

Following in the Footsteps of Jesus

SURRENDER - ADJUST - OBEY

Galatians 2:20

April 23, 2022

At the center of our life of discipleship is Jesus. We have chosen to **hold fast to, cling to, bond to, attach ourselves to, be faithful to** ---- HIM.

This is only a part of the equation, however, because the very essence of the Christian life is not just to hold fast to Jesus, but to become **LIKE HIM**.

Paul saw the formation of Christ in the life of a believer as his primary mission:

- **Romans 12:2** - Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is -- his good, pleasing and perfect will.
- **2 Corinthians 3:18** - And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
- **Galatians 4:19** - My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you,

Before we can start becoming like Him, there are a few things we have to commit to every moment of the day ---- **SURRENDER** and **OBEDIENCE** and this require a little **ADJUSTING**.

Surrender

Have you ever heard the saying, "**God is my co-pilot.**"? It sounds all nice and spiritual, but is it really? If God is only the co-pilot, that makes me the pilot. I remain in control of my situation and only call on Him when I can no longer control the plane on my own. Definitely a very human view of surrender.

God's view of surrender is that we hand the controls over to Him and go sit in the back of the plane and enjoy the complimentary beverage service. This makes us very uncomfortable and will require an adjustment in our thinking, because what if He takes us somewhere we don't want to go? What if the landing is bumpier than we'd like? What if the plane..... crashes?

- **Listen to the words of Ken Gire from his amazing little book, "Windows of the Soul"** - *"It came the summer after my senior year in high school when I was at a Young Life camp in Colorado. During a twenty-minute time of silence after one of the evening messages, I felt compelled to answer Christ's love as it called to me from the cross. That night, while sitting under a tree, I answered that call with my life, thinking my life would be of little use to Him, but still, if He wanted it for something, it was His for the taking.*

Answering that call seemed so natural. So much had been given; so little had been asked in return. How could I not entrust my life to so great a love? And yet, somewhere in the subterranean places of my heart flowed a very quiet but very real fear of trusting too much. I feared that if I got too serious about my relationship with God, that if I got close enough to where He could see the whites of my eyes, He might call me out from the crowd, call me by name, send me somewhere I didn't want to go.... I remembered the story of Jonah.... That could be me if I wasn't careful how I worded things. He might send me to Nineveh. I remembered the story of Abraham too.... What if God asked me to take a knife to all the Isaac's in my life? You get on a first-name basis with God and who knows what could happen to you?"

In order for this transfer of power to be successful, we have to go limp.....

Lifeguards know that it is virtually impossible to save a drowning person who struggles and fights against his rescuer. The only way to be rescued is for the victim to go limp - to surrender. Only then can the lifeguard put his arms around him and pull him to safety. As long as the victim fights, he is destined to drown.

But that is exactly what God wants. He wants us to give up our insistence on being the "**directors of our own destinies**" to our "**self-determination**" to our "**YOU are NOT the boss of ME!!**" thinking and go limp {**surrender**} in His arms, trusting in His promises and ability to fulfill **HIS** plans and purposes for our lives.

Because truth be told, not a single plan you can come up with holds a candle to the plan God has for you... {**Jeremiah 29:11 & 1 Corinthians 2:9**}

In David McCasland's biography on Oswald Chambers, he recounts a period in Oswald's life when he experienced a great struggle over his life's work, the direction God wanted to take him, and the surrender of his life to God. This period lasted for 4 years - "**Finally, the long night**"

was over and peace had come. The citadel of his heart had fallen, not to a conquering Christ, but to the gentle knocking of a wounded hand..... Chambers crisis of full surrender to God in 1901 profoundly altered his life. The things he once held dear were willingly sacrificed and traded for complete reliance upon God. 'All I have to do is come as a spiritual pauper, not ashamed to beg, to let go of right to myself, it is never do, do and you'll be with the Lord, but be, be, and I will do through you. It is a case of 'hands up' and letting go, and then entire reliance on Him'' [Oswald Chambers: Abandoned to God pg. 87, 89]

Is this too much for Jesus to ask of you? No! Why? Because He surrendered everything to the Father - **FOR YOU:**

- **Galatians 1:3-4** - Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father...
- **Philippians 2:5-8** - Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!

Surrender will require us to adjust and obey.

Adjust

Anytime you move from where you are to where God wants you to be --- from your way of thinking to God's way of thinking -- adjustments will be required in order to follow Him.

- Noah had to adjust his life in order to do what God asked him to do. He surrendered - adjusted and obeyed ---- and an Ark was built.
- Abraham had to adjust his life to go where God wanted him to go. He surrendered - adjusted and obeyed ---- and a Nation was born.
- Moses had to adjust his life in order to become the leader God needed. He surrendered - adjusted and obeyed ---- and a Nation was delivered.
- The disciples had to adjust their lives in order to become the missionaries God needed. They surrendered - adjusted and obeyed ---- and a world was evangelized.

Obey

Christians have reduced obedience to following a set of rules. But obedience is more than mere law keeping. Christian obedience is grounded in our relationship with a Person - Jesus.

As we have noted in the past, obedience is **THE WALK** of faith - getting up and going where God wants us go and doing what He wants us to do - trusting that He has the details worked out.

In WW2, an elite group of soldiers was formed - the paratroopers. The goal of the paratroopers was to drop behind enemy lines and have the ability to move fast against the enemy. Of course, part of paratrooper training was jumping out of a perfectly good plane.

When the green light went on, each soldier jumped, without pause, without doubt, without reflection, without questioning. If a paratrooper hesitated at the door, he was washed out of training and sent to the worst possible alternative - the infantry.

It was not **AT** the door that the soldier decided whether or not to jump. That was not the time to question if the plane was going in the right direction, at the right speed and height or begin a debate on whether the **"stick"** had really been ordered to jump or insist that the jump be smooth and the landing comfortable or wonder if jumping was really the safest thing to do.

The only relevant question was, **"Did you sign up to be a paratrooper?"** If the answer was, **"yes"**, then you jumped out the door.

The only relevant question for the Christian is, **"Did you choose to follow Jesus?"** If the answer is, **"yes"**, then you wait when He says, **"wait"**, stop when He says, **"stop"**, and go when He says, **"go."**

Obedience is not a checklist ---- it is a way of life.

- **Bill Hull {The Complete Book of Discipleship 117}** - Beyond calling us to follow, Jesus also described the nature of the commitment that we need to follow Him. My whole life is the answer to Jesus' call to follow Him. He calls and I answer, not just in words, but in the action of following. George MacDonald noted, "Instead of asking yourself whether you believe or not, ask yourself whether you have this day done one thing because He said, 'Do it,' or once abstained because He said, 'Do not do it.' It is simply absurd to say you believe, or even want to believe in Him, if you not do anything He tells you."

Surrender, Adjustment and Obedience go hand in hand on our journey of discipleship. We surrender - adjust - obey - and as we do, Jesus reveals more and more of Himself to us and we grow - we mature - we become more like Him.

Ephesians 3:16-21 - I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. ²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.