

Fil-Am Community Church

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Key Verse: 1 Kings 20:1-4

“ABSOLUTE SURRENDER”

Happy New Year! I hope you're really happy. You all seem to be. Except for one or two who are wearing a frown? Say to your neighbor, "Smile, it's a new year". Now, you all seem to be happy.

But what is really behind those smiling faces? Is it confidence, faith, hope? Or fear, anxiety, dread?

I'm sure all of us want to face the New Year with renewed strength and vigor. How do you do that? We also want God to bless us this year. How can that happen?

That is my topic this morning. And from this topic, I'd like to share with you later on what I thought would be a good theme for this year.

You see, there is only one way for you to be confident about the future and to receive God's blessings in your life. There is only one way that you could defeat all the negativities in your life and be a winner this New Year and in the years to come. And that one way is to surrender yourself absolutely to God. There is no other way. God demands no less.

The title of this message actually comes from a book of the same title written by Andrew Murray. Murray is a Christian writer, revivalist and pastor in South Africa who lived in the 1800's, almost a contemporary of George Muller, that great man of faith and prayer. Murray himself is a man of faith and prayer. In fact, he has written over 240 books about faith and prayer.

This morning I'd like to share with you one of his acclaimed books. This message is primarily based on the first chapter of this book. The points of this message are taken from this book.

So, what does absolute surrender look like? It looks like this. In 1 Kings 20:1-4, we read, *“Ben-hadad king of Syria gathered all his army together. Thirty-two kings were with him, and horses and war-wagons. And he went up against Samaria in battle. Then he sent men with news to the city of Ahab king of Israel, saying, ‘This is what Ben-hadad says. “Your silver and gold are mine. Your most beautiful wives and children are mine also.’” The king of Israel answered, ‘It is as you say, my lord, O king. I am yours, and all that I have.’”*

In this passage, we see that Ben-hadad, King of Syria, was ready to conquer Israel. He had a mighty army composed of his own and other kings. He threatened Ahab the King of Israel and he demanded absolute surrender. And what Ahab gave was what asked of him—absolute surrender. I want to use these words in verse 4: *‘It is as you say, my lord, O king. I am yours, and all that I have.’* as the words of absolute surrender with which every child of God ought to yield himself or herself to the Father. We have heard it before, but we need to hear it very definitely—**the condition of God’s blessing is absolute surrender of all into his hands.** If our hearts are willing for that, there is no end to what God will do for us, and to the blessing God will give us.

So, the question now is, “Are you willing to surrender yourselves absolutely into His hands? What is our answer? It may be hard for us to say “yes” right away. Why? Because immediately what come to our minds are the things we want to keep to ourselves. Like that old habit, that pastime, that relationship, that hurt, that hang-up, that secret sin. Some of us have been so accustomed to those “pretty little things” in our life that we cannot say wholeheartedly to God like King Ahab, “I am yours, and all that I have”. At best, we say, “I am yours, God” but this habit is

mine, “I am yours, Lord” but this relationship is mine, “I am yours, my King” but this career is mine, “I am yours, Lord” but this money is mine.

Let me tell you, the secret to a blessed life is absolute surrender to the King and Lord of this universe. Until we have done so, we will flounder in this journey called life.

Now, let me say four things about God and absolute surrender. Things we need to keep in mind in order to help us to take that bold step of faith.

Let me say, first of all, that

1. God Claims It From Us.

God expects your surrender. He expects nothing less. Why? Because he is our Creator. He is the Fountain of life, the only Source of existence and power and goodness, and throughout the universe there is nothing which can compare to the good and mighty things he has done. God has created the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the flowers, and the trees, and the grass; and are they not all absolutely surrendered to God? Do they not allow God to work in them according to his pleasure? When God clothes the lily with its beauty, is it not yielded up, surrendered, given over to God as He works in it its beauty?

In the same way, can you think that God can work His work in us if there is only half or a part of us surrendered? God cannot do it. God is life, and love, and blessing, and power, and infinite beauty, and God delights to communicate Himself to every person who is prepared to receive Him; but this one lack of absolute surrender is just the thing that hinders God.

