

## **Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.**

**Sunday Nov 15, 2020. "Under His Influence: Submitting and Surrendering".**

### **I Intro.**

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

We're still gathering in person. A small but growing group who follow all the safety guidelines joins us in person. We're so encouraged with your love and presence when you gather with us. If you're still joining us online, we love and so appreciate your presence also. We still are your church family, and if there is ANYTHING you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions you have, please pass them our way. We feel just as isolated as you, and we want to maintain that connection with each of you.

### **II Sunday.**

Well I hope each of you are still doing alright. It's been a tumultuous past several weeks, months... okay really all of 2020. And I know most of us are weary and ready to move forward. We don't believe one election changes all the division and unsettledness we see and feel. But it does give us a hard reboot to make some personal choices and life changes to help lead the healing our nation needs.

We also hope that our "***Unshakable Kingdom***" series gave you a few things to hold onto that helped give a sense of stability and solidness during these uncertain somewhat 'shakable' times.

Okay...enough of that. Let's talk about this new series. Sunday we began a two part emphasis which is actually compressed from an original four part series. You probably could pick out the two separate conversations we were going to have. These two topics work well together, so it was fairly smooth to just condense them into one Sunday. So, we'll talk about the overall series, the elements from this past Sunday separately, and then tie it up and the end.

First, the theme for this series is; "***Under His Influence***". This idea is founded in the belief that we are all influenced by the things we value, these things affect the direction of our lives. And our life will go in the direction of what we allow it to influence us.

**So, what does influence mean to you?**

**Taking a deep look at your life, what do you allow to have influence over who you are?**

Here are the two specific issues that we believe are an essential part of having some effect over what you allow to influence you.

#### **1. Submission.**

Let's talk about the act of submitting first.

**What does submission mean to you?**

**What makes submitting difficult?**

The scripture passage used for this topic was **Luke 2:41-52**. Read it and then we'll discuss.

**What jumped out to you about this passage?**

**Where do you find examples, ideas of submitting from this passage?**

**What did those examples reveal to you about what submitting means?**

**How do these examples of submitting paint a picture of being under the influence of someone else?**

Submitting is such a difficult topic, because our culture and society do not embrace an ethic and practice of submitting. We like stories about submitting. But we don't have active models and the holding up of values to actually encourage and reward the practice. So we realize if, and hopefully when, we choose to submit to the influence of another, we are ready to stand alone against the values of our culture. Submission is the recognition we cannot on our own grow ourselves into who we need to be. In order for real spiritual growth to take place, we have to submit ourselves to others. We see Jesus doing this in two different situations. To the authorities in the temple and also to his parents. For us to be influenced by things that will actually make us better, and our lives more meaningful and richer, we have to find others who model the kind of life we want, and grow this ability to submit ourselves to be influenced by these people.

## **2. Surrender.**

Now let's talk about the practice of surrender. This sounds a bit like submitting, but there are some subtle differences we hope to point out to you. But first.

**What does surrender mean to you?**

**What are some negative connotations of this idea of surrender?**

**What makes surrender difficult?**

The scripture passage used for this topic was **Matthew 3:13-17**. Read it and then we'll discuss.

**What jumped out to you about this passage?**

**How do you see the idea of surrender being practiced in this passage?**

**What did it reveal to you about what surrender means?**

**How does this act paint a picture of surrendering to processes so as to be under another's influence?**

The same things we said about submitting we can say also about surrender. Surrendering can look weak, and is something we identify with losing rather than winning. And admit it, our society is all about winning, and unfortunately at any cost. So as with submitting, surrender is something we have to push against culture, and be willing to stand alone in practicing surrendering to the influence of another. And in this story we see Jesus surrendering to the requirements of his father. This is Jesus, the son of God, who did not have to be baptized, surrendering himself to "*carrying out what his father requires*". Which is an amazing act by the savior of the world. And just as an aside, we also see the heart of someone who gets this in John, who recognizes and admits that he is submitting, and surrendered to who Jesus is. What a beautiful picture of mutual submission.

### **III Challenge.**

So, we hit these first two values of what a life ***“under his influence”*** looks like...in real life. This life ***“under his influence”*** calls us to find others who are living lives we admire, and submitting to their influence in our daily lives. It also demands us to go against the current culture, and surrender to processes that may feel and even look unnecessary, but are such an important part of cultivating a life that moves us towards being the person we really want to be, and living that richer, fuller, more meaningful life.

So.

**Who around you is living a life you admire, and what would be a great way to submit to their influence?**

**What things could you incorporate into your life, processes you could surrender to, that could move you towards living *“under his influence”*?**