

Biblical S-Words that Shape your Life: Surrender

- I. Intro: This is our final week studying biblical S-Words. As I was preparing for this message I looked back over many of my sermons over the past 2 ½ years and found that this particular word, “Surrender” was used in many of them.
 - a. We say this word so often in church that I think we really don’t stop to think about what this word really means.
 - b. This word, Surrender, ought to be a terrifying word to us.
 - i. Have you ever seen any nation surrender if they thought they could win the battle?
 1. Of course not.
 2. And to accomplish surrender, battles are often fought and a lot of pain is experienced by both sides.
 3. The Greek word for Surrender used in your bibles is Paradiidomai, which is two words joined together: Para (beside) Didomai (to give). Put together we get a word that means to “**give over to another’s power, custody or control.**”
 - ii. As a history buff, I have enjoyed civil war movies, such as Gettysburg and God’s and Generals. One of the most moving elements of such movies is the incredible level to which one side will go to avoid defeat and surrender.
 1. This is because **Surrender only occurs when one side has completely exhausted all of its resources to resist.**
 - a. What does that mean to “exhaust your resources to resist?”
 - b. Think about this for a minute...would you ask God for help if you believe you can do something yourself?
 - i. Probably not. In fact, some of us would say, “That’s why God gave me a brain and two feet.”
 - c. But what happens when we face a task that is beyond our ability to accomplish it?
 - d. What happens when we lack the resources to do something?
 - i. We ask for help...either from God or from someone nearby.
 - iii. This morning, as we study the concept of surrender, a question I would like you to ask yourself is, “have you exhausted your resources yet?”
 1. Are you relying upon your own strength and ability to live the Christian life?
 - II. Let’s Pray:
 - a. *Lord God, Open our ears and help us to hear. Open our eyes and let us see who You are. Show us our need for You today. Show us our powerlessness and poverty before You. O God, as long as we think we are “able” we won’t seek Your strength. Lord, Your power is perfected in our weakness. Lead us to the point of surrender today, In Jesus Name, Amen.*
 - b. I would like to tell you a story about resistance and surrender.
 - i. Some of you may have served in WW2 or have family members who did. Many of them are aging and their testimony of that momentous struggle will soon be but a memory.
 - ii. My dad served in Europe at the Battle of the Bulge and at the surrender of Germany, was given orders to prepare for training for the invasion of Japan.
 1. Everyone knew about how horrible the battle for Okinawa was.
 - a. Okinawa was the last major island before Japan, and held a sizeable populace of Japanese civilians and soldiers.
 - b. During the battle for this modest island, over 41,000 US servicemen lost their lives while the populace fought to the death, eventually jumping off of cliffs to avoid the humiliation of surrender to their enemy.

2. The war planners were learning how stubborn the Japanese were as a result of their Bushido code of honor that said it was more honorable to die in battle than to surrender to your foe.
 - a. Images of the entire nation of Japan following the examples of the kamikaze pilots and the soldiers who fought to the bitter end filled the planner's minds.
 - b. Battle estimates were drawn up, and it was concluded that between 500,000 to 1,000,000 American soldiers would be killed or wounded in the final battle for the Japanese mainland.
3. It was the result of these estimates that President Truman issued orders to drop one, then a second atomic bomb on 2 significant Japanese industrial cities.
4. Some history revisionists blame Truman's demand for "unconditional surrender" from the Japanese as the reason we had to drop the bombs.
 - a. Folks, if you lived through the treachery of Pearl Harbor, you too would have demanded nothing less.
 - b. In fact, for Truman to accept less than an unconditional surrender would be like us negotiating with Osama Bin Laden after 9-11.
 - c. Why no negotiated truce? Because it would not have been a victory.
 - i. The enemy would still have their base of operations, and they would still been at war with us like North Korea still believes it is.

