

Show-Me Your Surrender

Genesis 14:18-20

We live in what we call the “post-modernist” era. The central idea of post modernism is that everyone is an authority unto himself, that people do what they feel is right *for them*. The post modernist thinker does not accept any absolute authority, including that of God. Ultimately, this philosophy leads to a rejection of authority from any source, including government, law enforcement, even parents. It’s very much like the philosophy ancient people followed and that was described by Judges. “There was no king - every man did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6).

The Bible warns us against this philosophy, and teaches us that our actions must be governed by divine truth. Christians must realize that what we do must ultimately stem from surrender to God’s authority in our lives. The very definition of being a Christian is that one has surrendered himself to Jesus Christ, God the Son, as Lord of all life.

At the heart of every biblical expectation of the Christian and the people of God is that we must surrender to God. God’s laws make practical sense, of course; but even when we do not see clearly the purpose of God, and even when we may feel that God’s principles make demands on us that are difficult, we are to obey because these principles and commands come from God.

One of the lessons we derive from the stories of the patriarchs is that they recognized the sovereignty of God. By faith they obeyed Him, even when they didn’t understand everything their obedience would mean—or what it might cost. Abram is a good example. God told him to pack up and travel wherever He led him. Abram did so, because God was God.

As Abram settled in Canaan, he prospered. At one point, several local kings ganged up and captured several cities, including Sodom, where Abram’s nephew Lot lived. Abram mobilized his forces and defeated these kings, and rescued Lot. When Abram was riding home, he came near Salem, and the king and high priest of Salem, Melchizedek, came out to meet him. In Genesis 14:18-20, here’s what the Bible says took place:

18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.

19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:

20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies

into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

Because of his success in battle, Abram was thankful to God, to whom he had surrendered his life, fortune and future.

(Summary of verses)

Abram expressed his surrender to the Most High God by giving the priest and King Melchizedek tithes of all.

(Thesis of this message)

When we surrender to Jesus Christ as the Son of God, He must become Lord of all, including Lord of our giving, so that the priestly mission of Christ may go forward.

(Goal of this message)

Applying this principle, every Christian today hearing this scripture should surrender his life to Christ through giving. Surrendering our lives is how we show God our faith. When we say to Christ, "I believe in you," He says, "**Show me!**"

By Making Me Lord of All

The overarching way in which we show God our surrender is by making Him Lord of all. For every Christian, at some point there must be a surrender of his entire life to the mastery of Christ. That's what we do when we come to Jesus for salvation. We say, "Jesus is Lord." Romans 10:9 says that when we believe Jesus, who was crucified for our sins, was raised from the dead and we declare Him Lord, we are saved.

When Abram neared Salem, Melchizedek came to meet him. Melchizedek was both the king of Salem (later Jerusalem) and its high priest. Abram's actions indicate clearly that he recognized Melchizedek as both a worshiper and a priest of the same God that Abram served. So Abram honored God himself when he gave an offering to Melchizedek. Long ago, Abram had said yes to God when he left his home in Ur and began a journey whose goal he didn't know. It didn't matter; Abram was surrendered to God. His offering to Melchizedek further expressed his surrender.

Abram expressed his surrender because he had been victorious in battle and Lot had been saved. You and I must surrender because Jesus Christ has been victorious over sin and death and has provided salvation for us. Nothing less than the surrender of our entire lives will show our gratitude to God. **Jesus must be Lord of all.**

A story from a mission field tells how a missionary preached to a fledgling church of primitive people about surrender of life. When the time came for an offering to be taken (we can tell it was a Baptist missionary!), one man, having nothing in his possession, placed the basket on the ground and stood in it. He was giving his life to Christ.

It would be a good idea for us to consider ways in which we can show God our surrender. What basket will you stand in? How will you demonstrate with your daily living that you belong to Jesus? How will you show God your surrender? Surrender must be total, but it must not be general. True surrender gets very specific.

By Giving Me Thankful Gifts

Certainly one of the most effective demonstrations of the lordship of Christ is the surrender of our money. In effect, God's word says, "Show me your surrender by giving me thankful gifts."

Notice in the story of Abram that he did not merely bow or make symbolic gestures honoring Melchizedek. He did something; he gave him tithes of all. "All" most likely refers to the booty he had gotten in his rout of the "gang of four" kings. That was his income for the week, so to speak.

