

Surrendering to His Love

Tim Conway | 2017 Fellowship Conference

illbehonest.com

Well, good morning, brethren. I greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I don't want to take any other time in introductions and get right to the message this morning.

Brethren, let's turn in our Bibles to Luke 14. Luke 14:33. We're going to deal with various texts this morning, but I want to start right here. Luke 14:33. "So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple." Let's pray.

Father, I pray for Your help. And Lord, I pray that You would give us just what we need in this hour. I pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, our hiding place, amen.

Brethren, I kind of look at this conference as a mile marker in life, much like birthdays, the new year. We kind of have these sign posts along the way, these markers. Here we are at another Denton conference. Here we are at the end of another Denton conference. Everybody here is going to drive away from this place very soon, and what I want to seek to do in this hour is to have you go away able to express before the Lord your unconditional allegiance to Him. That's my goal: surrender to Christ.

And not just to look at it in theory, my goal is that we affirm it. That we speak to the Lord our surrender. You see the text. Our Lord's words, "any one of you who does not renounce all that he has, he cannot be My disciple." The aim: all leaving here surrendered.

The title of my message: Absolute Allegiance. I want you to think about your submission to Christ, but more than that, I want you to affirm it. This is about you and the Lord Jesus. The Lord of your life.

So, just for starters, I want us to think historically. And I might go all the way back to David in Psalm 119. Do you know David promised the Lord that he would keep His word? Do you know he made an oath to that effect? And I just want to ask you right up front: are we in the habit of doing that? In our prayer life, "Lord, I am Yours. I am going to do Your Word. I am going to follow Your ways. I am surrendered to You. Lord, I'm all Yours. Everything. Everything." Unless you forsake all that you have, you cannot be His disciple. Are we affirming that?

Let me tell you something, many of you are aware, Jonathan Edwards, he had resolutions, have you ever read those 70 resolutions? Let me just tell you about several of them. In resolution 42, Edwards resolved himself to frequently renew the dedication of himself to God. So here's a man who stands out, much like Chapman, he stands out as a very godly man, we look back on, his works are here. He made a resolution to not just come into Christianity at the beginning, saying, "Lord, I'm Yours. I surrender." He actually sought in a resolution to frequently renew the dedication of himself to the Lord. Frequently. Another one of his resolutions, 53, he was resolved to consecrate himself wholly to Christ. And the thing is, he had some other resolutions, , where he was dedicated to every day, every week, every month and every year reaffirming these things.

There was a Puritan by the name of Richard Alleine. He wrote a book called, "A Vindication of Godliness." In that book, probably most of us have never heard of it, but I'll tell you somebody who heard about it, was John

Wesley. But let me tell you what Alleine said in that book: He emphasized in this book on godliness that we as Christians covenant with God, we covenant with God to be His and to live for Him, and to be committed to cleave to Him and obey Him and serve Him all our days. Ok, you have to recognize that both the Puritan camp and the Anglican camp, they talk about making a certain covenant in their baptism. We as Baptists don't talk that way. But I just want you to think about the concept here. Alleine believed that we are given to more care, more watchfulness and more seriousness in our Christian life if we are frequently going back to the Lord, and looking up, and expressing, being transparent before the Lord, "Lord, nothing is held back... it's all Yours. Lord, I am all Yours. I am wholly committed. I am reaffirming my allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ, to live only for Him, and to die to self, and to cleave to Him, and He is my only hope, and I'm going to serve Him and I'm going to live for Him." Elaine was convinced that when we do that, it produces a seriousness that men don't lightly go out and not do that after they've made that kind of commitment face to face with God.

Reaffirming that on a regular basis. And I'll tell you what happened: Wesley got a hold of that, he got a hold of this book by Alleine, and you know what he did? He said, we're going to start what he called covenant renewal services. They had these in the societies of Methodism. They began to develop these. And they were times when they would reaffirm their commitment to the Lord. They would reaffirm their surrender to the Lord. They would reaffirm their allegiance to the Lord.

Now listen to this, Wesley says in April 1756, these are his journal entries concerning these renewal services, "Many mourned before God, and many were comforted."

