

Russell Kelfer

The Call to Surrender

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Series: The Four Callings of God

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10602 Mossbank, San Antonio, TX 78230 • (210) 226-0000 / 1-800-375-7778 • www.dtm.org • dtm@dtm.org

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Words—we use too many of them in this class. I know that. If you took a vote, you would agree. And we Christians often use the same words over and over and over, and oftentimes, don't really understand what they mean. Or, if we understand, we don't mean the same thing that the guy sitting next to us means, when he says, "committed." Some of us think that means being hauled off to the funny farm or something. "Discipled," there is a word where not everyone means the same thing. "Led." "Filled." But there is one word I want to talk to you about this morning, that I don't think most Christians necessarily have come to an agreement on what it means. I would like us to look at that, this morning. The word is "balance"—the balanced Christian life. It's a tough one.

To many people, the balanced Christian life means you never go out on a limb. You never become vulnerable. You never take any risks; therefore, you never get into trouble. You're balanced. The problem is, if that's what balance is, Jesus wasn't balanced, and Paul wasn't balanced, so that's not the answer. To other people, the balanced Christian life means you run off in every direction you can, and try everything you can, and go from extreme to extreme. Then as you come back to the middle, you find a balance. The problem with that, of course, is that *at any given time*, no one knows who you are or what you are doing. I think one of the key areas where we struggle with this issue is in the difference between the emotions and the mind. Christians struggle with that. And if you were to ask ten different people where the balance is, you would probably get ten answers.

This morning, I would like to submit to you, that perhaps the balanced Christian life is one in which the decision-making apparatus is under the control of the Spirit, in response to the Word, rather than under the control of your emotions. That, you see, would always leave the choices up to you, but the power to exercise those choices, up to God. You may or may not agree with that, but that will give us a basis to begin with at any rate.

Our lesson is called: The Call to Surrender. It's the fourth

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and final (I know you like that one word, final) part of this series on The Four Callings of God.

I- The Balanced Life

II- The Need to Choose

III- The Power to Obey

IV- The Answer to Eddy

Now, I think I can be honest with you, this morning. This is a tough one to teach. I'm not sure exactly why, but I struggled with it for the last two weeks. I think it is one of the most important principles that needs to be communicated to the body of Christ, at large. Except the Holy Spirit intervene, I'm not sure this lesson will totally communicate what I would like to say. But pray for me that His Spirit might intervene because nothing is more important than achieving that balance.

THE BALANCED LIFE

If you remember, we are looking at John, chapter 14, and we're moving now to the end of that chapter. Jesus has just called His disciples together at the last supper. And He has explained to them who He is. He said, "I am the truth, the way and the life. I am the only way, the only truth, the only life. No man comes to the Father but by Me".¹ Now, I hope you grasp what He said. He said there is only one way to get to God, and that's through Jesus Christ. And there is only one way to come to Jesus Christ, and that's by way of the cross. I believe He knew that through the ages, this would be a *narrow* way. He said it would. He knew that the world would not understand. He knew that even the church in the latter days, would struggle with this concept of heaven and hell and such a restricted access to God. He knew that, so He made it plain.

Then, He looked into their eyes and He began to talk to them *simultaneously* about two totally opposite subjects. That's what we are going to address, this morning. First, He addressed their need for total, complete obedience. Then He interspersed with that, His reminder of the provision that God wants to live in you. He told them it was up to them to obey. Then He turned right around and said, "It's not up to you to live *the Christian life*." Some may find that confusing. I find it the picture of the "balanced Christian life."

¹ John 14:6

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In fact, even the passage itself is balanced. The principle of obedience is mentioned in John 14:15,21,23,24. And the concept of the indwelling Holy Spirit is explained in John 14:16-20,26,27.

I'm going to read you the passage now, in detail, and maybe that will help.

“If you love Me, keep My commandments.

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—

the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

I will not leave you orphans [comfortless]; I will come to you.

A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also.

At that day you will know that I AM [is] in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?”

Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

These things I have spoken to you while being present with you.

But the Helper [Comforter], the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

(John 14:15-27 NKJV)

THE NEED TO CHOOSE

Four times, if you caught it, in this one passage, Jesus tells His disciples, “Obey. Obey. Keep My words, keep My commandments.”

