

SURRENDER

Then [Jesus] withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and began to pray, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me — nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."

LUKE 22:41-42

Jesus Christ subjected himself to God the Father, and His service on earth was in humble obedience his plans. Even in the final hours before His death—which Christ knew he must experience—He sought the will of the Father and surrendered to it.

Surrendering can be difficult while necessary for spiritual maturity, just like pruning a plant allows for growth. It goes against one's pride. It forces one to let go of one's possessions. Surrendering may remove you from your position.

There are four sections and each will address an aspect of your life to surrender. As you pray and consider the matters before you, may you respond in humility and obedience just as Christ subjected himself to God's plans.

You're encouraged to take your time with each section.

SURRENDER YOUR TIME

They forced a man coming in from the country, who was passing by, to carry Jesus's cross. He was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus.

MARK 15:21

Dear Jesus,

When You could no longer carry Your own cross, Simon bore it for You. He had no idea he would be doing this. He was just passing by. The cross was heavy and the distance to carry was far. Unaware of who You really were (and really none of his business), he took up Your cross in this ordained assignment and ministered to You. All along, Simon was part of God's plan.

I'm a busy person. I've got deadlines to meet, things to do, and tasks I want to accomplish. I'm already serving in so many ways. But am I too busy to see the needs of others? Am I missing the ordained—or ignoring—opportunities God is arranging?

Help me to be like Simon, surrendering my time and plans to serve a need or to respond to a person in trouble. Examine my heart, Lord. Am I flexible enough to change my schedule so I can help others in need? Can I sacrifice time to serve You in serving others, and to be a blessing to them?

Amen.

Extend this prayer on your own. Consider the following, and confess what is applicable:

- Who or what occupies most of your time, leaving little to serve in the name of Christ?
- What is your attitude toward helping friends and strangers?
- What fears do you have toward initiating care?

Ask God now to give you a soft heart toward those in need and attentiveness to respond with care.

GOD CALLS US TO HELP THOSE IN NEED.

Isaiah 58:5-8 says, “Will the fast I choose be like this: a day for a person to deny himself, to bow his head like a reed, and to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast and a day acceptable to the LORD? Isn’t this the fast I choose: to break the chains of wickedness, to untie the ropes of the yoke, to set the oppressed free, and to tear off every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, to bring the poor and homeless into your house, to clothe the naked when you see him, and not to ignore your own flesh and blood? Then your light will appear like the dawn, and your recovery will come quickly. Your righteousness will go before you, and the LORD’s glory will be your rear guard.”

This is the kind of service and fasting the Lord desires from us: to serve others and love them.

In response, make one of the commitments to serve, and build a homeless care package today to give away.

- Commit to serve at a homeless shelter or a food bank
- Commit to respond to those in the margins of society as best you can
- Commit to help and serve those in immediate need

Pray about your commitment, close with singing *Make Me a Servant*, and make a care package before the end of the day.

Make me a servant humble and meek
Lord let me lift up those who are weak
And may the prayer of my heart always be
Make me a servant make me a servant
Make me a servant today

Make Me a Servant. Kelly Willard. 1982 CCCM Music (Admin. by Brentwood-Benson Music Publishing, Inc.) CCLI Song # 33131

SURRENDER YOUR SILENCE

So Judas took a company of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees and came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.

Then Jesus, knowing everything that was about to happen to him, went out and said to them, “Who is it that you’re seeking?”

“Jesus of Nazareth,” they answered.

“I am he,” Jesus told them.

JOHN 18:3-5

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said to him, “You aren’t one of his disciples too, are you?”

He denied it and said, “I am not.”

JOHN 18:25

Dear Jesus,

Your persecutors were intending to do harm since they came with weapons. You had an opportunity to avoid capture and to hide but instead You sought it. When the chief priests, Pharisees, and soldiers came asking for Jesus of Nazareth, You told them without any hesitation and trembling in Your voice, “I am He.” Indeed, You are the great “I Am.” You stated this without shame or reservation. You made this declaration. Jesus, they sought a heretic. You presented Yourself as the “I am” they all needed for their spiritual condition.

Silence is something that comes easily for me. Sadly, when confronted as a disciple of Christ, my words and my actions say, “I am not.”

I say nothing
... as You go hungry by our tables,
... as You were orphaned in our wars,
... as You walked powerless in our world.
... as You became a victim to a robber.
... as You wept from an assault.

Indeed, when I ignore the needs of the hungry, poor, widowed, orphaned, powerless, and victims, I deny knowing you.

My insecurities keep me from speaking up for You. I'm paralyzed by my fears. Oh, how I have hurt You with my silence!

Why am I ashamed to speak against injustice? You are never ashamed of me! Why do I stand in silence when the world spews hatred towards You, the innocent? Give me the courage to break the silence and defend You. Help me to be an advocate for those whom You love. For when I love others, I show my love for You.

Amen

**WILL YOU MAKE A DECLARATION BEFORE GOD
THAT YOU WILL NOT BE SILENT ANY LONGER?**

Speak up for those who have no voice, for the justice of all who are dispossessed. Speak up, judge righteously, and defend the cause of the oppressed and needy.