In October 1765, another meeting, "It was a time of remarkable blessing." January 1, 1775, "I do not know that ever we had a greater blessing, afterwards, many desired to return thanks either for a sense of pardon, for full salvation, or for fresh manifestation of His graces, His healing of their backslidings." What he saw was this, he took this idea of Alleine and he went to the Methodist societies, and he had specific meetings where what he wanted the people to do was nothing else but rededicate themselves. Not lightly, not flippantly. But really think about what we're called to as Christians, to forsake everything for Christ. To live wholly to Christ, to die to self, to live to Him. To follow Him. To carry your cross. Total dedication to Him. And he said that such meetings were met with amazing blessings from the Lord. And you know, I think Alleine is right.

When we look up to heaven in our prayers, and we recommit ourselves, a man or woman of God, they don't lightly run out and flippantly sin after that. Here's the matter that I want us to consider: If it be that Christ demands total allegiance, and He does, should we not be committed to it? Should we not affirm it? I want us to think. Come with me, now. I want us to behold Christ. I want us to behold the Person that you find in the pages of the four Gospels of your Bible. What is He really like?

Let's think for a second about what He's really like. Not what men oftentimes want to think that He's like. But what is He really like? I mean, have you ever noticed, I'm sure you have, You talk to people about Jesus of Nazareth... I can remember in one workplace, talking to a certain foreman, you've seen this a lot of times... it's just a memory that jumps out, I'm sure it's happened to me hundreds of times. Many of you know this, you talk to people, you talk to your families, you talk to your co-workers, fellow students about Christ and they want to give their opinions. Well, I think this about Christ... they speak as though their own approval or disapproval is what defines Christ. Have you ever seen that? People want to tell you, "Well, I think He's like this..." or "I think this..."

“I think the other thing...” They speak very irreverently, and men talk about the Biblical Christ as though He’s the One on trial. Do you notice how men do that? We did that when we were lost, undoubtedly. What’s He like? What is the true Christ like? You know what the truth is? The true Christ of Scripture... He’s dangerous. And sometimes disturbing, alarming. I mean, listen to Him. “You have heard it said... you shall not commit adultery.” Moses said that. Seventh commandment. “You have heard it said, but I say unto you.” Whoa, what did He say? He’s trumping Moses. And He’s saying, “But I say...” What did He say? “If you even look on a woman with lustful intent, you’ve already committed adultery with her in your heart.” And He says this, you better tear out that right eye and cast it away from you, for it’s better for you to go without that member into life.” And He uses this term, “than to be thrown into hell!” Who do you think is going to throw you? Listen to Who is speaking here. You know what He said? He said, “You call me Teacher and Lord? And you’re right, for so I am.” He spoke with authority. This is the Christ of the Scripture. He is a Lamb, yes. But do we not read in Scripture that He is a lamb with wrath? He is dangerous. He is a Savior. He speaks of His gentle ways. But make no mistake about it, He demands absolute allegiance from His followers. And you can’t escape it. You cannot just be a spectator with this Christ. I mean, have you ever noticed?

You think there in John 6, you’ve got people leaving. And there’s James and John and Thomas, and they’re over there, and you can’t just be a spectator. And they were watching this, they were watching our Lord. He said you need to eat My flesh and you need to drink My blood. And you’ve got all these disciples leaving, and the inner circle they’re standing over there, and you can’t just be a spectator. Because what does Jesus do? He looks right over at them and He says, “you guys want to go too?” You can’t just watch this Christ. You can’t just stand back and make your evaluations. He will pull you in every single time. It affects all of us. How we respond to Him affects every one of us directly. It affects our eternity. You know there was that question posed before men one day: “What think ye of Christ?” You do recognize He was not looking for man’s opinion about who He is or who He ought to be.

