

The Essence of True Worship

21 - Reclaiming the Gates
Church on the Park | Sunday, 06 MAR 2016

Text: “Samuel said, ‘Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed [to attentively listen] than the fat of rams” (1 Sam. 15:22)

“Yet not as I will, but as you will.” Matthew 26:39b

Theme: The world tells us to avoid pain and suffering, but God wants to give us His perspective. When we surrender to God in the midst of pain, precious oil is released - ultimate worship.

Intro: The Lord put this message on my heart in January. It goes along with what Glen shared last week - having hearts that are soft and surrendered to the Lord. Hearts that fully obey Him. He talked about the fourth spice in the anointing oil: cassia (Exo. 30:22-33). The Hebrew word comes from ‘bend’ or ‘bow’. Real worship is from a soft and submitted heart.

I want to talk about what it means to **surrender in the context of pain and suffering**. What it means to worship God when you feel pressed, overwhelmed by life.

If you are **not going through any suffering** right now, please **keep listening**, because you will! My experience - hearing Jensen Franklin message on suffering when I thought things were going well. But when we returned to Australia I realized how much I needed that message!

If you are going through a tough time right now, I pray this message encourages you.

Sometimes we can feel so overwhelmed by how we feel, that it’s hard for us to really hear. Choose to open up your ears, **choose to listen by the Spirit and not by your feelings**. That’s why we pray, “Jesus, speak to my heart and change my life.”

Read: Matthew 26:36-39

Gesthemane means “oil press”. The olives were put on a stone and another stone rolled on top to release the oil. Imagine the pressure! The olive no longer looked like an olive, but the oil that came from it was far more valuable.

In Biblical times, oil was also used for **anointing**, cooking, for food, for **healing** wounds (remember the Good Samaritan) and as fuel for lamps - to provide **light**.

The Australian equivalent : GUMLEAF - break it, smell it, eucalyptus oil

The oil is released: ”Yet not as I will, but as you will... Your will be done”

How to worship in times of pressure (releasing the oil - the treasure that is within us):

1 Surrender - “Not my will”

At the beginning of our ministry, God gave me a vision of a clay pot with a crack in it and oil was flowing out of the crack. The oil of the Holy Spirit flowing out of our **brokenness**.

My testimony - self-confident young woman - 12 years of intense pressure - “undone” but confident in the Lord. When we allow ourselves to be broken, **humbled** and surrender to God’s work in our lives, we are no longer confident in our flesh (the outward), but we are confident in the work of the Holy Spirit (within us). Eg Me, Paul Philippians 4 (“participating in His sufferings” - key to knowing Christ in a deeper way.

God is not looking for a nice looking pot! What’s inside the pots needs to come out. But that is completely different to what the world tells us.

As I was preparing, I heard the Lord say that **He wants to change our mindsets towards suffering**. He wants to give us a Kingdom perspective.

So before I talk more about surrendering, I want to talk about **hedonism** - a worldly mindset that has infiltrated the church.

Anything that feels bad IS bad and should be avoided. This comes from **hedonism**. "Hedonism is a school of thought that argues that pleasure is the primary or most important intrinsic good. A hedonist strives to maximize pleasure (pleasure minus pain)."

False mindset: "A successful Christian is someone who lives without pain or difficulty in their life and knows only pleasure. This becomes the goal instead of knowing Jesus and His heart and becoming like Him. A successful Christian look like they have it altogether."

TRUTH: A successful Christian is one who continually turns to the Lord for strength and daily yields their will to God's will. In doing so, they receive God's life and grace.

Another false mindset: "We have to be without pain or difficulty - for things to be "just so" before God can use us or for us to fulfill our calling."

When we believe this lie, it is VERY difficult for us to surrender and we are tempted to take the reins off God and start calling the shots ourselves to alleviate the pain in our own strength. "Ok, you've had a good go and it's still not feeling very good. Now it's my turn."

But "taking the easy way isn't the easy way"

Lot's example - Genesis 13:11-13 "Lot **chose for himself** the whole plain of the Jordan... and **pitched his tents near Sodom** (for the convenience). Now the people of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD." Before you know it he's living in Sodom, some scholars say he became like a citizen of Sodom. In any case his family was influenced by the wicked culture of Sodom (offers to give his .

On the other hand, **Abraham followed God's direction** (God chose for Abraham), even though it seemed ridiculous, the promise of being the Father of nations seemed **laughable** and the **journey long** - traveling though Canaan, **extremely inconvenient** and God's commands sometimes painful. **But Abraham believed God's Word**. Every time God spoke to him he **made an altar to remember** that God had spoken to him

next time he came to it. Even though it was a test of faith, we see how God continued to bless Abraham (even before he had Isaac), how he fellowshiped with Abraham and protected Abraham and Sarah. Abraham **quick to obey** (eg the same day the command was given, Abraham circumcised his whole household). **It was clear to everyone that God was with Abraham (he influences the kings he comes into contact with, the come to fear God, while Lot was influenced by the cities he lived in).**

NOTE: God did not change Abraham's circumstances to make His promise possible (ie He didn't make Abraham and Sarah's body young again). He gave a child to a 100yo man and old lady to show His power in their weakness. He made His promise come to pass in IMPOSSIBLE circumstances (25 years of waiting for the promise to be fulfilled).

Be like Abraham and pray: "I don't understand how that could possibly happen, but I trust you, I honour you and I'm committed to fully follow and obey you."

Stop trying to escape suffering/God's discipline. Isaiah 30:15ff

To surrender is to give God the reins of your heart or your entire life of your family. The brokenness that God works in us is more like how a horse is broken - when it finally stops fighting with its rider and allows its owner to direct its steps.

2. Find out what God's will is - "but as you will"

If we're honest, most of the time we know what God's will is anyway; our flesh is just fighting against it.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways,"
declares the Lord.

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"As the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 55:8-9

3. Receive grace to do God's will - "Your will be done"

Conclusion:

In times of pressure, of suffering and pain we need to say like Jesus, "not as I will, but as you will... your will be done."

Surrender your will
Find out what God's will
Receive grace to do God's will

This heart of surrendered obedience in all circumstances, this sacrifice of worship is like precious oil released - God's life within us - His power, healing and light.

Remember not to run from suffering and don't be tempted to take up the reins of your life, no matter how bad things seem. Matthew 16:21-26 MSG
"You're Not in the Driver's Seat

21-22 Then Jesus made it clear to his disciples that it was now necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, submit to an ordeal of suffering at the hands of the religious leaders, be killed, and then on the third day be raised up alive. Peter took him in hand, protesting, "Impossible, Master! That can never be!"

23 But Jesus didn't swerve. "Peter, get out of my way. Satan, get lost. You have no idea how God works."

24-26 Then Jesus went to work on his disciples. "Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self. What kind of deal is it to get everything you want but lose yourself? What could you ever trade your soul for?"

Be encouraged!

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Hebrews 12:11

When Jesus was in Gethemane (the oil press), He was surrounded by many olive trees - trees that are still there to this day (reminded of this Scripture: Psalm 52 “But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God’s unfailing love forever and ever.” This was a prophetic picture of the tremendous fruit of His surrender and sacrifice. Millions of people who have been redeemed because He was poured out.

“The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” (Psalm 34:18)

I remain confident of this:

I will see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living.

14

Wait for the Lord;
be strong and take heart
and wait for the Lord. Psalm

27 _____