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Verse 16,

“If you love Me, keep My commandments.”

Verse 21,

“He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, He it is that loveth Me.”

Verse 23,

“If a man love Me, He will keep My words.”

Verse 24,

“He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My sayings, and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me.”

I don’t know about you, but I think He is trying to tell us something. I think He is trying to say that the responsibility to choose to obey is ours individually. Sin, beloved, is not a sickness. Sin is a choice. There are some sicknesses that result from sin, but the decision to sin is a choice:

But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full- grown, brings forth death.

(James 1:14,15 NKJV)

Many textbooks on the market today, in the fields of medicine, theology, and psychology, are doing away, by and large, with the use of the word, evil, and certainly, with the word, sin. We are being led to believe, in one form or another, that the things that happen to us, by and large, are the result of uncontrollable circumstances in our lives, and basically, we have no choices to make. Or, if we have choices, they are ours to make apart from any absolutes. Jesus is reminding us here, that if you want to abide in Christ, you must *be obedient*; you must learn the Word and obey the Word you learn. In fact, He says, obedience is the only way that I can know you really love Me. He isn’t impressed with our emotional promises to trust and obey, when we weep and wail and moan and groan and then go back to the “hypocrisy zone.” He is not impressed. God is impressed when we do what He asks us to do. In fact, so sure was Jesus of that, that in verse 21 He said, “He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me.” Then He said, “I will love him and my Father will love him, and I will manifest myself to Him.”

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I'm going to ask you a question. How many of you want God to make Himself known to you? I would imagine every one of you has prayed that prayer in the last month. "Lord, reveal Your will to me. Reveal Yourself to me. Show me the mind of God." Jesus just told us how to progressively come to know the will of God, the mind of God, come to know God, and to have God manifest Himself to us. This is what I'm going to suggest we do. Take a piece of paper and write down the areas in your life that you know are not in total obedience to the will of God. Your prayer life. Your time in the Word. Besetting sins that you know get you while you "be setting there." The absence of love in your spirit. Take a piece of paper, write them down, and here is what I want you to do. Take that list, go before God, and say to the Lord, "Lord, I don't love you enough to do these things." You say, "I'm not going to say that to God." Well, let's go on. Verse 23:

"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.
(John 14:23 NKJV)

You say, "I just can't do it." That's not true. That makes Jesus a liar. He said, "If a man loves Me, he will keep My words. My Father will love him and we will come unto him." Obedience is a choice. In fact, He said:

He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.
(John 14:24 NKJV)

"That's how I know who doesn't love me. They don't do what I say." Now, we don't want to phrase it that way, but that's what it is. Life is a series of choices. That is the essence of it. When the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us, we have the Word of God as our basis for making decisions. We are responsible to choose to obey, again and again and again. We have a *decision* whether or not to pray tomorrow morning, don't we? God won't make that decision for you. We can choose. I woke up last night three or four or five times. I usually do on Saturday night. I call it Saturday Night Live because I don't sleep much on Saturday night. And each time, I knew exactly what I should be doing. God was trying to get my attention so I would stop and pray. And each time I chose to go back to sleep, or tried to. So, He woke me up again. But the point is every time it was a choice.

Now, you tell God, "I'm going to be faithful to you. The Scripture says:

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that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,

(Luke 18:1b NKJV)

You get up tomorrow morning and you don't "have time." As you get in the car to leave the house, not having prayed, what I would ask you to do is simply say, "Dear Lord, good morning. I don't love you enough to pray. You say, "I'm not going to say that to God." You already have, because He said, "If you love Me, you will keep my commandments." Everything we do is a choice. Everything.

I hate to get into touchy subjects, but I got up this morning and decided there were some link sausages in the refrigerator that really looked kind of anemic and were waiting to be eaten. The problem is the sausages only come in packages of five. Now, you can break the package, but that just doesn't seem to be an appropriate way to approach it. So, I looked at them and I decided I would eat two. After I ate the fourth one, I decided I would leave one for my wife and I decided that I had made a bad choice. I could have chosen easily what to do. I'll call it gluttony, but whatever you call it, we are driven to do these things. We blame it on the flesh, but beloved, the flesh does not have the power the Spirit has, and I did not make a wise choice! Had I made the right choice and asked the Spirit to empower me, I would have eaten two.

