

## Unlikely Heroes Part 11

### “Will you Surrender everything?”

Turn your Bibles to Ephesians 1:11-12

We have spent several weeks in this series titled, “Unlikely Heroes” because we believe it is such an important topic for your life. One of the biggest questions people often ask themselves is “What am I here for?” What’s my purpose here on this earth? What does God want of me in my life? This series isn’t about accomplishing some grandiose heroic act, but about living a life that is daily set on fulfilling the plans and purposes that God has for you right now, today, in this season of your life.

Over the past ten weeks we’ve learned that “if you have a pulse, then you have a purpose.” and that “the greatest pleasure that we can have in this life here on earth is to fulfill God’s will and purpose for our life.”

Pastor Frank also taught us that our identity and our purpose is discovered in and through Jesus!

Ephesians 1:11-12 (MSG)

<sup>11-12</sup> It’s in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.

According to Paul, apart from Christ, we will never discover true purpose, God-given purpose, purpose that gives meaning and fulfillment to life! God had you and your purpose in mind long before you ever even thought of Him, long before you knew Jesus and His saving power. and Your purpose is so much bigger than you and your life, but it contributes and supports God’s greater purpose of bringing the entire world back into right relationship with Him.

Sounds a little intimidating doesn't it? Sounds like a lot of pressure. Seems like there are some pretty high expectations on us..

The good news is it's not. God has kept it simple for us, and that's what Pastor Frank has been laying out for us so clearly.

1. We carry out this extraordinary purpose by being obedient and faithful in the daily, ordinary tasks and decision we encounter throughout our life.
2. We fulfill our purpose when we bring glory to God through our daily life as we worship Him, love other believers, become like Jesus, serve others with our gifts, and tell others about him.
3. We fulfill our purpose when we bring pleasure to God through our daily lifestyle of purposed worship, more than music, but through our love, trust, obedience, praise, and our abilities.

This morning I want to conclude the series by asking us all this simple, yet very difficult question, "Are you willing to surrender everything to Jesus?"

I believe that our answer to this question will make or break our ability to live out this extraordinary life of fulfilling our God-given purpose.

"Are you willing to surrender everything to Jesus?"

But before we can answer this question, we must first count the cost of saying yes. Jesus himself told those who wanted to follow him that they, too, must first count the cost.

Let's look at Luke 14:28-30 (NLT)

"But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? 29 Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh

at you. 30 They would say, 'There's the person who started that building and couldn't afford to finish it!'

We just sold our house, and for a minute looked into building...

This is what Jesus has asked us to do with our decision to live and follow after Him. Look back at that scripture in the verses before and let's read some of the costs the early disciples had to consider before deciding to follow after Jesus.

Luke 14:25-27,33 (NLT)

"25 A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, 26 'If you want to be my disciples, you must hate everyone else by comparison-your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters- yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. 27 And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple.'" skip down to verse 33, "You cannot become my disciple without giving up everything you own."

WOW! Jesus, that's intense!

Now, I think many people have a hard time understanding this word from Jesus. Probably many people that heard these words from Jesus on that day didn't receive it all that well. In fact, I would bet there were some who walked away in that moment and went back to their homes and to their family. Maybe even some of us here this morning initially hear those words and think, "I'm out" If that's what God is asking of me, I don't want to be a part of it. What kind of life is that?"

You see, I think we often read a passage like this in scripture, because believe it or not there are others, and we'll read some of them today, but we read these scriptures and we **confuse surrender with suffering**. We

think, oh man, If I decide to surrender or sacrifice my desires, passions, money, career, relationships to God then I will somehow be accepting a life of suffering, lack/poverty, isolation, and servitude. That God, forcing us into submission, will ask us to live this miserable earthly life of suffering in order to prove to Him our dedication and love for Him.

To understand Jesus' words, we have to remember the context and audience to which he spoke these words. Jesus was speaking to a large group of Jews. People who would have (up to this point) been committed to the Jewish law and traditions. Jesus' teachings seemed to be in radical opposition to these laws and traditions, which is why the Jewish religious leaders killed Him. Jesus was telling them, hey if you follow after me and my teachings, you may face a similar fate. Your Jewish relatives and friends may not agree with this life decision, and they may even hate you for it. This commitment to surrender to me may require significant financial loss, in fact you may lose everything, you may be displaced from your home as you run for your life. so, decide today, are you willing to surrender it all?