PROVERBS 31:8-9

As the church and Body of Christ, how have we failed to speak up for the oppressed and needy? Please take a moment to confess and pray for the church, admitting our shortcomings and being silent.

Complete these declarations. Write them out.

- I am a follower of Jesus Christ, and this is why ...
- I will speak up for ...

SURRENDER YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES

And the chief priests accused him of many things. Pilate questioned him again, “Aren’t you going to answer? Look how many things they are accusing you of!” But Jesus still did not answer, and so Pilate was amazed.

At the festival Pilate used to release for the people a prisoner whom they requested. There was one named Barabbas, who was in prison with rebels who had committed murder during the rebellion. The crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do for them as was his custom. Pilate answered them, “Do you want me to release the king of the Jews for you?” For he knew it was because of envy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd so that he would release Barabbas to them instead. Pilate asked them again, “Then what do you want me to do with the one you call the king of the Jews?”

Again they shouted, “Crucify him!”

Pilate said to them, “Why? What has he done wrong?”

But they shouted all the more, “Crucify him!”

Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them; and after having Jesus flogged, he handed him over to be crucified.

The soldiers led him away into the palace (that is, the governor’s residence) and called the whole company together. They dressed him in a purple robe, twisted together a crown of thorns, and put it on him. And they began to salute him, “Hail, king of the Jews!” They were hitting him on the head with a stick and spitting on him. Getting down on their knees, they were paying him homage. After they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple robe and put his clothes on him.

MARK 15:3-20

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughter and like a sheep silent before her shearers, he did not open his mouth.

ISAIAH 53:7

Dear Jesus,

You accepted the pain of Your circumstances without complaint. You bore Your own cross without a word of protest. Although You labored under the weight of the cross, You showed no resentment. As You passed the hostile crowd that spat at You and cursed You, You were not defensive. When the splinters of wood dug deep into Your skin, You were silent.

Jesus, if You surrendered to the circumstances and carried the cross without complaint, that meant they were part of Your plan. You did not complain about this injustice upon You. One would resist and protest to what one finds objectionable.

One would challenge these charges. But You never fought back. You let these events occur as if they were plans to follow. In fact, You never did anything against the plans of God the Father but were in complete obedience to him.

Lord, give me an understanding—as Christ did—toward the burdens I must bear. Reveal to me what the hard circumstances I face are intended to do or result in. Let me see the trials in my life as Christ would. Is it a change in character I must undergo? Is there a new mindset I'm to adopt? Show me, Lord.

Amen

LOOK TO THE CROSS.

There are splinters and rough spots. There will be times when things go smoothly and you are comfortable and problem-free. But there will also be times when the circumstances of life become sharp and painful. The “splinters” of those circumstances can dig deep and bring agony to your life.

Are there “splinters” in your life that make things difficult to bear? Think about the sins you have committed. Consider the struggles you have. Are you willing to trust Jesus to give victory over your sins, and over your struggles?

How often do you complain when faced with hardship? Do you find yourself muttering to yourself, “It’s not fair”? When you recall your own hardships, and burdens falling upon you, how did you react and respond? Did you look to someone to blame?

Meditate on the passage. Take a personal moment to recall some trials you experienced. Confess any wrongful attitudes you had. Pray about how your hardships are part of a bigger plan or work God is doing in and around you.

SURRENDER YOUR SUFFERING

*After this, when Jesus knew that everything was now finished that the Scripture might be fulfilled, he said, "I'm thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was sitting there; so they fixed a sponge full of sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it up to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "**It is finished.**" Then bowing his head, he gave up his spirit.*

JOHN 19:28-30

Yet the Lord was pleased to crush him severely. When you make him a guilt offering, he will see his seed, he will prolong his days, and by his hand, the Lord's pleasure will be accomplished. After his anguish, he will see light and be satisfied. By his knowledge, my righteous servant will justify many, and he will carry their iniquities.

ISAIAH 53:10-11

Dear Jesus,

The verbal and physical assault upon You undoubtedly caused You to suffer great pain. With each stroke of the whip and each strike of the nail, I can hear You scream in agony. I can imagine the piercing of Your skin and the breaking of bones. I see You struggling to breathe while hanging on that cross. But all of this pain and suffering You bore was not to highlight the evil in man's heart but to communicate and demonstrate the lengths and depths of Your love.

Your time on earth was to convey the abundant love God has for his creation, and that message continued even in Your death. As *Immanuel* (God with us) and God Incarnate (God in the flesh), You demonstrated the lengths You would go to prove Your love: You walked among us, You taught us, You served us. Your love was displayed on that cross while You bore all of our sins.

In Your complete atonement for sin, I can lay every weight and burden down. I am not defeated by sin because You, Lord, took it from me and placed it upon Yourself. I do not need to suffer the guilt of my sins because Your righteousness has freed me from its hold. I am not a wretched sinner. I am not known for my former self. I am new in Christ. Thank You, Lord! I am free because of Christ in me!

Amen!

The accomplished work of Christ on the cross allows you to abandon the chains of sin. If you are held by sin or its influences, or you're still living in its shadow, then surrender them over to Christ. If you're believing you're not good enough or worthy enough of forgiveness, abandon the lies of sin and leave them at the cross.

Write your sins on some paper, crumple them, and discard them. Because of Jesus Christ, you are free from them.