

John 14:1-14, 2014

Surrender.

What does it mean to surrender?

If you look the word up in the dictionary you will find that surrender is to capitulate, give in, give oneself up, to give your will over to the victor.

Enemies give in to surrender when they see that their cause is lost and they wish to live to fight another day.

Most of the time when we talk about surrender these days there are winners and losers and the losers surrender.

They capitulate,, give in, give themselves up to the will of their enemy,

But, this type of surrender is rooted in fear, defeat and death.

There is another type of surrender that I would like to call *faith surrender*.

This type of surrender is very different from what I have just described.

This surrender is surrender to God

In this surrender Rick Warren, author of *Purpose Driven Life* and *The Purpose Driven Church* says, "let go and let God work."

AA says "Let go and let God."

And there a myriads of books and program to help you along the way to living a surrendered life..

Surrender is a significant element of faith life and we find it throughout the bible.

In our readings for today we hear the words of surrender from a couple of characters, the earliest in time being the Psalmist.

In Psalm 31 verse 5 immediately following his plea to God that he be heard, rescued,

that God would be his refuge, save him from shame,
the Psalmist cries out

“Into your hand I commit my spirit...”

The psalmist surrenders to God.

From our Acts reading we hear about the minister Stephen being stoned to death, and it is in the middle of being surrounded by the enemy, facing certain death that he surrenders.

You notice, however, that it is not his enemies to whom he surrenders, but it is to God;

“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

and that is a very different thing.

And then there is Jesus who gives us some of the most powerful examples of surrender in carrying out His mission in and for the world.

In Matthew 26 it is recorded that in the Garden of Gethsemene Jesus prays,

“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.”

And then, of course, we remember the words Jesus cried out from the cross,

“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” Having said this he breathed His last.

Jesus' surrender was total and complete, and loud enough for all to hear.

The psalmist, Stephen, and Jesus Himself, however do not come to this surrender on their own, by their own will, or outside the influences of the world they lived in.

They also did not come to their surrender outside their relationship with God, the Father.

The psalmist obviously lived before Jesus and his faith and relationship with God was directed at the Father. It was God the Father of whom he said,

God you are indeed my rock and my fortress; for you name's sake lead me and guide me so life can go on.

The psalmist lives in absolute trust of God in spite of the fact that, as he says, things are so bad that he has "...passed out of mind like one who is dead; I have become a broken vessel."

Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God."

He believed and trusted in the faithfulness of God.

Stephens great faith is documented for us in the book of Acts.

To serve in his position he had to be a man of good standing, full of the Spirit, faith and wisdom. He is described as one full of grace and power. (Acts 6:8)

He lived in an intimate relationship with God.

You know of the intimacy of Jesus' relationship with the Father by the many examples of His prayer, and by the words from our gospel lesson today.

"Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me."

Jesus says he doesn't even speak on His own but the Father who dwells in Him does His work.

It is the close, intimate relationship that allows these bible characters to surrender themselves, their lives to God.

I think that ought to say something important to us about our own relationship with God and our own life.

God calls each of us to surrender ourselves to Him, to His will, to His purpose, and to give up ourselves, but we don't do it.

We suffer from the same difficulty as the disciples in our gospel lesson today.

Jesus is talking to them about things they don't and probably can't understand as yet.

They have a belief problem. They have a trust problem.
Lord show us the Father and we will be satisfied...
Then we will believe.

What you are saying is to new and difficult to trust.

Really? After 3 years following me around you can't do any better than that?

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and He is in me? **Believe!**

And if you can't believe that then believe the works themselves.

This surrender takes trust;

Trust that this God is not your enemy.

Trust that the God to whom you surrender has a plan for you, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)

Trust that your God will provide all that you need.

Trust in God's love and grace.

In order to surrender you must believe just as those disciples who joined Jesus for that final Passover meal.

Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me."

In this time together Jesus talks about a very specific belief which is appropriate for the occasion

Jesus is saying His final goodbye to His disciple, but wants to leave them with hope, something to hold on to, to look forward to,

and so He tells them about the many rooms in God's house, and that there is one for each of them, and He makes the promise that He will come and take them unto himself and to that new home they will receive.

He tells them, that, in the mean time, when they believe they will do even greater works than He, and that He will do whatever they ask in His name.

Jesus calls them to surrender, but it is a surrender rooted in trust, belief and love.

Some surrender comes at the end of this life as it did for Stephen and Jesus, but surrender comes also as it did for the psalmist in the midst of life;

yes, perhaps difficult life, but as the sustaining power of God to draw you into His will and desire for you.

Believe, trust, surrender yourself!