

A Surrendered Sender

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 10 November 2011

[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alpharetta, Georgia. This is the next message in our series on the book of John entitled, Jesus is God.

Take your Bibles, if you would, and turn with me to the book of John, chapter 5 and verse 30. How many of you enjoyed those missionaries? Say amen. And I'm excited about that. You know, one of the goals that I have for each of us is that you would visit the mission field.

And I hope you'll visit it regularly. I wish you would go every two or three years. Every one of you would visit somewhere around the world so you'd have a heart. You'd understand what goes on.

You'd meet the people. You'd find out how much they need the gospel. You'd understand because really you don't understand what it's like in another part of the world until you've gone. So I would challenge you, like this family gave their lives and they went on a trip.

And the next thing you know, they're going to the field. But every one of us would have a greater heart to get the gospel of the world if we would visit the mission field. Go with me to John, chapter 5, if you would. And we'll read verse 30 down to verse 35.

[1 : 05] The Bible says, He says, Let's bow our heads forward to prayer.

Father, I pray that tonight you would develop real senders in our church. God, I pray that you'd help us as a church to be more separated, surrendered senders.

For your honor and your glory. And I'll give you praise and honor and glory for all that you do in Jesus' precious name. Amen. If you have your Bible, go to verse 32, 33. And put a circle around the word John.

And I want to talk to you about a surrendered sender here. A surrendered sender. Now it's sender, goer sender coalition. So I obviously am preaching through the book of John. And as I looked at this, I thought this would really work for us tonight.

I wish you'd look at what the Bible says. Jesus has been under strong attack from the Jews for being who he is and doing his ministry. He makes it clear. Look in verse 30.

[2 : 58] He makes it clear. In verse 30, the only seeks to do the Father's will. I can of mine own self do nothing. As I hear I judge, my judgment is just. Because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which has sent me.

There are witnesses to who Jesus is. But when Jesus is going to call out witnesses, the first one he calls. There will be four in this passage of scripture. You'll see the rest of them Sunday morning.

The first one he calls is John the Baptist. And I think John the Baptist could teach us tonight about our responsibility as senders. I really wish you'd write some things down here in a minute.

Maybe some things that you can consider. Here, John pushes another's ministry over his own. John gives his best disciples to the ministry of another.

John was willing and desirous of diminishing so another could be magnified. So look if you would. Let me give you three or four things. The first thing, let's just real quickly look at the ministry of John the Baptist.

[3 : 59] And see him as an example of a sender. I want you to consider John the Baptist as a guy who sends out. Now, it's true. He's not a pastor. It's not a church. And he's not giving money.

But you know what? He gets a lot of things ready. He's the forerunner. He prepares things for Jesus to do the ministry. And vision can prepare things for our people to do the ministry around the world.

Well, the first thing he does is he bears witness of him. Look in verse 32. There's another that beareth witness of me. And I know that the witness which he witnesses of me is true.

John had a job. His job was to prepare the way of the Lord. He gave glory and preeminence to the Lord Jesus. He announced to the world. Do you remember? He said, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

John was the most popular preacher of his day. He was a man. If anybody was being followed, if anybody's been written up in the newspaper, if anybody's got the position, it's John.

[5 : 01] But John acknowledges that Jesus is greater than him and before him and more important than him. And John says, I have a job to do and I want to prepare the way for the ministry of another.

Now, you may not know this, but oftentimes we can get an attitude about missionaries. We can get an attitude about them always asking for money. We can get an attitude about them being moochinars.

We can get an attitude about them traveling. We can get an attitude about them going other places. And we're kind of like, wait a minute, who am I? Why do I have to support them doing that?

Well, I'd ask you, why does the most important preacher of his day have to support another? His job was that of a sender and getting somebody else to the field. His witness was true.

Look at verse 32 again. There's another that bears witness to me. And I know that the witness which he witnesses of me is true. John was the greatest prophet of his day.

[5 : 58] Yet he always points to another. He made it clear. He made it clear that he had seen God confirm that Jesus was the very son of God. He told the people that Jesus could save them.

