you will miss out on what He has for you*.

And so look again, **verse 22** *one thing you still lack* and here was his one unsundered part, *Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven. And come, follow me*,

"Here's the one area. You're very wealthy. So sell everything that you have, give it to the poor, you'll have treasure in heaven. And now you *come, follow me*.

Giving away all your property will not get you into heaven. But giving up whatever it is that is keeping you from following Jesus WILL. And it is a key to a surrendered life.

That was this man's *area of unsunder*. It may not be for you. For you, it may be your money. (For most people, it probably does have something to do with money) or property or position. It may be something else too. It may be a relationship. It may be an attitude that you hold on to. It may be some sin in your life that you've made excuses for, and you've decided you're not going to let it go.

But Jesus looks at that one unsundered part of your life. And he says, *until you're willing to surrender that you will not be able to fully follow*.

Some of you are here and you've never trusted in Jesus as your Savior because you're still holding on to that unsundered part of your life. And then there are

Christians who are here and you're not following Jesus the way he wants you to follow him because there's some part of your life that you're still saying. *Lord, I'll say yes to you in 100 other areas, but I'm not going to say yes to you in this -at least not now. Maybe someday.* And as long as you're unsundered to that one point, the riches of following Jesus fully is missed, maybe for the large, large part of your life.

So Jesus gave this man a choice. Are you gonna hold on to that thing? Or, are you going to follow me there?

There's a game called, "Would You Rather?" It's just based on some simple questions. It says, *would you rather do this or would you rather do that?* And some of the questions are pretty funny.

Let's play. Tell me what you would rather do.

- *Would you rather make a one-minute speech to 10,000 people or kiss a frog?* How many of you say speech? Raise your hand. How many of you say I'd rather kiss a frog? Raise your hands.
- Here's one then. *Would you rather have seven toes on each foot, or seven fingers on each hand?* How many of you would rather have seven toes on each foot? Raise your hand. OK. How many of you would rather have seven fingers on each hand? Raise your hand.
- No, you're wrong. I have had time to think about this and I'd rather do the hand. I'd because I'm thinking if I had seven toes on each foot, I'd have to spend money on custom shoes...for all my life!. All my life that would cost me a lot of money. Be better off with seven fingers on each hand.
- *How many of you would rather have an elephant's trunk attached to your face or a neck as long as a giraffe?* How many of you would say I'll take the trunk? Raise your hand. Stay with me on this. How many of you would rather have the giraffes neck raise your hand?
- Here's the last one. *How many of you would rather spring forward one hour or fall back one hour?* Spring forward one hour. How many? OK, Fall back one hour?

You say, "Pastor...what? We know you're going somewhere with this. Where are you going?" Here's where.

Jesus gave the rich young ruler a "Would you rather" question? Here's what he said. *Would you rather have your stuff, Or would you rather give it up, follow me and have eternal life?*

Simple question. *Would you rather hold on to your stuff, or would you rather surrender that, follow me*

and have eternal life? And what did the rich young ruler say? “I’d rather have my stuff.”

When we talk about it in this setting, unattached, it seems pretty clear. Boy, *I’d better to let go of that stuff and follow Jesus. But so many times in our lives, we hold on to whatever it is, it might be.* It might be an attitude. It might be a habit, whatever it is. We’ll hold on to that.

But Jesus says let that go and follow Him. That’s **the DEMAND of a surrendered faith**. Say “Jesus. I’ll let it go. I’ll let this unsundered part of my life go so that I can follow you.”

Thirdly, I want you to see this. **LET’S READ Luke 18:23-27** Jesus talks about

III. THE DIFFICULTY OF SURRENDERED FAITH.

Look in **verse 23** of the text. *When he heard these things*, the rich young ruler, when he heard what Jesus said, *he became very sad for he was extremely rich. Jesus, seeing that he had become sad, said how difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the Kingdom of God.* Why? Not because their wealth itself keeps people out of God’s Kingdom. But because so many times we don’t want to surrender what God has enabled us to have to the Lordship and Authority of God.

Then he said, *for it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God.*

That’s just a simple illustration.

In the city of Jerusalem there is a little side street into this old church. And inside this old church there was an ancient gate. And that gate has been called the Needles Eye. It’s a very low and narrow gate and some people over the years have claimed that’s what Jesus was talking about when he talked about *a camel going through the eye of a needle.*

Really? No. Turns out that gate was built years after the time of Jesus, and so Jesus wasn’t talking about some narrow gate in the city of Jerusalem that it was maybe possible, but hard for a camel to go through.

