

PBC20060906CS

## SURRENDER

### Drivenness

Acts 7-9 (Select Passages)  
Philippians 3:7-14

September 6, 2006 - Wednesday 6:30PM - Dr. David H. McKinley

#### [Dr. McKinley, message, SURRENDER: Drivenness]

... that are working together and ah... are just thankful for what ah... God is doing in these days. And we're all part of it through prayer, through giving, through service, through faith. And I'm just thankful that we get to share a special part ah... as we have this worship team come and join us on occasion on Wednesday evenings and ah... that's a great thing for all of us.

I hope you're having a great week. I know that ah... for most of us it started with a little bit of a pause for Labor Day. But ah... I've been disoriented ever since, you know trying to get on the right day of the week. And they'll probably be some people come to this service tomorrow night thinking that it was actually you know Wednesday night. But I'm glad that you managed to get it put together and to be here tonight and to be a part of this gathering ah... with us.

We are involved in a series of messages on the life of the Apostle Paul that I've entitled SURRENDER. And tonight I want to invite you to take your Bible and go ahead and open with me to the eighth chapter of the book of Acts because we are going to pick up our reading there in just a few minutes.

Now I think that it is a common observation to say that we would all understand and all agree that we live in an age that is characterized by compulsive behaviors. There are a lot of compulsive people in our world. And if we were to be honest, we would have to say that we live in a community that is filled with compulsive people. We are surrounded by adrenal-charged, aggressively engaged and sometimes individually aggravated people. And it seems as though compulsiveness is reflected in just about every area of life today.

We're compulsive when we work, when we eat, when we play, when we workout, and there are a lot of compulsive tendencies to be observed when we drive. Amen? Hmm? Or oh me, I don't know which one we say. You've probably seen people riding around in their automobiles and they have a little sign that's posted in the back window or on the side window that says: Baby on Board. Have you ever seen one of those before? If you have, give me your hand. I just want to know you're here... okay. Be sure you listen. You've

seen one of those: Baby on Board. I've actually been thinking lately that maybe it would fit here in north Dallas to simply do a little sign that says: Compulsive Driver at the Wheel. You know, just go ahead and give everybody a warning and let them know.

I was reminded of that in a little story that was put in my hand. Ah... this just sounds so common. A guy said: Driving to work this morning on the interstate, I looked over to my right and there was a woman in a brand new BMW and she was pushing close to 90 m... miles an hour with her face right up close to the rearview mirror, putting on her eyeliner. He said, I looked away for a couple of seconds and when I looked back she was halfway over in my lane, still coming, and still putting on her makeup. It scared me so much that I dropped my electric shaver which knocked the Egg McMuffin out of the other hand! [laughter] In all the confusion of trying to straighten out the car using my knees against the steering wheel, it knocked my mobile phone from my ear which fell into the coffee that was between my legs, causing it to splash and burn me, ruining my tie that I was in the middle of tying. And then in all of the confusion, I missed my exit which my GPS was telling me to take and I had to ask the lady at OnStar to wait on my dinner reservations until I could turn down the radio. Hum! [laughter]

Ha, that sounds like what seems to be going on in most of the automobiles I'm looking at, and sadly, I have to say sometimes even in my own! We are surrounded by a community filled with upwardly mobile people, people who are driving and have a drive toward promotion, career advancement, personal agendas, and all sorts of goals for material possessions.

Now let me quickly say that drive... personal drive is not necessarily a bad thing. In fact, it's much better to be driven toward responsibility than it is to basically live with no motivation in life. Some people have motivation to do nothing, and that's certainly not a good thing. But drivenness in and of itself, and drivenness that is particularly focused on self, can and does become a destructive thing in life.