He told men to repent and get ready. And John knew what it was like to be rejected. John knew what it was like to not have his message listened to. Look at verse 35. In verse 35, he was a burning and shining light.

And you were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. See, John's a burning and a shining light. Did you see that in the verse? Underline that. The burning speaks about his passion and his earnestness.

The fire, the shining speaks of his wisdom and the substance. The facts. The people liked John and they respected John for a while. But the stronger his message got and the more he pushed towards Jesus, the less people liked what he was doing.

He called for repentance. He didn't care who they were. He didn't care if they were regular people or priests or if they were kings. He didn't care. They rejected the message. They rejected the messenger because he pointed away from religion to Jesus.

[7 : 06] Now, I want to take those things that you know about John. And I want to just give you some practical things I think that would help us be good sinners as a church. Look with me at verse 30.

I can of my own self do nothing as I hear I judge. My judgment is just because I seek not my own will but the will of the Father which has sent me. First thing.

That's Jesus talking. Would you look this way just a second? Do you realize Jesus himself said I don't do what I want to do. I do what he wants me to do. How in the world could we be good sinners if we don't get off of our own throne and put Jesus on the throne?

If we don't quit running our life and let Jesus run our life. If we don't decide he's the one that's in charge. I'm not seeking to do my will but his will. It's not just preachers that ought to say that.

It's not just Jesus that ought to say that. It's not just mischrits. Every person in this room ought to say I'm not in charge. Jesus is and I want him to run my life. Can you say amen right there? I want to surrender my life.

[8 : 09] The second thing I want you to think about is this. You got to get the message right. John the Baptist had the message right. John the Baptist had the message right. I got some questions for you.

Do you understand the gospel? Do you understand the gospel? Do you understand the good news? I'm not talking about stories but truths. I'm talking about have these truths impacted your life?

Have you realized that you were a sinner? Have you realized that you would really go to hell? The sad thing about missions is many of us look at missions as third world countries.

We look at missions as poor people. We look at missions and think we could help those poor people in another country. When the truth is if you feed them they'll just die with a full belly.

They need Jesus. They need the gospel. Do you understand there is a heaven? There is a hell. Do you understand Jesus died and paid the debt? Do you understand that?

[9 : 04] Do you really believe there's a heaven and a hell? Do you really believe that men must turn to Christ? I would ask you this. Church, stop. Let's study the gospel.

Let's study the great truths. Let's understand what's going on here. Let's understand why John the Baptist would lose his head. Let's understand why Jesus would be crucified. That'll make us sinners.

Then we ought to understand the purpose of our existence. You know, John knew who he was. He was the big shot preacher. You remember back when he was over in John chapter 1 and John chapter 2? In John chapter 1 they come to him and they say, who are you and what are you doing?

He said, I'm just a voice. I'm just a voice in the wilderness crying. But you better get ready. There's the man. There's the one. He knew his purpose. By the way, Jesus knew his purpose.

He came to die. And as a person and as a church, we need to know our purpose tonight. We need to know why we are here. Why do we have a church? Why are we meeting on Thursday night?

[10 : 02] Why aren't we like other churches? Why are we so consumed with getting the gospel message? Because our purpose is to do his will, not our will. Jesus didn't seek to do his will.

He sought to do the Father's will. That means realizing that life's not about you, but about him. It means that you get your time and your talents and your treasure in the right perspective.

Can I ask you to think about doing something? Why don't you get your wallet sometime? Just take your wallet, take your checkbook, take whatever computer program you use, and run a little sling and find out how much are you putting into the things of God?

You claim he's your purpose. You claim he's important. But you know what? I can tell you how to tell if he is. How much of your time is given to him and his causes? How much of your treasure is given to him and his causes?

How much of your talent is given to him and his causes? John knew his purpose. He gave his entire life. Jesus knew his purpose. He gave his entire life. We're not to do our own will. We're to do his will. It'd be a good thing to check up every now and then and just say, Am I really living for him?

[11 : 06] You know, I think almost everybody in this room would hate the prosperity gospel. And if you don't, you should. We don't serve God so he can make us rich. We don't come to God to get God to do things for us.

