



CHURCH WITHOUT WALLS · WEEKLY SERMON NOTES

The Art of Surrender

Sunday 13 September 2026 · Pastor Bashan Ragavan & Pastor Didi Jacobs

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor... to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound."

Isaiah 61:1

BIG IDEA

Surrender isn't a moment of relief when life gets hard — it's a daily choice to let Jesus replace you, because the Holy Spirit isn't looking for a partner. He's looking for ownership.

These notes trace the flow of the morning: what was said, how it connects, where it meets your life, and what to do with it this week.

01 Information — what was said

The message made one claim from several angles: nobody else can fulfil the purpose God placed in you, and the only way into that purpose is to be replaced — your plans, your ambition, your grip on the wheel — by Christ himself, the same way Jesus was.

Pastor Didi opened with a few volunteers standing at the front, each strikingly different in personality and gifting. His point: God cannot swap one person's destiny for another's. If someone doesn't fulfil what's been placed in them, nobody else steps in to cover it — that soul's imprint on the world is theirs alone to leave.

From there, the paradox: Jesus said that whoever finds their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life will find it [Matthew 16:25]. Something must be replaced. Pastor Didi was direct about it: Christianity isn't self-improvement — it isn't about bettering the version of you that exists. It's about that version being replaced by the image of Christ.

Pastor Didi and Pastor Bash then traced how Jesus himself walked this out. Jesus first identified his purpose by reading, in the synagogue, the passage that opens these notes — Isaiah 61:1–2. But identifying the purpose wasn't the finish line. Jesus went back to ordinary, unseen faithfulness for years afterward, the same way David kept tending sheep long after he'd already been anointed king. Only later, at his baptism, did the Holy Spirit come upon him — “the day of his replacement” — and his public ministry of miracles began. That whole journey led to one place: the garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus prayed that if the cup could pass from him, let it pass — but if not, let God's will be done [Matthew 26:39].

The Holy Spirit's entire mission is to glorify Jesus in us — which is why, Pastor Didi said, he isn't negotiating for a share of your life alongside your ambition and pride. He wants full ownership, because he can't do his one job any other way. Paul's own trade was named too: everything gained in this life counted as loss, compared to knowing Christ [Phil 3:8]. Christians who keep a running tally of what following Jesus has cost them become bitter; the ones who count what they've gained don't.

ILLUSTRATIONS GIVEN

- A rugby team's third straight world title — the moment on the field is the payoff of years of practice nobody saw.

- Genesis's compressed timeline — a few short chapters can quietly cover years, the same way Jesus's growth into his purpose happened slowly, in ordinary decisions, long before any miracle was recorded.
- Cleaning a tiled floor with a drinking glass — willingness to be used ("God, use me") isn't the same as having the right character formed in you to actually be useful.
- "Jesus, take the wheel" — Pastor Didi's pointed correction: the real question isn't whether Jesus will take the wheel in a crisis, but why your hands were ever on it to begin with.

02 Understanding the context — how it connects

Every piece of Sunday's message is really one argument told through different pictures: purpose, paradox, pattern and posture.

Start with purpose. The volunteers at the front weren't a game — they were the premise for everything that followed. If your destiny is genuinely yours alone, then surrender isn't optional decoration on an otherwise fine life; it's the only road to the thing only you can do. That's the join to the paradox that came next. Jesus's own words — find your life and lose it, lose it and find it — aren't a riddle to admire. They're the mechanism. You don't discover your purpose by adding effort to your existing self. You discover it by that self being replaced.

Which is why the sermon spent so long on Jesus's own pattern rather than jumping straight to application. Isaiah 61 mattered because it shows Jesus doing the first thing surrender requires: naming the purpose out loud, by faith, before there was any evidence of it. But naming it wasn't enough — he still went home to the carpentry shop. Back to normal life but continually building His commitment to His purpose through faith in His heavenly father. That is the process that a lot of believers miss today. And by missing that, they create more fear towards surrendering because they have the perception that it is this massive one time event instead of seeing it as a daily small efforts of surrendering.