Suppose tomorrow, somebody comes into your office at work, or somebody calls you on the phone at home, and they want to come see you, and you don't want to see them. You've got a lot to do and you know that they'll stay too long. So, you come up with an answer, an excuse, why they can't spend time with you, but it's not the truth. I mean, it would be the truth if it were true, but it's not. You say, "Nobody will be hurt." Wrong. God will be hurt. Because at the moment you choose to lie, you're saying to God, "I don't love you enough to tell the truth." Because God has told you a lie is an abomination to the Lord.

You sit down in front of your "sin tube" this afternoon—the television set—and you're tempted to watch something you know you shouldn't watch. That covers almost everything. Anyway, you know it will fill your heart with wrong thoughts and it will quench the work of the Spirit. You rationalize in your mind, "But God doesn't care what I watch." You ought to know better, and you're making a deliberate choice. You're saying to God, "This is how much I love you."

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If your eye is pure, there will be sunshine in your soul

But if your eye is clouded with evil thoughts and desires, you are in deep spiritual darkness. And oh, how deep that darkness can be! You cannot serve two masters:

(Matthew 6:22,23a Living Bible)

That's the clear Word of God. So, if you to watch that which is impure, you have to say to God, "*Lord, I love you, but not that much. I love this program more.*" You say, "*Well, I'm not going to say that.*" I wouldn't say it either. It's too convicting. But the point is that life is a series of choices, and to the degree that we love God, our choices will reflect His will based on His Word. In Luke 6:46, Jesus asked the question,

"Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say."

You may remember the story—I only have three so you are bound to have heard it before—but it goes like this. A little boy's mother wanted him to mow the yard. He didn't want to mow the yard—I can't imagine why—so he decided to show his love in a different way. An hour later, he comes in breathless. His mother looks out the window, and sees that the yard isn't mowed and she says, "Johnny, mow the yard." He says, "Mommy, I love you. I love you so much that I cleaned out my closet." Now, usually, that's a miracle in itself. His mother looked at him and said, "Johnny, mow the yard."

He disappeared. About an hour later, he came in. She looked out. The yard hadn't been mowed. "Johnny, you didn't mow the yard." And Johnny said, "But, Mom, I love you. I love you so much, I washed your car." To which Mom replied, "Mow the yard. I *know you love me*, Johnny, but if you want to show me you love me, you will simply do what I ask you to do."

I think that's what God is so often saying to us. "Mow your spiritual yard, beloved. Stop lying. Cleanse your thought life. Pray without ceasing. Meditate in the Word day and night, the way I told you to. Obey those in authority over you. If you love Me, just do what I say."

That's the first half of this passage. I don't think our love for God is demonstrated *by our emotional outbursts of affection*, but *by our acts of obedience that prove our love*.

We look at our children that way, don't we? I mean, we expect them to demonstrate their love by doing what we ask them to do.

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If they come and they tug at you and say, “I love you, I love you,” then go right off and do what you told them not to do, you don’t believe them. But somehow, when the Father is God and we’re the children, we don’t know how to apply that.

THE POWER TO OBEY

There are a couple of problems. One is that for many of us, *the desire to obey seems to be there, but we don’t seem to be able.* For still others, the desire is *just not there all the time.* That’s why Jesus balanced His teaching, interspersing these clearcut commandments to obey, with a story about the person and work of the Holy Spirit. It is the other half of the balanced Christian life. We are responsible to choose, but we aren’t capable of doing it. Only God in us can do it. If you ever get both sides of the coin clear in your mind, things begin to happen.

To be sure, we never feared that we might choose to obey and not be able, God decided to move into our hearts, Himself, and live in us. Then there could be no limitations on what we could or could not do in the way of obedience. We could “do all things *through Christ* who strengthens us” (Philippians 4:13).

That is where we get the balance. Jesus did say, “If you love Me, keep my commandments.” Then He said:

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper [Comforter], that He may abide with you forever —
the Spirit of truth... (John 14:16,17a NKJV)

Your job is to choose to keep the commandments. God’s job is to let the Spirit of Truth live inside of you so you can, and to free Him to do His work. Apart from Him, you can’t obey. You would be filled with frustration, trying to act out in a human body the will of God. So, He sends His Spirit to live inside of you. Without Him, you can’t even understand the commandments, the Scripture says. You can’t recall the commandments, the Scripture says. You can’t do the commandments.