III. What does this history lesson have to do with our subject this morning?

- a. Maybe you can see some of the parallels.
- b. We are dealing with our own "unconditional surrender" to God.
 - i. I run into very few people who really "hate" God.
 - ii. Most folks I talk to want the benefits that a relationship with God provides.
 - iii. But when it comes to decision time, there is a foundational reason why many folks don't want to come to Him.
 1. They don't come because it means that they have give up control.
 2. They have to leave the driver's seat and yield that to God.
 3. When push comes to shove, most people don't want to give up being the god of their lives.
 4. And yet, there is room for only ONE God in heaven. Who will it be? You must settle that issue here on earth.
 - iv. So when we resist God, what does that mean?
 1. It means that we haven't surrendered.
 2. We still believe in the root of our being that we have "what it takes" to continue.
 3. We still have some resources left (or think we do).
 4. So we resist God as long as we have resources left to do "it" on our own.

IV. I would like to share some principles and paradoxes about surrender to make this principle clear.

- a. **Surrender brings splendor.**
 - i. Jesus provides us the model for surrender. If you watched the movie, The Passion, you probably have that image of Him in the garden etched indelibly in your mind. I watched it again this week just to reacquaint myself with the meaning of surrender.
 1. In the garden, Jesus is surrendering His will to His Father.
 2. We hear him saying in John 12:27, *"Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, 'Father, save me from what lies ahead'? But that is the very reason why I came!"*
 3. His agony concerning this surrender is so great that he perspires drops of blood rather than water.

- a. What is he surrendering to that could be so agonizing?
 - b. The agony isn't about death...we all die.
 - c. The agony isn't about a cruel death...people die tragic and cruel deaths every day.
 - d. The agony he endured in surrendering His will was about knowingly and willingly taking the punishment of all the sins of the world, past, present and future, upon himself on a cross.
 - e. The agony he endured in surrendering His will was about knowingly and willingly bearing and becoming sin,
 - i. The bible says that "*He who knew no sin became sin for us.*"
 - f. The agony he endured...was about bearing the wrath of His own Father that you and I deserved, that was going to be unleashed upon him.
 - g. That was the horror that he faced.
 - h. What is more, Jesus surrenders his will, his divine rights, everything...to take the divine judgment upon Himself so as to release you and I from that judgment.
4. Consider what Philippians 2:5-11 says, "*5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*"
- ii. My point that *surrender brings splendor* comes in here.
 1. Did you read verse 9? "*For this reason also, God highly exalted Him.*"
 2. Before Jesus was given the authority, the name before which all would bow, He surrendered. He came in unconditional surrender to His Father's will and purpose.
 - iii. At 9:04 a.m. on September 2, 1945, aboard the battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, World War II officially ended. Signing on behalf of Emperor Hirohito, the Japanese foreign minister inked his signature to the document declaring Japan's complete, unconditional surrender to the Allied powers.
 1. You might know what followed. With occupation aid and tutelage, Japan emerged from the ashes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Recovery, though slow, was steady. Japan became one of the most productive, peaceful countries in the world.
 2. Placing itself at the mercy of the prevailing powers allowed Japan to renew itself.
 3. **But first** the Japanese military and government had to completely give up, lay down its arms, and accept surrender with no conditions.
 - iv. If you desire the benefits of being a Christian, you and I must surrender.
 1. It is only through surrender that you can reap the benefits of your conqueror.

b. Surrender brings peace.

- i. When we put our faith in Christ and His work, God cleanses us from our sin and give us the righteousness of Christ.
 1. It is called the "great exchange."
 2. Imagine this deal: You give God your worthless sin and God gives you His infinitely valuable righteousness.
 3. A remarkable exchange takes place the moment we trust Christ.

