I’ve learned one thing in my attempts at gardening and landscaping. “You have to get all the roots out to get rid of the weeds.” If not they just keep coming back – over and over again. Weeds can be very frustrating because they keep me from having the flowerbeds I want.

Speaking of frustrations listen to these lines from “Life’s Little Book of Frustrations.”
You had that pen in your hand just a second ago and now you can’’ find it anywhere.

You ask someone how to spell a word and they say to look in the dictionary.

The lift stops at every floor and no one gets on or off.

You set your digital alarm for 7 PM instead of 7 AM.

You have to inform five different sales people in the same store that you’re just looking. Then when you want to buy something you can’t find a single one.

Just when you’re ready to watch your favourite TV show the phone rings and it’s a tele-marketer who won’t stop talking.

Just when you turn your head something important happens behind you.

Why are these things so frustrating? Because in each situation something keeps you from having what you want.

I heard a story about a boy that asked his dad to explain the differences between irritation, aggravation and frustration.

Dad picked up the phone and dialed a number at random. When someone answered he asked, “Can I speak to Alf please.” “You have the wrong number. There’s no Alf here.” Dad said, “That’s irritation.”

Then Dad hit “redial” and asked for Alf a second time. The voice on the other end said, “There’s no one named Alf here! If you call again I will call the police.” Dad said, “Son, that’s aggravation.”

“Then what’s frustration?” asked the little boy. Dad picked up the phone, hit redial again and said, “Hi, this is Alf. Do I have any messages?”

Why would the guy on the other end of the phone line be frustrated? Because he couldn’t get the peace and quiet that he wanted.

When we can’t have what we want we become FRUSTRATED.

In a recent survey of teens, 56% said “selfishness” – not thinking of the rights of others – was one of the top five problems in Britain. Why would they think selfishness is a leading cause of our society’s troubles?

SELFISHNESS causes many problems because it always takes what it wants, when it wants and doesn’t care who gets hurt.

The problem with that though is that our desires keep on GROWING no matter how many times we try to satisfy them. In other words, we will never be satisfied and we will always be frustrated.

James wrote to Christians with several SURFACE problems – like the tops of my hated weeds.

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don’t get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. (James 4:1-4)
Fights and QUARRELS
Selfish DESIRES
Anger, frustration and murderous words
Not much PRAYER and what was there was selfish

James confronted the ROOT problem in their lives. (He wanted to deal with this situation like a nasty weed.) And he said they were committing “spiritual adultery.”

You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." (James 4:4-6)

Spiritual adultery means, “to give my desires a higher PRIORITY than God” or “to think that what I want is on THE SAME level as God.” It always leads to PRIDE.

Pride is essentially acting as if we can do God’s work. Jesus’ first disciples tended to do that too. They told Jesus they would go through anything for him. They argued over who was the greatest. They expected to be second only to Jesus in God’s kingdom. But all their selfish plans and desires died with Jesus on the Cross.

Let’s be honest for a moment. Don’t we tend to be selfish too? Isn’t that why we feel frustrated when things don’t go the way we think they should? Isn’t it easy to think that with a little extra will power and determination we can please God? Don’t we often make decisions based on what will keep us comfortable and secure rather than on what God says is right?

James confronts selfish Christians in every time and place with these words. Submit yourselves, [or Surrender] to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. (James 4:7-10)

The only way to pull out the root of spiritual adultery and selfishness is to surrender all our plans and desires to God. If you want a full-blown spiritual life, SURRENDER YOUR LIFE to God.

While driving around town, one thing I enjoy doing, is reading church signs.

Some of them may seem silly, some I may not be able to apply to my life, and some are downright unbiblical and theologically incorrect.

For example I’ve seen one in a Methodist Church which had a sign that read: “Jesus is coming soon so look busy!”

I don’t know what the people who put those words on that sign were thinking...
...Were they trying to be funny?...
...Were they serious?....
...Were they legitmately telling us some great truth in a sarcastic way?...
...I don’t know, but they left it up for a long time.

