



PRAYER MEETING

August 30



The Fruit of the Spirit: Surrender

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Leader

From Simon Patrick. A British divine who was appointed dean of Peterborough in 1679 and Bishop of Chichester in England in 1689.

Almighty and most merciful Father, in you we live and move and have our being. From you we have received tender mercy and compassion. To you we owe our safety in days past, together with all the supply of this present life, and the hopes of the life to come.

We praise you, O God, our creator; to you we give our thanks, for you are our joy and crown. You daily pour out your good gifts upon us. We humbly pray that Jesus our Lord, the hope of glory, may be more fully formed in us and evidenced in growing humility, meekness, patience, contentment and absolute **surrender** of our whole lives—body, soul, and spirit—to your will and pleasure.

Do not leave us or forsake us, our Father, but lead us safely through all the changes of this present world, with an unchanging love for you, and with a holy peace of mind which comes from an assurance of your steadfast love for us, until we come at last to see you face to face, be with you where you are, behold your glory and worship you forever, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Call to Worship

Galatians 5: 13-14, 16-24

New International Reader's Version

My brothers and sisters, you were chosen to be free. But don't use your freedom as an excuse to live under the power of sin. Instead, serve one another in love. The whole law is fulfilled by obeying this one command. "Love your neighbor as you love yourself."

So I say, live by the Holy Spirit's power. Then you will not do what your desires controlled by sin want you to do. The desires controlled by sin do not want what the Spirit delights in. And the Spirit does not want what the desires controlled by sin delight in. The two are at war with each other. That's why you are not supposed to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the authority of the law.

The result of sin's control in our lives is clear. It includes sexual sins, impure acts and wild living. It includes worshipping statues of gods and worshipping evil powers. It also includes hatred and fighting, jealousy and fits of anger. Sinful desire is interested only in getting ahead. It stirs up trouble. It separates people into their own little groups. It wants what others have. It gets drunk and takes part in wild parties.

It does many things of that kind. I warn you now as I did before. People who live like this will not receive God's kingdom. But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself. There is no law against things of that kind. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed their sinful desires to his cross. They don't want these things anymore.

Music

Quiet your hearts and minds as you listen to today's music. Open to God and listen to what the Holy Spirit might say to you.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJNR0IxbIP4>

Gracefully Broken, Matt Redman with Tasha Cobbs Leonard

Praise

This day, we praise You, O God for your attributes and your works. We praise you for calling us to yourself. May we rest in your arms, **surrendered** like a child to your faithful goodness to hold and sustain us.

Congregational Psalm/ Passages from Psalms

Leader and People

I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart.”

Ps 40:8

I trust in you, LORD; I say, “You are my God.”
My times are in your hands.

Ps 31:14-15

For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

Ps 95:3-7

I spread out my hands to you; I thirst for you like a parched land. Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you.

Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life. I hide myself in you. *Ps 143:6-7*

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. *Ps 51:10*

My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.

Ps 84:2,5

LORD, my heart is not proud; I don't look down on others. I don't do great things, and I can't do miracles. But I am calm and quiet, like a baby with its mother. I am at peace, like a baby with its mother.

Ps 131:1-2

What shall I return to the LORD for all his goodness to me? I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people. Truly I am your servant, LORD; you have freed me from my chains. I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the LORD. I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people.

Ps 116:13,16-18

I am under vows to you, my God; I will present my thank offerings to you. For you have delivered me from death and my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before God in the light of life.

Ps 56:12-13

Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, The LORD makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand.

Ps 37:2-6,23-24

Teach me your way, LORD, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name. I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever.

Ps 86: 11-12

You are my portion, LORD; I have promised to obey your words. I have sought your face with all my heart; be gracious to me according to your promise. I have considered my ways and have turned my steps to your statutes.

I call with all my heart; answer me, LORD, and I will obey your decrees. I call out to you; save me and I will keep your statutes

Ps 119:57-59, 145-146

We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help
and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice,
for we trust in his holy name. *Ps 33:20-21*

Show me the way I should go, for to you I
entrust my life. I hide myself in you. *Ps 143:7*

Reading about the Word of the Day

Surrender plays a crucial role in the spiritual journey... Christ does not simply want our compliance. He wants our heart. He wants our love and he offers us his. He invites us to surrender to his love.

For many Christians, obedience is more familiar than surrender. By contrasting obedience and surrender, I do not want to put too much distance between them. Those who surrender, obey. But not all who obey surrender. It is quite easy to obey God for the wrong reasons.