Just today I picked up off of the internet a preview release of the upcoming Newsweek magazine that will be on the stands this weekend. And the title article on that magazine... the front cover is this: "The New First Grade: Too Much, Too Soon?" And it tells the story of how Bryan and Tiffany Ask of Oakwood... Oakland, California desperately want their daughter Ashlyn to succeed in the first grade. And for that reason they're moving from where they live in California to Washington state. As it turns out Ashlyn started school, hasn't been able to read the 130 word list that her teacher gave her... words like our, house, and their. And she became so exhausted and distraught over her homework which included a weekly writing assignment of an essay on "my favorite animal" or "my favorite vacation". And she found herself in a pool of tears sitting at the dinning room table and the parents so frustrated by the aggressive pace of the academic requirements, decided maybe they need to move and get her in another location.

The article goes on to say in the last decade the earliest years of schooling have become less and less like a trip to Mr. Roger's neighborhood and more and more like an... like an SAT preps course. In fact, it talks about how many parents begin before the first grade, trying to chart the course to Ivy League schools and figuring out a way to ah... assert and to promote their children. And so this whole article... and it is a multi-page article... talks about the aggression, the ambition and the compulsion that is going on in the arena of education.

Now I certainly believe we all want the very best for our children. We want them to grow; we want them to learn. But I'm saying to you that whether it's in the arena of family or in the arena of finances, or even in the arena of faith, there are many people who are compulsive, who are driven. And their drivenness is becoming the very source of their own destructiveness in life.

Now compulsiveness can be fueled by a variety of factors. It can be by our own pride; it can be from a sense of perfectionism; performance, profit, power, prestige, people. I don't know what may drive the people that you know... the people that I know, you or me, but I do know that we all have this tendency in this world... in this atmosphere, in this environment in which we live, to be absolutely consumed with compulsiveness. And there are many people who are living breathless lives, and made it through their efforts to climb and to achieve and to find greater significance. And they keep pushing themselves to the point of exhaustion on one hand and to the point of total self-absorption on the other. And that seems to be the context that we live in over and over again.

And so for that reason there is a biblical writer who pens some words of instruction to a church so that they might know how to have joy in life. Because so many people live on the edge, so many people are exhausted, so many people are stressed, this biblical writer wanted people to know the secret to joy and life. And in writing this letter to this church, these are the things that he told them that they needed to understand if they were going to guard against compulsiveness. If you'll look at it, it's on the screen: Philippians 2:3 and 4:

*3) Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourself. 4) Let each of you look out not only for his own interest, but also for the interest of others.*

Now you know the curious thing about the man who penned this under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is that it came from the pen of a man who was one of the most compulsive, driven,...and a man whose life for the most part for a long time was simply lived out of control. He wrote this at a time when he had made a discovery. But before that discovery all of his life was being consumed by his own drivenness and by his own compulsiveness. Let me introduce you to that man tonight here in Acts chapter 7.

We read the account of the story of a man who's described as being full of the Holy Spirit. The man's name is Stephen, and Stephen was one of the servants in the early church. He was a man who must have had an incredible heart and spirit, and the Bible even indicates that his very countenance was like the countenance of an angel. He was just someone who had a glow about him. He loved God. He was full of the Holy Spirit. He was a man who lived his life for Christ. But ultimately because of the commitment of his life to Jesus Christ, there were a group of people who opposed him, who wrongfully accused him, and who ultimately took him outside of the city of Jerusalem that they might stone him and put him to death.

And so we break into the story in Acts chapter 7 and in verse 58. And it says:

*58) They cast him out of the city and stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named (say his name with me) Saul. 59) And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60) And falling to his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep. Acts 8:1) And Saul approved of his execution and there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria except the apostles. 2) And devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. (That is, they cried a lot at the loss of this man.) 3) But Saul was ravaging the church, entering house after house, dragging off men and women, and committed them to prison.*

This is the guy I'm talking about. This guy names Saul. I mean, you don't have to read any further than just those few verses to realize you love Stephen, you hate Saul. You're... you are absolutely drawn to this man Stephen, his heart, his spirit. He falls to his knees and even as he's being stoned, he cries out to God and says, "God, do not lay this sin to their account." Who does that sound like? It sounds like Jesus. And here's a man who's so full of Jesus that even at his death, he's as though it were embracing the very suffering of Christ but with a heart of forgiveness and a heart of love. And there's that man Stephen. You love him!

