

NEW COVENANT CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

SERMON NOTES

January 4, 2026

Pastor Billy R. Johnson

Emptied and Surrendered *Luke 22:41-42 (NKJV)*

The beginning of a new year is always an exciting time to set new goals and dreams and long to experience a fresh start. However, this year, instead of coming to God full of our aspirations and assumptions, let us ask God to empty us.

We come before God crowded on the inside. If we examine our hearts, we would be startled to find compressed layers of unrealized ambitions, unfinished plans, unfulfilled expectations, and unsubmitted desires. This year, because our theme is *Consecrated for His Purpose*, we cannot afford to just live based on what we want, but we must live based on His will. There is no greater model than in Luke 22:41-42 (NKJV), where Jesus has His nevertheless moment of not my will, but God's will be done. Jesus saw that the requirement for our redemption was His very life. Christ emptied Himself and yielded His human will to God's will.

How can we empty out and surrender?

Lay down personal ambitions, timelines, and attachments. God is not asking us to dream smaller; He is asking us to surrender deeper. Some of our ambitions are not being laid down not because they are sinful, but because they are not submitted. God wants us to lay them down because a) He allows us to prepare, but ultimately the result is in His hands (Proverbs 16:1-3, NKJV); b) we do not control tomorrow (James 4:13-15, NKJV); and c) discipleship requires that we release whatever competes with our obedience (Luke 14:33, NKJV).

"Anything that you hold onto that God tells you release is an idol." – Pastor Billy R. Johnson

Confront spiritual clutter: pride, fear, faults, and control. Confronting spiritual clutter is not God condemning us, but it's God consecrating us. He exposes what must be surrendered: tv programs, the crowd, etc. God will clear out those things that hinder obedience, and He will still fill us. Spiritual clutter can take the form of pride that disguises itself as confidence, fear that hides behind caution, control that pretends to be responsibility, and unhealed failures that quietly shape our decisions. Psalm 139:23-24 (NKJV) asks that our hearts and thoughts be submitted to a detailed analysis, where we invite God into those places that no one else can see. Some clutter is visible, some clutter is emotional, and some clutter is so hidden that we've learned to live with it. But our purpose is too important not to allow God to search us and put to the test those things that are disturbing us, because we can never conquer and have victory over what we do not confront.

"God cannot fully govern what we insist on controlling." – Pastor Billy R. Johnson

Allow God to purify motives and reset direction, Romans 12:1 – 2 (NKJV). Purified motives begin with surrender. We must take our everyday, ordinary lives (sleeping, eating, working, walking around) and place them on the altar (Romans 12:1, MSG). We often walk around with unsundered plans because we are so insistent upon our own way that our motives are not to glorify God, but to use His power to bring about our own will. We must get to a point where it is no longer what we want, but what God wants. If we're going to see our motives change, there must be surrender. Motives are purified when the ownership changes, and direction is reset when our mind is renewed. God must reorient our thinking to line up with the success He has planned for us. When we allow God to purify our motives and reset our thinking, we can say, *"Lord, I come not full, but I come empty."*

Let's start the year asking God to fill us with the knowledge of His will, not our will, emptied and surrendered at another level (Colossians 1:9).