THE DIFFERENCE

Beloved, that is why there are no “almost Christians.” At conversion, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of you. Either He’s there or He’s not. If you’ve been born again, He’s there. If not, He’s not. There are no “kind of Christians.” That’s why Paul said, “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons

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of God”.² You can’t say, “Someone is almost saved.” That’s like walking in a cemetery and saying to a corpse, “That guy is almost alive.” Whoopee! That’s like saying, “I’m going to have my own airplane.” “Well, let me see it.” “Well, I don’t have it yet, but I’d sure like to have one. I like to fly on airplanes and I have always wanted one. I agree with the concept.” Beloved, if you can’t get in that plane and fly to New York tomorrow, you don’t have it. And if you don’t have it, or it doesn’t work, quit saying you do. The issue here is very plain. The Holy Spirit is a person who comes to live inside the believer at the point of conversion, and if He does not live in you, you haven’t been born from above and if you haven’t been born from above, *you cannot obey. That’s the balance of this passage.*

Jesus said:

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper [Comforter], that He may abide with you forever —

the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him,

(John 14:16,17 NKJV)

Paul said in I Corinthians 2:

But the natural man does not [have the right tuner on his radio. He can’t] receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned [and He doesn’t have the Spirit].

(I Corinthians 2:14 NKJV)

Only in those in whom the Spirit dwells, does the power dwell. And as we have said before in this class, this is the terrible danger of teaching Christian principles to non-Christians, and leading them to believe they can do it. And having them leave all the more frustrated because they cannot totally discern the spiritual aspect of the principle. And they cannot obey it without the Holy Spirit in them to do it.

I wonder how often we stop to realize how little we can do apart from God, and how much the Spirit does for us? I’ll give you a list of just a few things we cannot do apart from God. The Holy Spirit, according to three passages, empowers us. Acts 1:8 says,

“You shall receive power after the Holy Ghost has come upon you.”

² Romans 8:14

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The Spirit's Work	The Scripture's Description
Empowering us	Matthew 11:28; Acts 19:11
Sending us	Acts 13:2,4; Matthew 9:38
Comforting us	II Corinthians 1:3
Sanctifying us	Romans 15:16; I Corinthians 6:11
Convicting us	John 16:8-11
Commissioning us	Acts 20:28
Directing us	Acts 8:29, 16:6
Reproving us	John 16:8
Praying through us	Romans 8:26
Teaching us	John 14:26; I Corinthians 12:3
Guiding us	John 16:13
Revealing God's Truth to us	I Corinthians 2:10; John 16:14
Reminding us	John 14:26
Speaking through us	Luke 12:12

Do you get the picture? All of those are things the Holy Spirit does because we can't. Without Him, we have no power. Without Him, we have no direction. Without Him, we have no comfort. Without Him, we have no growth. Without Him, we have no conviction. Without Him, we have no knowledge. Without Him, we have no recall. Without Him, we have no understanding. Beloved, without Him, in the Spiritual realm, we have nothing. And that's what Jesus, in essence, was saying in this passage. The Father lives through the Son, the Son lives through the Spirit, and the Spirit lives through us. Therefore, when we set Him free by choosing to obey, He actually does in your life, what He did in Jesus' life 2,000 years ago—He *glorifies His Name*.

THE DECISION

The decision, then, is two-fold:

- 1- On a minute-by-minute, second-by-second basis, you and I must *choose to obey*. *Temptations come, questions come, choices come. We must make the choice.*
- 2- At the identical time, on a minute-by-minute basis, as we choose to obey, *we must acknowledge in our spirits, that we can't, God can. Let Him.*

If we lose either side of that coin, beloved, we are headed off the track and onto an access road. If we choose to lie, God will not receive honor. If we choose to think unclean thoughts, God

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will not be honored.

