

“FINALLY ... SURRENDER YOUR DAY TO GOD AND LET IT GO!”
By Rom A. Pegram (11/20/05)

When you come to the end of a bad day, it's usually as hard to finish as it was to live through. The end of any bad day—or period of time that's been a struggle for us—can lead to a long night of reliving the day's struggles and missing out on the restorative powers of sleep we so desperately need. And, the truth is, bad days can actually be weeks long or months long or years long. So, the end of the day may take its own good time, too. No matter how long our bad days have been, they always seem to end with the same ol' question: “When will all of this go away?”

Today, we're going to look at the end of our bad days. We're going to follow Jesus' example of how to end our bad days successfully—by the grace of God. But, first, I want to do a quick review of the past six of Jesus' examples to us on how to get through our bad days. Do you remember them?

- Forgive anyone—no, *everyone*—who seems set on ruining your life—**BE FORGIVENESS READY!**
- Though beset yourself, focus on encouraging others who are struggling and uncertain.
- Be sure you are sensitive and loving, certain to take care of those who are near you.
- When seemingly impossible questions come, aim them at God, not others.
- Whatever your adequacy, never be above letting others know your need for help.
- Embrace the certainty that God's “finishes” *always* have a purpose and an end.

And finally, when it is all said, there remains only one thing left to be done:

- Surrender everything to God and let go ...

Listen to Jesus' final words at the end of his very worst day on the face of this earth—what has come to be known as Good Friday (Luke 23:46, TEV)...

“Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Father! In your hands I place my spirit!’ He said this and died.”

This principle of discipleship, modeled for us by Jesus himself, becomes all the more important when we know that the day that's now ending may not be much different from tomorrow. Folks, this is a principle of discipleship that *should* apply to all our days ... good and bad alike, but let's concentrate on those not-so-good days right now...

According to Jesus' example, to live through a bad day—indeed, to finish it—is to do two things: First, place it into the hands of God and, second (and maybe the hardest to do), leave it there! That's Jesus' message to us today! So, let's start with the first part of this principle of discipleship...

SURRENDER YOUR BAD DAYS TO GOD. Remember Jesus' fourth principle of discipleship—his fourth word on how to get through our bad days: *Shoot the hard questions at God, not others!* This is the same type of principle Jesus teaches here—its focus having to do with *turning directly to God!*

Here's a question for you: *Why are we so selfish, when it comes to our bad days?* It seems like the logical thing to do would be to *want* to get rid of our bad days ... and yet, for many of us, we act as if we wouldn't know what to do in life if we had to let them go!

Surrender, by dictionary definition, means ... to relinquish possession or control of to another because of demand or compulsion, to give up in favor of another, to give up or give back that which has been granted, to give up or abandon, to give over or resign (oneself) to something...

This is what God is asking us to do with our bad days! He's asking us to relinquish possession or control of them—to trust God to the point of doing that. (If last week's word—It is finished!—is a word of 'triumph,' then this week's word is a word of 'trust.')

God is asking us to give up *the sin of independence*, of hanging on to a part of our lives when we've—many times publicly—given them over to God. He's asking us to quit saying with our lives that *we don't need Him!*

Oswald Chambers, quoted in an article from Leadership [Journal], says this: "Whenever God touches sin it is independence that is touched, and that awakens resentment in the human heart. Independence must be blasted clean out, there must be no such thing left, only freedom, which is very different. Freedom is the ability not to insist on my own rights, but to see that God gets His."

We too often forget what we pray every single Sunday, when we gather together in the name of Christ ... (Matthew 6:10) "... may *your* Kingdom come; may *your* will be done on earth as it is in heaven." But, do we mean it?

Now, those who have the hardest time with this essential step are these:

- Persons who are so prideful they have not come to the point yet of admitting that they need God ... for anything.
- Persons who have fallen into the apostasy of 'spiritual superiority'—in other words, those who have—for some unknown reason—become spiritual snobs—acting like they have been completely sanctified while the rest of the world is still trying to catch up.
- Or, those persons who are Type A (like myself) ... and, by their very nature or personality, self-sufficient—those who tell God all too often by their very actions that they don't need God.