And then there's that guy Saul. And he's the guy who's stirring it up. And he's the guy who's being driven. He's a raging bull religiously, and he's absolutely devouring and destroying the church. And so here we are loving Stephen; hating Saul and trying to figure out what in the world is going on with this man, because all that we see of him is a man who is driven with compulsion and obsession to destroy followers of Jesus Christ.

It's hard to believe that the man that I'm talking to you about right here is the same man who would go on later to pen the book of Romans. He's the same man whose pen by the power of the Holy Spirit captured the words that we read in 1 Corinthians chapter 13; the greatest and most wonderful description of love that has ever been written. And yet when we meet him, we can't help but think: I don't like this guy. His self-assertion, his

self-promotion, his aggression is disturbing. And it is distasteful. What happened?

Well, turn over just a few chapters from Acts 7 and 8 over to Acts chapter 9, because we need to get yet another glimpse of Paul's life... Saul's life as he was known, and see what happened here. In chapter 9 and verse 1 it says:

1) *But S... Saul still breathing threats and murders against the disciples,*

The thing we saw him doing last time, he's still doing. And not only is he going around breathing these threats, being that religious raging bull that I talked about; it says:

*He went to the High Priest 2) and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus so that if they found any belonging to the Way...*

That was what they called earlier believers...those who belonged to the Way. You remember Jesus said (John 14:6):

*"I am the way, the truth and the life."*

So those who were Christ followers were followers... people of the Way. And so it says that he tried to see that if there were any people of the Way, men or women, that:

*...he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3) Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4) And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?[tap] 5) And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting..."6) ... "But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." 7) And then the men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. 8) And Saul rose from the ground, and although he opened his eyes, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him to Damascus. 9) And for three days he was without sight and neither ate nor drank.*

What happened to Saul? Well, it's pretty obvious, isn't it? Saul met Jesus. And this man whose life was marked by drivenness and by compulsiveness and by obsessiveness, suddenly became a man whose life was changed all through the process of something that we put in a single, simple word: surrender. Saul surrendered his life to Jesus. And everything that he had believed before he met Jesus was changed by an encounter that transformed his heart.

You see, everything in life is driven by what we believe. If we believe that material things are the greatest things and what life is all about, then we will live that belief out in passionate, zealous pr... ah... ah... ah... pursuit of trying to gain those things in life. If we believe that we can simply live life of our own accord, doing our best, being as good as we can to others, and hope that someday we can earn the approval of God, then

we'll work hard and be good citizens and be good people, but that belief can be a wrong belief.

You see, Paul had to come to the place that he was willing to give up his religion, that he might have a relationship with Jesus Christ. And what's true of Paul is true of so many people, because you see there's so many people who are trying to simply perform to merit God's favor. So many people who are trying to do it their own way, who try to come to God on their terms, who ask God to applaud their best efforts. And yet, in a moment in time, while they're driven and why their compulsive, and while their doing their thing, just like in the life of Paul, God [clap] steps in. And God stepped into this man's life and suddenly [clap] he [clap] realized how limited, how ignorant, how self-obsessed and how wrong he had been in life.

God always does that, ladies and gentlemen. There are moments in life when He steps in and they're not always in the ways that we would expect to meet God. Some of you are in this room tonight because God stepped in in your life in the moment of a divorce, God stepped into your life at the hour of death, God stepped into your life when you faced financial ruin and all the things that you'd worked toward and all the things that you'd dreamed about, and all the things that you tried to do with your own drive and your own effort and your own strength were suddenly shut down and God stepped in and all that you could see and all that you could know was that like Saul, you had to surrender to Him.

But you see when God steps in what we begin to realize in life is how God has the one and only thing that we all need in life and that is grace. God gives grace. And for every need and every hurt and every heartache and every false belief in life, God gives us His grace. And when the grace of God touches your life, the grace of God changes your life. And you begin to discover that being a Christian and being a Christ follower is not simply about one grand performance, but it's about a dependence every day upon the God of grace who stepped into your world, who provided for you a Savior and who wants to meet every need in your life if you will only be willing to surrender yourself to Him.

