

Pretending

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[0 : 0 0] Hello, everyone. Thanks for joining the broadcast today. I'm Pastor Steve Frenzenmeyer from the First Christian Church in Greensburg, Indiana. I usually see our lead pastor, Ray Sweet, here.

I'm kind of filling in for him today. He's been at church camp this past week with his kids, so he's been one of the deans at Mahoning Valley Christian Camp up near Rushville, so he's had a great week with his family. So if you've ever heard me talk before or seen one of our broadcasts where I've been speaking, I love to tell stories, and I want to tell a story today.

So this is a true story. Here at FCC, we just finished our vacation Bible school just last week, and then we had a great week here. It was just an exciting, exciting week to see about 150 kids here each and every day, and we had great volunteers, and it was just wonderful to see how God just worked in these kids' lives. It was just beautiful to see. So I can remember a few years ago, I was part of another church at the time, and we had our VBS going on at the time, and the theme of the week was superheroes of the Bible. So with that, what we did is I dressed up as a superhero. I know that's kind of hard to imagine, but I dressed up as a superhero. I had a cape on, and I had a mask that covered my face and all that, and I was Captain Crusader. And so each and every day, Captain Crusader would come out and try to be a superhero in all these different scenarios of life when essentially they didn't need a superhero. They just needed Jesus. So finally throughout the week is when we get to the end of the week, and we realize we don't need a superhero. All we need is Jesus Christ in our lives. So here it is the entire week. I donned the cape, and I donned the mask, and I cruise out on the stage as Captain

Crusader in front of all these kids, and had a great week doing that, just being a part of that. And about a week later, my daughter had a softball game. And so we're at the game, and this little girl is just staring at me the whole time, and I really didn't think much of it. And finally, the mother comes up to me and says, Sir, I'm so sorry that my daughter keeps staring at you. She just went to Vacation Bible School last week, and she thinks that you're some kind of superhero. And me kind of being an obnoxious guy that I can be sometimes, just looked at the mother and said, I am a superhero.

And I turned and I walked away from her, didn't say another word. So you know what? Sometimes it's really kind of fun to pretend. You know, pretending to be something or someone that we really aren't.

[2 : 5 6] But sometimes pretending can be fun. But unfortunately, we're in a world today where pretending goes way too far. In this world, the world that we live in today, someone can pretend to be a boy, they can pretend to be a girl, an animal, or something totally different. And through their pretending, they consider their pretending to truly be their reality. And not only their own reality, but they try to impress their reality on the rest of the world, just because they say so.

But in their mind, deep down, they are pretending. That is their reality, but it's a false reality. And it's easy to make fun of these people. It really is. But people with such a warped view of themselves and the world around them. But unfortunately, they just don't see themselves truly how God created them to be. And they don't have the lordship of Christ in their life.

You know, and I don't want to go into all that today, but we're going to save that discussion for a whole other day, if that's all right. Okay? So in the meantime, excuse me, but pretending is not just for the world itself. Unfortunately, we also see that in the church. And in the church, we have a bunch of people pretending to be Christians. And pretending to be a Christian can be a very serious problem. In Matthew, the 7th chapter, verses 21 through 23, Jesus says, Sounds harsh, doesn't it? People doing the work of God, yet not getting into heaven?

And again, Jesus talks in Matthew 26, verses 41 through 46. I needed clothes, and you did not clothe me. I was sick and in prison, and you did not look after me.

And they will answer, Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty, or a stranger, or needing clothes, or sick or in prison, and did not help you? And then he will reply, I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for the least of these, you did not do for me. Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but they're righteous to eternal life. And you know, Jesus takes us even one step further in Revelation, the third chapter, verses 15 through 16. And he says, Do you hear that? Jesus would prefer us to be cold versus being lukewarm. If we're just lukewarm, we're probably pretending to be Christians. As a pretender of Jesus, we may be doing some of the right things, but our hearts, our hearts do not belong to Jesus. And Jesus doesn't want to be just us to be just Christians, but to be Christ followers, imitator of Christ, not pretenders of Christ.

[7:19] Jesus would rather us to be totally cold than to be just lukewarm or right in the middle. Well, isn't lukewarm better than being cold? Would you rather have a lukewarm shower than a cold shower?

Would you rather have a lukewarm steak versus a cold one? What about a lukewarm hot chocolate compared to a cold hot chocolate? In all these cases, lukewarm is better than cold. But when it comes to our relationship with Jesus, as a lukewarm Christian, we are just pretending. We serve out of convenience.

We attend worship if it doesn't interfere with our social or sleep schedules. We tithe or maybe just give a little bit out of convenience. And a lot of times we're just doing the bare minimum and sometimes not even that. But when you're cold, you have made that statement clear about where you stand with Christ. And God wants a clear answer from us about where we stand with him.

Matthew 5, verses 37. This is Jesus speaking. And he says, simply let your yes be yes and your no be no.

There's no maybes. No, we'll see. But it's a definitive yes or no. But you know, Jesus wants so much more. He wants so much more of you and me. So that so much, because he knows that so much can be done for us and it can be done through us for his kingdom.

But it's even more than that. We miss out on that close, intimate relationship that only Christ can offer us. And is there anything more important in our life than that? But if we're lukewarm, being lukewarm holds us back from experiencing the fullness of God. So how do we get away from being lukewarm and moved from being lukewarm to being hot? Well, we could say the obvious answers and the obvious solutions. Pray more. We could read the Bible more. Praise and worship more. Give more money.

