

Unconditional Surrender

Week 12: March 19-25 – *Luke 14-17; John 11*

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Helpful Resources

Map of Palestine in the Time of Christ

Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

When one general surrenders a battle or war to another general, the two of them usually meet to negotiate terms. The one who is forfeiting may get to surrender on his terms, or he may have to compromise with the conqueror's requests. However, there are times when a victor demands unconditional surrender, which means that the one forfeiting has no say in the matter. He must be all in, or there is no deal. When we surrender our lives to Christ, we do not get to request conditions. He expects an unconditional surrender, in which we give Him everything — relationships, marriage, family, time, habits, plans, passions, possessions, and money. We give it all to Him. In this review, we will consider what it means to surrender our lives to Christ unconditionally.

- The Cost of Discipleship

Following in the steps of Jesus is demanding and costly. He said, "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (*Luke 14:27*).

1. **Loss of Relationships** (*Luke 14:26*): Jesus expects us to love and prioritize Him above our friends and loved ones. Have you ever lost a relationship for the sake of Christ?
2. **Dispossessing Possessions** (*Luke 14:33; 16:13*): A disciple of Jesus cannot idolize his money or belongings. Whatever has his heart is evidence of his real treasure.
3. **Forfeiting Pride** (*Luke 15:1-32*): In the parable of the two sons, both boys were faced with prideful moments. The prodigal humiliated himself with poor decisions but returned to the father, and the angry brother kept comparing himself to others. Which are you?
4. **Heavenly Investments** (*Luke 16:1-12*): Jesus challenged His followers to use their worldly wealth for godly purposes. While we may not be able to take money with us to heaven, we can "send it ahead" by investing in future treasures. How so?
5. **Stumbling Blocks** (*Luke 17:1, 2*): Followers of Christ should be good examples to others (especially children) and avoid causing them to trip and fall.
6. **Confronting Sin** (*Luke 17:3*): When a follower of Christ becomes a stumbling block, God expects us to have the courage to rebuke him. If he repents, we must forgive him.
7. **Faithful Servant** (*Luke 17:7-10*): There is so much to do. God's expectations are high. But we are to faithfully serve the Lord without thanks and without complaint. Why?
8. **Grateful God-Follower** (*Luke 17:11-19*): While God is not obligated to thank us for what we do for Him, we must always thank Him for what He's done for us.

- The Resurrection and Return

While we will learn more in the weeks to come, Jesus gave us a glimpse of them this week.

1. **The Resurrection** (*John 11:1-57*): When Jesus raised his friend Lazarus from the grave, it revealed several truths about Him. First, He has the power over life and death. That which He created and gave life, He has no problem re-creating after death. Second, human death to God is like sleep. The dead simply need to be awakened. Third, though death is our enemy, the inevitable end of our lives on earth, the Lord has defeated it. We no longer need to fear death. Finally, Lazarus' resurrection is a foreshadowing of Jesus' resurrection. Because He defeated death, He can promise His followers eternal life.
2. **The Return** (*Luke 17:20-37*): Several times Jesus hinted that He would leave for a while then come again. While He is gone, His followers will long to see Him again. But everyone will know when He returns. It would not be subtle or secret. His return will also happen quickly, catching us by surprise. Until He returns, Jesus challenged us to be prepared, to be about our mission (His work), and to avoid clinging to this world and its ways or wares. Finally, Jesus warned that there would be a great separation upon His return. He would judge all people, assigning them to their final destination.

- Difficult Doctrine

In Jesus' parable of the rich man and Lazarus, we are introduced to three interesting statements. First, the poor man (Lazarus) died and was taken to Abraham's bosom or side. This phrase referred to a place of rest or honor for a Jew. Today, we would use heaven to describe Abraham's bosom. Second, the rich man died and was taken to Hades. Hades is the Greek word for the Hebrew word *Sheol* or the place of the dead. In Hades, the rich man is in torment. It is not a place of rest but punishment. Finally, angels carried Lazarus away to heaven. Perhaps, one of their responsibilities is to minister to and manage the souls or spirits of those who have departed earth for heaven. The bottom line is that Jesus spoke of these things as true. They are not fiction but fact. We must be prepared to meet our earthly end.

- Prophetic Passage

Besides all the prophecies regarding Jesus' resurrection and return, the Pharisees made a statement foreshadowing Jesus' crucifixion. "It is expedient that one man die for the people and that the whole nation not perish" (*John 11:50*). Here is the purpose of Jesus' substitutionary death on the cross, a ransom for many (*Mark 10:45*).

The Bottom Line

When we surrender our lives to Christ, we do not get to request conditions. We give it all to Him.

Questions to Consider

1. Being a disciple of Jesus demands total surrender to His will and ways? What has been the most difficult aspect of your life to surrender to Him? To what are you still clinging today?
2. What are some ways that we can use worldly wealth for godly purposes?
3. Allowing sin to fester and grow can be damaging to the church. How so?
4. What encourages you most about the resurrection and return of Jesus?