

The Song of Surrender – Ephesians 1:1-14

Slide: The Song of Surrender – Ephesians 1:1-14

Introduction

There have been some forwarded emails coming through the church office, and usually I delete forwards, but when Larry forwards you an email...like when EF Hutton speaks...I listen. Larry sent me a forwarded email about home invasions. Some of the statistics in this email were scary:

Slide:

1 out of every 5 homes will have a burglary, fire or carbon monoxide poisoning over the next 6 years.

Every two minutes, somewhere in America, someone is sexually assaulted.

Violent crime rose by double-digit percentages in cities across the country over the last two years.

Now when I was single, I rarely thought about having to protect myself from home invasion. I lived with an ex-football player who was 6' 3", 320 lbs who had a 150 lb. Neapolitan Mastiff that had a rail road tie for a chew toy: if someone broke into our apartment they were in trouble. But after I was married, my thoughts changed a bit. I started imagining situations where my wife would be in danger, and those thoughts heightened even more when we had children. I imagined situations where I would have to step in and protect them with my Irish Kung Fu... which is essentially is falling to the ground, curling up into the fetal position and screaming as high, as long, and as loud as I can. Hopefully the high pitched piercing noise of my scream would damage the attacker's ears, and he would leave us alone. I guess the point of this though is that being married and having children gave me something worth protecting.

Paul writes to the church at Ephesus because they have something worth protecting, and as the church of Jesus Christ we have something worth protecting as well. Often times we protect the wrong things in churches. We fight for our preferences: for music styles, and programs... what we like, what our children like...we fight for color schemes and even sermon styles...and frankly, fighting to protect these things is dangerous. I think it's exactly what the evil one desires; for our protective attention to be focused on the minors...the relatively insignificant, and while our attention is diverted, Satan is back here attacking that which we truly should be protecting. Paul does not tell us in Ephesians to protect our preferences.

There are many times in the Scriptures that we are told to fight for the truth of the Gospel; this is actually a worthy cause, and to follow our Lord and Savior into this kind of battle is an honor...but let's be honest. Achilles, in the movie, Troy, said to a Greek king, "Greece was Greece long before I was born, and Greece will be Greece long after

I'm dead." The Word and Truth of God are no different. The Word of God was Truth long before I was born, and the Word of God will be Truth long after I'm dead. In Ephesians, God is not telling us to protect God's truth.

In the book of Ephesians, Paul is calling the church at Ephesus and here at Covenant Life Presbyterian Church to protect their faith in that truth...their belief in that truth, theirs and our belief in the One and Triune Living God of the universe. Our preferences are insignificant at best and idolatry at worst, and God and His truth stand firm for eternity, but our faith in His truth and in Him can fade and be shaken. And so, almost like book ends to this first section of Ephesians Paul emphasizes their faith.

Slide: Ephesians 1:1 – “who are **faithful** in Christ”

Ephesians 1:13 – “having also **believed**”

Ephesians 2:8 - “For by grace you have been saved **by faith**, and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God.”

God says, I have given you this gift of faith...now protect it...with singular focus...with the depths of your heart...protect this faith that I have given you. And while protection can be done through different ways...building walls, fighting...screaming while in the fetal position...Paul gives us a powerful way to protect our faith...we are to sing.

I use to be a soccer player...emphasis on “use to”... and it was always sad to me that I had worked so hard to get into such good shape just in time for the season to end. I knew that during the cold winter months in Iowa, I would not stay in shape. I imagine the same is for those who build up their muscles in the gym, and they get injured and have to take a break from lifting weights. Then they lose muscle mass in the time they can't lift. How do we stay in shape...how do we protect our faith from becoming sickly, flimsy faith: Our faith is protected when we exercise faith in song.

Three times throughout our passage as Paul writes about the only Living, True and Triune God, and in FAITH he impulsively bursts into song...

Slide: Ephesians 1:6 – to the praise of the glory of His grace

Ephesians 1:12 – to the praise of His glory

Ephesians 1:14 – to the praise of His glory

But Paul is not just singing any song...if we are truly are to protect our faith, we must sing the Song of Surrender. And the best way that I know how to say it is...

Slide: Those Who Sing the Deepest Have Surrendered the Most (Repeat)

Janna's open hands

Ten times in eleven verses Paul uses words to describe God's plan, God's purpose, God's agenda, God's desires, and God's will.

Slide: Ephesians 1:1 – “will of God”

Ephesians 1:4 – “He chose”

Ephesians 1:5 – “predestined”, “intention of His will”

Ephesians 1:9 – “His will”, “His kind intention”, “He purposed”

Ephesians 1:11 – “predestined”, “His purpose”, “His will”

As Christians we often, after the fact, say something like, “well, God has His reasons”. Can I ask you a question? Why don’t we ask before the fact...why is it not our one, singular desire as God’s church at Covenant Life to sing the song of surrender and live a life of surrender to God’s will. He has given us more than just the gift of faith. He has given us our finances, our homes, our talents, our businesses, our families, our minds, and our time.

What would it mean to stand before the living God and ask, “What do you want me to do with my finances? The money is yours anyway... You tell me what to do with it...if that means giving it all away...then I’ll give it away. What do you want me to do with my business? You want us to go in a certain direction...we will go your way. What do you want with my talents and my time? You want me to use them in the church? I will use them as you want me to.