But that aside, more often than not, the words on church notice boards are convicting and thought provoking. One of them that I have read several times reads: “Surrender Brings Peace.”...and I agree with these words one hundred per cent!....that is, depending on what
we are surrendering too.

Paul talks about a “peace...which transcends all understanding.” And I would imagine that many of us here today can in some degree relate to what Paul is referring too.

Because this passage is speaking to Christian believers, not to unbelievers. Unbelievers do not have this peace....and have never felt this peace. There is no peace...no real peace outside the peace which comes from a personal relationship with the living and forgiving One and Only Almighty God!

Unbeleivers do not have peace with God, and therefore unbelievers do not have peace.
Unbelievers reject, question, deny, curse, and oppose God....and no matter how mild the unbeliever’s questioning and rejecting might be--it is still questioning and rejecting---and this is not peace!!!

But when a person surrenders all they have and all they are--their entire lives to God---peace is made between them and God. Peace rules both within and between the person and God.

In fact, God causes a flood of peace to surge through the heart and life of the new believer...and this is what new believers have been experiencing for two thousand years!!!!

We all have this common experience.

The question is this: once we have the peace of God flooding our lives, how do we maintain that peace?

This is where things can get tricky....this is where that “transcends all understanding” stuff comes in.

I don’t care who we are, where we live, the colour of our skin, the language that we speak, whether our hair is curly, straight or thin....even though we are saved through surrendering our lives to Christ we still all have to live in this fallen world!...and in living in this fallen world....we all still have to deal with outside forces which try to bring us down...

With the aching pain of impoverished people walking the streets without a place to sleep or a good thing to eat

With friends, neighbours, and family members who do not yet believe in Christ and can’t understand...or won’t accept our message...
With pain that comes to our bodies, and death that comes to our loved ones
With loneliness....old age....lost friendships...tight finances...and I guess I could spend the entire morning into the night and into the next day listing the problems which tear at our hearts and minds and try to undermine the peace which only comes from God!

Jesus said, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”....“Peace I leave with you;” says Jesus to His followers, “my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

So how do we maintain the peace which transcends all understanding?

In verses 4 and 5 of our Epistle lesson Paul writes to the Christians at Philippi: “Rejoice in the Lord always.

I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

And he follows this by saying that when we do this we will have the peace of God which transcends all understanding.

In essence, he’s saying that when we surrender everything....all that stuff that gets between us and peace--to God...well this is what brings us peace!

When we say, “Lord it’s out of my hands...it’s beyond my ability to cope with...I give it to You....that is when we are able to have peace.

Think of it this way...how did we come to the saving knowledge that Christ is the Way to salvation in the first place?

Was it through our own wisdom?
Was it by taking things into our own hands?
Were we saved through the wisdom of the world?
Were we saved by doing things our way?
No. We were saved by humbling ourselves, deciding that it is impossible for us to save ourselves, and surrendering our entire selves to God.

Of course, it is possible for us to be like the one who recieved the seed that fell among the thorns, but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of this life choked us to the point where we lost the peace we received at salvation.

Have you ever been so deceived? I sure have!

So often, we as Christians put out the flame of peace by following a way which seems to be right by human standards....by human wisdom....or whatever....but it is not the right way!

And then, and then.... ...we find that we are in a miserable--peaceless situation...a real snare of the devil....and if we don’t surrender all to God at this point....well....we will not regain peace until we do!

Paul tells us: “Do not be anxious about anything.”

Paul is not talking here about the anxiety that many of us have to cope with due to some kind of medical condition or mental handicap. Science has come a long way in helping us overcome inborn anxiety problems through therapy and medication.

The kind of anxiety Paul is referring to comes to us needlessly when we take things into our own hands.

As we talked about last week, the Christian life is about the constant conscious dependence upon Christ for everything!