We come to God because he already did something for us. He saved us from hell and he gave us new life. And we come to serve him. And that ought to be reflected in the way we give and the way we go and the way we do.

The next thing, if we want to be sinners, we're going to have to be willing. John was willing to be in the background. That's probably the hardest thing for all of us. I know this. It's been the hardest thing for me.

For the last five and a half years, the hardest thing for me has been to be in the background. You say, well, you're the pastor. Yeah, but you know, there's a whole lot of difference traveling around the churches. There's a whole lot of difference being the hero every week.

There's a whole lot of difference preaching the same message to you so good at it that when you walk in the room, they're all like, man, we've heard of that message. Sure. It's the only one I got, but I've been preaching a lot. Let's see.

[12 : 03] Here's what John said. Be in the back. John was in the background. Now, Matthew 11, 11 says, verily, I say unto you among them that are born of women, there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist, notwithstanding.

But at the same time, I'll tell you, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. John, the Baptist, the great preacher, the least.

John even says in John 3, 30, I must, he must increase. I must decrease. Be willing to be rejected for telling and living the truth. John was.

Be willing to be, to be rejected for telling and living the truth. Before I go to the last thing where I really think I'm going to try to say some very practical things to you. I would say to you, you know, we're not witnessing to our neighbors very much because we're afraid they'll reject us.

And we're not talking to our friends and we're not inviting people to Christ. And we're not talking to our family members because we're afraid they'll reject us. We've all probably think, well, if I were a mystery going somewhere else, I would.

[13 : 02] But the truth is you're going to get rejected anywhere you go. When you tell people that they're sinners and you tell people they're going to die and go to hell and you tell people the truth, it won't make you popular.

Let's make up our mind that we'll do that. Now, let me give you some applications real quickly. And I wish you, these are the parts I really wish you'd write down and think about. Number one, obedience is a requirement for God to use us.

Obedience. I wish you'd write that word down. Obedience. James chapter 1, verse 21 through 25. Wherefore, lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness and receive with meekness and grafted words that's able to save your soul.

Be doers of the word, not hearers. For if you're a hearer, not a doer, you're like a guy that looks in a mirror, looks in a glass, and he beholds himself and he goes his way and straightforward, forgets what manner of man he was.

But if you look into the perfect law of liberty and continue therein and be not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed. Let me just, this bothers me.

[14:02] This worries me about our church. And we got discipleship going. You're in foundations and you're talking to others and you're learning about the stuff. And you come to church and you hear good preaching, at least when I'm traveling, but you get good Bible messages.

You get it straight out of the Bible. And it's awful easy to fill your head and leave your heart empty. It's awful easy to get a head so big you can't get it through the door and feet so small they couldn't carry your big fat head full of air.

God wants us to do the ministry. He wants us to live out what we're learning. We're to be doers of the word. By the way, as Christians, that's our prayer.

You remember when the disciples said, Lord, would you teach us to pray? You remember when he said, would you teach us to pray? Do you know what they were taught to pray? Jesus said, all right, I'll give you a lesson how to pray. We don't really want to pray this way.

Because our prayer is really the opposite of the way the Lord taught his people to pray. Look at what it says in Matthew 6, 9 and 10 right here behind my head. You can see if you've got time to look it up. After this matter, therefore, pray ye, our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

[15:12] Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Verse 13, for thine is the kingdom. Just a second. Can I be honest?

Obedience. That's the word. Obedience. Not how much do I know. Not how many Bible facts have I learned. Not how moral am I. But obedience. Doing what God tells us to do.

I'm afraid the majority of people go to God to build their kingdom. I'm afraid. I'm guilty of that so many times. I want you to use me, God. Even when I say that, sometimes it is so sinfully proud.

I say, God, I'm important. I'm doing big stuff and I need you to use me. And God's probably thinking, I want you to shut up. You're a nobody and a nothing. It's my kingdom and it's not you.

You go to God bless me. God take care of me. God don't let anything bad happen to me. That's the opposite of obedience. Obedience is God do whatever you need to do to build your kingdom.