The problem in simply trying to do what God asks is that it leaves the kingdom of self-intact. I remain in control, and my willful ways of running my life remain unchallenged. The whole point of the kingdom of God is to overturn the kingdom of self.

Obedience that flows from a surrendered heart is totally different. Rather than willpower and resolve, love is the motive for what we will and what we do.

Jesus is the key to surrender to God. He does not command us to surrender... instead, he welcomes us with love that invites intimacy... he invites us with vulnerability. In Jesus, God becomes human and courts us with tenderness and unimaginable kindness. He does so because he wants our hearts and not just our will. He knows that only love will make us willing to give him both our heart and our will.

Paradoxically, the abundant life promised us 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 life outside of the grasp of God's love.

Christian surrender is saying yes to God's *Yes!* to me. It begins as I experience his wildly enthusiastic, recklessly loving affirmation of me.

Surrender to love is never a once-for-all done deal. There is no reason to feel guilty if you need to hear the invitation to surrender over and over again, each time responding with whatever surrender you can offer. When we take this step of surrender, we suddenly discover the place for which we have been unconsciously longing... the place of rest, fulfillment, and the discovery of our truest and deepest self in Christ.

Excerpts taken from Surrender to Love, David G Benner

Scripture Reading

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.

The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail.”

“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered.
“May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then
the angel left her.

Luke 1: 26-38 NIV

Reflect

Scripture Reading repeated

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Individual Silent Prayer

A time to pray and talk to God about what you heard and noticed. Pray for your needs. Pray thanks. Confess sin. Ask for help. Pray for others, for direction, for guidance, for God's glory.

Response

Responsive Reading

Leader and People

Leader: Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Prov 3:5-6

People: Blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit. *Jer 17:6-8*

Leader: We have confidence in You, Lord.
In your love, we do not fear, but are
renewed.

People: Our hearts are Yours, God. Our
hearts are Yours.

Leader: We kneel before our Father in heaven, praying that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen us with power through his Spirit in our inner being, so that Christ will dwell in our hearts through faith.

People: We pray that we will be rooted and established in God's love, together with all the Lord's holy people, so that we may grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.

Leader: We ask that we might truly experience this love that surpasses knowledge so that we may be filled to the full measure of all the fullness of God.

Eph 3:14-19

Together: Our hearts are Yours, God. Our hearts are Yours. We trust your love. We surrender to You.

Prayer for the World

Leader: Lord, we pray for God's loving-kindness to be the foundation of our hope

People: We pray for God's mercy in stopping the spread of this virus;

Leader: We pray for God's healing of those who are sick throughout the world

People: We pray for God's strength for medical personnel serving tirelessly

Leader: We pray for God's insight to be given to researchers seeking solutions

People: We pray for God's wisdom to guide and direct civic leaders, health officials, and world leaders

Leader: We pray for God's peace to guard us from fear or anxiety

People: We pray for God's provision for those whose livelihoods and income have been affected by this crisis

Leader: We pray for God's creativity to make us agents of love and compassion, that all believers would display the character of Christ

People: We pray for racial reconciliation, justice, compassionate civil dialog, understanding, and true unity

Together: Lord, we pray for healing for our nation, that Your righteousness and truth and justice would be known, and that the Holy Spirit would draw people everywhere to the saving power of Jesus.

Lord's Prayer

Leader and People

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader

We thank you, Lord, that you do not hold us to an impossible standard of law-keeping, but that you gave yourself to fulfill the just demands of righteousness. In you, we are freed to respond with hearts full of grateful devotion.

We thank you for your pursuing and endless love. We pray that we might be surrendered to your grace. We pray that our lives would reflect the abandon of living in the goodness of relationship with you. We pray that those who do not yet know you would be drawn by your Spirit to surrender to your love. We thank you for your heart that desires that all would come to know you, the only Savior and Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Closing Prayer

Leader

The Pattern of Our Days: Worship in the Celtic Tradition from the Iona Community

Beloved God,
we fear your judgement:
teach us to know it as our friend.
Your word has pierced us to the bone;
we are exposed, laid open to your sight.

Therefore, let us bless you, for you come to us when we are most ashamed; and when we long to hide our face from you, you will not suffer us to turn away.

You call us by our name; you touch us,
raise us, invite us into shameless love.
God our lover, know us, judge us, turn
us, wound us, demand of us, forgive us.

We are yours.
We abandon ourselves to your love.
We trust you.