

INTRODUCTION

Everyone makes mistakes, including churches. I’ve compiled what I call the “top ten church bulletin bloopers.” I hope these actual examples from church newsletters and bulletins bring a smile to your face.

10. The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* on Friday at 7 p.m. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.
9. Weight Watchers will meet at 7 p.m. Please use large double door at the side entrance.
8. Low Self-Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 to 8:30 p.m. Please use the back door.
7. The Pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday morning.
6. The outreach committee has enlisted 25 visitors to make calls on people who are not afflicted with any church.
5. Tuesday evening there will be a meeting of the Boars of Deacons.
4. Men’s Luncheon: You will hear an excellent speaker and have a healthy lunch.
3. Hot Dog Supper tonight after church—please bring your own hot dogs and guns.
2. Next Sunday evening there will be a Super Bowel Party.
1. Miss Bertha Belch, Missionary from Africa will be speaking at Calvary Memorial Church in Racine. “Come tonight and hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa.”

We serve a perfect Savior, but churches are made up of imperfect people who make mistakes. When you see the expression S2W in our worship folder, it’s not a misprint. S2W stands for “Surrender 2 Win.” As we begin this new year, I want to share with you the dynamic spiritual principle that will assure personal victory for you in 2005. Your spiritual victory will happen when you surrender to God. It sounds like a contradiction to say you must surrender to win, but the Bible contains several paradoxical truths. It says the first will be last and the last will be first. It says if you want to receive, you must first give. It says if you want to save your life, you will lose it, but if you lose your life for the sake of Jesus, you will find your life. So don’t be surprised to learn the way to win is by surrendering.

Today we’re going to talk about surrendering your time to God. Over the next three lessons we’ll discuss the importance of surrendering your trust, your thinking, and your treasure. The text for these messages comes from one of the greatest chapters in the Bible, Proverbs 3. Over the years, I have made it a habit to try to read one chapter from Proverbs every day. You’ve probably heard the expression, “An apple a day will keep the doctor away.” That may be true. But I also believe “a proverb a day will keep the devil away.” This wonderful book contains some of the most powerful, practical instructions in the entire Bible. The third chapter contains fatherly advice given a son. He’s telling his son how to win, to succeed. These are words we should obey as well:

Proverbs 3:1-4: My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity. Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of

your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.

There are three important words in verse four: YOU WILL WIN. God wants you to be a winner in life, and the key to winning is total surrender to Him. Consider three aspects of surrender to win:

1. TOTAL SURRENDER MEANS SPENDING TIME WITH GOD AND FOR HIM

The most valuable commodity you have to give is time. You can make more money but you cannot make more time. You have exactly the same amount of time each day as every other person on earth. Twenty four hours, 1,440 minutes, 864,000 seconds—no more no less. Where you spend time and with whom you spend your time tells a lot about your priorities. The Bible says, “See then, that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil.” (Ephesians 5:15-16)

We live in at time when many people are frantically fighting the clock. They live under the constant stress of juggling time between their jobs, their families, and the many other various demands. Someone aptly observed: Ours is the age of the half-read page, The quick hash and the mad dash; The bright nights with the nerves tight; The plane hop with a brief stop; The lamp tan in a short span; The brain strain and the heart pain; The catnaps till the spring snaps; And then the fun’s done.

Proverbs 3 instructs us that our primary focus should be to show love and faithfulness to God. You can do this only when you understand:

(1) God deserves my love

We read, “Let love and faithfulness never leave you.” Love and faithfulness aren’t two separate qualities. Instead the language conveys the idea of “love that is continually faithful” or “steadfast love.”

Jesus didn’t always answer the questions He was asked. But on one occasion, a lawyer asked Him a question worthy of His reply. The lawyer inquired, “What is the greatest commandment?” Jesus was quick to answer, “The greatest one is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’” (Mark 12:29)

The most important thing we can offer God is our sincere love. He made you to have a love relationship with Him, and it takes time to strengthen and build any relationship. When you love someone, you will devote time to be with them. I love my wife, and even though we’ve been married more than 30 years, I continue to spend time with her, being with her, and interacting with her. I’d rather be with her than any other inhabitant of this planet. If I never spent any personal time with my wife, I would be liar if I said I loved her. Love takes time—and plenty of it.

Do you love God? How much time do you devote to being with Him? You can’t really claim that you love God unless you consistently spend time reading the Bible and speaking to Him in

prayer. That’s why I tell Christians that if you want to grow you must have a daily quiet time when you get alone with God and pray and read the Bible. It takes time—how much time every day are investing in your love relationship with God?