Now these were very real and serious costs that the Jewish people of Jesus' day had to consider before following Him. Most of us today will probably never have to truly consider the potential of losing our life or all of our possessions because of our faith in Christ, but our willingness to surrender everything to follow after Jesus must be the same.

God's will, motive, and desire is NOT suffering, His desire is a people who are wholly devoted and surrendered to Him no matter what the cost.

Now, understand, as we just read, surrender will have a price at times. At times we will have to sacrifice finances, relationships, goals, aspirations, hobbies, careers, possessions, and more to live out this purposed life

But when we are in God's perfect love and purpose, the cost becomes an investment! An investment we give joyfully, passionately, and confidently give.

Let's look at a few people in the Bible who was also faced with this question, "Are you willing to surrender everything"?

Turn with me to Exodus chapter 3. Let's look at the well-known story of Moses and his encounter with God at the burning bush. But for those who don't know the story of Moses,

- Moses was born in a dangerous time for Jewish boys, and in order to preserve his life, Moses' mother put him in a basket in a river which was found by an Egyptian princess who raised him until adulthood.
- One day, Moses saw an Egyptian task master mistreating one of his fellow Jews, and Moses killed him.
- Moses fled from Egypt and found refuge, a wife, and started a family in the land of Midian under the care of his father-in-law.

So, Moses is safe, he's comfortable, he's started a new life for himself.

Look at verse 1 in chapter 3

Exodus 3:1-10 (NLT)

3 One day Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro,<sup>[a]</sup> the priest of Midian. He led the flock far into the wilderness and came to Sinai,<sup>[b]</sup> the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup> There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the middle of a bush. Moses stared in amazement. Though the bush was engulfed in flames, it didn't burn up. <sup>3</sup> "This is amazing," Moses said to himself. "Why isn't that bush burning up? I must go see it."

<sup>4</sup> When the Lord saw Moses coming to take a closer look, God called to him from the middle of the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

“Here I am!” Moses replied.

<sup>5</sup> “Do not come any closer,” the Lord warned. “Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground. <sup>6</sup> I am the God of your father<sup>[c]</sup>—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” When Moses heard this, he covered his face because he was afraid to look at God.

<sup>7</sup> Then the Lord told him, “I have certainly seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cries of distress because of their harsh slave drivers. Yes, I am aware of their suffering. <sup>8</sup> So I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and lead them out of Egypt into their own fertile and spacious land. It is a land flowing with milk and honey—the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites now live. <sup>9</sup> Look! The cry of the people of Israel has reached me, and I have seen how harshly the Egyptians abuse them.

<sup>10</sup> Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh. You must lead my people Israel out of Egypt.”

So here Moses is, mind’ in his own business, living out his ordinary life of watching sheep, and God reveals to him his plan and purpose to use Moses to save the people of Israel from Egyptian slavery.

So Moses has a choice, will he surrender everything to God’s plan?

Exodus 3:11-14 (NLT)

“But Moses protested to God, ‘Who am I to appear before Pharaoh? Who am I to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt?’” <sup>12</sup> God answered, “I will be with you...verse <sup>13</sup> “But Moses protested, ‘If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, ‘The god of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ they will ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?’” <sup>14</sup> God replied, ‘I am who I am...’

skip to chapter 4 verse 1

Exodus 4:1 'But Moses protested again, 'What if they won't believe me or listen to me? What if they say, 'The Lord never appeared to you?''  
God gives him another answer, but look at verse 10,

Exodus 4:10-12 (NLT)

10 But Moses pleaded with the Lord, 'O Lord, I'm not very good with words. I never have been, and I'm not now, even though you have spoken to me. I get tongue-tied, and my words get tangled.'<sup>11</sup> Then the Lord asked Moses, 'Who makes a person's mouth? Who decides whether people speak or do not speak, hear or do not hear, see or do not see? Is it not I, the Lord? <sup>12</sup> Now go! I will be with you as you speak, and I will instruct you in what to say.'