Abram set a powerful example that became the prototype for the offerings of God's people for all time to come. First, he gave out of surrender and thanksgiving; and second, he gave a tithe, a proportion of his increase that eventually became the standard of the Old Testament law.

This Bible passage demands the interpretation that God wants His people to show their surrender to Him by giving.

Sam Houston, once president of Texas, was converted late in life. When he was baptized, he said he wanted to begin paying half of the preacher's salary. Asked, "Why?" he responded simply, "In my pocketbook was baptized, too."

God wants each of us to serve Him and surrender to Him with our pocketbooks. One of the most important ways to serve God is by working together with other Christians to carry out the Great Commission. In fact, the mission ventures of your church and your conventions will not succeed without your surrendered giving.

Southern Baptists, surrendering to God's purpose and guidance, devised the most efficient method of missionary work in the world. Begun in 1925, the Cooperative Program sought to unite the efforts of Southern Baptist churches, state Baptist conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. It all begins with you, the Christian and church member, when you give, in surrender to Christ's command.

This church performs mission and ministry through your gifts and activity. We pass on a portion of our offerings to the Missouri Baptist Convention, which carries out the directions of all Missouri Baptist churches through church planting, evangelism, partnership missions, and much more. They, in turn, pass on a percentage of offerings from the churches to the Southern Baptist Convention, which operates six seminaries,

the International Mission Board, the North American Mission Board, and other agencies. Hundreds of Southern Baptist pastors are graduated from our seminaries every year, and our current force of missionaries is nearing 11,000. This is the Cooperative Program—and it all depends on your pocketbook being surrendered to God.

You see, giving is not just a token to God; God has a very specific purpose for our gifts - the advancement of His kingdom. Here's the third way that God tells us, "Show me your surrender:"

By Committing Yourself to His Kingdom

Abram gave tithes to Melchizedek. In the book of Hebrews, the New Testament author goes to great lengths to show us that Melchizedek was a symbol of the coming Jesus Christ. Hebrews proves that by giving offerings to Melchizedek. Abram's unborn priestly sons, the children of Levi, were by representation, submitting themselves to Melchizedek. What this means is that Abram was symbolically surrendering to the Christ of God, though he did not know His name.

So giving, in the Bible, ultimately symbolizes surrender to the Lordship of the Son of God. And the Son of God Himself, Jesus, issued a command just before He left the earth - to take the gospel to all people everywhere. The first disciples believed He meant it, and they committed their lives and their means to His commission. The disciples were not timid about asking churches everywhere to dig deep to support missions so that the gospel might be spread in obedience to Christ's command. They did not attempt to motivate people to give solely on the basis of emotional response to need. First and foremost, the biblical concept of giving is that it expresses our surrender to Jesus Christ as Lord. But the purpose was clear - that the message of Christ might spread from country to country, city to city, person to person, until the whole world knows a Savior has come.

When we say Jesus is Lord we must be aware of the implications for our giving to missions. Southern Baptists have followed God's wisdom in establishing an effective mission strategy. We supplement the Cooperative Program with three separate major offerings focusing on local, North American, and international missionary forces. Southern Baptist missions - from our church work to the work of the farthest missionary on the continent of Asia - depend on your responding to the challenge of stewardship. When we ask you to commit yourself to giving to this church, or to give generously and sacrificially to the Missouri Missions Offering, the Annie Armstrong Offering, or the Lottie Moon Offering, we are doing more than asking you for money, we are challenging you to surrender yourself to the cause of Christ's kingdom. If you are surrendered to Him in His kingdom work, we will not need to beg for your support.

Money is usually the last thing people are willing to turn over to God. But until we surrender our money, we haven't surrendered our all. And if we're still holding out, we need to recognize what our reluctance probably means.

Jesus was approached by a man we often call the rich young ruler. He asked how he could have eternal life. After a brief exchange in which the man declared how obedient he already was to God, Jesus told him abruptly there was one thing he hadn't done. He told him to sell everything, give it away to the poor, and come follow Him. The story ends with this sad fact: "And he went away grieved, for he had great possessions."

Jesus knew that young man served money, not God. Jesus presented him a choice: serve God or serve things. Put to the same test today, how do we respond? Do we go away sad, because we are not willing to surrender our money to God in reality as well as our lives in theory? Or do we say, 'Here, Lord, I show You my surrender. I give, because you are Lord, and because by giving, others, too, will know of Your salvation.'