

I Surrender!
Pastor David Seabaugh
Immanuel, Elmhurst

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. James 4:7

It's not something you expect to hear from someone on the winning team. However, teams that win have to surrender their own plan in favor of the coach's game plan. As followers of Jesus, we have confidence that victory is ours through Him. We also look back upon a long tradition of surrender. In fact, the only way to true victory is through surrender...and refusing to surrender.

God calls us to surrender our whole lives to Him and His purposes, acknowledging our complete dependence on Him. At the same time, we are called to never surrender to the forces that oppose Him and His mission.

Imagine being among the Israelites who were miraculously freed from their captivity in Egypt only to be trapped between the Red Sea and the chariots of Pharaoh quickly approaching. What do you do? One option is to grumble that Moses had brought you to the desert to die. Plenty of people did that. Another option is to surrender. I suppose they could have surrendered to the Egyptians, but after all the plagues that sprung them from Egypt, I have a feeling God would have been pretty upset for them to just give up. Surrender to evil is never acceptable because God wants us totally surrendered to Him. It was in this spirit of submission that Moses raised his hands over the sea. God parted the waters, giving the people a path to safety over dry land. Once the people were through, the water closed in over the Egyptians.

Do you hear the message? Don't give up on God and His ways. Surrender your life to Him and He will make a way where there is no way. The easy choice may be to give in to the temptation, to follow the crowd, or to be defeated in despair. God calls us to the more difficult way of trusting Him through the trouble and submitting to the way He chooses for us to take.

Does this sound difficult to you? If so, it's because it is! Even our Lord, Jesus Christ, had to totally surrender Himself to the purposes of His Father, while resisting the temptations of the devil to take a path other than the cross. Think of Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane hours before he would be tortured and killed for our sins. Jesus was fully human. He could have come up with a different plan, one without so much pain. He didn't. It wasn't in the Coach's game plan. The Coach's game plan was written long before Jesus was born on this earth. It called for Jesus to suffer in our place so we could have eternal victory. I don't know about you, but I'm grateful Jesus stuck with the plan.

The challenges and opportunities of modern-day Christianity echo those of the past, with a 21st century flair. Like Moses lifting his hands toward the Red Sea, or Jesus submitting Himself to God's will, we can draw inspiration from those who gave themselves over to God only for Him to prove again and again that He is the source of life and goodness. We do not win this battle. God does. His victory is assured through Jesus. So, huddle up everyone! It's time to surrender to the Coach's game plan. Total Surrender. Never Surrender. Game on.