

A Surrendered Life

Built Different #1 - Adam Purvis - June 5, 2026 - Luke 9:23-25

INTRO: Good morning church! Today we are beginning a new sermon series entitled "Built Different." Those in Christ have lives that are "Built Different" and stand out from the patterns, priorities, and culture of this world as their lives are built on Christ alone. We will begin today with a life that is built different because it is surrendered to Jesus.

"Built different" is a slang phrase meaning someone or something is unique, exceptional, or operates on a higher level than the average person. When I see guys at the gym throwing crazy weight around, I might say, "That guys built different." Millennials might say, "Guy's a beast," Boomers might say, "A rare breed," Shakespeare would've said, "Of a different mould." Basically for Christians, we are unique in Christ and should stick out.

Our series is based around six (6) concepts of a life built different in Jesus from Romans 12:

Series Theme: Romans 12:1-2 (ESV) ¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Today, we will hyper focus on the first concept that the apostle Paul introduces for a life built in Christ: "Present your bodies." This is not divorced from "as a living sacrifice" but this will be part 1 of a focused approach to this text.

"Present" (1) (παρίστημι) - to place beside or near. (contextually) to bring, lead to, in the sense of presenting.

"Bodies" (1) (σῶμα) - the body both of men or animals. (contextually) the physical body.

Need: There is a gap in every human heart between what we know is right and what we actually do. We make promises we don't keep. We set standards we don't meet. We know what God says, yet we often choose our own way instead. Many people point to hypocrisy in the church, and certainly there are times when that criticism is deserved. But the deeper issue is not really hypocrisy, it's surrender. Most Christians genuinely want to follow Jesus, yet they find themselves in a daily battle between God's will and their own.

The apostle Paul described this struggle in Romans 7: "I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." He knew what every believer discovers: the greatest obstacle to following Christ is often not the world around us but the desires within us. We naturally drift toward self-rule. **We want Jesus as Savior, but we resist Him as Lord.** We want forgiveness without surrender, blessing without obedience, and eternal life without dying to ourselves.

Trans: That is why Paul commands believers to "present your bodies" to God. Not part of yourself. Not your Sundays. Not your spare time. Your whole self. Because partial surrender is still self-rule. And as Jesus will show us today, the only way to truly follow Him is through complete surrender.

BODY: In chapter 9 of the Gospel of Luke, Jesus taught that all who would come after Him must completely surrender their lives for His sake. We can completely surrender our lives for Jesus. How can we completely surrender our lives for Jesus? The text gives 3 conditions for how we can completely surrender our lives for Jesus.

Read text: Luke 9:23-25 (ESV) ²³ And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. ²⁵ For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?"

THREE CONDITIONS FOR COMPLETELY SURRENDERING OUR LIVES FOR JESUS:

1. Deny yourself.

EXP: (23-25)

A Surrendered Life

Built Different #1 - Adam Purvis - June 5, 2026 - Luke 9:23-25

“He said to all” (23) - all, total, collectively. Jesus is speaking to the disciples and the crowds:

Mark 8:34 (ESV) And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

- There is a crowd here of individuals who will either accept the conditions or reject the conditions of complete surrender to Jesus.

“Come after me” (23) (ὀπίσω, *opisō*) - become known, to come, to go, to follow one; back, behind, after, afterwards. Metaphoric language for being my disciple or following a rabbi.

- If we desire to follow after Jesus then he has this condition...

“Let him deny himself” (23) (ἀπαρνέομαι, *aparneomai*) - to affirm that one has no acquaintance or connection with someone; to forget one's self, lose sight of one's self and one's own interests.

- Jesus makes it clear to all who would come after him to be his disciple that they bring Nothing to the table! Jesus doesn't want your works, he has it all covered. He is leading so we are to listen. To say “Yes” to Jesus is to deny any and all “Yes's” to yourself!
- In verses 24-25 we get to see the consequences of our choices and the destination Jesus has in mind for those desiring to come after him as disciples...

“Whoever would save his life” (24) (σῶζω, *sōzō*) - to save, keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction

- This person loses their life in the end. We will all face death, and so far only one has truly conquered it. He predicted he would!

“Whoever loses his life” (24) (ἀπόλλυμι, *apollumi*) - to destroy; to put out of the way entirely, abolish, put an end to ruin

“For my sake” (24) (ἕνεκα, *heneka*) - on account of, for the sake of, for; for this cause, therefore

- This person saves their life because they have denied trusting in themselves and have turned to Jesus alone. Jesus is leading us on a journey and he is the way. On this journey we are tempted to bring along our old way of thinking, our old habits and plans, but we come to Christ with empty backpacks and he tells us what to take up and what to put down.