He was simply illustrating with a *word picture*. He took the biggest animal that they had in Israel, a camel, and the smallest opening, they could imagine, the eye of a sewing needle, and he said, “It’d be *easier to lead a camel through the eye of than needle.*”

Why? Because so many times when we have the things that life has to offer us, we hold on to those things at the cost of full surrender to Jesus.

Because if there’s one unsundered part of your life, the devil will always build a road to that one unsundered part.

Imagine you had 1000 acres of land. And you decided to give away 999 of those acres? But you kept one acre right in the middle of all that land. If you kept that one acre, you’d have to build a road to get to it.

And that’s what the devil does when we have one unsundered part, whatever it is. The devil will build a road to that, and he’ll keep you going back to that unsundered part, and he’ll use that unsundered part of your life to keep you from experiencing what God wants you to experience.

Because listen, **when we surrender ourselves fully to him, that’s where his fullest blessing comes.** And He’s always looking for surrender.

- When you pray. You’re looking for an answer. God is looking for surrender.
- When you serve. You’re looking for something to do for the Lord. God is looking for surrender.
- When you give, you may look at how much you’ve given God is looking for surrender.
- In every part of our life, when you obey, you may be like this guy and be able to say *I’ve done all these things. I’ve kept every law from my youth.* God is looking for surrender.

And as long as we’re holding on to that unsundered part of our life the devil will build roads to it to keep us from being what God wants us to be.

There’s a fourth thing I want you to notice in this from **Luke 18:28-30**

IV. THE DELIGHT OF SURRENDERED FAITH.

Look in **verse 28**. Peter had been listening to this whole thing. He had been one of the disciples that Jesus had rebuked for telling the children not to come to him. And he had heard this whole conversation with the rich young ruler.

And so Peter brought up a point, he said. Lord, look. *See we have left our homes and followed you. Jesus, as far as we can see, we’ve done everything that that you’re talking to this guy about doing.*

They had. Jesus had come when Peter and Andrew were fishing and said *follow me* and they *left their nets and followed him*. They left their homes and went far away and traveled places they’ve never been before and experienced things they’ve never experienced just to follow him. *Lord, we have left our homes and followed you and the unspoken question is, Lord, what do we*

receive? And in some of the Gospels, he actually asked that question, *what do we receive?*

Here's the answer Jesus said to him, **verse 29-30**.

“Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God who will not receive many times more in this time in this life and in the age to come eternal life. In other words, Jesus was saying **there is delight and reward that comes to us at the point of surrender.**

If following Jesus requires you to leave behind your house and your property. If it requires you to leave behind your spouse. If it's necessary for you to leave behind your brothers or sisters, or your mom or dad or your kids. If you that for the sake of saying *YES* to Jesus, you'll *receive many times more in this life, and in the age to come, eternal life.*

Here's what Jesus promises - when you surrender ***there's always a reward.*** Always. There's always a blessing. Always. There's always delight. Always.

And it comes on the *other side* of surrender.

But you never experience that until you get past that decision. The moment until you get past that decision and say, *Lord, I will surrender and I'll give myself over to you, friendship with God and fellowship with God* come at the point of surrender.

But you must lay down whatever it is. It may be your *will*. It may be your *pride*. It may be your *possessions*. It may be a *relationship*. It may be a *sin*. It may be an *attitude*. Whatever it is, you know what it is. When you lay that down, then you can come to him. And He will come to you. And you can experience the delight of a full relationship with your loving God.

CONCLUSION

I am not a pilot, but I learned if you are a pilot in the cockpit of a commercial airline, that when you fly and you hear the signal “**V1**” that is decision-time. It means the aircraft has reached a critical takeoff speed – a point of no return. (can anyone confirm?)

Once the aircraft reaches V1, the decision to continue the takeoff or abort must be made. After that the plane *has* to take off. Until that moment, things can change and the flight can be aborted. But when they go beyond V1, the plane has to take off. **It surrenders itself to flight.**

For every believer in Jesus Christ, for everyone who would follow Jesus, there is that one moment, that *decision-speed* we reach where we have to say “*Yes, Lord I will follow you.*” And many people get right up

to that point and then we stop and we don't experience what God wants to us to experience because we're not willing to say “*Jesus, I will surrender fully to you.*”

What will you do?

- Will you step over the line today and put your trust in Jesus Christ? Come up.
- Will you obey your Savior and get baptized in his name? Come up.
- Will you get to V1 and Surrender your unsundered parts to God? As we close, I and others will be here to receive you...
- Will you come?