Jesus wasn’t interested in our opinions. He asked that question to wake us up to what God’s Word says, and what does God’s Word say? Yes, He’s David’s Son, but He’s David’s Lord. And He’s our Lord. Think of the claims that He made. He claimed to be Lord. He claimed to be King. He claimed to be the Son of Man. He claimed to be Master. He’s in His 30’s. He claims to be the I AM. Think of the claims. He’s the Christ of Scripture. Not the one who is the figment of men’s imaginations. He claimed that He had no sin. He claimed that He could forgive sin. He claimed to be the only way to God. He claimed He was God. He claimed that He came to give His life a ransom for many. He claimed to be the Savior of the world. And I’ll tell you this, He claimed men’s allegiance. He came and He insisted that He be believed on and that He be followed. He did not hesitate. This is the Christ who does not hesitate to be walking along one day, look over at a man who’s fully employed in his business as a tax collector. There he is. He’s busy. He’s about his business. He’s collecting his taxes. And Jesus says to him, “Follow Me.” Can you imagine that? He actually expected him to follow Him. Follow Me. And He meant it. What are we going to do with this Christ? He actually expects people to leave everything and follow Him. And the thing is, Matthew did it. How unreasonable and inconvenient is that? Just to get up and leave your whole life behind? But this, beloved, is the Christ of Scripture. Without hesitation He called men to absolute surrender, and you know He did if you read your Bibles.

Don’t you see? Brethren, we’re the ones on trial when we’re confronted by this Christ. He’s not the One on

trial. It's us. We're the ones being put to the test. Follow Me. The rich, young ruler. You know about him. Why don't we turn there? Mark 10:21. Brethren, we may imagine ourselves as some sort of spectators over on the side, but none of us can escape those words, "Follow Me." He demands absolute allegiance and how we answer is not a reflection on Him. It is a reflection on us. You know this account, Mark 10:21 We're going to break in right here: "Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, 'you lack one thing, go sell all that you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come, follow Me.'" Here's this young man; rich, young ruler we call him. He ran up to Jesus, he knelt before Him, Jesus loved him. And you know what? Jesus loved him too much to waste his time, too much to skirt the real issues. He didn't mince words. He laid it on the line. Young man, do you want eternal life? You say yes? O.k. Surrender. Surrender. Eternal life is to be found in surrendering oneself to Christ. To be saved the way Christ saves. Many people have a wrong idea about how the Lord saves. Sell it all, give to the poor, follow Me. Listen, this is not works. This is Jesus saying, "Do you want to be saved? Well, I always save people into conformity to Me. I always save people in a certain way. I save people from their idols." If you want to be saved, it's not just the guilt aspect of your sin, He saves the way He saves, and He's looking at this man... Do you know what this man basically said by his actions? "I don't really want to be saved." I don't want to be saved the way Christ saves people. Christ saves us into total allegiance to Him. He saves us into surrender to Him. Do you really want to be saved the way I save people? It's full allegiance. We don't want to play around. We don't want to make Christianity into anything else. We don't want to make the Christ of Scripture into anyone else. Do you really want to be saved? Full surrender. All for Him. We're bought with a price. We're not our own. That kind of surrender. That's what He calls for. And the thing is, the thing that just ought to jump out at us, is He let the man walk. He let the man walk, after only a few words and a short time. You know, He didn't argue. Jesus called for absolute allegiance on this man's part. He wasn't willing. And Jesus didn't deliberate with him. He didn't debate. He didn't say "Whoa, whoa, whoa... let's talk about this before you walk away. Maybe you didn't understand Me clearly." Jesus didn't dive in front of him. Jesus didn't try to stop him. Isn't it amazing? He just let him go. You know sometimes that doesn't work. That doesn't seem to fit with our idea of evangelism. Don't we have sometimes concepts of friendship evangelism; we need to kind of work with people, we need to work with people over time, we need to pour the truth into them? But look what happened here. He doesn't mince words. If you would be saved by Him then surrender to Him to be saved by Him the way that He saves. That's what He's calling for. If that's not what you're interested in, case closed. He let him walk. Brethren, what I'm wanting to do here as we're thinking about our own affirmation, a reaffirmation for many of us, of our allegiance to Him. I want you to see, He is the Christ who demands total allegiance. He wants us all. He wants us wholly. Entirely. Case closed. He let him walk. Just think with me here.