That's why it all begins at the moment of a personal encounter that we call salvation. That's why every person has to be saved. It's not enough to just try to be better or to do more. It's not enough to try to offer to God the offering of our own compulsiveness and our own drivenness or our own righteousness. We all have to come to God and understand that it is only by His grace that we can ever experience salvation. And salvation is this; it is... it is a personal encounter with the living Christ. And every person needs to have that encounter in life.

You know that our world has been shocked and saddened this week at the death of the crocodile hunter, Steve Irwin. I mean, he's literally a cultural icon to a generation of young adults. When my son heard this news early on Monday morning on his way to class, he began to think of

something, got in class, and quickly popped up a website and started a Steve Irwin memorial and within 15 minutes he had 20 responses. By the next morning he had 600 responses. It's just incredible! This connected world we live in. And yet the response that everyone had to the death of this sort of popular icon, this iconic figure in our culture.

You know what the greatest thing that has been echoed over and over in the death of Steve Irwin has been? It's the regret that there wasn't an ability to save him. Everybody wishes they could have saved him because what took him in life, seemed to be one of the most remote of all possibilities. That he was hit with the tail of a sting ray that went through his chest and his heart like a knife. Of all the dangerous things he had done, of all the edge things he had done; only a handful of people have ever been killed by sting rays. Yes, people are stung and people are afflicted by them, but few have been killed. And yet this man who seemed so invincible in the animal kingdom suddenly and swiftly faced a tragedy in his life. And the regret that's been echoed by his friends and everyone else has just been, "Why couldn't we save him?"

Well, that really is the passion of the heart of God. God wants people to be saved. God sent Jesus that you might be saved because every one of us needs to be saved from our own drivenness and from our own compulsiveness to try to live life apart from God.

So having said all of this as a part of our understanding of who this man is, this driven man named Paul, I want you to go with me in these moments over to Philippians chapter 3 because everything that is expressed and that is happening in Acts 8 and 9 suddenly takes on a whole new expression when we come to Philippians chapter 3.

You know it was in the book of Philippians that I read to you earlier:

*Let nothing be done through strife and through selfish ambition but look on the interest of others as more important than your own.*

It was Paul who wrote those things to the church in Philippi. But it was also Paul who in Philippians chapters 3 began to share the testimony of what Christ had done in his life. And how Jesus took a man who was so driven in life toward things that would not matter, and gave him a life that mattered.

And that's really my passion for you tonight. I want to be sure that you're not just living in a driven world, in a driven culture and caught up in compulsion, but that you are living for some things in your life that really matter. And so I guess you could say that what I'm going to give you in these final moments... this final 50 minutes that I have with you... [laughter] (I do need to be sure you're listening) [laughter]... is how can we be rescued from a wasted life?

Had it not been for the fact that Jesus stepped in, Paul's life was a wasted life. It was zealous life, it was driven life, it was an ambitious life, it was an aggressive life, but it was a wasted life until he met Jesus. And for all the things that could have been the good things in life, Paul came to the place that he understood the one thing in life that would make life matter.

Now as a description it's right there on the front of your worship guide, and it's in the version that I'd like for you to look at it in the English Standard version, this is what Paul says about his life before he met Jesus... BC... before Christ this is how Paul was. He says [Philippians 3:4]

*4 )If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5) circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6) as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness, under the law blameless.*

"I was an impeccable person by the cultural standards of my day. Religiously I was a righteous man outward!" But we know that he was anything but righteous in his heart. There was nothing characteristic about the heart of God in the heart of Saul, the man that we met. But then he says, verse 7:

*But whatever gain I have, I count it as lost for the sake of Christ... But whatever gain I have, I counted it as lost for the sake of Christ.*

Do you want to be rescued from a wasted life? Well, here's the first insight. Release the illusion that you can bring fulfillment through achievement. You've got to come to the place in your life and I've got to come to the place in my life where I release the illusion that I can bring fulfillment through achievement.

