

The Heart of a Surrendered Life

Luke 9:23

Introduction:

1. God's plan for the believer is found in **Galatians 5:22-23**. This describes for us the character and attitude that Christ desires to produce in and through us.
 - **Galatians 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 meekness, and self-control; against such, there is no law.**
2. These fruits are displayed in us when we surrender our will to God's will and allow Christ's Spirit to flow through us freely, however, self always stands in defiance of surrender.
3. What does a heart of surrender require?

The heart of a surrendered life is a denying of your flesh.

1. Look at **verse 23** again. The word "*deny*" means "to deny utterly, to disown, to reject."
2. Again, "*The flesh*" speaks of the part of us that desires to live independent of God and it seeks self-gratification, rather than seeking to please Christ.
3. Anything that would hinder us from seeking Christ and pull us away from Him, we gladly refuse and refrain. Anything keeping us from total surrender to Christ, we must take out of our lives. In **Titus 2:11-12 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us**

that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, righteously, and in godliness in this present world,

4. **When self is on the throne of our heart, we are always looking for ways to excuse ourselves and skirt around things in our life. Why? The flesh does not want to deny itself. The flesh wants what it wants and it wants it now.**
5. **To come to the place where you truly desire to surrender to Christ and deny the flesh, you must:**
 - Never be satisfied with where you are in your development and growth as a follower of Christ.**
 - Have a true, deep yearning for Christ. **Luke 9:23** - ***“If anyone will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”*****
 - Decide to do whatever it takes to experience Christ’s life-giving power in and through you.**
6. **At key times in your life, you will be faced with a decision – will I follow after my flesh or Christ?**

What does a heart of surrender require?

The heart of a surrendered life is a denying of your flesh.

The heart of a surrendered life is death to the mindset of, “I’m going to live my life my way”.

1. In our text, Jesus said that in order to come after Him you must take up your cross daily.
2. **What is your cross? What did Jesus mean?** Many people think that their cross is a certain thing or a certain person –

I.E.> *“this old car that is always breaking down is my cross to bear, my job and my boss is my cross to bear, my sickness or constant health issue is my cross to bear, my husband is my cross to bear, my kids, my mortgage, after all – we all have our cross to bear, etc.”*

3. But I want to teach you something that you might not know. When someone said the word or talked about the **“cross”** in Jesus’ day, immediately, everybody knew what it meant – **it meant death!** This wasn’t just some ornament hanging around your neck like jewelry or a painting on the wall or some decorative piece hung on a building.
4. **Jesus was clearly teaching that if you want to follow Him, you must die to your way and follow My way – Jesus is saying, die to your way and realize that I am life, I am your only life source, and My way is life.**
 - It is saying, *“Lord, I am yours – lock, stock, and barrel. No longer will I do things my way, but I am coming after You and doing things Your way.”* **Romans 12:1**
5. **Your cross is not a person, a thing, or an event. It is your entire life. It is dying to self and surrendering everything over to Christ.**
6. While it is reasonable for a believer to surrender their way to Christ’s way, it is a lot more difficult than one might think. Why? We very much like having it our way. We know this is true, don’t we?
 - Remember the hamburger chain whose motto was, “Have it your way”?**
 - Show Burger King vintage video**

- That philosophy appeals to the most basic desire of a man's nature.
7. **Left to ourselves, we want it our way. We like having it our way.**
- Satan didn't tempt Adam and Eve to steal, to kill, or commit adultery. He tempted them to simply live independently of God, convincing them to do things their **own** way.
 - Satan asked, *"You want that fruit?" He said, "Take it and enjoy it. It doesn't matter what God said. Have it your way."*
8. **Our biggest problem is that we want our own way, which is in opposition to God's way. This has always been man's biggest struggle. **Judges 17:6; Psalm 81:12; Proverbs 12:15; 28:26; Isaiah 5:21; 53:6; 2 Timothy 3:2-4****
- **Judges 17:6 - In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**
 - **Psalm 81:12 - So I gave them up to their stubborn hearts, to walk in their own counsels.**
 - **2 Timothy 3:2-4 - Men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 without natural affection, trucebreakers, slanderers, unrestrained, fierce, despisers of those who are good, 4 traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God,**
9. Going back to the illustration of Adam in the Garden of Eden. Adam was not made to live independently of God. He **was** given volition to make decisions, but it was in the

context of an ongoing relationship with God and in the context of God's will regarding his life, the earth, the Garden of Eden, his relationship with Eve, etc.

10. **Adam was not autonomous. He needed God.** Satan's deception was, *"It's no big deal. God is just trying to ruin your fun. Your way is fine. There is nothing wrong with it at all. Eat the fruit, and you'll be like God. You won't need Him anymore at all."*
 - By the way, this is the big lie that Satan and your flesh want you to believe.
11. The attitude of *"I want it my way"* is what led to Satan's fall (**Isaiah 14:13-14 - For you have said in your heart, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also on the mount of the congregation, in the recesses of the north; 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High."**)
 - That is the same satanic spirit of independence and rebellion that has been cloned into our fleshly nature, whereby we desire our own way. **Ephesians 2:2-3 - in which you formerly walked according to the age of this world and according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among them we all also once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and we were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.**
 - Anything that gives us the illusion that we can make life work apart from God only makes us more of a rebel against God and **destroys** our usefulness to God.

- So many times, I have had people say to me, “*I know what God says but...*” At that point, you’re done. You’re toast. You are saying, “*I want it my way.*”
12. **Christ is calling us to renounce our own way of self-dependency and submit our hearts to the way of Christ. Any change that will ultimately help a person must move him away from autonomy and must move him toward dependence upon his Creator. **Psalm 100:3 - Know that the Lord, He is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;****
- **John 15:5 - I am the vine, you are the branches. He who remains in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit. For without Me you can do nothing.**
 - **2 Corinthians 3:5 - Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to take credit for anything of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God,**
 - **2 Samuel 22:31 - As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield for all who take refuge in Him.**
 - **Proverbs 3:5-6 - Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths.**
13. **This is the call of Jesus in **Luke 9:23**. To be a true Christ-follower, you must put aside your way and allow Christ’s Spirit to flow through you to do things His way. By the way, that’s when you get the wonderful fruit we read and talked about over the last few weeks. **Galatians 5:22-23****

14. **Here is the key – to look to anything other than Christ to make life work is to forsake Him and cease following Him.**
15. **If we are going to surrender to Christ, we must daily die to our way, and our daily prayer must be similar to **Psalm 25:4 - Make me to know Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths & Psalm 27:11 - Teach me Your way, O Lord, and lead me in an upright path,****

May we, as committed faithful followers of Christ live with a heart of surrender unto Him, and may our daily choice be to deny of our flesh as well as have the mindset of no to living our life our way.