



Lent Day 6, February 27, 2012

"I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."
Deuteronomy 30:19-20

Yesterday, we introduced the topic of [self-denial](#), which we will be talking about for the rest of this week. When we think about self-denial, what we are really doing is surrendering ourselves to God and to His plans for us. Surrendering is not an easy state for us to get to--it doesn't come naturally to us. As Galatians 5:17 shows us, we have two natures warring for control over us--our sin nature and the Holy Spirit who is now living in us.

The verses that we read today from Deuteronomy are really a picture of living a surrendered life. God tells us that our choices are life and blessing or death and cursing. When we choose life, we are creating a legacy of godliness for our children. What does a surrendered life look like? According to these verses, we

1. love the Lord our God
2. obey His voice
3. cling to Him, for He is the one that will sustain us in good times and bad
4. dwell in our promised land.

It would seem to many of us, that this is an offer we can't refuse; but we underestimate that sin nature in us. You see, Jesus isn't trying to make us "good" people. He wants to transform us into His image, which, for most of us, means radical surgery is required. Or as C.S Lewis puts it in *Mere Christianity* (as quoted from *Devotional Classics, Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups*, p. 8) "I have not come to torment your natural self, but to kill it."

You see, even if we are already Christ followers, surrender is often a long battle for us, because we don't realize we're still holding on to control, or the illusion of it, in certain areas of our lives. Perhaps, we've totally surrendered our vocations to the Lord, but when it comes to our children, we're still trying to guide and direct every facet of their lives. Surrender often involves us yielding more layers of our lives to God's control as the Holy Spirit shows us where we're still holding on.

Application: I think Galatians 5:16 is a key to the whole process. “I say then, ‘Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.’” We need to each day ask the Holy Spirit to fill us up and control our thoughts and actions. I love the words that C.S. Lewis uses (taken again from Devotional Classics, p. 9).

It comes the very moment you wake up each morning. All your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists simply in shoving them all back; in listening to that other voice, taking that other point of view, letting that other larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in. And so on, all day. Standing back from all your natural fussings and frettings; coming in out of the wind.

Prayer: Lord,
Help us to see that surrender is an ongoing process. Show us the areas of our lives that we still cling to. Help us to loosen our grip, open our hands, and let go. Amen.