Paul did not need God to help him fulfill himself; he needed God in order to release him from lesser pursuits for greater priorities. He needed God to set him free. He was bound up in his ambition. He was bound up in his compulsion! He was in bondage to his own drive and he was going nowhere!

I fear tonight there may be people listening to my voice who are bound in ambition and bound in drive and you know that the harder you pedal... the faster you go, you are going nowhere. And you're not going to go anywhere until you release the illusion that you cannot bring fulfillment through your own achievement. We always think that we can achieve so much and be so much more and yet we leave God out of the whole equation. And we're just not nearly as wise as we think that we are.

There was a little boy and his father that were walking along and having a talk, and you know boys ask their dads all kinds of questions. And so the little boy said to his dad, "Dad, do fathers always know more than their sons?" The father said, "Yes, son." He said, "Then dad, who invented the



telephone?" Well the father said, "Why son, you know, you've studied it in school. Alexander Graham Bell. He's the man who invented the telephone." And then the little boy said, "Well, dad, if fathers always know more than sons, then why didn't his dad invent the telephone?" [laughter] You know we just always think we know so much. We always think we can do so much. But Paul said the problem in his life is that he was tripping over his own accomplishments and his own ambitions. He said I had to come to the place where I released the illusion that I could bring fulfillment by my own achievement.

And then he said this: We have to embrace the obsession of knowing Christ above all else. If you want to be delivered from a wasted life, not only must you release an illusion that you can fulfill yourself; but second, you have to embrace the obsession of knowing Christ above all else. Listen to what Paul said in verse 8:

*8) Indeed I count everything as lost for the surpassing knowledge of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.*

Yes, I was a driven person; yes, I had ambition; yes, I had compulsion. But I want you to know I had to put all of that away and embrace one magnificent obsession in my life. And what is that obsession? That I may know Christ.

Is that the pursuit of your heart tonight? Are you a man... are you a woman who is seeking to know Christ? I'm not talking about just knowing about Christ, knowing about the Bible, knowing about spiritual things! I'm talking about a life that is absolutely committed to knowing Christ! Christianity [tap][tap] is [tap] Christ [tap]! It is knowing Him! And experiencing Him! And salvation is the doorway by which we begin a life pursuit of living to know God and that becomes the obsession of our hearts!

There's a major problem with people who seem to think that we're going to take Jesus into some little compartment of our lives and we're going to go on and live any old way we want to and let Jesus be that little safety deposit box that's going to take us to heaven when we die. That's not a biblical faith. Biblical faith is a consuming obsession that says I want to live to know God and to pursue God beyond everything else in my life! God is a big deal to me! [Jeremiah 9:23-24]

And it's a big deal to God that you seek after Him. Listen to the prophet Jeremiah.

*23) Thus says the Lord, Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom and let not the mighty man boast in his might. Let not the rich man boast in his riches, 24) but let him who boasts, boasts in this: that he understands and knows Me. That I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice and righteousness in the earth, for in these I delight, declares the Lord.*

God wants you to boast in life that you know Him! Paul said, I could have boasted about all kinds of things in my life, but I want you to know all that's gone because I have one obsession that I've embraced. I want to know God. Jesus said it this way in Matthew chapter 6 and verse 33:

*But seek first[<sup>tap</sup>] the kingdom of God and His righteousness.*

Not your righteousness His righteousness! The only way we're ever righteous is not by the deeds that we do, it's the righteousness we receive from Jesus Christ! Seek Him first... His righteousness and then everything else will be added unto you.

How can I be delivered from a wasted life? How can I be delivered from my own drivenness and the emptiness of that life? Release the illusion that you can bring fulfillment through achievement. Embrace the obsession of knowing Christ above all else. And then seize every life situation for the glory of God... seize every life situation for the glory of God.

You say, what do you mean by that? Well look at what Paul went on to say in verse 9. He says... Well let's go on in verse 8. He says (Philippians 3:8:

*8)For His sake (that is, Jesus) I've suffered the loss of all things and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ 9)and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith, 10) that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, 11)that by any means possible, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

Paul said this thing of knowing Christ isn't just some lofty private thing; it's a part of the practical public life that I live. And I want in all things to be able to discover and to prove the power of God in my life. And even in pain... in the suffering of life, to be able to praise God in my life and to let everything that I am demonstrate the power of His death and the power of His life in me.