[16:10] If you were playing a game of chess right now. And you had all those pieces across the board. Has anybody in this room ever played chess in your life? You played chess, raise your hand. You know those pawns across the front?

You know what you do with them, don't you? You just let them get killed. You know who we are, don't you? Pawns. The king is in the back row. You're on the front row.

You're expendable. It's his kingdom, not my kingdom. It's his kingdom. Good intentions are not what godly sinners have or look for. Prayer and church attendance cannot be a cover for not obeying.

You might think to yourself right now. Nobody else even mad at church here in the middle of the week. They don't have church on Sunday night. Don't have Sunday school. Everybody else go to church one hour a week. You ought to know we're better than everybody. We go to church four hours a week.

Boy, doesn't that make us something? You know, going to church is not a cover for not obeying. Attending church is not an excuse for not telling somebody about Jesus.

[17 : 11] It's not an excuse for not using your time and your talents and your treasure for Jesus. First word, obedience. Second word, discipleship. Would you write this one down? Brother John will help anybody in this room.

But I'm going to tell you something. Everybody in this room ought to be discipling or being disciplined. Everybody in this room ought to be disciplined or be being disciplined. Be discipling or be disciplined.

You should learn all you can and teach everybody you can. You say, well, I don't know anybody I can teach. Every lost person needs to be taught. The Bible says in Matthew chapter 28 and verse 19, go and teach.

That word teach is the exact same word as make a disciple. You know what you do? You teach them until they do get saved. And once they do get saved, you teach them how to keep on serving God. You teach them until the salvation. And after salvation, you keep on teaching.

We ought to become teachers. You should be involved. Are you involved? I just talked to you about obedience. You should be. You want to be a good sinner. Get in discipleship.

[18 : 10] Get in discipleship. Teach people. I'd like to ask this question. The man said he went over there and he was walking down the road. And the guy's pulling on his arm and said, come teach us about Jesus. I question, could you teach about Jesus?

Would they be able to pull on your arm and say, teach us about Jesus? Or it'd be like, no, you don't know enough to teach us. We ought to be people that know the book. Say amen. Know the book. Know Jesus. He's been disciplined and are discipling others.

Third thing. Listen. Listen to every message as though it were from God to you and your life. Listen to every message as though it were from God to you for your life.

It's not about somebody else hearing a message. It's about God speaking to you. And I may not even sit what your need is, but the Holy Spirit knows you ought to listen.

Get on target and realize what the purpose of your life is. A man I knew in Peru as a missionary. I wasn't a close friend of his, but I've been out to eat with him. I've spent time with him.

[19 : 08] He was a missionary there. He was there when I first got there. He was there until today. Today he departed this earth and went to heaven at 66 years of age. Talked about putting his fingerprints on souls all over the world.

That's what they talked about him doing. You and I ought to find out what life is about. We ought to find out what life is about. You know, Sunday I went back to the town where I graduated from high school.

I hadn't seen some of those people in nearly 40 years. And I sat in the house of my old Sunday school teacher and I said, well, what about so-and-so? Oh, they died. What about so-and-so? Oh, they died. Oh, what about, you know, we're all going to die.

The stuff you have and the things you think are so important aren't that important. There is a purpose for your life and it's bigger.

Get on target. How about another word? Spend, spend and be spent. You have to write both of them down. Spend and be spent to get the gospel. That's what Paul said he did. We spend, he spend, he was spend and be spent.

[20 : 08] You know, you and I should say, I hope and pray our church never falls in the trap. And I don't know if we're there now or not, but I hope we never fall into the trap of there's some special people called goers or missionaries or pastors.

And it gets us off the hook. I hope we never, ever fall for that. Every one of us are his servants. Every one of us are to be telling people about Jesus and getting the gospel message around the world.

He wants to use you. Take your time and talents and treasures and consider how you invest each in his purposes. Questions. Just a couple of questions and I'll be through.

Do you allow the fact that you're not called to ministry to give you an excuse to not view everything about you? And meant for him and his purposes. I would question how many stayers, cinders, we're like that missionary.