“What does it profit” (25) (ὠφελέω, *ōpheleō*) - to be useful, to benefit; advantage, better, prevail, profit

“Gains the whole world” (25) (κερδαίνω) - to get. (Contextually) to get gain/money. (κόσμος) “World” riches, goods, pleasures, advancement.

“Forfeits himself” (25) (ζημιώω) - to affect with damage, do damage to. (contextually) absolutely, to sustain damage, to receive injury, suffer loss.

- We can prosper like no other person before but if it leads to our destruction then what good are temporary pleasures? Jesus calls us to deny ourselves.
- Paul reminded the Corinthians that they too were to deny themselves in light of the gospel.

ARG:

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - “...You are not your own, for you were bought at a price. So glorify God with your body.”

- We deny using our own bodies the way we desire. The condition of denying self not only means our minds but our physical bodies as well. We honor God with our bodies so that we are bringing glory to God! The

A Surrendered Life

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context of 1 Corinthians was or sexual immorality and Paul reminds them that they have been bought with a price and so they are to glorify God with their body.

- Fornication, sexual identity, pornography, adultery, co-habitation. These are the things we are told to deny so that we are presenting our bodies to the Lord as part of our spiritual worship.

Romans 14:7-8 - "For none of us lives for himself, and no one dies for himself. If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord."

- All of our mind, heart, soul, and strength is to be for the Lord's sake because he is Life! Self Denial is easier when you recognize that everything we can produce through ourselves leads to death, but everything he has produced leads to our life if we truly trust him! And where does this lead us? He leads us to become like him...

Philippians 2:3-5 - "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus..."

ILL: Deny self, not deny desire... A married person no longer sees the world through "me" but "us." A new parent will know that the "me self" yields to the "we self." A good teammate knows that there is "No I in team." Denying self is not to refuse selfish desire, it is more importantly to deny that there even is a self independent of the One who created it.

Self worth is only as good as the ability to enforce worth. A christian's worth is in the One who gives worth.

APP:

There is a real danger that our culture pushes of a false identity of self. Deny it! Who you are meant to be is who God has made you be in Christ. Our bodies are not our own, as we read they are the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit! Our minds are for God,

We cannot trust in our efforts, our strength, our possessions. The only one holding us back from Jesus is ourselves. We must trust in him alone.

Self-Denial is counting all of our gain as loss. It's resisting our desires and passions and seeking what is pleasing to God. We deny our plans for his plans.

At times, we practice the discipline of fasting to deprive our physical bodies so that we are more ready to hear from our Heavenly Father and see His will.

By obeying the condition of self denial, we open ourselves to complete allegiance to Jesus Christ and to having a completely surrendered life for him.

The second condition given for living a completely surrendered life for Jesus is to...

2. Take up your cross daily.

EXP: (23-25)

"Take up his cross daily" (23) (αἶψα, *airō*) - to raise up, elevate, lift up. What is this daily self death?

- Jesus likely had in mind Roman crucifixion and its practice of making the condemned person carry the main beam on which he would be hanged.
- "**Cross**" - a well known instrument of most cruel and ignominious punishment, borrowed by the Greeks and Romans from the Phoenicians; to it were affixed among the Romans, down to the time of Constantine the

A Surrendered Life

Built Different #1 - Adam Purvis - June 5, 2026 - Luke 9:23-25

Great, *the guiltiest criminals*, particularly *the basest slaves, robbers, the authors and abettors of insurrections*, and occasionally in the provinces, at the arbitrary pleasure of the governors, upright and peaceable men also, and even Roman citizens themselves.” (Blue Letter Bible)

- To bear a cross was to be mocked, despised, shamed, to be an outcast of society, and ultimately to be put to death in view of all who pass.
- Commitment unto death. A determination made “daily” in Luke’s gospel account. (NAC)
- Luke believes that the Christian Life is dying daily to self... (Cambridge Bible Commentary)
 - To take up one’s own cross would have been a command of intentional self-sacrifice.
 - To take up one’s own cross is to know your destination, and there aren’t any detours...
 - People like their comfort, and I’m not only talking about American Christians. ALL societies have what they consider civil and what they consider shameful. We want to keep peace but if it’s at the cost of my eternal soul then I’ll pursue death because I know the one who conquered it!
 - The call of Christ is to willingly bear with the persecutions, troubles, and the distress of living self-sacrificially for his sake.

ARG:

Acts 20:24 24 - “But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”

- “Finish my course” strikes me. The Christian life isn’t a sprint but a marathon. We are living for Jesus for the long haul and disciples aren’t quitters. We run daily, giving up our lives to live for the ministry Jesus has given us. The truth is, to be “taking up our cross daily” is to accept that there are plenty of things we may not want to do, but we must do in order to live as Jesus did. It will push us out of our comfort zones, and may even make us seem odd to the world’s standards. It could even bring us suffering, but let us remember the words of Jesus himself before he took up his cross that would save his people.