Life is a series of experiences. That's really what it is. It's like a chain of just one experience after another linked together. And the quality of life has everything to do with what you believe about those experiences and how you handle those experiences.

Paul said I want my life in weakness and in strength, in suffering and in hardship, in responsibility and reward... I want every part of my life situation to be taken and to be shared in my heart for the glory of God.  
[clap]

Where are you on that issue tonight? Are you dealing with some things in your life that you feel like are taking you from God? Maybe those are the very things that tonight you need to begin to seize and to let them bring you back to God, and to be the very things... the points of pain, the struggle, that you would say with Paul, that I may know Him and the power

of His resurrection, and share in His sufferings and become like Him in His death. That is dying to self and living to Christ. And though the thing I may be going through in life is killing me, Lord, I'm willing to die to me that I might live to You.

It's not about you; it's not about me. All of my life is about Jesus. And that's exactly what Paul is saying here. We have to seize every life situation for the glory of God.

And then channel your ambition to do the will of God... channel your ambition to do the will of God. Maintaining a vital faith is a constant struggle. It's a struggle for me and it's a struggle for you. Because it's easy for me to begin to embrace other ambitions in life. So what does Paul say? He says in verse 12:

*12) Not that I have already attained this, or am already perfect; but I press on, to make it my own because Christ Jesus has made me His own.*

My life is not about my will; it's about God's will. My life isn't just about what I want to do; it's about what He wants in me and through me. And therefore, Paul says, I want to channel my ambition to do the will of God, so that everything in my life will prove that I live for one purpose... for Him, for Him.

Then if you want to be delivered from a wasted life... let me review it. And by the way, this is an acrostic, if you're writing it down. R-E-S-C-U-E. I don't know if you figured that out yet or not.

- Release the illusion that you can bring fulfillment through achievement.
- Embrace the obsession of knowing Christ above all else.
- Seize every life situation for the glory of God.
- Channel your ambition to do the will of God.
- Use your past to guide your future.

Use your past to guide your future. In verse 13 Paul says:

*13) Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it on my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead.*

Paul had a lot of things to be ashamed of in his past, starting with the very way that I introduced him to you tonight: the man who was overseeing the execution of Stephen. Paul lived to face with and to deal with regrets in his life, and he had plenty of them to cause him to live with guilt! And I'm sure you do as well, even as I could in life to live with guilt and to live with regret for the things that we've done. We all have things in life that we wished that we'd handled better, things that we wished we'd done differently or avoided altogether. And we live with a tension between what we've done and what we've become and what we wish we could be. But listen to Paul's words: "Forgetting what lies behind."

Now he's not saying here you need to have a bad memory. That would be foolish. There's some things you can't forget in life. Your life has been marked [tap] by things [tap] that have happened [tap] to you [tap]. When he says forget, he's not talking about having a bad memory. What he's saying is I am no longer going to be influenced [tap] only [tap] by my past. I am no longer going to be defined by my past [tap]! While I cannot change my past, I can change my present with God's grace. And I have a future of change that is the hope of God in my heart. And while I can't change the past, I can change how I view the past. I can change how the past influences the future. I can change the person that I've become. And Paul said this has been the secret to a life that matters!" [He] Said, I'm no longer going to live in shackles to the past. I'm going to break its power.

And that brings me to the final thing. Extend all your energies toward a goal worth achieving... extend all of your energies toward a goal that is worth achieving. What was that for Paul? Verse 14:

*14) I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

I have one big goal in my life now. And I am extending all of the energies of my life. The picture here is of a runner... a runner who's coming to the finish line. And as he gets close to the tape, he's not just running sort of trying to drag back, he's extending himself to be the first across the tape! Paul said, I'm not any less driven, I'm just now directing. It's not that I don't still have passion and compulsion in my life; it's that my passion is given a right goal and a right objective, and it is to ultimately hear and to fulfill the upward call of God in Jesus Christ.