That builds directly to the trinity explanation Pastor Didi gave near the end: the Father held the plan, the Son carried the Father's image all the way to the cross, and the Holy Spirit's whole assignment now is to glorify that finished work in us. Ownership, not partnership, follows naturally from that structure — the Spirit isn't free to split his one job with whatever else you're still holding onto. That's also why "Jesus, take the wheel" gets corrected rather than affirmed: it treats the Spirit as a passenger to call on in a crisis, when the sermon's whole shape says he was never meant to be a passenger at all, He was meant to be the driver!

Finally, the cost-versus-gain teaching closes the loop back to purpose. If surrender is really replacement — losing a smaller life to find the one only you can live — then what looks like loss from the outside is the very thing that gets you to what you were made for. Following the Lord is not a loss, it is eternal gain!

03 Conceptualisation — where this meets your life

There's a version of faith that calls on God the way you'd call roadside assistance — useful in a crisis, otherwise left in the glove compartment. You'd say you trust him. Most weeks, though, you're the one steering, praying more for backup than for a replacement.

Sit with these for a moment.

1. Where in your life are you still gripping the wheel, only really asking God to help once things have already gone wrong?
2. What's one part of "your plan" you've never actually laid down, even though you'd say you trust God with your life?
3. When you picture God using you, are you picturing your willingness — or the character being quietly formed in you on ordinary days nobody's watching?
4. If you totalled up everything following Jesus has cost you against everything knowing him has actually given you, which list would be longer, honestly?
5. What would it look like this week to stop asking the Holy Spirit to partner with your plans and instead ask Him what plan He has for you to impact the people around you?

None of this is a scoreboard, and nothing you find while sitting with it changes how much God loves you — that was never in question. You're not being asked to perform your way into a purpose you have to earn. You're being invited to stop protecting the smaller life so the one only you can live has room to show up.

04 Application — what to do this week

THIS WEEK

1. Name one area where you've been calling on God like backup, not ownership, and say it plainly in prayer: "Lord, take this — not just an opinion on it."
2. Read Isaiah 61:1–2 slowly, and notice which part of that purpose is already showing up somewhere in your own life.
3. Do one small, faithful thing this week that nobody will see or applaud — your own version of the carpentry shop.
4. When your flesh pushes back against something you sense the Spirit is asking, say your identity out loud anyway — "I'm a child of God" — and take the next step regardless of how you feel.
5. Tell one-person what surrender is actually costing you right now, and let them pray it with you instead of carrying it alone.

GOING DEEPER

- Read the Gethsemane account slowly this week (Matthew 26 or Luke 22) and notice that surrender there was still an honest, wrestling prayer — never a performance.
- Spend time in Philippians 3, where Paul counts everything as loss compared to knowing Christ, and ask which of your own "gains" you're still quietly keeping on the scale.

A PRAYER TO PRAY

Father, thank you that surrender was never about earning your love — that was settled long before I understood any of this. Show me where I've been asking you to help my plan instead of handing you the whole thing. Replace what needs replacing in me, one honest day at a time, the way you did in Jesus. I trust you with what it costs. Amen.

05 Discussion questions

If you find yourself with an opportunity to watch and discuss this sermon with your friends or family, or you'd like to create the opportunity to discuss it with them, we've given a few questions below that could help you get things started.

Facilitator note. Allow 45 to 60 minutes. Question 1 is a warm-up — keep it light. Read Isaiah 61:1–2 aloud before question 4.

1. What's something in your life where you can see, looking back, that years of unseen practice or faithfulness were quietly building toward one moment?
2. In your own words, what did Pastor Didi mean by saying nobody can fulfil the purpose God placed in someone else?
3. Why do you think the sermon described the Holy Spirit as wanting “ownership, not partnership”? What's the difference practically?
4. Where do you tend to call on God like roadside assistance rather than handing him the wheel from the start?
5. “Christians who count the cost become bitter; the ones who count the gain don't.” Which list have you been keeping lately?
6. What would surrendering one specific area — actually replacing your plan with God's — look like for you this week?
7. Read Isaiah 61:1–2 together. What purpose is God quietly building in you the same way he built Jesus's, over time, before it's ever seen?

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