

Lent

WEEK FIVE: SURRENDER

“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Galatians 2:20

The kingdom of God is often referred to as an “upside-down kingdom.” A kingdom where the last will be first, where the humble will be exalted, and where death leads to life.

Another wonderful mystery of the kingdom of God is the idea of surrender. A concept that we may typically associate with defeat, grief, and pain is instead the pathway to victory. To freedom. To our deepest joy.

Paul experienced this truth as one who surrendered his whole will and life over to God, being transformed from a persecutor of the gospel to one persecuted for the gospel. Though he suffered greatly, Paul persevered in joy and faith. The crucifixion of Jesus is more than a transaction. It's a personal expression of his love for the individuals he gave up his life for.

Paul declares that he has been crucified and is no longer alive! Of course, he was still alive at the time of this letter, but Paul considered himself dead to sin and his old ways, and alive in Christ with a new purpose. God calls each of us to do the same.

Jesus himself lived a perfectly surrendered life, only doing the Father's will, even in suffering and sorrow. Yet, Jesus still declared, "Not my will, but yours, be done." Jesus endured for the joy set before him: *us*.

This week, press in with trust that surrendering into the loving hands of the Father leads to joy. Live by faith in the Son of God, who loves you and gave himself for you.

Consider the joy that Jesus experienced in knowing what would be accomplished through surrendering to the Father. Imagine how this joy strengthened him in obedience and trust. Ask God to do the same for you through the power of his Spirit.