This doesn’t mean just the areas of your life that you want to surrender...it means Full Surrender!!! Lord I have an agenda for my life...but I will throw it out as you give me your agenda for my life. You want to protect your faith, your belief in the Living and True God? Sing the song of surrender.

Ethiopian Girls Singing

Those who sing the deepest are those who have surrendered the most.

There is a reason why we can pursue our life’s song of full surrender to our God and His will. Because of what His will has already accomplished and proven.

A good friend of mine said something very insightful as we were reading this passage together. I respect and love this friend more than I can tell you and I want to keep his name anonymous, but I will tell you that his initials are Luke Larkin. When we were reading about God’s choosing, His predestination, and His will, Luke said, “As Christians we always focus on the controversy between predestination and free will when we talk about this passage...but whatever predestination means...it’s because of God’s love.” And a Father’s Love Changes Everything.

Slide: A Father’s Love Changes Everything

Father’s Love Story

And we realize more and more what how God loves us and how He displayed that love...we will surrender our lives more and more, because a Father’s Love Changes Everything.

In His will His Love accomplished three things for you.

Slide: In love...

Ephesians 1:5 He predestined us to **adoption as sons**

Ephesians 1:7 ...we have **redemption** through His blood, the forgiveness
of our trespasses

Ephesians 1:13 ...you were **sealed** in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise

In His love for us His desire led Him to adopt us into His family....

But God did not adopt us from an orphanage. Because of His love He redeemed us from the slave block. The picture here is one that we find in Hosea. God told Hosea, the prophet to marry a prostitute named Gomer. She married him but then continued to sell herself to other men. One of those men took her as his slave. But eventually he had had enough of her, but he didn't let her go...he put her on the slave block to sell her to another man. The day of the auction arrived and she was stripped naked in front of the crowd of men and the bidding began. Do you know who bought her...the man who loved her...the man who had no business paying for, because she was already his wife. Because of his great love for her, Hosea bought her.

This is the image of God's love for us. We were slaves to sin, deserving of God's wrath even as Ephesians 2:3 tells us...

Slide: Ephesians 2:3 ... "we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were **by nature children of wrath**, even as the rest."

Being slaves to sin, we deserved the cup of God's wrath to be poured out on us, but instead, He bought not at the price of silver, but at the price of Jesus' blood that was poured out on the cross. And we are now as Paul says in Galatians 4:7 no longer slaves but sons.

Slide: Galatians 4:5 ...so that He might **redeem** (us)...that we might receive the adoption as sons...7 Therefore **you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son**, then an heir through God.

But God's love didn't stop there...he had to make the adoption final. And He did it through His kingly seal.

Slide: Ephesians 1:13 ...you were **sealed** in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise

This image of being sealed by the Holy Spirit is a royal image...we see this image throughout Scripture in Daniel and Nehemiah. The image is one of finality. A king would have a document written and some hot wax was then poured on the document and with His royal seal the king would seal his document...which means that it could not be overturned...ever....not even by the king. By God's love and by His will you and I have

been adopted, redeemed and sealed by the Holy Spirit, and there aint nothin' but nothin' that can change that.

And when this truth of His love and His will sinks down into the depths of our souls...we will do anything to protect our faith in it...we will even sing the song of surrender.

Video

Amazing grace how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me, I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind but now I see. When we have been there ten thousand years bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise then when we've first begun We have been adopted, redeemed and sealed by God...and it was all in Jesus.

Slide:

Ephesians 1:4 – “in Him”, “before Him”

Ephesians 1:6 – “in the Beloved”

Ephesians 1:7 – “in Him”

Ephesians 1:9 – “in Him”

Ephesians 1:10 – “in Christ”, “in Him”

Ephesians 1:12 – “in Christ”

Ephesians 1:13 – “in Him”, “in Him”

Ten times in eleven verses Christ's name is mentioned in that everything that God's loving will accomplished was accomplished through Jesus.

On the night Jesus was betrayed, he lay face down in the garden of Gathsemene. His heart was overwhelmed, knowing that the beatings, and the mockings, and the floggings, and the cross lay ahead of Him. And with blood droplets coming out of His pours, He prayed to His Father saying, "Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet **not My will, but Thine be done.**"

Jesus sang the song of surrender all the way into the grave for you and me. And just hours before He sang the song of surrender on the cross, He sat with His disciples around the table to have a meal...a meal that would symbolize His surrender to the cross in order that we might be adopted, redeemed and sealed. This is a family meal...for those of faith in Christ. If you don't believe or don't know if you believe...we are so glad you are here. I would ask that as the bread and wine come to you that you would pass them on, and take some time to reflect on your need for Jesus and what He has done for you. For those of the family of faith remember to wait until the entire family has the bread and then we will eat together.

On the night Jesus was betrayed, He took the bread and broke it, and said, “This is my body which is broken for you, do this in remembrance of me.” ...let me paraphrase that for us today...because of Jesus' body being broken you are adopted, redeemed and sealed.

Take and Eat

Please remember that we do serve wine in this church, so if you would prefer to use grape juice, please take from the cups on the outer rim, and please wait until we all have received our cups so that we can take part together.

And in the same way *He took* the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.

Take and Drink

Song

Benediction: Now to the Father who chose you, to the Son, who redeemed you, and to the Holy Spirit who sealed you be glory forever...Amen.