Let's go back to John 6; in fact, turn to John 6 let's actually look at this account as well. John 6:66, Again, we get this feel for Jesus of Nazareth, the historical Jesus of Nazareth "After this many of the disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him, Jesus said to the twelve, 'do you want to go away as well?' Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.'" And see, here's the thing, He not only let many of His disciples walk away that day, He even looked over at the inner circle - isn't that amazing? "Do you guys want to go too?" He not only was not trying to keep all of the other disciples from going, He wasn't saying, "Hold on, guys, hold on!" "Maybe we can renegotiate terms here, if you didn't like something I said, maybe we can tone that down." He never did that. He laid it out there. They didn't want it on His terms. They didn't accept Him for who

He was. They didn't accept what He was calling them to. And they walked. He didn't argue, He didn't debate, He didn't deliberate. He didn't throw Himself in the way. In fact, what He does is He looks over at the other guys who aren't walking and He says, "Do you guys want to go too?" Put yourself in that place. Here you are: Peter. He looks at you. It's like, "Lord, I wasn't walking. We weren't going. Why are You directing Your attention to us?" But you see that's what He always does. Do you know what He wanted? A reaffirmation right there. "Are you guys totally in?" We can watch other people walk away. You can watch people leave your church. You can watch people turn their backs and they go away. And we can stand there. But even there, the Lord is not going to let us be spectators. Because He's going to turn right to you, and say, "Are you all in?" "Can you affirm, am I your all? Am I the only answer? Full allegiance to Me?" "All in or all out?" That's what He was looking for in these guys. He wants them to reaffirm. Are you still all in or not? His question to you, "Do you want to go away as well?" What's He looking for? Fresh commitment. "So therefore, any one of you who does not surrender all that he has cannot be My disciple." What does Christ want you to surrender? In a word. One word: Everything.

Now let me tell you something, when Wesley would hold these covenant renewal services, there is a prayer, he admits he got it somewhere else, I'm not sure where he got it, but he used this, and he often would encourage them to pray this way: Listen to this, because this is my aim, that we walk out of here today and we're able, before the Lord, to say this. These covenant renewal services that were so blessed, this is where he wanted the hearts of those early Methodists lifted up in prayer this way. And you think with me here as I say this. I want you to pray this. I want you to feel this: "I am no longer my own, but Thine." "Put me to what Thou wilt. Rank me with whom Thou wilt." Rank me. You know you read in Scripture, Your gentleness has made me great. His gentleness may make you least. Are we resigned to not be used or to be used? Wesley goes on, "Put me to doing. Put me to suffering. Let me be employed for Thee, or laid aside for Thee." For Thee. "Exalted for Thee or brought low for Thee." "Let me be full. Let me be empty. Let me have all things. Let me have nothing." Surrender. Can we put the marriage, the money, our children? This is surrender.

It's surrender to the Lord Who may want your lost child to yet be lost a year from now. Or He may not. Surrender. "I freely and heartily yield all things to Thy pleasure and disposal." "And now O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Thou art mine and I am Thine, so be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen."

Brethren, can you look to heaven and pray with all your heart, "Lord, I love You. Lord, thank You that almighty vengeance fell upon Your head. Thank You that You have redeemed me. Thank You for all the kindness. You've bought me with a price. Nothing held back. Do inventory. Inventory all the way through. Lord, I'm not going to hold anything back. The way I eat, the way I exercise, my t.v., my computer, my relationship, my wife, my husband, my children, my job, my money, my possessions, my house, my car, Lord, my goals, my ambitions, my desires, Lord, all of it. Lord, I surrender it. I surrender afresh. I surrender." You're thinking is there anything held back, is there anything? "Lord, nothing. Lord, do with me as You will." I think we need to do that afresh, brethren, to stimulate our walk before the Lord. And I'm going to show you that there is a real, Biblical basis for this, which I'm leading to. But, all of it, brethren, all of it, consecrated to Him. All of it. "I bow in absolute allegiance to You. Nothing held back." Say this, brethren, say it to the Lord. Say it in your own heart. Say it as you leave here. Reaffirm this. "Lord, there is no part of my life I am going to hold back from You. Nothing is going to be protected. All on

