

Not My Will: Surrender - Crown of Thorns

Genesis 3:17-18; Matthew 27:27-31; John 15:13, 19:1-5; Philippians 2:5-11

In this series, we are walking through the objects of the Passion Week. We have discussed the grave clothes of sorrow, the sword for submission, and the cat of nine tails demonstrating sacrifice. This week we will be covering the crown of thorns which embodies surrender.

A Tale of 2 Crowns:

Read Matthew 27:27-31 and John 19:1-5. One crown is of the praise, freedom, comfort, and authority that Jesus deserved. One represents the mockery of the proper crown.

Jesus had spent 3 years making the very convincing case that He was innocent and that He was God. He deserved the Highest Crown.

- Being God: He had rightful authority over all that was created for Him and by Him.
- Being innocent: He deserved to enjoy the comfort that comes from a Lack of Punishment.
- Being Both: He deserved blessing. Blessed as God. Blessed as being blameless. He had no requirement to deal with someone else's curse/burden.

Instead of deserved authority, He was humiliated and subjected Himself to the lower, human authorities, that were obviously corrupt. He remained largely silent, not defending Himself, since His speaking brought authority that would be recognizable, and thus it would not be surrender.

Instead of His innocence being protected under the law, he was punished with pain anyway. Though He was innocent, He submitted Himself to our punishment. He surrendered His safety and innocence.

Instead of blessing, He took on the curse meant for us. Read Genesis 3:17-18. It says the ground will produce "*thorns and thistles...for you*" meaning Adam/mankind. The thorns themselves were a representation of the curse that came about from man's fall. This was not Jesus's problem. It was ours. Yet He took it on. He took on the curse to defeat it. The conquering of the curse became His true coronation and victory.

Why Surrender?:

Read Philippians 2:5-11. The first and most obvious reason Jesus surrendered was to show you how much He loves you. You never know how much you actually mean to someone, until you see what they'll give up for you. Read John 15:13. It's not about what you say, it's all about the price you pay.

A less obvious reason is to glorify God. Philippians 2:11 says, "*and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*" A lot of modern churches don't really talk about this because it sounds arrogant and mean to actively seek to glorify yourself. But all of God's actions in the Bible are to glorify God's Name. We were made to worship. We were made to glorify.

CS Lewis says in Mere Christianity "*God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.*" God is the source of every good thing. To glorify Himself is to invite everyone into every good thing. Surrendering His authority shows how far He's willing to go, how awesome of a work He can do, how unparalleled His mercies actually are. All Glory is to God.

As an example, consider these questions. How often would you give up that which you're entitled to for the sake of others, without inspiration? How often would you suspend your own rights to help someone? How many people have you seen step down from a position to assist, rather than step down out of scandal?

The Choice:

Reread Philippians 2:10. A commentary for this verse says, "*At the last judgement even those who are condemned will recognize Jesus' authority and right to rule. People can choose to regard Jesus as Lord now as a step of willing and loving commitment, or be forced to acknowledge him as Lord when he returns. Christ may return at any moment. Are you prepared to meet him?*"¹

Jesus' adoption of the crown of thorns, forsaking his true lordship for a time, gives us an inescapable choice. We either accept His gesture, or we scoff at it. We either let his surrender change us or we go it alone to our inevitable failure and doom. Every knee will bow, but will yours bow too late?

Jesus' Example:

What can we learn from Jesus' example of surrender? It's obvious that surrendering to God's will is powerful. In scripture, there's several examples of what happens when you don't surrender something to God.

- Census - David counted his army instead of relying on God as his strength and got a plague
- Saul - failed to surrender his image and pride, lost the throne.
- Exile - Israel and Judah failed to surrender their fidelity and lost their nation.
- Abraham - failure to surrender to God's timing resulted in conflict in the family that is still ongoing today
- Jonah - failed to go Nineveh as directed by God thus was swallowed by a great fish

Any area that you do not surrender to God opens you to attack by the enemy in that area. There is a South African missionary who gave this analogy: Consider your salvation as a house that is lit and warm with a roaring fire (God) in the fireplace. You are safe, cozy, and have shalom. Now think of all the different areas in your life (habits, ways of thought, things you keep/give up, etc.) as doors and windows. When you enter this house of salvation, you are safe, sheltered from the cold, close to God, and can't be taken out. But if you choose to withhold something from God (how you treat others, what you look at, what you spend your money on, etc) and not surrender it, you open a window or a door. You are still in the house and warm and it may take a long time for you to realize it is getting cold (based on proximity to God), but the cold will come in and begin to hinder. It is a foothold for the enemy to take. If you don't surrender something to God, you will surrender it to something else.

We hold things back all the time. Our finances, our time, our comfort, our status, our appearance, what we watch, what we listen to, 'guilty' pleasures, things we excuse because of how hard things are...

If you surrender something to God, He has plans to prosper you and not to harm you. If you don't surrender it to God, thinking you can keep it for yourself, this selfish act is an act of surrendering to the rebellion against God. And the enemy will use this as a door into your life to work against you and your family.

So here's an exhaustive list of what you should surrender...**Everything!!!!**

Conclusion:

Jesus' surrender in the Garden of Gethsemane resulted in the greatest demonstration of God's love that could ever happen.

If you surrender something to God, you will see how far He can take it...how far He can take you.

If you keep it, you get what you ask for, limited success, and an open invitation for the enemy to claim what you have because you can only hold on to it with your own limited strength.

Jesus, though he surrendered his station, comfort, and blessing for your sake, used that crown of thorns to attain His ultimate glory in saving us. He is high above all earthly authorities. He brings division within all nations, within all political parties, within all families. We surrender to Him, or we surrender to the enemy. We must choose Him over every earthly authority and circle. For He deserves the Glory that He once surrendered *because He will not surrender it again.*

*¹Life Application Study Bible, New American Standard Bible-Updated Edition
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Reflection Questions:

- What did Jesus surrender? How does it impact how you feel about what He did?
- In week 1, we learned that Jesus knew that raising Lazarus from the dead would set His own death in motion. Yet He did it anyway. What does that teach you about obedience/surrender to God?
- Consider the analogy of the house. Do you have any doors/windows that are open (not surrendered to God)? What would it look like to surrender those areas to God?
- What would surrender - "Not My Will" - sound like in your own words today?