

ASK: Prayer of Surrender

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1 Samuel 3:1-10

I've been talking about these 2 kingdoms: The Kingdom of Self v the Kingdom of God. We naturally gravitate towards KOS, not KOG. In case you've not heard, I'm a grandfather. (Picture #1) Our daughter, Jessee, sent us this picture last Sunday (#2). Lonnie is bending over looking at something....it's a mirror. Jessee's caption to describe the scene: "*Lonnie kissing her favorite person.*" (Maybe we should spend as much time in prayer or in the Bible as we do looking in the mirror) Nothing wrong with that....when you're 11 months old. Something IS wrong with that when you're 11 yrs old, etc.

We have a choice which Kingdom we'll live in: the "KOS" or the "KOG." We could also live in the Kingdom of Satan. The kingdom belongs to the King. The fundamental question = who is the King (or queen) of our lives? Me (default); Satan (evil) or Jesus (the way, truth, life)

Jesus is our model for someone who came to not only TALK about the KOG, but to LIVE it out. His MESSAGE and His MISSION were the same. We see Him: Obedient to the Father, as a Servant, He was poor, He was welcoming to the sinners/outcasts and confronted the self-righteous, He cast His message far/wide, He was despised and rejected – not everyone followed Him, in fact, He was crucified for living in the KOG. It was costly. And it was costly for the Disciples who followed Him, too. It wasn't a hobby or an hour a week if they could get around to it; it was a life-time pursuit. All of the Disciples were martyred, except for Judas who didn't give Jesus an opportunity to redeem him, and John, who was exiled and not martyred. Jesus stressed that the KOG was available (for YOU) and immediate (NOW!).

One of the "Dark Ages" of the Bible is found in the Book of Judges. This was a bleak, chaotic and dark period in the life of Israel. "**Judges 21:25** is the last verse of that Book. Listen to the verse: ***In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.*** (Revised Standard Version) I've been talking about living in "The Kingdom of Self," that is what "*Everyone did what was right in his own eyes*" means.

Following the Book of Judges is the Book of **Ruth**. Naomi's husband died. Then her two sons died. She had no income, no pension and no Social Security. She was a destitute widow. She urged her daughter-in-law's to leave to find a husband elsewhere. One daughter-in-law did so. She kissed Naomi and left. The

other daughter-in-law, Ruth, surrendered her future and her life to follow Naomi. **(Ruth 1:16-18) But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me." When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.**

The Book of 1 Samuel begins with the barrenness of a woman named Hannah. She ends up giving her son to God (you should read the first chapter of 1 Samuel). Today's text is: 1 Samuel 3:1-10:

In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions. Things haven't been going well in Israel for some time (The Book of Judges). Yet, when things seem most hopeless, like the Book of Ruth shows, God is still speaking. There's a note of hope that things would be different: *The **boy** (he's not yet 13) Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions.*² *One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely **see** (he was a woeful Priest – his sons were monsters and Eli couldn't prevent them from acting out), was lying down in his usual place.*³ *The lamp of God had not yet gone out (the Lamp would burn through the night, so this would've happened before sunrise), and Samuel was lying down in the **temple** of the Lord (Solomon's Temple would occur later – this was at a place called "Shiloh." It was also called "The Tabernacle."), where the ark of God was.*⁴ *Then the Lord called Samuel. Samuel answered, "**Here I am.**"* (This is the language of response some of the greatest Biblical characters: Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Isaiah and Jesus who were also called by God and gave the same "Here I am" answer.)⁵ *And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.*⁶ *Again the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." "My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."*

⁷ *Now Samuel did not yet **know** the Lord: The word of the Lord had not yet been **revealed** to him.* (This ability to "Know the Lord" is intimate. Jesus also described in John 10 how his sheep know his voice and they follow Him.)⁸ *The Lord called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy.*⁹ *So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is **listening.**'"* (Listening to the Lord is what prayer is. While we probably won't hear an audible voice, we can still listen to God in a variety of ways. One way is to invite Him to speak to us. Another is to be still and wait.) *So Samuel went and lay*

down in his place. ¹⁰ The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Our new sermon series is called: "ASK." Today we talk about "the Prayer of Surrender."

WHAT is surrender? It means giving up to God and doing things His way, not mine.

WHY should I surrender?

Our kingdoms all implode. God's kingdom won't. Do you want to give your life for a Kingdom that will collapse or a kingdom that will be victorious?

The Prayer of Surrender **aligns our will** with the Kingdom of God so we'll start living more like Jesus and less like our natural, self-absorbed selves. When Jesus prayed the prayer of surrender in the Garden of Gethsemane he aligned Himself with God. Going to the cross was not what He wanted to do, but He was going to do God's will regardless. Even though he was crucified, the Christian faith never ENDS with crucifixion – it ends with RESURRECTION.