the table. How you want me to live, whether You want me to go to the right or left, whether You even want me to move at all. Lord, all of it. All of it. I am not going to hold anything back. Everything fully yielded to You. No longer am I going to resist Your right to control my body, my appetites, my time, my future, my final years, my tongue, my daily decisions, whatever it may be.” Now, brethren, turn with me to Matthew 6, because if anyone is hesitating, is it really necessary that we reaffirm our surrender? Yes, it is. Our Lord taught us so. He taught us in the very way to pray, that we should be doing this as one of the pillars of our prayer life. You say, where? Matthew 6:9-10, “Pray then like this...” This is no legalistic prescription for prayer. We get an idea about that because we find numerous examples of Christians in our Bibles praying and they never prayed this verbatim. This is a guide for how to pray. This contains the spirit of prayer. This is the Lord teaching us what is important to consider when approaching God, but notice this: “Our Father, who art in Heaven. Hallowed by Thy name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.” Notice that: Thy will be done. Every time we pray, Jesus is teaching us fresh surrender. You say, “Thy will be done on earth.” You know we can distance ourselves from that. Well, all out here, Thy will be done, but who’s on earth?

Brethren, you are on earth. That’s where we are. When you’re lifting up your voice, “Thy will be done,” that is a prayer, that is a component of prayer, that is reaffirming surrender, every time. This is the attitude, this is the spirit, this is the heart that Christ is teaching His disciples ought to be evident, ought to be present, when we go - when we lift up our voices, when we turn our eyes to heaven, there should be this surrender to His will, a fresh surrender, a fresh reaffirming. That’s what we find, all over again, new every morning, we’re to acknowledge our surrender. There it is. Thy will be done. My house, my comforts, my pleasures, Lord, all of it, my convenience, my old age, my young age, I surrender all I am and have to Your will. Take me, have me, do with me as You desire. Thy will be done.”

Brethren, resigned. Surrendered. To be used by the Lord as He wills. For some of us, it may mean, Lord, I surrender. I will go to Lebanon. And for somebody else it will mean, Lord, I surrender. I will not continue to hold on to this desire to go to Lebanon. Lord, I put my child on the altar. I surrender. Lord, if it’s Your will that he still be lost a year from now, I surrender.

Brethren, in all this surrender, we’re surrendering to His will. Still, in His will He tells us to pray; He tells us to pray in His name, He tell us to pray that our joy may be full. The thing is, surrendering to Him is not all drudgery. Surrendering to Him is surrendering to His love. It’s surrendering to His kindness. It’s surrendering to His goodness. It’s surrendering to the reality that that child that I just laid on the altar may very well be saved next year. Brethren, there is fear - I know it - there is fear to speak this way to the Lord. There tends to be a hesitancy and there tends to be a reservation in us to willingly and honestly pass every single aspect of our life beneath the gaze of this all-allegiance-demanding Christ. We know it. There’s a hesitation; there’s a fear. Why? Because we don’t know what tomorrow brings. We don’t know what He may put us through. That’s why we hesitate. Because when we put it all on the altar, you know what? When you put Isaac on the altar, He may demand Isaac. And you put it all out there, and we’re afraid. We’re often afraid. We have these fears that what if He takes away that thing that I just feel like I need. And I know that there’s fears, because I know you - I know me. The fear is what will happen if I do surrender, especially that one particular area of my life? We fear. We hesitate. We get nervous. What will He require? He always requires things of us that we don’t want to give up. And He gives us things that are far better

than the things that we do give up. Brethren, He has not promised to call us to an easy road. And He's not promised to call us to a road without suffering. We need to be ready and resigned. The suffering is coming, brethren. The pain and the sorrows and the tears in this life. They're all ahead of us. But there's glory beyond that, and there's lots of glory in this life as well. And being surrendered to Him, He could bring revival tomorrow. He could bring cancer tomorrow. I mean, that's been the reality of church history. That's been the reality of our brethren that have gone before us. But being surrendered, we don't want to fight, because brethren, He never puts us through anything that isn't for our good. He always does what He does with purpose, and it is always done with love.

Brethren, I would just say this to us, As we hesitate, you think about this Christ Who demands all of our allegiance, has He not led you in the best possible way? Has He not been kind to you? We heard about His providences. Have they always been easy? No. But brethren, do we not have a promise in Scripture that they're all being worked out for our good? Do we not have the promise that as the Father loved Christ, He says, so I love you. Did He not tell us that He came to give us life more abundantly? You see, these things we hold onto. We get this idea, I have to protect this, because, Lord, the truth is I just really believe that I know how better to handle this thing than You do. Because I really think that if something happens to this over here, that I'm not going to be able to be happy and satisfied and content any longer. And I'm just really nervous about surrendering this thing to You, because You may come in and do something that I don't want You to do.

