"THE SURRENDERED LIFE"

Scripture Reading: Matthew 25:20; Matthew 7:21; Matthew 25:41; Matthew 20:15-16

'His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.'

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Scripture Reading: Matthew 20:15-16

Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? ¹⁶ So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

INTROPUCTION

The three Categories of Christians

In the first category, I saw people came to know God, had a very personal revelation from God, caught the fire of the Holy Spirit and they stayed continuously zealous for God until this very day.

Matthew 25:21 'His master said, to him, "Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things: enter into the joy of your master.'

The phrase, 'Well done, good and faithful slave' points to good stewardship. Good stewardship is the responsible overseeing and protecting of something considered worth caring for and preserving.

'Enter into the joy of your master' is a repeated phrase found constantly in the New Testament and an idiom for entering the Kingdom.

Service for Christ is service for the family of God.

The phrase, 'The joy' is health and growth of the fellowship.

This person is praised not for success, but for being a good steward. God is looking for goodness and faithfulness.

'Over a few things', means the sum entrusted to him was considerable in itself (the ministry given is considerable in itself), but LITTLE compared with the riches of His LORD and little in comparison of the reward bestowed upon him.

'I will make thee ruler' implies having authority over; from being a slave (for Jesus' sake) he is raised to the position of a master.' I also see another category of Christian. They started well, were zealous of the things of God. But when persecution comes, worldliness creep into their lives, the cares of the world overtook them, pressure mounted on them, they realized the cost, they decided to pull back only to become an audience, church attendees, spectators in the church. They too became irregular in church attendance, yet thinking that they are saved and on the way to heaven. They became lawless and accursed (doomed).

To these people Jesus will say to them, 'Depart from me, I never knew you, be ye cast into everlasting fire prepared for Satan and the devil.' The phrase, 'I never knew you' was a strong grammatical construction in Greek. The term 'know' had an Old Testament background meaning 'intimate, personal relationship'. So, Jesus was saying, 'there was no intimate, personal relationship in the first place'.

Jesus said, 'depart from me.' This is a present active tense, a continuing command rendered literally as 'keep on departing from Me.

Jesus stated that these people practice lawlessness.

The third category of Christian I have had the opportunity to come across are those who were apprehensive and careful in the beginning and slowly, but surely, they became interested.

Matthew 20:16. This scripture verse comes before the end of the verse, 'for many are called, but few chosen'. These two verses can be understood in two ways:

A. All believers will not receive equal rewards, but equal standing in the kingdom. This is a biblical tension between a free salvation and Christlike discipleship.

B. The Jews who received the promises of God first will not receive greater rewards or blessings than Gentiles believers.

Why do Christians behave differently? Why are their services and commitment so drastic in comparison to one another. It has to do with how they consecrated and gave their lives to God.

All the three groups' behavior has to do with their surrender to God.

The surrendered life is spoken of by Jesus many times in the bible.

Jesus say, 'If any man will lose his life, shall save it; if any man will save his life shall lose it. Jesus also says, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and follow after me.' To surrender is to yield, to relinquish possession of, to abandon, to give, to cease to claim. It is a yielding or giving up, an abandonment without debate or argument and murmuring.

1. The Characteristics of a surrendered life

What are the characteristics of a surrendered life? **Firstly** it is death to Sin. It simply means dead to sin or saying No to sin.

1 John 1:7-9 says, 'But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Paul says in Colossians 3:5-11 'Away then with sinful earthly things, deaden the evil desires lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual sin (committed by a married man to a woman that is not his wife or adultery; fornication committed by a man before he is married to the woman. Impurity, lust and shameful desires (having unclean thoughts, shameful desires), don't worship the good things of life for that is idolatry. God's terrible anger is upon those who do such thing. You used to do them when your life was still part of this world but now is the time to cast off and throw away all these; rotten garments of anger, hatred, cursing and dirty language.

Secondly, a surrendered life has fellowship with Christ's death

2 Corinthians 4:11, 'For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.'

Thirdly, a surrendered life displays the rendering of unquestioning service.

Fourthly a surrendered life display resignation in trials.

But a surrendered life sees ad receive all as from God.

In conclusion, many of us fall into the categories of second group of Christians. We started well, were zealous of the things of God. But when persecution comes, worldliness creep into our lives, the cares of the world overtook us, pressure mounted on us, we realized the cost, we decided to pull back only to become an audience, church attendees, spectators in the church. We too became irregular in church attendance. Jesus knew we are in this category. But he lived a totally surrendered life for our sakes. He knew no sin, when we have sinned. We experienced death, when we were not willing to die.

He served God with unquestioning service when we failed miserably, murmuring, complaining. He displayed resignation to trials, when we like Peter, denied him multiple times. All that we failed he succeeded and went to the cross to take all the failures on our surrendered life. For our unsurrendered life, he was nailed to the cross and took the wrath of God for our sake. But when he was resurrected, he has come looking for you as he looked for Peter. And he says to you, I want you to feed my sheep.

When you are afraid of failure again, he breathed into you the Holy Spirit and baptized you with the Power of the Holy Spirit. He energized your spirit to be able to live this surrendered life like Peter did. And he will constantly be with you until you meet him one day in heaven. He says to you today, 'Come, I forgive you. Just be honest with me like Billy Graham and totally surrender you live to me one more time. And I will make you effective again.