

November 8, 2015

6 Decisions

The Decision to Surrender

John 10:22-30

Opening Words: According to some, the average person makes more than 35,000 decisions in a single day. Most of them are rather simple: where to sit, what to eat for breakfast, what lane to drive in, should I have another cup of coffee, etc. These decisions are easily made and have very few consequences. Other decisions are more serious, with long-lasting effects. Some decisions have an eternal influence. It is those decisions that we are looking at in this sermon series, *Six Decisions*. Today's message, number six in this six-part series, is called *The Decision to Surrender*.

John 10:22-30 Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, ²³ and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade. ²⁴ The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

²⁵ Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, ²⁶ but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. ²⁷ My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. ³⁰ I and the Father are one."

In 1904, William Borden, heir to the Borden Dairy Estate, graduated from a Chicago high school a millionaire. His parents gave him a trip around the world. Traveling through Asia, the Middle East, and Europe gave Borden a burden for the world's hurting people. Writing home, he said, "I'm going to give my life to prepare for the mission field." When he made this decision, he wrote in the back of his Bible two words: NO RESERVES.

Borden arrived at Yale University in 1905. During his first semester, Borden started to pray and study the Bible with a friend. A short time later a third student joined them. By the end of his first year, 150 freshmen had become interested in meeting for weekly prayer and Bible study. By the time he was a senior, 1,000 out of the 1,300 students were meeting in groups like these. It was his goal to win every soul at Yale University for Jesus. That wasn't enough for Borden. Off Yale's campus, he went to the darkest parts of New Haven, helping those individuals that society had forgotten. Turning down high paying job offers after graduating from Yale, Borden entered two more words in his Bible: NO RETREATS.

After completing his studies for the mission field at Princeton Seminary, he dreamed of evangelizing the Muslims in China. He sailed toward China but stopped in Egypt to

study Arabic. It was there the unexpected happened. He was diagnosed with spinal meningitis and died at the age of 24. During his illness he wrote two more words in the back of his Bible, NO REGRETS. Those six words written in the back of William Borden's Bible act as the perfect outline for this morning's message. Let us look at the text together.

We are in the tenth chapter of John. Just like last week's text, conflict is surrounding the Master. Everyone wants to know if he is the Messiah. He tells us something our generation still believes: Actions speak louder than words. His miracles and his teaching state the obvious. However, it is not just true of himself. It is also true of his disciples. Actions do speak louder than words. It is one thing to say you are a disciple of Jesus Christ; it is something else to act like a disciple of Jesus Christ. If you didn't speak a single word about Jesus, would the people in your life know you are a disciple? To answer that question, let us look at William Borden's six words and examine your own life. If you are ready to begin, say, "**Amen!**"

No Reserves

A missionary society wrote to David Livingstone and asked, "Have you found a good road to where you are? If so, we want to send other men to join you." Livingstone wrote back, "If you have men who will come only if they know there is a good road, I don't want them. I want men who will come if there is no road at all." David Livingstone and William Borden were totally committed.

The first two words William Borden wrote in his Bible were the words: NO RESERVES. In other words, he was totally committed to serving God. When he traveled around the world he experienced the needy of the world. He knew he had to respond with his life. There would be no reserves. He was totally committed. Are you totally committed?

Did you know the budget of this church is \$392,585? When I came to this church 21 years ago, the budget was \$154,000, so I guess you can blame me. However, this is the truth. The problem isn't the expenses, the problem is the income. Next week you will hear the exact figure. However, I know I am close. Did you know 60% of the members in this church give \$5.00 or less (per week)? (That makes me cheap Christian entertainment!) I know some can only give that much. I understand. However, I also know there are others who can give more. They don't give more because this ministry is really not a priority in their lives. They are not really committed. How can you give \$5.00 or less and believe you are totally committed? Even a Big Mac Value Meal costs \$6.50. The question is, are you totally committed? The first two words in William Borden's Bible were NO RESERVES! How many reserves do you hold for yourself? And all of God's people said, "**Amen!**"

No Retreats

When Julius Caesar landed on the shores of Britain with his Roman legions, he took a bold and decisive step to ensure the success of his military venture. Ordering his men

to march to the edge of the Cliffs of Dover, he commanded them to look down at the water below. To their amazement, they saw every ship in which they had crossed the channel engulfed in flames. Caesar had deliberately cut off any possibility of retreat. Now that his soldiers were unable to return to the continent, there was nothing left for them to do but to advance and conquer! And that is exactly what they did.

The second two words William Borden wrote in his Bible were the words: NO RETREATS. He was always finding a new ways to serve God. He didn't just stay on the campus of Yale University; he got involved in the city of New Haven. He helped those people that society had forgotten. Are you still advancing, or has your momentum ground to a halt?

Years ago, we hosted a church consultant to help us plan for the future as a church. Periodically, I still look at his final report. His name was Don Cummings and he spent three days with us. Part of the process was meeting in small groups and discussing why it was important to change. Do you remember what he said? The mainline Protestant church peaked in 1957 and we have been on a downhill slide for the past fifty-three years. How much has the world changed since 1957? (A great deal!) How much has the mainline Protestant church changed since 1957? He talked about the changes in the world in the areas of electronics, life style and attitudes. He talked about how the church hasn't changed. He said the mainline Protestant church is on the verge of becoming the Amish of the twenty-first century. He finished each session with the same question, *do you have any questions?* In one of the sessions one of the saints asked, *"Wouldn't it be easier to go back to 1957?"* This is the truth. You can't go back to 1957. Time only moves in one direction, forward! The church that doesn't change will close. If we really want to serve God in today's world then there is no retreating. The Gospel message still speaks to every generation. Are you more interested in having a church to speak to younger generations, or are you more interested in having a church that you like? It is only the package that changes. And all of God's people said, **"Amen!"**

No Regrets

This week I found a list of ten things you will never regret. Maybe you can relate to one of these?

1. Showing kindness to an aged person.
2. Destroying a letter written in anger.
3. Offering an apology that will save a friendship.
4. Stopping a scandal that was ruining a reputation.
5. Helping a boy or girl find themselves.
6. Taking time to show consideration.
7. Refraining from gossip.
8. Refusing to do a thing which is wrong.
9. Living according to your convictions.
10. Accepting the judgment of God.

William Borden had his whole life in front of him. He was only twenty-four years old when he died. To us it really doesn't seem fair. However, William Borden trusted God. The only one he was trying to please was God. The last two words he wrote in his Bible were the words NO REGRETS.

I have said it a million times. The only things that really matter are those issues that will matter in one hundred years. What is going to matter in one hundred years? The only thing that will really matter in one hundred years is your relationship with Jesus! Are you living for Jesus, or are you living for someone or something else? And all of God's people said, "**Amen!**" In the back of William Borden's Bible were written these words: NO RESERVES, NO RETREATS, NO REGRETS. Those words summarized his ministry.

Can I ask you a really difficult question? What words would you write in the back of your Bible? What words summarize your service to God? Would anybody write down SAVE MONEY! Would anyone write down LOCK THE DOORS! Would anyone write down TURN OFF THE LIGHTS! Would anyone write down I DON'T LIKE CHANGE! Would anyone write down one word, NO! Would anyone have no words to write in their Bible? What words summarize your service to God? Perhaps a better question: How serious are you about serving God?

Will you please pray with me?