4. Trusting Christ, placing our faith in Christ, is giving Him all that we are for all that He is.
 - a. It's seeing our self crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20). It's dying to self (Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9) whereby He might now reign as Lord in our lives. It's experiencing being "in Christ" (2 Cor. 5:17) and "Christ in me" (Col. 1:27).
 - b. His life has now become ours! It's a great exchange! An exchange that happened ultimately at salvation but continues through the Christian life as we put off the old self and put on the new (Eph. 4:22f; Col. 3:10f).
 - c. We trade our old self, once dead and bound to self-interest and pride and folly for a re-birth, for a new life in Him. We literally take on His life, which is "the life."
- ii. **There are two effects of the Great Exchange**
 1. **We have "peace with God."**
 - a. Romans 5:1 *"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"*
 - b. To have peace with God means that **the war is over**.
 - c. It means that the struggle has ended.
 - i. We are no longer at odds with God.
 - ii. We are no longer His enemies because of the separation of sin.
 - d. We have made an unconditional surrender of our lives to Him which results in us obtaining the benefits of peace.
 2. While we may have peace with God, we may still have turmoil and struggle in areas of our lives.
 - a. Making peace with God is the first step to experiencing the **peace OF God**.
 - b. The peace of God is experienced as we surrender the daily cares and worries of life to Him in prayer.
 - c. (Philippians 4:6-7) *6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything (did he say, in only the things you can't handle?) by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus"*
 3. Many of us here have **peace with God**; we know that we are loved by Him and that we are going to spend eternity with Him because we have surrendered control of our lives to Him and placed our faith in Christ rather than ourselves.
 - a. But there are many here who are not experiencing the **"peace of God"** because we are still operating in our own strength.
- iii. In Jesus' first recorded sermon, known to most of us as the sermon on the mount, we hear his words, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*
 1. Jesus had two words he could have chosen for poor. The first word which He did not use was a word that would have meant, "one who lives just below the poverty line." In other words, someone who is not well off as most folks.
 2. But the second word, which he did use, is a word that literally means "beggar."
 - a. This is one who is utterly destitute.
 - b. A beggar has no means of survival unless someone else helps him.
 3. What Jesus is saying is "blessed are the beggars" ...those who *recognize* that they are spiritually destitute and bankrupt.
 - a. They know that they have no means apart from God's provision.
 - b. Because they are acutely aware of their need, they reach out to Him.
 4. If you only see yourself as one below the spiritual poverty line, then you will not be constantly seeking the riches of God in every circumstance.

- a. You will not be living a life dependent upon God.
 - b. You will “sometimes” seek Him.
 - c. You will “sometimes” call on Him.
 - d. But your life is not a life of utter dependence.
 - e. And it will be a life that is missing peace. Your life will be peppered with turmoil and angst.
5. Wouldn't you rather have the peace of God that carries you through every circumstance, the faith that says, “God will take care of it.”
6. My wife and I both had a concern recently, I had turmoil in it, she had peace. As we talked about it, she shared that she had “given it to God” and His peace was covering her. I still was struggling with letting God have my concern with it. I hadn't surrendered it to Him. She had. And she was experiencing the peace of God.
- c. **Defeat means victory.**
- i. Our world is filled with looking and feeling good.
 - 1. Christians adopt it as well.
 - a. We want gain without pain, we want the resurrection without going to the grave, we want life without experiencing death, we want a crown without going the way of the cross.
 - ii. Most of us really want to accept the fact and the truth that we can't figure it out, that we can't do it ourselves and that we can't make it.
 - iii. But God's ways are not our ways. The way up is down.
 - iv. There is power in losing control.
 - 1. We gain only what we give up.
 - 2. Mt. 16:25 *“Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”*
 - v. **You must admit defeat if you are to win.**
 - 1. When we become Christians, we find our first task at hand seems to be “avoiding” sin. We want more than anything to live lives that are pleasing to God. We don't want to sin anymore.
 - 2. I remember when I became a Christian I got rid of everything that used to make me stumble. I avoided all sorts of situations that would draw me back into a lifestyle that would be sinful. An old girlfriend called me a couple of months after I became a Christian. I told her I was a Christian. She said “wow.” Then she asked if she could drive to Pittsburgh and visit over the weekend. It didn't take me more than a couple of seconds to calculate what would lead to what. I said no. I wasn't going back. I knew that would be defeat for me. I was going forward with God.
 - 3. As we mature as Christians, avoidance remains important, but less important as admission. We learn that admitting our sin and tendency toward sin is as or more important for victory. When we admit we are weak, we discover God's strength.
 - 4. Just like the AA – when you admit you have a need, it is only then that you can find help.
- d. **Surrender is the path to Victory**
- i. (James 4:7) *“Submit yourselves unto God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”*
 - 1. If you do not first submit to God you never will resist the devil, and you will remain constantly under his power.
 - a. Many of us wonder why we experience so little victory in our lives, and it is because the stronghold (our study 2 weeks ago) still exists.