But brethren, we're just infants, we're children, we don't know what is best for us, and He knows, and I guarantee when He comes and He comes and He cuts, it is good. It is good for us. We can trust Him.

Brethren, has He not always done everything that leads us to believe we can trust Him? You see, it's a trust issue. That fear, when it crops up, it's a trust issue. And He tells us, "I love you!" He tells us, "I came that you might have life more abundantly."

Brethren, we try to hold on to things. And you as a Christian, you know this: How often have we been in that place, oh, we're trying to hold on to this thing? We're trying to protect this thing. And the longer we try to hold on to it and protect it, and keep it from Him, and shelter it, and hold it back, the more miserable we become.

And when you let it go, joy. The cases are manifold. Don Johnson and his arrowheads. Corrie Ten Boom and the Nazi's. You can read the chapter there... Hudson Taylor, those of you who got that, concerning the mission. Men and women throughout history, they come to these points of resignation, and what happens? Is it misery? No, it's joy. There is so much joy in surrender. Because brethren, when we're surrendered, He may take us through suffering, and He may take us through sorrows. You read about Richard Wormbrand, he's surrendered, surrendered, and there he is in his cell and the place glowed. The presence was so amazing. Surrendered. They would beat him. He said there were times when they would beat those prisoners, and with every stroke, he said he felt greater love for the guy that was beating him. It's like, "bang!" but being surrendered...

Brethren, there are blessings for those who walk a surrendered life. And to the degree as Christians that we walk that way, we are going to know joy. The Christians that are most difficult and most unruly and most trying to rule and govern their own lives, are the Christians that are going to be most miserable, and are going to feel the least amount of joy. And listen, if it's habitual with you, yeah I know what the Lord says, but I'm not doing it... I mean, you're the man that built his house on the sand. You cannot be His disciple. But see, we as Christians, we know this, do we not? Don't you have times in your life you feel surrendered, you desire to be surrendered, and

then you have other times where that idol crept in? And you begin protecting it? And the Lord begins to deal with you, He begins to touch your conscience. You know it. You know what the thing is. You might try to deny it. You might try to look the other way, but you know. Doesn't He always test our surrender? He does. On a regular basis, He does. He tests us. Just like with those inner circle, just like John 6. Something's going on with other people, and He looks at you. "Are you surrendered to Me? All for me?" All. Beloved, it's an issue of trust. Does He demand our unconditional surrender? You know He does. But not as a tyrant. As One Who's come to save us. As One Who's come to take us to glory. As One Who's promised a thief next to Him paradise. This is the Christ Who promises paradise. He knows the way. When He says, "Follow Me," He's saying, "This is the way to God. This is the way to glory. Follow Me." That thing you think you need so much, let it go. Because He's going to say to us the same thing He said to the rich, young ruler, "You let that go, and you follow Me." And oh brethren, that is the sweet way, when we're following and we're resigned. He's never failed us. He's never given us reason to believe that He's not worthy of all of our trust.

Brethren, it's like Paul says, I appeal to you by the mercies of God, present yourselves as these living sacrifices. All for God. All on the altar. Totally surrendered. Brethren, has He not indicated to us that every single thing He takes away, it's always, always for a purpose. The Lord's dealings with us are never meaningless. He has a plan and it is perfect. And it is to make us into His image. And it's not the easy path. Brethren, I am not promising any of you that over the next year till we all meet again, that it is going to be easy. Some of us are going to discover such things, some of us are going to go through some glorious blessings. There's a time when He pours out that which we delight in, and there's a time when He pours out that which is difficult. Sometimes they're intermingled. But they're coming. Are you resigned? Yes, Lord, I'm resigned to what You say in the Word. I am resigned to love my wife, I'm resigned to submit to my husband, I'm resigned to train my children in the way that You would have me to train them, I am submitted with regards to their spiritual condition, Lord, my money is resigned, You say to store up treasure in heaven, I'm going to seek to do that. Use my possessions. I see that those brethren in the early days, they sold possessions to meet each others' needs; I recognize You want us to love one another; I recognize You want us to not forsake the assembling together; I recognize that when we have meals, we should invite people that can't pay us back. I recognize that You call us, Lord, to put to death sin in our lives. You call us to be people of prayer. You call us to be people that are abiding in Your Word. Lord, we recognize, You call us to surrender. You call us to follow. You call us to die. You call us to evangelize the world. Lord, You are calling us to walk through whatever comes, trusting, fully committed to allegiance to Him.