He ought to leave his mama, leave his daddy, leave his family, leave his friends. He ought to go to the other side of the world. He ought to do all this stuff. But I get to stay here. And so my life is about my comfort and my enjoyment.

[21 : 23] I mean, God didn't call me if God wanted to use me. And so that's my excuse for not really getting involved. I need a bigger house. I need a bigger car. I need a bigger this and a bigger this and more of this and more of that because I'm not called.

If God had called me, I'd have been willing to sacrifice. And I was willing to be called, but he didn't call me. Honestly, you won't find that in Bible teaching. We are cinders.

Do you truly believe that you're as responsible to get the gospel to the world as missionaries? Do you? Do you? Do you truly believe you're as responsible to get the gospel to the world as missionaries?

We are. There's not one word in the Bible that says, I'm going to pick these guys out and other guys I'm going to use to get the gospel. The rest of y'all just have, y'all go on vacation. It's almost like when I was a kid, I was the last year before they, I don't, I can't remember if they stopped the draft the year I was supposed to get drafted or the year after.

But anyway, I didn't get drafted and I was in college. But you know, the draft was a funny thing back then. It's volunteer services today. But you know, the draft was a funny thing. And if you didn't get drafted, it didn't matter. It wasn't your problem.

[22 : 31] You remember that? How many people, I mean, you old enough to remember that. I didn't get drafted. It's not my problem. And it's almost like that with us. Fact is, we get uncomfortable in services where the Holy Spirit's dealing with people and calling people.

And we're praying to God that he doesn't call us. A good friend of mine, when I told him God had called us to go to Peru, he told me, he said, And if God had sent an angel down in the flesh and I could see him, I would tell him he had the wrong door.

He was a pastor. Most of my pastor friends, when God called us, told me, Austin, we can help you get a better church. We know you're discouraged and you're just doing this because you're running from your problems and we can help you.

Do you really believe you're responsible to get the gospel of the world? Are you willing to give your life, your family, your money, your talents to accomplish great things for the cause of Christ?

Before it's over, John will be dead and gone and it's over for John. His head's cut off and he's in heaven and the ministry of Jesus Christ will go on. But the truth is that Jesus starts off at a full run.

[23 : 40] If you leave, I know he's God and I know we can say, well, it's all written and it's all planned and God had it all worked out. But can I just tell you, if you look at it on the earthly side of it, Jesus has a place to start because John carved him out of Toho.

Jesus has a place. He has disciples. He has a crowd to speak to. He has people to follow him because there was somebody that got it ready. I stood in the church this Sunday at McEwen First Baptist Church and I looked on the ground, the floor around the altar and I told them I spent hundreds of hours on my knees at this altar.

Every week, an hour, hour and a half, our teens got there. We prayed together. It was an every week thing. I remember all the teachers that taught me and I told them, I said, it's amazing what God does in a guy's life.

Do you understand this church ought to get a hold of this? We are senders. We have goers here. And it's like, man, they have sacrificed.

No, we ought to sacrifice. He was a surrendered sender. Jesus says, well, I'll tell you, I am God and I have a witness. And his name is John.

[24 : 49] And you guys even liked him when he was a shining and a burning light. Then you quit liking him. But I know this, what he said is true. And he'll go on to say, well, my works prove who I am.

And the father spoke from heaven and said who I am. And for the life of me, my name is Perry. And I can't remember the last one. But anyway, I was uncalled for.

I should have done that. Father, forgive me. Let's have a word of prayer. Father, I love you. I thank you so very much for what you're doing.

God, deal with our hearts. Cause us to surrender. Cause us to yield our lives. Cause us to be goers. Cause us to be senders. God, let Vision Baptist Church impact the world for you.

Because you work in us and through us. And you give through us. And you pray through us. And you witness through us. And you do a work. God, let us be your vessels. Let us be you.

[25 : 46] So I will give you great glory and honor and praise. You have been listening to Austin Gardner, pastor of Vision Baptist Church.

For contact information, location, service times, or more audio and video recordings, log on to www.visionbaptist.com Thank you.

Thank you.