Moses was counting the cost. It's ok to count the cost. Moses was being confronted with the question, "Will you surrender everything for God's plans and purposes?" Aren't you glad that God is patient with us? God says, hey I have great plans for you. Don't be afraid, I'm with you. Don't worry, I'll equip you, Don't doubt, you can trust me. Your surrender may require sacrifice, but it will be worth the extraordinary, eternal adventure!

Moses finally surrenders his will to God's will and successfully fulfills God's purpose for his life by leading an entire nation out of slavery and saving thousands of people.

Here's another story.

Luke chapter 18:18-21

<sup>18</sup> Once a religious leader asked Jesus this question: "Good Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?"

<sup>19</sup> "Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked him. "Only God is truly good.

<sup>20</sup> But to answer your question, you know the commandments: 'You must

not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. Honor your father and mother.'<sup>[a]</sup>"

<sup>21</sup> The man replied, "I've obeyed all these commandments since I was young."

He said Jesus, what is the secret to living this purpose-filled life here on earth. I want to know what God's will, desire and plan is for my life. Jesus responds, Obey the commands of God to live a holy moral life with others. The man's response, yea, I know, I've done that...

You know what I think the man was thinking here.. "But isn't there more! There has to be more!" "I don't feel truly and completely fulfilled"

Jesus' response...

<sup>22</sup> When Jesus heard his answer, he said, "There is still one thing you haven't done. Sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

<sup>23</sup> But when the man heard this he became very sad, for he was very rich.

So, again, was Jesus saying, hey if you want to be my disciple you must become poor, you must suffer more in order to please God?

No! Jesus said, you are lacking one thing, "YOU HAVEN'T FULLY SURRENDERED EVERYTHING TO ME! There are still parts of your life you aren't willing to completely give to God for His plans and purposes for you. There is still a part of your life that you are holding back for yourself. The issue wasn't that he was rich, it was that He wasn't willing to submit His wealth to God's plans and purposes.

God's kingdom needs wealthy people. We have successful, wealthy men and women in our church who are fully committed to God, and God is blessing them all the more for their generosity and complete submission



of their finances to God's plans and purposes. These are often the people who partner and finance important Kingdom work in this world.

And that's the beauty of God's economy. Whether it's time, money, energy, or spiritual giftings, when we joyfully submit these areas of our life to God for his eternal purposes, He gives us more so that we can continue to do more!

Jesus told a parable about this Godly concept in Luke chapter 16:9-12 (NLT) when he says,

<sup>9</sup> Here's the lesson: Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. Then, when your possessions are gone, they will welcome you to an eternal home.<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>10</sup> "If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. <sup>11</sup> And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? <sup>12</sup> And if you are not faithful with other people's things, why should you be trusted with things of your own?"

When you fully and completely surrender every area of your life to God's will and purposes, God's promise is that you will experience true blessing and fulfillment that nothing else on this earth can give you.

Look again at what Paul said in Romans chapter 12:1-2

Romans 12:1-2 (NLT)

"And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind He will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship Him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.

Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect."

Let me conclude with this,

Matthew 16:24-26(NKJV)

<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. <sup>25</sup> For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. <sup>26</sup> For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

Listen to it from the Message Paraphrase,

<sup>24-26</sup> Then Jesus went to work on his disciples. "Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self. What kind of deal is it to get everything you want but lose yourself? What could you ever trade your soul for?

That's it Church! If we want to live our ordinary lives to accomplish God's extraordinary purpose, we have to be willing to surrender the driver's seat! Submit to God's leading in our life.

And I love this verse because Jesus said, when you truly get to a place of fully submitting your life to Jesus or losing your life, that's when you will truly find your purpose and fulfillment here on earth.

Are you struggling with feeling like you have meaning and purpose in your life? Surrender everything to Jesus. Do you feel separated from God? Surrender everything to Jesus. Do you feel like you are aimlessly wondering through your days? Surrender everything to Jesus. Do you

want to experience the abundant life that Jesus came to offer you? Surrender everything to Jesus. Do you want to make a meaningful impact in your family and friends? Surrender everything to Jesus! Do you want to be able to stand before God at the end of your life and for Him to say, “great job, well done?” Surrender everything to Jesus!

Let me ask again, “Are you willing to surrender everything to Jesus?” because when you do, that’s when you will begin to find yourself, and the purposes that God has for your life.