[9:57] Serve more at church. And you know what? All of those are good things. Those are all good things that a healthy Christ-centered relationship would have.

But it starts with something even deeper than all of those. It starts with one very simple, but one very difficult word. And that word's surrender. Surrender is defined as the action or fact of accepting or yielding to a superior force. And that comes from dictionary.com.

In our world, we see surrendering as a sign of weakness. A sign that we are weak and just need to give up. And that because of surrendering, we are cowards and even considered failures.

But let's say you're a coach. You're the coach of a sporting team. You love coaching. You love the impact that you have on young people. But your playbook just isn't working. And to become a better coach, you surrender your playbook for a different one. Maybe even surrender your coaching style for the betterment of the team. Or let's say you're a business person that you own your own business.

You have a great product or a great service. And you're passionate about it. But you just have a terrible business plan. You're not making any money. In fact, you're in the red. So to save your dream of owning your business. And you surrender your current business plan to a totally new proven model.

[11:46] You know, the same goes for our lives. There are great elements in all of our lives. For those that are married to a spouse or children or friends, you may have a great career. You may have, who knows, but lots of good things going on in your life. But even though we have all these good things going on, there is just something not holding it all together. And doing, you know, by trying to do all these things, it's just not working. It's just not holding things together.

By surrendering to God, surrendering to Jesus, you aren't giving up your family and your children. And surrendering to God, God is giving you a new playbook for your relationships. A new playbook

for living what already is a good life. But then again, there are some of us that we just really need to start all over. We may need not only a new game plan, but a whole new beginning.

Surrendering offers that. Surrendering to God does not mean defeat. However, what it does mean is that we need to humble ourselves. And if we don't humble ourselves, it just leads to our desires over God. But surrendering is not sharing the throne of life, but relinquishing it to Jesus.

Relinquish is just another word for surrender. So let's say the stool that I'm sitting on is the throne of your life. And you want Jesus to be in that position. So let's say the Bible is Jesus.

Okay. So we put Jesus on the throne, but then something comes along and we decide, you know, Jesus, why don't you scoot over for a second? Let me help you with this one. And then all of a sudden, it's not only that, but it's actually Jesus. Hey, let me take this one. I got it.

[13:44] Luke, the ninth chapter, verses 23 through 24. If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me.

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for me will save it. Because it comes down to this. Surrendering is a daily choice. And each day is full of possibilities.

But each day we need to decide, are we going to pursue our own possibilities or pursue the possibilities of God? So is it going to be this? Is it going to be my plan or his plan? Am I going to be on my throne or will God sit on the throne of my life?

In surrendering, the first thing that we must lose in our life is our pride. And our pride is probably the one thing that has gotten us into many of the difficult, embarrassing, and damaging positions that we have lived through.

All because we think we know what's best. And pride is our throne. Where we have control, and it's all within our grasp to hold.

[15:16] We may be successful in phases of our life, but control masks as a strength that is actually a weakness. Stealing our true freedom, says Mary Rooney Armand.

So let's talk about this. Do you remember these words from the old hymn? All to Jesus I surrender. All to Him I freely give.

I will ever love and trust Him. In His presence daily live. All to Jesus I surrender. Make me Savior, holy Thine.

Let me feel Thy Holy Spirit. Truly know that Thou art mine. All to Jesus, Lord, I give myself to Thee. Fill me with Thy love and power. Let Thy blessing fall on me. I surrender all. I surrender all.

[16:22] I surrender all. All to Thee, my blessed Savior. I surrender all.

Those words were penned by J.W. Van Venter. He penned those words way back in 1896.

And he wrote those heart-filled lyrics as he himself was trying to surrender his life to the Lord. And it was a battle. And he says, For some time, I had struggled between developing my talents in the field of art and going into full-time evangelism work.

And at last, the pivotal hour of my life came. And I surrendered all. A new day was ushered into my life.

And I became an evangelist and discovered down deep in my heart a talent hitherto unknown to me, he says. God had hidden a song in my heart.

[17:28] And touching a tender chord, he caused me to sing. So, you know, let's quit pretending.

Let's be real. And may this be our prayer at this pivotal moment of our life. All to Thee, my blessed Savior.

I surrender all. Let's pray together. Lord God, I thank you for the words today. Lord, words that are wanting us just to give you everything that we are and everything that we have.

Giving it all to you and laying it at your throne. And allowing you to come into our lives and to be at the throne of our lives.

Lord, we thank you for all that you are and all that you do. And it's in your name we pray. Amen. I pray that the message today just touched you.

[18:39] And more importantly, even brings you closer to Jesus. That you would just allow your life to be governed by him. That he could sit in the throne of your life.

It's never a bad thing. It's never a bad thing. Giving in to Jesus. Surrendering to Jesus. It's not a bad thing.

You're not being defeated. You're not being defeated. In fact, you're being brought up in Christ. So thank you for joining with us today.

If you need to talk with a pastor, you can talk to one of us here at First Christian Church in Greensburg. Our phone number is 812-663-8488.
Or you can find us on the web at www.fccgreensburg.com. Thank you for joining us today. May God bless you. Bye. Here we go.