



love where you live

Love Where You Live

Part 4 - Surrendering... To LOVE

Oct 17 & 18 | Speaker: Richard Fredericks, Adult Pathways Pastor

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE:

Surrender to an enemy signals defeat, our total loss of freedom.

It requires hands up in a defenseless posture of “**giving up**,” knowing that *by that act of defeat* we are sacrificing so much we love and that is good.

But not so in the lexicon of God. “**Surrender**” as God uses the term is “**giving over**” to God this destructive weight, too heavy to bear, a huge backpack we carry needlessly, full of toxic garbage.

God calls us to surrender, but only to achieve our true freedom—to give us this growing capacity to experience life as He designed us to.

***“If you live in My teachings, if you hold fast to them and obey them—
then you will know the Truth—and the Truth will set you free.”***

John 8:31-32

His goal is *not to put us into a prison*—rather, it is to get us out of one.

**“It is for FREEDOM that Christ has set you FREE. Stand firm, then!
Do not allow yourselves to be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”**

Galatians 5:1

**“They promise you freedom, while they themselves are enslaved to their
own inner depravity—for we are slaves to whatever has mastered us.”**

2 Peter 2:19

There are two kinds of surrender in this world: *first*, the forced or tricked (deceived) surrender of ourselves to the enemy; whose goal is to control us, dominate us, take our capacity to choose; and determine our destiny.

There is the way of God: surrender as love responding to love: “*we love because He first loved us...*” But make no mistake. **He wants every room in our heart.**

Loving Sallie to the point of marriage meant I was forever surrendering my autonomy: my right to a life centered in self. But what did love give me? In the end, *surrendering my autonomy* in order to love Sallie set me free in a hundred ways.

Love does not allow us to drift.

Love requires discipline, but discipline always opens doorways to freedom.

“Always Make Your Bed.” Admiral William H. McRaven on YouTube.

Navy Seal training requires *surrendering personal autonomy*—of *doing things* the way I want, when I want. Yet it is the *furthest thing imaginable* from passivity.

To choose Jesus Christ as LORD is also the furthest thing possible from passivity.

It is boldly “*giving over*” ALL our life and capacities to the will and purpose of God; and then *actively, passionately* pursuing His will with ALL our strength.

“Love your neighbor as yourself.” **Matthew 22:39**

“Love the LORD your God with all your heart...Love your neighbor as you love yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.” **Mark 12:30-31**

“Do this and you will live!” **Luke 10:28**

Not a single “good” thing happens in the story of the “*Good Samaritan*” until someone prioritizes another person’s needs over their personal plans.

Loving our neighbor means seeing people according to their real stories—

Not according to our imposed labels.

And that kind of love becomes a two-way street—a relationship of *blessing and being blessed*. The Christian doctrine of “common grace” teaches us that there are God-like qualities and capacities in every person.

So, when we build a relational bridge with anyone, there will be times when *more blessings come our way across that bridge than we give*.

And remember: Jesus calls us to love our neighbors because WE are Christians, not because we are trying to make THEM Christians. Our JOB is to love, the Holy Spirit’s JOB is to convert. That is so liberating!

Here are our **three action steps**:

1. Get to know your **neighbors' names**. People cease being strangers when we know their names.
2. Get to **know their stories**. Someone becomes our friend when we have shared our stories.
3. **Pray for your neighbors** often, by name, telling God you are willing to be part of His answers to your prayers for them. [In fact, I would urge you: **talk to God** about your neighbors **before** you ever **talk to your neighbors** about God.]

Jesus said: "**Now, go and do likewise.**"

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

(for personal and small group discussion)

- What was most impactful to you from this weekend's service?
- Discuss together the difference as you understand it between being a POW (prisoner of war) and surrendering to God. What are three crucial differences?
- Discuss together the places in your life where you have experienced the truth that discipline always opens doorways to greater freedom. What are the key differences between discipline and drift? How does that apply to John 8:31-32?
- Discuss together honestly how you are doing in getting to know your neighbors' names and stories. Share what are the two greatest barriers to achieving those goals in your life?