God's character is Good. We can trust Him. Surrendering to God is not like surrendering to Isis or the Nazis. God isn't cruel. Following God leads to the best life = one who surrenders to God's purposes and ways.

WHAT should I surrender?

My **RIGHTS**. Servants give up their rights. That's what Samuel was. That's who Jesus was.

My **EXPECTATIONS**. We think life will go in one direction but it seldom does. Sometimes what we think should happen doesn't and we find out that in the long run, it all worked out for the best.

My **MONEY/POSSESSIONS**. Jesus constantly told people not to worry about this – but to be a generous, not stingy. Nearly all of us could live with less in a more simple way. Rarely will our stuff bring us joy.

A Psychologist rigged "Monopoly" games in a research experiment. One of the 2 players got \$400 when they passed "GO" instead of \$200 and they got to roll 2 dice while the other player only rolled one. As the player with the advantage began to prevail, they'd slap the board, boast and arrogantly move their piece from space to space. Success made them taunt their opponent. Wealth, even in a rigged game with fake money, made them mean. The psychologist claimed that this behavior was also seen in rich people in real life. He said they were more likely to cheat in a computer game and to take candy from a jar clearly labeled as being for children. He said they were also less likely to stop for pedestrians at crosswalks or to give money to strangers (think of Steve Jobs parking in handicapped parking spaces because he could). He concluded that when our

wealth increases our compassion decreases.

Money doesn't have to make us mean. There are plenty of good and generous wealth people. But, buyer beware! Wealth and arrogance over prevail in the Kingdom of Self. We need to surrender our money to God, too.

My **TIME**. Those who came to our prayer service last week were challenged. It was different than I'd expected...but then I didn't know what to expect, either, really. But I left feeling like it had been good.

"Last year I mentored six 6th graders at Walt Whitman. I went there nearly every Thursday. I also went to their ball games, school programs, etc. We read 3 'Alex Rider' books (sort of a junior James Bond) which are fairly advanced reading for the kids' level and then a book of poetry/rap called Crossover. They'd take the book we were reading home with them and read a chapter or 2 during the week/weekend on their own. I'd usually take 2-3 large pizzas and sometimes Cathy's chocolate dessert. We'd talk about various things going on in their lives. Then we'd talk about what they read during the week to make sure they were getting some reading comprehension and then we'd take turns reading out loud and go around the group 3-4 times. The kids actually raised their reading levels dramatically in the first 90 days (between 200-300 points). A couple went from "unsatisfactory" to "proficient" or "advance" (that would be 2-3 levels). It made their teacher/principal cry. Then they continued to show improvement after that but not as much. I didn't do anything special, just spent time with them, showed them someone genuinely cared about them and got them interested in reading. They did the rest. They wanted to learn. I really enjoyed getting to spend time with them. It may sound cheesy but it blessed me greatly to spend time with them. They took turns praying over our lunch. Some of their prayers were pretty awesome – others were pretty funny ("Thank you Lord for Mr. Tim and especially for Ms. Cathy's chocolate dessert). I spent a lot of time praying for each one of the students & their families as well as the elementary school and the staff. Getting involved in something like this really helps to re-align focus and priorities and get into God's wheelhouse.

It's about learning to love God with my **AFFECTIONS**. We become what we love. If we love God, then when we think of surrender, we'll not think that it's like surrendering to the Nazis or Isis or to some cruel person.

HOW do I surrender?

A child, like Samuel, can do this. Parents can help. My initial surrender was as a teenager.

Daily. Surrender isn't a "once and done" any more than repeating vows at a wedding makes for a great marriage.

I'd like to lead you in a Prayer of Surrender. This might be the very 1st time you've ever given your life to Christ – or it might be the 100th or the 10,000th. But it's something we do which is incredibly meaningful. Living for the KOG = LIFE. Following Jesus = Life. If we live for the praise and adoration of men then we can get it...but that's ALL we'll get. But if we want to hear God say "Well done thou good and faithful servant – enter my heaven" we have to surrender. And with that surrender, which feels like crucifixion, you'll also find a great surprise. It's called resurrection. Your Good Friday moment becomes an Easter Sunday.

Wesley's Covenant Prayer of Surrender

I am no longer my own, but yours. Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will; put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you, exalted for you, or brought low for you; let me be full, let me be empty, let me have all things, let me have nothing: I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal. And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. So be it. And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

"Speak, for your servant is listening." How do we listen?

I invite you to come back to our Prayer service at 4:30 in the Chapel this afternoon