



# + YOU

Winter 2024  
Owning a Faith that Matters

**Sermon Title:** Yielding Control  
**To be used with session 2:** Yielded Faith  
**Scripture:** Acts 26:9-23

**Connection with Bible Study:** To complement the Bible study “Yielded Faith,” this sermon continues looking at the faith journey of the Apostle Paul in his own words as he spoke of his immediate acknowledgment and obedience to Jesus Christ as Lord. Paul swiftly went from a man who seemingly was in control of every aspect of his life to one who began living under the control of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **Introduction**

In August 2023, ten driverless robotic taxis stalled in the streets of San Francisco causing a major traffic jam. A near-by concert impacted the internet connection in the area causing the self-driven cars to lose contact with central control. Several minutes passed until the internet connection was restored at which time the cars began to move once again.<sup>1</sup>

All of us need to realize that life without control can put us in a jam. In fact, we often speak of people being “out of control,” and that’s not a good thing. We tell people, “get yourself under control.” We get frustrated when we think we aren’t in control. But the larger issue is this: what is in control of your life? Or even more important: who is in control—you or someone else? As we study the faith journey of the Apostle Paul through his own words, we will come to understand that the best approach in life is to yield control to Jesus Christ as Lord of our life.

## **In Control (Acts 26:9-11)**

In his defense before King Agrippa, Paul spoke of his conviction that the path he previously took was the right path. He firmly believed that his purpose was to purge Judaism of the poisonous influence of Jesus of Nazareth. This mindset led him to do whatever it might take to eradicate the followers of Jesus Christ. Paul thought he was in control of his life. In reality, he was spinning more and more out of control.

We like to think “I’ve got this!” Often, we believe we are in control of our lives, and the road ahead is smooth and leading in the right direction. The truth is that all of us are prone to mess up. It’s a part of our human nature. We are sinners through and through, and all our best intentions can’t override that fact. At best, our attempt to be in control can give us a false sense of stability, but in the end, it always leads to disappointment and possibly disaster. There comes a point for all of us when we must admit we’re stalled in life and maybe even out of control.

## **Confronted and Called (Acts 26:12-18)**

To resolve the control issue in his life, Paul had to be confronted with the truth. That confrontation occurred as Paul was headed to Damascus to further his agenda of destroying

Christianity. As he neared Damascus, Paul came face-to-face with Jesus Christ. The Risen Christ told Paul that he was wrong and steering his life in the wrong direction: “Paul, it is exceedingly difficult and completely useless trying to control things your way. It’s a dead end.” Each of us needs to hear the same message from Jesus Christ. Trying to control everything in our life is senseless and even destructive.

Paul understood that. With the confrontation about the wrong direction he was heading came a call to travel in the right direction. That call came in the form of a command to become God’s spokesman calling others to a new direction in life. Paul’s message would contain the plea to turn from darkness and embrace the light of God’s salvation in Jesus Christ.

This instruction to turn that Paul was to proclaim was the same call that Jesus gave to Paul. He was to turn from his mistaken belief that he was on the right road and begin living according to God’s will. This describes the biblical teaching of “repentance.” To repent means “to change the mind,” or “to go in a different direction.” Paul was to exchange his old thinking of trying constantly to be in control for a new way of thinking that yielded control to Jesus Christ as Lord. This yielding of control is essential in the journey of faith.

Each of us must make the same radical exchange of control in our life. To find true joy and purpose in life, we are to surrender control to the One who created us, loves us, and died for us. We “repent” by changing our thinking about who is in control of our lives.

### **Under Control (Acts 26:19-23)**

In verse 19, Paul made the life-changing confession: “I was not disobedient to the vision.” In other words, Paul obeyed instantly and fully. He turned over control of his thinking, the direction of his life, and the whole of his life to Jesus Christ. No longer would he follow his own ideas and patterns of living. Instead, he would be under the control of Jesus Christ. As such this would be a whole new approach to life.

Jesus spoke of this kind of yielded life in what we know as the Beatitudes. He spoke of the blessedness of those who are meek. We tend to think of a meek person as “mousey” or “timid.” However, the Greek word literally means “strength under control.” Picture a wild horse that has been “broken” and brought under control for riding. The strength of the horse is still there, but it is now controlled by the rider. He will start and stop, turn and run at the wishes of the rider. This is the picture of a believer who is under the control of Jesus Christ as Lord. God wants to be so in control of our life that we go where He leads, speak what He desires, and do His will continually. That is the yielded life modeled by Paul in his journey of faith.

### **Conclusion**

So, who is going to control your life? Trying to control your life on your own is like the guy in the circus spinning plates on the top of wobbly dowel sticks. It is a frantic race to keep the plates spinning so they won’t fall off and break. Such a task will wear you out, impact your family, and even break your health. Instead, why not let Jesus Christ as Lord be in control? The Man who walked on water and rose from the dead surely can keep the plates of your life in place and give you a joy unspeakable. Why not surrender today to what God wants to do in your life? Let go and let Him be in control.

*Dr. Sam Crouch is retired from 52 years in ministry. Sam was educated at Baylor University and Southwestern Seminary. He and his wife live in Tucson, Arizona where Sam enjoys writing, reading, yardwork, and cats. His latest book is [Clearing the Fog: Gaining an Understanding and Appreciation of the Old Testament](#).*

<sup>1</sup>Los Angeles Times, August 12, 2023. [Latimes.com/California/story/2023-08-12/cruise-robotaxis-come-to-a-standstill](https://www.latimes.com/California/story/2023-08-12/cruise-robotaxis-come-to-a-standstill)