Before, Paul was a driven person out of control, filled with self... selfish ambition. But you know what Paul is now? He's a called [tap] person. He's not driven [tap]; he's called [tap]! And according to the call of Christ on his life, he is living his life and living out his faith to live in the joy of Christ and the liberty of Christ, and to communicate that message to others also. Why? Because there are so many people who are bound up in their own drivenness, who are locked in by their own stubbornness.

It's an interesting fact in history that March 10, 1974 is the mark of the date when the last of the Japanese World War II soldiers surrendered and was willing to end the war. The man's name... Hiroo Onoda, Hiroo Onoda. He was dropped in the tropical island of Lubang in the Philippines in 1944. He was given orders to conduct guerrilla warfare, to prevent the enemy from attacking the island. And when the war ended, Onoda refused to believe any messages that were sent to him of Japan's surrender. And so he continued to defend his territory. As necessary he would live off the land, he would hide in the jungle; he would steal food supplies from some of the citizens there. And during those 29 years he actually killed 30 nationals in the process of trying to hide and to ultimately secure himself on that piece of

land. Messages were sent, efforts were made, but Onoda continued to hold out.

After it was all said and done, he wrote an autobiography that was entitled No Surrender: My Thirty Year War. And he describes the moment when reality really sank in. This is what he says: "I felt like a fool. What had I been doing for all those years? For the first time I really understood this was the end. I pulled back the bolt on my l... rifle and unloaded the bullets. I eased off the pack that I always carried with me and laid the gun on top of it. The war was finally over."

Thirty years! A war had ended! But there was a man who was still dealing with a raging battle, defending his territory!

How many years will it be for you before you surrender to Jesus Christ? In a world that's filled with drivenness and compulsiveness, are you willing to surrender? To be a true Christ-follower? To rescue your life from waste and to live a life that matters?

*Father, tonight I pray that You will press these words to each of our hearts, beginning with the man standing in this pulpit. I pray, O God, that in my heart and in my life that ah... I would give myself wholly and completely to You. And what I pray personally, I pray for these who hear me tonight. I pray that if there's any man, any woman in this place tonight who's never received Christ, never been saved, [music begins] that tonight would be the night of surrender.*

And while heads are bowed and eyes are closed, I do just want to say tonight, if you're here, what I've said to you is an expression of something that is going on in your life. There's a battle between you and God... the control of your life. I want to ask you, would you surrender tonight? Would you say the battle's over? Would you say tonight I receive Jesus and I want to begin the journey of rescue in my life?

While heads are bowed and eyes are closed, if that's you, right now just say: Dear Jesus, I surrender my life to You. Like Paul, I turn from my sin and my self and I receive You, Jesus, as my Savior and Lord. I give You my heart. Jesus, help me not to live hidden, but to live openly for You, that I may demonstrate to the world that I can be directed by a Savior who loves me and a God who has a plan for my life.

If you prayed that prayer tonight, I want you just to take that card that's there in your worship guide tonight. I want you just to look at it and I want you to mark it that says tonight I'm accepting Christ.

Maybe there's another spiritual decision that you need to make tonight. A decision for church membership, maybe to follow Christ in baptism. I don't know what it is, a point of surrender. Use that card and let this be a moment of decision.

*Father, for those of us who are here and have made those decisions, would You just help us tonight to take hands off in surrender to You. I thank You tonight for Your word, I thank You for the example of Paul, but I thank You even more for the power of Jesus Christ to deliver us, and to give us focus, meaning and destiny as we follow Him. Encourage us, O God, through this time of fellowship. Encourage us and strengthen us, O God, according to Your word and Your Holy Spirit. We give You thanks and glory. In Jesus' name. AMEN*

I want you to stand with me tonight and I want us to close the service and close in these moments by simply singing a song of response. It's a song that we often sing during an invitation here, but Chris, I want you to lead us in it. And I want us just to echo it from our hearts tonight and it will be our close. "I Am Yours". Let it be your response to His word tonight. [singing begins.]