

THE SACRAMENT OF LIVING

EPIPHANY 2011

Christianity puts surrender to love right at the core of the spiritual journey.

David G. Benner

Surrender to Love

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Matthew 16 vs. 13-27

¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

¹⁴ They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

¹⁵ “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

¹⁷ Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of death will not overcome it.

19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” **20** Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. **22** Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. **25** For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. **26** What good will it be for you to gain the whole world, yet forfeit your soul? Or what can you give in exchange for your soul? **27** For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward everyone according to what they have done.”

God Loves You Deeply and Unconditionally

HOW SURRENDER HAPPENS

See the fullness of Jesus

Matthew 16 vs. 13-23

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Son of Man

Daniel 7 vs. 13-14

¹³ “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

Son of Man

Suffering Servant

Matthew 16 vs. 17-18

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Son of Man

Suffering Servant

Giver of your True Self

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Release Control

Jesus invites us to relinquish the control of our life. He invites us to give up the desperate and illusory striving after autonomy. He invites us abandon the isolation and rigidity associated with our egocentricity. And in their place he offers rest, fulfillment, and the discovery of our true and deepest self in Christ. When we take this step of surrender, we discover the place for which we have been unconsciously longing. Like a tool seized by a strong hand, we are at last where we belong; we know we have been found. Paradoxically, the abundant life promised in Christ comes not from grasping but from releasing. It comes not from striving but from relinquishing.

It comes not so much from taking as from giving. Surrender is the foundational dynamic of Christian freedom – surrender of my efforts to live my life outside the grasp of God's love and surrender to God's will and gracious Spirit. Surrender is being willing rather than willful. It is a readiness to trust that is based in love. It is relaxing and letting go.

David G. Benner

Surrender to God's Timing

Surrender Your Definition of Success

Surrender Comfort as Your Primary Goal

Surrender the Fight Against Temptation

Experience the Freedom of Following