Luke 22:42 - “42 saying, ‘Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.’”

- For us it is looking to be obedient to God, like Jesus in the Garden, we too live self-sacrificially.
- Luke also wrote of Jesus describing the true cost of bearing a cross...

ILL:

From Luke 14:26-33 - describe the priority of Jesus first in the “hate” dialogue, describe counting the cost in constructing a tower, describe the planning of a king assessing victory in battle or peace through negotiation. End with, “27 Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.” Bearing our cross means we put nobody before Jesus. The cost of following Jesus must not exceed our commitment level. The cost of following Jesus must be carefully thought out with wise discernment. If he is the Risen Christ, he is worth prioritizing above all other relationships, he is worth counting the cost of difficulty and danger before committing to him. If you desire to be his disciple, you must consider his conditions for our commitment, “Take up your cross daily”.

APP:

Now that we’ve denied ourselves, what do you need to pick up to live completely for Jesus? What needs to die for you to live? To die to ourselves is to live in Christ. What has he commanded us to do?

- Every day, I’m going to wake up and make the deliberate choice to take up my cross for the sake of Christ. Today I’m waking up to die to myself and live for Christ.
- Does any relationship take priority over Jesus? Take up the commands of Christ to prioritize him!
- Does status? Take up humility to live underneath King Jesus who humbled himself for our sakes
- Does wealth? Take up a generous life that puts the needs of others before yourself as Jesus did

A Surrendered Life

Built Different #1 - Adam Purvis - June 5, 2026 - Luke 9:23-25

- Does a career path? Will you set the boundaries in your life to say “no”
- What about your own life? Remember the series text is to “Present our Bodies” to God. What if following Jesus cost you your own life? This is unlikely but many believers face this reality around the world. Count the cost and then pick up your cross daily.

The third condition given for living a completely surrendered life for Jesus is to...

3. Follow Jesus.

EXP: (23-25)

“Follow me” (23) (ἀκολουθέω, *akoloutheō*) - to follow one who precedes, join him as his attendant, accompany him; to join one as a disciple, become or be his disciple.

This point looks more like a duh than an ah-ha when I first read it. But let us dig deeper into this for a moment. Without “follow me,” Christianity becomes mere self-denial. Lots of people deny themselves:

- Athletes deny themselves certain comforts.
- Soldiers deny themselves safety.
- Monks deny themselves pleasure.

Many of the world’s philosophies and religions are centered around denial. The question is not whether you are sacrificing something. The question is who are you sacrificing for? Jesus is not calling His disciples to suffering for suffering’s sake. He is calling them to Himself. Jesus doesn’t invite us to deny ourselves to leave us empty, but rather to surrender ourselves that we might be filled with Him. Discipleship then is not merely saying “no” to yourself; it is saying “yes” to Jesus.

In another sense, our discipleship is not aimless, but has a true north star. We know where we are aiming, straight at Jesus. Where you He goes I go. There’s this great line in Captain America: Winter Soldier where Cap makes a plan for something and everyone looks at Sam Wilson and Sam says this great line, “Don’t look at me, I do what he does, just slower.”

ARG:

1 Peter 2:21 (ESV) For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.

Following Jesus means following Him with full devotion (not looking back):

Luke 9:61-62 (ESV) ⁶¹ Yet another said, “I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.” ⁶² Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”

ILL:

Jesus knows exactly where you need to step. Following Him is like going on an expedition where all you know is the only person who knows the way is the guide. The guide knows the way, has the scars to prove it, and is confident in his own abilities to lead newbies like us along the treacherous path. Rock climbers/ hikers/ trailblazers. They did the hard work so that we can follow in their footsteps. He's the expert expeditioner!

APP:

Keep Jesus as your guiding light. He is the way, the truth, and the life! He is the resurrection!

Do you consider where you are headed? The answer is in whoever you follow.

A Surrendered Life

Built Different #1 - Adam Purvis - June 5, 2026 - Luke 9:23-25

Following Jesus means being like Jesus! Be his Hands and Feet.

How I loved, you love: Jesus said, "Love one another as I have loved you." Be in community with each other and enjoy the company of your fellow believers. Jesus gave his life for them, will you give your time to them? Community Groups, Bible Study,

How Jesus gave, you give; how he prayed, you pray; how he lived, you live!

CONCLUSION:

Every destination has a journey to get you there and the cost needs to be worth the reward. The reward must exceed the cost. In Christ, Paul said that the present suffering aren't even worth comparing to what lies ahead.

Luke 9:24-25 (ESV) ²⁴ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

²⁵ For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?

If we are to be "built different" in Christ, then let us meet the conditions he has to live completely surrendered for him.

Will you live completely surrendered for Jesus by accepting his conditions to:

- 1) deny yourself
- 2) take up your cross daily
- 3) and follow him