- b. The stronghold is our will.
 - c. The stronghold is where the enemy holds up.
 - 2. Until the stronghold is torn down, until the surrender occurs, we will not have victory.
 - 3. Somehow we think that we can “sometimes serve God” and “always have victory.”
 - 4. Your victory is proportional to your surrender.
 - e. **Commitment under girds everything else in the Christian life.**
 - i. The call of Christ is always a call to commitment.
 - 1. It is a call to trust Him.
 - 2. It is a call to live for Him.
 - 3. It is a call to follow Him.
 - 4. It is a call to surrender our lives to Him.
 - 5. Someone once tried to describe commitment using the illustration of a breakfast of bacon and eggs.
 - a. The chicken contributed to the breakfast.
 - b. The pig was committed.
 - ii. What level is your commitment. Is it surrender or merely a “contribution?”
 - f. **Saving faith is unconditional surrender.**
 - i. Surrender is not saying okay, I promise to obey all of the rules from now on, God.
 - ii. It is not a submission to the church and your pastor.
 - iii. While those things might and ought to happen, they don’t constitute surrender.
 - iv. They are the fruits of surrender.
 - v. Surrender is an act of the will.
 - 1. In Matthew 19, don’t turn to it, there is a story of a rich young ruler who approached Jesus and said, "What must I do to have eternal life?" And Jesus said, "Sell all you have," and do what? "Give it to the poor." Jesus said, "Come follow me."
 - a. Here's a guy who comes to Jesus and says, "What do I do to get eternal life?" Jesus said, "Give your money away."
 - b. Is that the right answer? You put that on your quiz at Bible College and you will flunk!
 - c. What do you mean, "Give your money away," is that salvation by philanthropy?
 - d. What is Jesus saying? The young man said, "I want eternal life." Jesus said, "Yeah, that's fine, but we are going to deal with something else first.
 - i. Because He knew that money was the god of this man's life, Jesus says, "Let's deal with the issue, I know that you want eternal life, but are you willing to give up everything, if I ask you?"
 - e. The bible says that the ruler went away. He wasn’t willing to pay the price.
 - f. Salvation is an exchange of all that I am for all that He is.
 - 2. It's saying, "I won't follow me, I'll follow you."
 - 3. It doesn’t say, “I will follow you as long as you make my life nice and sweet” or “as long as you give me what I want.”
 - a. Surrender is you recognizing who won!
 - g. Illustration: There must be an unconditional surrender of the will to God, before God can get full possession of the affections of the heart, to bring it to life.

- i. There was a man who would go into an seekers' service; he would rise in a large meeting, and ask Christians to pray for him. He knew of no sin in his life that he had not given up, and wondered why he could not find peace.
- ii. At last a man who sat near him asked him to leave the seat he then occupied in a large meeting, and come and kneel with me at the front of the church.
 1. This was the very thing he had said he would never do.
 2. His pride and will rose in a desperate struggle.
 3. Should he do, at the invitation of a stranger, what he had said he would never do?
 4. Could there be anything special about going forward? Why can't I just tell God my need here at my seat? He had laid down conditions for God. He was not unconditional in his surrender. He was holding back.
 5. But the difficulty wasn't really about where he was, it was his will.
 6. Finally he said: "I will give up, and do what I have refused to do for fifteen years."
 7. He started to come to a front seat, and before he had gone half way to that seat, he felt in his heart that his sins were gone, and that he was "a new creature in Christ Jesus."
 8. It was not the place, but the will in the way. He had refused to admit his need. He had not surrendered.
 9. He might have sought Christ fifteen years longer, and died without becoming a Christian, if he had not given up that one condition..."I wont go forward."
 10. His will was holding onto a straw.
 - i. A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

V. Where are you today? Who is in charge? Who runs your life...You or Jesus?

a. In light of what Jesus did for you, can you hold anything back?

- i. What "conditions" are you giving God? You won't go forward? You don't want to be baptized? You don't want to give up this or that?
 1. It's not salvation until its unconditional. Let God take charge. Let go...today.

Let's Pray.