

Commitment vs. Surrender: Where Are You With Christ?

Word had spread throughout the hospital about Ken, the upbeat 80-year-old man in room 3330. His buoyant, cheerful attitude was infectious among the hospital staff. Ken was my best friend. We had lunch weekly for 32 years.

One morning, a doctor appeared at the door of his hospital room and read his chart. After looking it over, he said to Ken, "I wonder if I could talk to you for a minute?" He was not one of Ken's doctors.

"Sure, what's on your mind?" Ken replied.

He said, "Well, I've heard about you around the hospital, and I'd like to know how it is that you, at your age, with the difficulties you're having, can be so upbeat and cheerful?"

Ken answered, "I would be happy to tell you, but first, you tell me, how do you find your enjoyment?"

"To tell you the truth," the doctor said, "I really don't have much enjoyment. I had a plane, and I thought that would do it. But that didn't work. Now we have a boat, but that doesn't seem to work either. I've got a big income. That's really brought me no lasting satisfaction."

Ken said, "I know what you're going through. In my lifetime, the only thing that I've ever found that has provided me any lasting peace and satisfaction is a relationship with Jesus Christ."

About that time, Maria, a Hispanic maid about 50 years old entered the room. Ken had spoken with her on several previous occasions. She wrung out her mop and started working on the other side of the bed from where the doctor stood. Maria was

the lowest person in the hospital. She would work for the next 20 years to earn as much as this doctor would make in the current year. ,

Ken said, "Maria, can you come here please?" She looked up, and her peaceful countenance radiated sunshine throughout the room. Then Ken said to the doctor, "I want you to look into Maria's face," for she had a beautiful face and lovely smile. "She has what I'm talking about. Do you see it?"

The three of them fell quiet. The doctor looked into Maria's face. Ken and Maria alternated glances between each other and the doctor. Ken could peer into the doctor's mind. Yes, this doctor saw what Maria had. It was transparent that what she had was the thing for which he had been searching. It was clear that he wanted what Maria and Ken had found. It was a poignant, spiritual moment.

"Maria," Ken finally said, "do you have the Lord in your life?"

It seemed impossible, but Maria beamed even more broadly and said, "Oh, yes, I love my Jesus Christ."

Ken thanked her, and she continued with her chores.

Over the span of 15 minutes, Ken told this restless doctor that many years before, he had felt the same way. "One Monday morning," he said, "I cried out to God to come into my life, forgive my sins and give my life meaning. Blinded by tears, I had to pull over to the side of the road. That morning, I surrendered my life to Jesus Christ.

"All I ever asked Him to give me was peace and joy. He answered my prayer, and that's why you're in here right now trying to find out what's going on. What I want to encourage you to do is go find a quiet place and cry out to Jesus Christ. Tell Him what's in your heart. Ask Him to forgive your sins and surrender your life to Him in faith. In five more

minutes, you'll be gone from here, tomorrow I'll go home, and we'll never see each other again. But this is the one thing that can change your life and bring you peace."

Surrender vs. Commitment

Adrian Rogers, a famous 20th-century Baptist pastor, once went on a mission trip to Romania. Over the course of two weeks, he bonded with his interpreter but hadn't learned much about the man's thoughts. So toward the end of the trip, he asked the man, "Tell me, what do you think of American Christians?"

"I don't want to talk about it," came the strange reply. This, of course, only made Dr. Rogers more curious, so he began to press the man for an answer.

After several attempts, Dr. Rogers finally said, "Why won't you tell me? I really want to know."

Finally, the interpreter capitulated. "Well, OK then, but you're not going to like my answer. I don't think you Americans understand what Christianity is all about. Back in the 1960s, you started to use the word 'commitment' to describe your relationship with Christ. However, any time a word comes into usage, another word goes into disuse."

The man continued, "Until the 1960s, you Americans talked about 'surrender' to Christ. Surrender means giving up control, turning over all to the Master Jesus. By changing to the word 'commitment,' your relationship with Christ has become something you do, and therefore you are able to keep control. 'Surrender' means giving up all rights to one's self. You Americans don't like to do that, so, instead, you make a commitment."

The Act of Surrender

Have you truly surrendered—not just committed—your life to Jesus Christ? Maybe you have "prayed a sinner's prayer," maybe

not. Maybe you've surrendered in the past but have taken back control of your life. In any case, be sure to settle this issue before you stop reading this.

You can surrender, or re-surrender, your life by humbly telling God in your own words that you desire to yield control of your life to Him in repentance and faith. Or, if you wish, you can pray this prayer:

Lord Jesus, I need You in my life right now more than I ever have. I have very little joy, peace and passion in my life. I confess that I have been trying to have the best of both worlds, that I have been double-minded and that I have been seeking the God I have wanted and not the God who is. I am so sorry, and I repent. Please forgive me. Thank You for loving me so much that You would die for all of my sins so that I can have eternal life. By faith I receive (or renew) my salvation and surrender my life to You. Take control of my life. Make me into the kind of man that You want me to be. I pray this in Your name, Jesus, and for Your glory. Amen.

If you've just surrendered or re-surrendered your life, congratulations! The surrendered life is the foundation under everything. Let me add one suggestion. Because I am a rebel, as most men are, I realized that I must each day come humbly to the foot of the cross in a spirit of repentance and faith and once again make a full, total, complete surrender of my life to the lordship of Jesus.

That's the deal. Let me encourage you to also practice daily surrender. If someone forwarded this article to you, let them know if you surrendered your life. In any case, be sure to get with some other surrendered men and figure out how they do it.

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