But even if we choose to obey, and we do not recognize at that instant that we can't, that only God's Spirit in us *can* empower and enable and instruct and enlighten us, then we will be trying to do in the flesh what only the Spirit can do. And that, beloved, is where most of us go awry. If we are trying to overcome a bad habit and we continually fail, only one of two things is possible: 1) we are not choosing to obey, or 2) we are choosing and trying to do it in our own energy. Either alternative brings dishonor to God.

I believe that is the balanced Christian life. The choices are mine; I must make them. The power is His; I must let Him. It all takes place in the will, in response to the Word, over the objections of the emotions and the appetites. Your appetites and emotions will always lead you wrong. Don't use them to make your decisions. The appetite caused Eve to fall. She knew the Word of God. She made a deliberate choice not to obey. The minute she did, the battle was lost. It was the appetite that caused David to fall. He knew the will of God. He made a deliberate choice and the battle was lost. It was the emotions that caused Peter to fall. He felt afraid, so he denied the Lord, Jesus and broke the heart of God. He knew better. He chose to disobey because his emotions cried out, and he listened.

You think about that this week as you make choices. How many times are your wrong choices the result of what you call, your feelings or circumstances, rather than the clear, authoritative, absolute Word of God? The one who is sold out for Jesus Christ no longer owns his own life. His choices are made, not based on how he feels or what he wants, but by the clear, absolutes of Scripture. It's no longer your choice whether or not to lie, beloved. It's only your choice whether or not to obey.

The Holy Spirit lives within you. He is perfect truth, and even if your mind has always been programmed like a computer to bend the truth, to lie, He in you, is perfect truth. Therefore, He cannot lie, so if you're still lying, it means you're not choosing to let Him be truth in you. That's the balance of the exchanged life. You do that and guess what you'll do? You'll tell the truth. No, you won't. You've been crucified with Christ, but He's alive. God will tell the truth. He'll use your voice. He'll speak through you. You'll be amazed. The world will be amazed, and God will

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be glorified. You made the choice, the Spirit enabled you, and as you surrendered, the victory was won. That's the balanced Christian life. And how easily we get led into one extreme or the other—cold, hard doctrine without trusting the Spirit to perform, or emotional feelings without using the authority of the Word to choose.

THE ANSWER TO EDDY

I believe that's what Jesus was trying to tell us in John 14. He tried to give us the balance between our part and God's part. The enemy will do anything to upset that balance in your life, in my life, in the life of a church, and in the life of the body of Christ at large. He can appeal to our emotions and our appetites until we make choices based on anything but His Word. He's got us. And even if we make the right choices and think that we can do it, we are just as bad off.

But I'll tell you something, beloved. Once you get the picture, and once it begins to work, life begins to make sense. Power is there. The wisdom is there. The discernment is there. The prayer life is there. The moral victories are there. Life is lived in a physical body on a spiritual plane. And you and I are beginning to become disciples. Life is lived at parade rest. We're not uptight about those moral decisions because they are made for us and we don't have to panic at our own weakness, because His strength is made perfect in our weakness (II Corinthians 12:9b). Victory.

Which brings us back to Eddy. How many of you remember Eddy? A couple of you. Four weeks ago, when we began looking at The Four Callings of the Christian, we heard from a television reporter in Jerusalem in the first century. He had been assigned to follow this young preacher who was walking around the countryside changing lives, and at the same time, frustrating the religious hierarchy. When we left him, he had been following this "Jesus" as they called him, and he had witnessed turning water into wine, and a blind man seeing. He had seen the religious establishment turn on this young preacher.

And Eddy wrote to us, you remember, and he said, "Could you help me understand what this man is talking about? He said things like 'Save your life and you'll lose it.'³ 'Except a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone.'⁴ So, he

3- John 12:25 (Paraphrase)

4- John 12:25a (NKJV)

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wrote to us and said, “Help!” And I think it’s time now for us to answer our friend. So, I have written a letter. You might write your own this week. It says:

Dear Eddy,

Thanks for your letter, dated 3 B.C. And thanks for the Israeli stamp. I need it for my collection. Your questions are most interesting, Eddy, and we evangelicals think we have the answers. I have been looking, however, for people who are living the answers, and they are much harder to find.