How do we overcome our self-sufficiency, spiritual superiority, or self-proclaimed adequacy and become able to surrender our bad days (and every other day) to God? Well, for a Type A—self-sufficient—person, it would be a miracle ... and Jesus had a word for his disciples about miracles they struggled with. In Mark 9:28-29 (NRSV), it

says this: “When he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, ‘Why could we not cast it out [*speaking of a demon*]?’ He [*Jesus*] said to them, ‘This kind can come out only through prayer [*and fasting*].’” Sometimes that’s what it takes for some of us to be able to surrender anything—including our bad days—to God. Jesus is our example of how, at the end of our worst days, we simply need to surrender those days ... and everything that has happened ... to God...

And, there’s something else Jesus did, besides surrender his bad day to God. And, we’re supposed to do the same. What are we supposed to do? First, surrender your bad days to God and then...

LET YOUR BAD DAYS GO [AWAY]. This, folks, is sometimes the hardest part of realizing this principle of discipleship in our lives.

Now, this may not be ‘PC’, but I think you’ll get the idea. What do you call a person who gives you something—even a gift, and then returns sometime in the future and takes it back? What do we call that person? It may not be a politically correct name, but there’s a name for it—‘Indian Giver’. And that’s exactly what we are before God ... all too often! We don’t think God is doing too good with certain parts of our lives sometimes. We give God our talents and spiritual gifts ... but then decide that we’re too busy to keep giving them to God ... so we take them back. We give God the things that mean the most to us ... like our money and our stuff ... at least for a time, but then we get selfish and you know what we do: we take them back! So, just guess what we are before God. We are ‘Indian Givers!’ Folks, the key to finishing our bad days in victory is to *surrender* them to God ... and then LET GO! We cannot be ‘Indian Givers’ with our bad days ... and then expect God to bless us anyway! It doesn’t work like that with God...

Ask yourself this question, this morning: WHY are you having a bad day? Without playing the ‘blame game’—blaming others or circumstances, ask God what is really at the bottom of Him *allowing* the ‘bad day’ in your life; if you really *want* to know, God will reveal the reason to you. Whatever it is that God reveals to you, LET THAT GO ... and don’t take it back!

A woman was asked by a co-worker, “What is it like to be a Christian?” The co-worker replied, “It is like being a pumpkin. God picks you from the patch, brings you in, and washes all of the dirt off of you. Then he cuts off the top and scoops out all the yucky stuff. He removes the seeds of doubt, hate, greed, fear, jealousy, grudges [unforgiveness]—anything that would keep us from being the child he wants us to be, and then he carves you a new smiling face and puts his light inside of you to shine for all the world to see.”

Folks, have you experienced *that* kind of Christianity ... or are there bad days holding you back? Have you experienced *that* kind of a change in your life? This illustration could be a description of *your* life ... today ... before you leave this place. But, ‘you know what? You have to do *your* part, too. You have to *surrender* your bad day (and all that’s keeping you from experiencing God’s touch of healing and peace) to him ... and,

'you know what else? You've got to LET IT GO! That means ... *you can't take it back!* You've just got to let it go ... to God; you've got to leave your bad day (and all that goes with it) at the foot of the cross! How can we do that today?

God's word tells us in 2 Chronicles 7:14, "... if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." If you have it within you this morning to humble yourself and to turn your bad days—anything that's keeping you from having the joyous life God wants you to have—over to God in prayer, *then you too can be a pumpkin in the Kingdom of God!* You too, can know what it's like to rid your life of the consuming and dark presence of doubt, hate, greed, fear, jealousy, or grudges [unforgiveness]. How do we end our bad days, Jesus' way? We need to surrender our bad days to God ... and let them go!

I heard this saying a while back and it's really stuck with me; I want to share it with you today. It's simply this: **GOD CANNOT BLESS WHAT YOU DON'T SURRENDER!** Now that applies to a lot of things, but today let's apply that to our bad days. Do you want God to bless your days here on this earth—even your bad days? Do you want God to bless today in your life? If you do, you've got to surrender the day ... and give it to God; then God can bless your day ... and that's the ultimate way to get through your bad days...