Brethren, when it gets hard, and it does get hard! Brethren, as we're resigned, He's going to stretch us. There's going to be seasons which are difficult. And there's going to be seasons when you feel like, I've tried to resign myself and it feels like He wants more and more and more and I don't hardly feel that I have the reserves to be able to give. Brethren, when it gets hard, you just let your eyes go over to the cross. You let them settle on the garden of Gethsemane. You watch Him being so wrenched that blood comes from Him. You watch His anguish, and you hear Him. "Not My will, but Thine be done." When it gets difficult, just set your eyes on Calvary. Set your eyes on our Lord's suffering: a Man of Sorrows, and He learned obedience as He went through all these sufferings, and He went, and He yet went forward, and He didn't depart from that line at all. Watch His example, because He's beckoning every one of us right now, "Follow Me." "Follow Me." Be committed. Brethren, go out of this place, this

is the desire of my message today, we go out of this place committed to follow Him, committed to be people of His Word, committed to read it in His Word, and do it. Not be hearers only, but doers of this Word. Doers of the words of Christ; keeping His commandments, following Him, seeking to be like Him, seeking to imitate Him. He said, brethren, He has a yoke. A yoke. And He calls us to take that yoke. And a yoke, that's an instrument of surrender. And He said if you do, you'll know His rest. I want this to be a year of rest for all of us. Not an easy year. But rest. Because we've got the yoke on our necks. Oh brethren, there's simplicity. The Gospel just removes all sorts of complications, right? One Lord. That's simple. There's a great simplicity in that. And do you know who it's not? It's not me. We want to get away from that oxy-moron we heard about: "No, Lord." "Lord, I just think I know better how to deal with this situation than You do." Surrender. Yes, Lord. Say yes to Him. I want us all to leave here, "Yes, Lord." Yes. You are enough. If I have You, though you strip everything else away, I am satisfied. Brethren, surrender to His love. You look to that cross. He came to give His life as a ransom. Think of His love. Surrender to the love. If He did that for you, He certainly is not going to require anything of you that would harm you. Surrender, brethren, surrender.

Listen as we end here, just listen to this prayer that they would pray at these covenant renewal services again: This is what I want us resonating through ourselves and saying to the Lord. I want you to say this, brethren: "I am no longer my own." We need to think. We need to stop and think. And be honest. Be transparent. Lord, I am not my own. I belong to You. I've been bought with a price. Lord, by Your grace, I am going to seek to not live for myself. Not for my comfort and pleasure. Not for myself primarily. Lord, if You bring some measure of comfort, and if You bring some measure of worldly ease or good, I will praise Your name. I'm not mine. Lord, if it's to the desert... You singles, "Lord, if this time next year, You still want me single, Lord, it's not what I desire, but I surrender. Lord, I'm surrendered. If that's the path You want me to walk, I'm surrendered. I look to You, Lord, to give me the grace to be faithful to You, to walk that path that You have for me." Those of you that have a great desire for something, you can lay that on the altar. Not that you stop praying and asking the Lord to give you all manner of good things, but if the Lord chooses not to, I'm surrendered. If the Lord chooses to give it to me, I'm surrendered. I'm not mine, but Thine. Put me to what Thou wilt. Rank me with whom Thou wilt. Put me to doing. Put me to suffering. Let me be employed for Thee, or laid aside for Thee. Exalted for Thee or brought low for Thee. We can pray these things, being brought low for Christ. The valley of humiliation. And very often the devil meets you down in that valley. We're not talking about ease, but surrender and rest. Not ease. But we will find rest for our souls in this yoke. The yoke doesn't chafe, this is a good yoke, it takes you to glory. Let me be full. Let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and heartily yield all things to Thy pleasure and disposal. And now O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Thou art mine and I am Thine, so be it. And the covenant that I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.