This means that the more we depend on Christ---the more we are aware of our shortcomings, the more we realize that we must depend on Christ even more!!!! And this means that we must be in the continual and intentional motion of surrendering all to God.

When a problem comes our way, seek God.

When we don’t have the answers, seek God.

When we are trying to figure out which way to turn, seek God.

When we are in a troubling situation, and we don’t know how to handle it--seek God--surrender to God!!!

When we have made a mistake....or if we don’t even know that we have made a mistake...but we are not at peace....seek and surrender to God!!!!

By prayer and petition....by prayer and petition.
When Christ is talking in lesson for this morning about keeping ourselves from worry....He
basically says---Don’t worry! “But seek first” God’s “kingdom” and God’s “righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.”

God has set before us the right Way. It is the Truth. It is the Only true Light.
There is a narrow way and a broad way. There is a right way and a wrong way. There is our way and there is God’s way!!! And thanks be to God!!!... “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”

Because there is a Way!!!!! Surrender to God and you will find peace!

God is for us, not against us.

God is the Father waiting for the prodigal son to surrender and return home! And when that son returns, God runs out to meet the son, and throws a party!

God is the One who will leave the ninety-nine sheep on the hills and go look for the one that wandered off... For as Jesus says, it is not God’s will that any of us should be lost!

Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians from prison. The Romans had put him in prison for preaching Christ! He writes in the letter that he is “in chains for Christ.” But the letter is about rejoicing in the Lord! The letter is about the peace of God which transcends all understanding! Paul writes: “Yes, and I will [continue](http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/surrender-brings-peace-kenneth-sauer-sermon-on-gods-forgiveness-51216.asp?Page=3) to rejoice!”

Paul was an educated man. Paul was a citizen of Rome; Paul had been a Pharisee; Paul had been someone who was in charge; someone who the ‘world’ looked up to; he had been a success by any worldly standards.

And here he was....not depending on his own intellect, not full of pride and self-centeredness; not saying, “Hey man, I’m a Roman citizen for crying out loud! Unlock these chains!” And how was Paul able to keep himself from doing this...to keep himself at peace?

He was able to do this only through continually surrendering all he had and all he was to Christ....having no confidence in the flesh.... “I consider everything a loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own...”

In other words, “I surrender all.” Have we surrendered everything to Christ? Do we have that peace which transcends all understanding?

What is most important in life? How do we achieve peace?

Remember the words of the prophet Micah: “With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with a thousand rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

And this my friends, this and this only is what brings the peace that so many yearn for, but because we are so blinded by our own ideas, our own egos, our own interests, our own anger we so easily miss out on it!

In her book: The Hiding Place, Corrie Ten Boom a Christian who survived the German Concentration camps during World War 2 (but lost much of her family) is a person who had to surrender to God in order to find this peace. After the war was over, she spent much of her time speaking in churches.

After a church service in Munich, Germany she recognized a former S.S. man who had stood guard at one of the camps. “He came up to me as the church was emptying, beaming and bowing. ‘How grateful I am for your message, Fraulen.’ he said. ‘To think that, as you say, He (Christ) has washed my sins away!” Corrie writes, “His hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who had preached so often to the people...about the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side. Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive me and help me to forgive him. I tried to smile, I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again I breathed a silent paryer. Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me your forgiveness. As I took his hand the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me.”

It doesn’t make human sense, but it does make God-sense! “In everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Key Question: How can I surrender to God?

Pray. “God, I give up. I’m tired of trying to do your work. I’m exhausted from working to earn your approval. I realize now that You are the only one who can meet my needs. I surrender to you.”

Let’s all stand quietly in God’s presence.

Bow your heads and close your eyes so you can focus your attention on God’s Holy Spirit.

Is the Holy Spirit urging you to surrender to God today?

Do you want a full-blown spiritual life? Will you surrender to God in prayer? Are you ready to tell God he is in control of your life?