(2) God demands my loyalty

When it comes to God’s commands, verse three says you should, “bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.” The Orthodox Jews loved the Word of God so dearly they literally bond it around their heads and arms with leather straps called phylacteries. When they were wearing the phylacteries it was impossible for them to forget God’s Word. For instance, if you wrote a verse on a brick, put the brick on a rope and then wore it around your neck all day, you would constantly be reminded of God and His Word. Good news: You don’t have to wear a brick around your neck. God says you can write His Word on the tablet of your heart. That means you can read and memorize God’s Word. The Psalmist wrote: “I have hidden your Word in my heart that I may not sin against you.” (Psalm 119:11)

The best way to you can demonstrate your love and loyalty to God is by serving Him. God didn’t save you for you to just come to church and sit and soak and sour. He saved you to serve Him. Have you found a place of service here at Green Acres? There are over 200 ministries for you to choose from. You can do everything from singing in the choir, to serving as a greeter, to working with babies in the nursery. We constantly need new workers in every area of our church. If God has gifted you to teach, we are always looking for places to plug new teachers in. Now, these words are not directed toward those of you who are already working—some of you are doing two or three jobs. I’m directing these words to those of you who basically show up but you aren’t serving. What’s your excuse for not serving God? The #1 excuse people give is: I don’t have the time. As I said earlier, you have exactly the same amount of time everyone else on the planet has—how are you spending your time? If you are too busy to serve God, you are too busy. God doesn’t want your leftover time: He wants your prime time! When you surrender to God, you will *want* to serve Him. Sure, it will take time, but time is the greatest gift you can give to God! Serving Him is not a job it is joy!

2. TOTAL SURRENDER IS SUBMITTING TO CHRIST AS A CONQUERED SLAVE

When you realize who you are in Christ, you will come to understand that your time is not your own anyway. You belong to Christ. He has bought you and redeemed you. On the basis of His sacrifice, we become His slaves. One source of this great truth is found in II Corinthians 2:14-16, “But thanks be to God who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ, and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one, we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life.” The phrase “always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ,” is the key to total surrender to Christ. This word picture goes back to a common Roman custom during Paul’s time. When a Roman general accomplished a major victory in battle, he sent a runner back to Rome to announce the good news. Then the city would prepare for a victory parade. There was a certain incense burned in the city on the day of the parade to summon everyone to line the Apian Way. If you were a citizen in Rome and stepped outside one morning and detected a certain fragrance on the breeze, you would know there was

going to be a great victory parade that day. The parade would be led by musicians and those carrying incense burners. The victorious army would march into the city to the cheers of the citizens. But the star of the parade would be the victorious general. He would be riding in a gold plated chariot pulled by beautiful white horses. Chained to his chariot, and walking behind would be the surviving officers of the opposing army. They were now the slaves of the victorious general. Some of conquered army would be executed, but these officers would become slaves—sometimes important personal and professional assistants to finest Roman citizens. So, to some, the fragrance of the incense was a fragrance of life, and to others, it was a fragrance of death.

These enemy officers were trophies of war, and they represent those of us who have become the trophies of God’s grace. In this picture, Jesus is the Conquering Hero, and you and I are the slaves chained to His chariot. We have died to self and we have become His servants. That’s what Paul was saying, “I’ve been conquered by Christ, and I’m in the chains of His Lordship.” Where He goes, I, because my life is no longer my own, I am chained to His chariot. Here’s the life changing principle: Before you can ever be a conqueror, or as it says in Romans 8, “more than conquerors” you must first be conquered. Before you can become an over-comer, you must first be overcome. Before you can be a master of anything, you must first be mastered. The problem for most of us is that we want to be a winner. We want to be the one riding in the chariot. We don’t really like the image of being slaves chained to a chariot.

It’s all a matter of authority. This principle is illustrated by an incident in Jesus’ life recorded in Matthew 8. A Roman Centurion came to Jesus and said, “My servant is sick.” Jesus said, “I’ll come to your house and heal him.” The Centurion said, “Oh, you don’t need to come to my house, in fact, I’m not worthy for you to come to my house. Just say the word, and he’ll be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘go,’ and he goes; and that one, ‘come’ and he comes.” When Jesus heard these words, the Bible says He was astonished. (it takes a lot to astonish God!) He said, “I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.” And then He said to the Centurion, “Go! It will be done just as you believed it will.” (Matthew 8:5-13) The disciples must have been scratching their heads, and you may be also. Jesus was the soldier’s faith because he understood authority. He was saying, “I’m under the Emperor’s authority, so when I say, ‘jump’ the soldiers under me ask, ‘how high?’” This Roman recognized Jesus was under the Divine Authority of God the Father, so all He had to do was speak the word and all spiritual authorities obeyed Him.