We believe what Jesus was saying to His followers was, “Either God owns your life, or you do.” If He owns it, He wants to control it. That means you die to your own ambitions; you die to your own dreams; you die to your own desires. It means the only reason you have to live is to glorify God. Secondly, Eddy, it means if you want to live God’s kind of life you have to become a slave—a servant of God. And serving God means serving others and that’s not fun.

Thirdly, we learned, Eddy, the servant has only one message. Heaven is real. Hell is real, and only those who come to God on God’s terms, through Jesus Christ, can be saved. Jesus is the only way, the only truth, the only life, and no one comes to the Father, but by Him.

The key, then, Eddy, is to surrender your life to His. Give Him the key to your heart, and let Him take over. You make the decisions, but He’ll tell you what they ought to be, and He’ll give you the power to do it. In other words, Eddy, you don’t have to live life anymore. He’ll live through you. Eddy, the choice is yours. Don’t just follow Him from afar to report on His life. Give Him your heart and receive His life.

Signed,

Alvin Evangelical, 1990.

Well, that sort of takes care of Eddy. But what about you? Do you really grasp the four callings of God, the call to discipleship, the call to servitude, the call to evangelism, the call to the balanced Christian life? And if you understand, are you living as though you do? And do you know what would happen if just those of us in this room, this morning, took seriously, the four callings of God? They would say of us what they said of them, “These were

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they who turned the world upside down.” I ask you in closing, has there ever been a time in your life when you actually said to God, I want to be a disciple; I want to be the kind of disciple I was called to be; I don’t want to play games anymore; I’m tired of acting out the Christian life as though I’m living in victory, when in reality, I’m being controlled by besetting sins?

When was the last time you told God, that whatever it takes, you want to be the man or woman God wants you to be and you’re asking Him to do it? That’s a serious prayer. When was the last time you confronted the absence of first love in your heart and you went to the feet of Jesus and spent time and wept there and asked Him to return you to that level of surrender you once enjoyed? When was the last time you clearly gave back the keys to your future, your family, your career, your ministry, and rested in the sovereignty of God?

As we come to the end of this series, I would have to ask you, could it be time today? If God has been wrestling with you these past four lessons about the intensity of His call, and the urgency of His call, and the depth of His call, perhaps it’s time for some of us to respond. I believe the Lord Scripturally says He is scanning this auditorium, this morning, looking for faithful men, faithful women. He’s looking for men and women who consider themselves dead that they might come alive in Christ. He’s looking for men and women who are living regardless of the cost, to choose moment by moment to obey every breath of His Word. He looking for men and women realizing, in and of themselves, they can do nothing, thereby surrendering to an omnipotent, omniscient God, so He can do through them what only He can do.

I would ask you to remember II Chronicles 16:9. It says,

“The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the entire earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are faithful.”

God is still in the business of looking for disciples. May He need look no farther than this room.

Let’s pray.

Our Father,

Some of us here, this morning, need to make some new commitments. The finality of Your call to discipleship and the intensity of that call, leads us to realize that what we call the

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Christian life, often times is so watered down, so uncommitted, so undisciplined, so unsurrendered. It's so much easier to play church than it is to follow Jesus. It's so much easier to talk about it. It's certainly easier to teach about it than it is to do it.

Thank You, Lord, that the choices are ours. We can blame no one else. But, oh Lord, thank You that the power is Yours. May we leave this place refreshed, this morning, with that realization, and may we truly become, day by day, ever more responsive to the four callings of God.

*In Jesus' name,
Amen.*

A CHALLENGE TO FURTHER STUDY

1- Review the four-fold callings of God. Read and reread John, chapters 12-14. Make a list of the six most penetrating statements Jesus made in those passages.

2- Ask God to make you the disciple you are. Seriously pray for whatever it takes in your life for the reality of eternity to become real. This is a dangerous prayer. Don't take it lightly. But if you mean it, ask God to bring it about.

3- Make a list of the things in your life that are keeping you from "dying to self." Become accountable to someone who cares about you, so that they can help you systematically relinquish control of those strongholds.

4- Meditate daily on the six statements Jesus made that you have decided to apply to your life.

5- Begin to practice the process of letting the will respond to the Word over the objections of the appetites and emotions. Expect warfare. Acknowledge victory

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10602 Mossbank, San Antonio, TX 78230
210-226-0000 or 1-800-375-7778

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