You know in daily life what absolute surrender is. You know that everything has to be given up to its special, definite purpose. I have a pen in my pocket, and this pen is absolutely surrendered to the purpose of writing, and this pen must be absolutely surrendered to my hand if I am to write properly with it. If another holds it partly, I cannot write properly. Another example is your coat. It is absolutely

given up to you cover your body and protect you from the cold. It will cover only one body and not two. It must be absolutely surrendered to you to be of use to you. This room is entirely given up to a Worship Service on Sunday and not to a sports activity. We have the gym for that. And now, do you expect that in your immortal being, in the divine nature that you have received by regeneration, God can work His work, every day and every hour, unless you are entirely given up to Him? God cannot. The Temple of Solomon was absolutely surrendered to God when it was dedicated to Him. And every one of us is a temple of God, in which God will dwell and work mightily on one condition - absolute surrender to Him. God claims absolute surrender from us. Without it God cannot work in us and bless us.

The second thing we need to realize is that

2. God Will Accomplish It Himself

I'm sure some of you are thinking, "I don't think I can do what God expects me to do. I'm easily tempted. Or it's hard for me to get rid of this old habit. Or I just don't have the willpower to make this kind of commitment."

One thing is for sure. Although God expects you to surrender absolutely to him, he doesn't expect you to surrender in your own strength or willpower. He understands your limitations. You see, God is willing to work it in you. In Phil. 2;13, it says, "*For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.*" (NLT)

All power resides in God. Being your Creator, he is the one who can work in your heart to do his will. All you need to do is to yield yourself to him. God himself will work it in you.

Look at the men in the Old Testament, like Moses. Do you think it was in his own power that he was able to lead the exodus? No. If you recall, he wanted to save the people in his own strength but found out he couldn't until he gave himself fully to God and God used him to perform a superhuman deed.

I like what D. L. Moody said about Moses in this connection. He said that Moses spent forty years in the king's palace thinking that he was somebody; then he lived forty years in the wilderness finding out that without God he was a nobody; finally he spent forty more years discovering how a nobody with God can be a somebody.

And he was right. When Moses and the people found out they were nobodies without the resource of God, that's when the exodus began.

In fact, God said to Pharaoh, which he could have said to Moses and to each of us as well, *"But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."* (Exodus 9:16 NIV)

So, I encourage you this morning to put aside any fear or hesitation to surrender absolutely to God. Don't think it cannot be done because of a certain weakness or fear of failure. It can be done by God's grace in your life. Now, God not only claims your absolute surrender, he will also accomplish it and he will accept it when we bring it to him. Our third point then is

3. God Accepts It When We Bring It to Him.

So, I talked about God working in your life. That he is the one who is able to follow through your surrender. You see, one really weird thought that may come to us as we take the step of surrender is "Is my surrender absolute?"

We second-guess ourselves. We can't convince ourselves. I remember a story about a group of men gathered at a church conference on how to live in a loving relationship with their wives. The men were asked, "How many of you love your wife?" All the men raised their hands. Then they were asked, "When was the last time you told your wife you love her?" Some men answered today, some yesterday, majority didn't remember. The men were then told to take their cell

phones and send the following text to their respective wives: “I love you, sweetheart...”

Then the men were told to exchange their phones so one can read the other wife’s reply to the love message.

Here are some of the actual replies:

1. That was then, not now.
2. You wan borrow money abi?
3. What did you do again? I won’t forgive you this time.
4. Meaning?
5. Is that a new song?
6. Am I dreaming?
7. If you don’t tell me who this message is actually for, you will die today!
8. U dis man!! I asked you to stop drinking.
9. Abeg na who be this?
10. Did u miss ur med again?

Some women can’t just be convinced no matter how much you try. Is that true? In your case, when you say to God with all honesty and sincerity, “Lord, I am yours and all I have is yours”, don’t get caught up in whether it is absolute or not. God will accept your surrender as it is and as I said already, he will work in your heart to make that surrender absolute.

One time, a father approached Jesus and begged him to cast out the demon from his son. And Jesus said to him, “*Everything is possible for one who believes.*” (Mark 9:23 NIV) The father immediately replied, “*I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!*” (Mark 9:24 NIV)

That was a faith that triumphed over the Devil, and the evil spirit was cast out. And if you come and say: “Lord, I yield myself in absolute surrender to you,”

even though it is said with a trembling heart and with the consciousness of “I do not feel the power, I do not feel the determination, I do not feel the assurance,” it will succeed. So, don’t be afraid, but come just as you are, and even in the midst of your trembling, the power of the Holy Spirit will work.

Look at the Lord Jesus Christ in Gethsemane. We read in Hebrews that He, “*through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God.*” (Hebrews 9:14 NIV) In that garden, the Bible says that agony and exceeding sorrow came over Jesus as he prayed. Physically and emotionally, he was weak. He even prayed that he be spared from suffering but he prayed to his Father, “*...yet not my will, but yours be done.*” (Luke 22:42 NIV). And immediately an angel came and strengthened him. It was after the absolute surrender of Jesus to the will of his Father that God’s grace came and empowered him and allowed him to endure what was going to happen next in his life. Now, when you pray to surrender to God, you will not see the angel but I’m sure God will send one to strengthen you and make that commitment a firm resolve in your heart. You may not see it or feel it but God’s grace is there working in your life.

God claims absolute surrender from you. You must realize that he is the one who will accomplish it. You must know that he will accept a heart that is yielded to him. And because he accepts it,

4. God maintains it

Now, one thing that causes a lot of frustration to Christians is the feeling of not getting anywhere with regards to their commitment. They say, “I have often been stirred at a meeting or a convention, and I have consecrated myself to God, but it has passed away. I know it may last for a week or a month, but then it fades away, and after a time it is all gone.”

But listen! When God has begun the work of absolute surrender in you, and when God has accepted your surrender, then God holds himself bound to care for it and keep it. Will you believe that?

God is willing to continue what he has started in you. Paul says in Philippians 1:6 (NASB), *“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”*

Of course, that verse applies to his work of salvation in you but it should apply equally as well to your absolute surrender. So, God can keep you continually, day by day, moment by moment. He will never keep you out of his sight.

God is faithful. If it depends on us, we're all goners. But God knows us inside out. He's our Creator, remember?

Finally, God not only claims it from us, accomplishes it himself, accepts it, and maintains it. Also,

5. God Will Wonderfully Bless Us

Now, think about this: if King Ahab could said to his enemy, King Benhadad - *“It is as you say, my lord, O king. I am yours, and all that I have.”* shall we not say the same words to our God and loving Father? If we do say it, God's blessing will come upon us. God wants us to be separate from the world; we are called to come out from the world that hates God. So, come out for God, and say: *“Lord, anything for you.”*

I say again, God will bless you. You have been praying for blessing. But do remember, there must be absolute surrender. At every tea-table you see it. Why is tea poured into that cup? Because it is empty, and given up for the tea. But put ink, or vinegar, or wine into it, and will they pour the tea into the vessel? And can God fill you, can God bless you if you are not absolutely surrendered to Him? He cannot.

At the height of D.L. Moody's popularity as a revival preacher in the US, some pastors in London got together in order to talk about inviting Moody to conduct revival meetings in the city. One pastor stood up and said, "Do we have to invite Moody? Don't we have other capable preachers around here?" And he added, "Does Moody have a monopoly of the Holy Spirit?"

Someone replied, "But the Holy Spirit has a monopoly of Moody".

I hope that could be said of each one of us, too. When they see me, I hope people will say "The Holy Spirit has a monopoly of Rolly." Not, "The NY Giants has a monopoly of Rolly." I hope when people see you, they will say "The Holy Spirit has a monopoly of blank" not "TFC or Facebook or whatever has a monopoly of blank".

You get my point. God wants to monopolize every area of our lives. People sometimes say that when someone becomes a Christian, he or she comes under new management. I hope that really is the case. Because it means / we put everything in our disposal / under the care of someone who knows what he is doing in his business.

Jesus is the perfect example of someone who surrendered himself absolutely to God. He surrendered himself to the point of death in order to do the will of his father. Jesus died on the cross because he loves you and me. He shed his blood so that we can be free from sin and death. All you need to do is to believe in him and what he has done for you. All you need to do is to surrender yourself absolutely to him and you will receive the blessing of an abundant life here and eternal life in heaven. Jesus made sure that you will receive eternal life because he rose from the dead on the third day. By his resurrection, he has declared that he has conquered sin and death forever.

Folks, I want us to take seriously this expectation of God for us to surrender ourselves absolutely to him. When we do that, we will see our lives really

transformed in the power of the Holy Spirit. Not transformed only on the outside but on the inside as well. Where every thought, every idea, every desire, and every ambition is dedicated to God and is used to glorify God.

That is why for this year, I have thought of a theme that hinges on this verse from 1 Kings 20:4, *“It is as you say, my lord, O king. I am yours, and all that I have.”* To go along with this verse, I have thought of another verse, *“He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”* (Rom. 8:32 NIV) And these two complete the thought behind our theme for 2014:

“Giving Our All to an All-Giving God”

You may want to write that down in the blank space in front of your bulletin.

NJ and I are going to share a special number as you contemplate about giving your all to God.

I WILL GIVE YOU MY HEART