When you surrender to Jesus you are placing yourself under His authority. When He says, “go” your only questions is “where, Lord?”

III. TOTAL SURRENDER IS LIVING IN THE VICTORY THAT CHRIST HAS WON

The good news is that we don’t have to fight for the victory—the battle is the Lord’s and He has already won. The only way I can have victory is to cling to the One who has already won. I don’t have to fight the battle for redemption—Jesus has already fought it and won. My job is to simply put my trust in Him. The Bible says, “This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.” (I John 5:4)

Now if you can grasp this principle of surrender, it will take all the burden and weight off you

trying to perform and to earn your salvation. Remember the picture of the Roman general and the slaves chained to his chariot? In that picture, Jesus is the general, and I am the slave. It's not my job to try to run ahead of the chariot and fight for the general. He's already won. My job is simply to submit to Him. Here's the powerful **SURRENDER PRINCIPLE: MY ROLE AS A SLAVE TO CHRIST IS TO STAY CHAINED TO HIS CHARIOT!** That's not easy for us, because we all want to be the one riding in the chariot giving the directions. We like to be in control. When you make Jesus the Lord of your life, you are surrendering control to Him.

This next statement will sound strange, but when I personally understood that my main job is to be the slave of Christ, it liberated me. In other words, when I came to understand that I'm chained to His chariot, it set me free. My slavery to Jesus was my day of emancipation!

Early in my ministry I would have said it was my job to build the church. Then one the Lord showed me His words in Matthew 16 when He said, "I will build my church." Since that day I've never once referred to the church as "my church" and I've never thought it was my job to build the church. Jesus said, "It's my church and it's my job to build it." He showed me that my job is to stay chained to His chariot.

Let me simplify your walk with the Lord. Just stay chained to His chariot. If you're saying, "Oh, is that all?" If you think that's easy, you haven't tried it. It takes all your time. In Proverbs 3, we discover two wonderful benefits to surrender:

(1) When we surrender, God gives us His favor

Verse four says, "you will win favor." There's something you can win that's a lot better than winning the lottery, winning a state championship, or winning a tennis or golf game. It's winning the favor of God. Proverbs 12:2 says, "A good man obtains favor from the Lord, but the Lord condemns a crafty man." (Proverbs 12:2) Favor means attention and blessing. Last week I was putting Christmas decorations back in the attic, and we have a lot, thank you. We don't have one artificial Christmas tree, we have five! God has favored us with many Christmas trees. I was carrying one of the boxes up the pull-down ladder to get to the attic, and the box shifted and I had to turn to catch it. When I did I wrenched my left knee—it's not fun getting old. For the next few days, I had to walk favoring the hurt knee. I climbed stairs differently, and got into my car differently. I was giving special treatment to that knee. Don't you want God to favor you? When He shows you favor it means He pays closer attention to your needs. When you surrender to Jesus as your Lord, He is a kind Lord who considers all your needs. So, in 2005, do yourself a favor and surrender to God.

(2) When we surrender, God gives us a good name

The second part of the promise in verse four says, "YOU WILL WIN...a good name in the sight of God and man." This doesn't refer primarily to your personal reputation—the value of your personal name. In other words, this doesn't mean God will make the name "David Dykes" a good name, because it's not about me. And the name of the slave wasn't what was important. The slave was known more by the name of his master. There's only one name is the universe God has exalted as the name above all names, and that is the name of Jesus. But when you

surrender to Him, you receive a part of His Name. You become a “Christ-tian” which means a little Christ.

There are some names I speak to those I love, and nobody else uses that name. For instance, my wife’s name is Cindy, but my pet name for her is “Cin.” I’m the only preacher who can honestly say, “I love Cin!” She calls me “Dav.” When I leave my side of the bathroom dirty, sometimes she calls me other names nobody else calls me! We have these names because we have a loving relationship. In the same way, when you surrender to Christ, it’s as if He gives you a new name so you can know Him intimately. Jesus said, “To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.” (Revelation 2:17) There was a wonderful custom in Bible times when two friends would part for a long time; they would give each other a small white stone. And the name of the friend would be written on that stone. Wherever the friends went, they could look at the stone, and though nobody else would know who the name referred to, it was always a happy reminder of this special person. When you become a Christian, Jesus gives you the right to know Him not just as His servant but as His friend! You can say, “What a friend I have in Jesus.” That’s the name that is a good name!

CONCLUSION

In sports and business, we are taught to play hard and to never quit. Sadly, we sometimes transfer this same competitive, win-at-all-costs attitude to our Christian faith. Because of our proud human nature, surrender doesn’t come easy, but when it comes to your relationship with your Creator, surrender is the *only* pathway to peace and victory.

One of my spiritual heroes is Oswald Chambers. He was a military chaplain from Scotland who died ministering to others. After his death, his wife compiled some of his writings. One collection is called *My Utmost for His Highest*. I’ve read it through many times. Here’s what Oswald Chambers wrote about surrender: “You will never know anything about surrender until you understand that John 3:16 means that God completely and absolutely gave Himself to us. In our surrender, we must give ourselves to God in the same way He gave Himself for us—totally, unconditionally, and without reservation.” (*My Utmost For His Highest*, March 13)

There will never be peace in your life until there is surrender.

The year 1945 was an important year in world history. After the Allied invasion of Europe, the Germans surrendered on May 5, 1945. As the Allied leaders met to discuss how victory could be achieved in the Pacific, an invasion of Tokyo was seriously considered. However, the Japanese events in the Pacific such as the kamikaze attacks demonstrated they would rather die than surrender. So, the allied leaders ruled out the possibility of a land-based invasion of Japan. Harry Truman made the difficult decision to drop an atomic bomb on Japan. The Emperor Hirohito was warned that the allies would unleash a new powerful weapon, yet he refused to surrender.

On August 6 an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. President Truman warned Hirohito that more devastation would follow if the Japanese forces refused to surrender—but the Emperor refused. On August 9, another bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Five days later Japan agreed to

surrender.

On September 2, 1945 at 9:04 a.m., an official delegation from Emperor Hirohito signed the terms of surrender aboard the USS Missouri. General Douglas MacArthur signed for the Allied forces. Part of the surrender document said: “We hereby proclaim the unconditional surrender to the Allied Powers of the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters and of all Japanese armed forces and all armed forces under the Japanese control wherever situated...The authority of the Emperor and the Japanese Government to rule the state shall be subject to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers who will take such steps as he deems proper to effectuate these terms of surrender.”

What many people missed about this surrender is that all of these officials and officers brought their Samurai swords and surrendered them as well. The sword of the Emperor himself was brought and surrendered. If you’ve seen the movie “The Last Samurai,” you’ll recall there is a powerful message conveyed when a warrior lays down his sword. He is totally, absolutely, unconditionally, and with no reserve submitting to the authority of the one who receives his.

You’re probably not a Samurai warrior, but most people carry a sword. It represents your own power, your own abilities, your job, your accomplishments, your strength, your reputation. Are you willing to surrender it all to God? Will you kneel before the Lord of the Lords and King of Kings and say, “Lord, I submit to you. From this moment on, I surrender all that I am and all that I have to you. I will become your slave. I am at your service from this moment forward.

Will you surrender to Him? It’s the only way to experience His Victory!

OUTLINE

I. TOTAL SURRENDER MEANS SPENDING TIME WITH GOD AND FOR HIM

"See then, that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil." *Ephesians 5:15-16*

- (1) God deserves my love
- (2) God demands my loyalty

II. TOTAL SURRENDER IS SUBMITTING TO CHRIST AS A CONQUERED SLAVE

"But thanks be to God who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ, and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one, we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life." *II Corinthians 2:14-16*

III. TOTAL SURRENDER IS LIVING IN THE VICTORY THAT CHRIST HAS WON

"This is the VICTORY that has overcome the world, even our faith." *I John 5:4*

- (1) God gives us His favor

"A good man obtains favor from the Lord, but the Lord condemns a crafty man." *Proverbs 12:2*

- (2) God gives us a good name

"To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it." *Revelation 2:17*



DISCLAIMER: These messages are offered for your personal edification and enrichment. There is no legal copyright on this material. I have used many sources, and I have always attempted to cite any exact quotations. Any failure to cite a quote is simply an oversight on my part.

If you are a preacher or teacher, I encourage you to use this material to stimulate your own Spirit-driven imagination. Additional study beyond this material will benefit both you and your listeners. You have my full permission to use any of this material as long as you cite the source for any substantial amount used in your message.

If you borrow the majority of a message or outline, I encourage you to simply preface your remarks by saying something like: ***“Some (or “much” as the case may be) of the ideas I’m sharing in this message came from a message by Pastor David Dykes in Texas.”*** This simple citation may prevent any criticism that may be directed toward you.

To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes