

## **Living Obediently**

- *John 14:13-15*

- **Thank you choir for those tremendous songs & for pointing our hearts toward the cross this morning.**
- **We make many critical decisions each and every day of our lives and they range from what we will eat to more important decisions that will affect not only us, but those closest to us. Life is made up of one continuing decision after another.**
  - Some decisions that we make are not that important & we give very little thought to, while other decisions require lots of planning & preparation.
  - But what is it the determining factor that causes you to make certain decisions?
    - For some the bottom line is, “Is it the reasonable thing to do?”
    - For others, their decision is based on what others think.
    - For some it is a matter of whether it will profit them or not.
  - The reasons are different for every person, but what about you? Where does God fit in the decisions that you make?
    - Are we making wise decisions?
    - What are the consequences of our decisions?
    - Cause here’s the truth. Many just think, “What will this decision do for me now”, and they think very little about the consequences down the road.
      - This is why people get into financial debt.
      - This is why people get into unhealthy relationships.
      - This is why many lives are wrecked b/c of poor decisions.
  - The most important deciding factor in making decisions should be, “Am I obeying God.”
    - Cause I will tell you this, as long as you’re obeying God, you won’t have to worry about the consequences.
- **This morning I want to talk to you about a subject that I believe many Christians not only struggle with on a routine basis, but some have never committed to in their Christian life.**
  - There’s an old hymn that was written in 1887 by John Sammis that I pray will guide us this morning to our solution. The song goes like this ... “Trust and obey, for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey.”
  - What’s wrong in the average Christian’s relationship with God? He’s disobedient.
  - Do you want me to tell you what is wrong with the average church? It is filled with disobedient people.
  - Do you know why people are not happy in their faith, they’re saved but they’re enduring it rather than enjoying it. They’re simply not being obedient to God.
  - I understand that obedience is not a very popular subject, especially from the pulpit. We had rather hear sermons of grace & forgiveness & God’s blessings. While those certainly have their place, I think we have forgotten that much of God’s reward, provision, and peace is completely dependent on our response to Him.
    - Martin Luther said, “we’re not saved by faith and works, but we are saved by a faith that works.”
    - James said that faith without works is dead and there are so many things that hinge on our obedience.
- **There are several things I want us to look at this morning as we discuss the importance of obedience.**
  1. **The Motive**
    - Let me start by just asking this simple question. Why do you obey the Lord?
      - a. **The Love of Christ**
        - i. A love for Christ should be the motive for obedience. (v.15)

- ii. Let's turn this around, if you don't obey Christ, you don't really love Him. You may say you do with your lips, but what are you saying with your actions?
  - 1. "One act of obedience is better than one hundred sermons." – Dietrich Bonhoeffer
  - 2. Look down at v.21
- iii. Jesus tells us very clearly and very plainly therefore that the motive for obeying Him must always be our love for the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - 1. Did the Children of Israel love God? Did they really? After God had already given them the Promised Land, they came down from Mt. Sinai, went through the wilderness & came to the banks of the land only to see giants in the land.
  - 2. The majority of the spies said, "There's no way we can go in." But two knew that they could take the Land b/c of God's promise.
  - 3. But b/c of their disobedience. It cost them 40 long years in the wilderness.
- iv. If we truly love God, it ought to show in everything that we do, Amen?
- v. Mark 12:30 – "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment."
  - 1. Folks, I want to tell you this morning, we need to get back to loving God with all our hearts. We have too much today demanding our heart & often times God gets very little, if any, of our love.
    - a. We're to love God with all of our heart. It's to be a heartfelt love, it's not to be a superficial love, you know Jesus said this people honoureth me with their lips but their heart is far from me.
      - i. Luke 6:46 – "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
    - b. Now if I were to ask you this morning if you loved Jesus, I would not expect a one of you not to raise your hand.
    - c. But if I ask you do you love Him with ALL your heart, that might be a little more difficult to answer truthfully.
    - d. To love Jesus with all our heart speaks of a burning, passionate, emotional love for the Lord Jesus. Is that the kind of love you have for God today?
      - i. Perhaps you love God enough to be here this morning, but do you love Him enough to be back tonight?
      - ii. You might love Jesus enough to stand for Him around church, but what about at school or on the job tomorrow?
  - 2. The scriptures go on to say we are to love God with all our soul. What does it mean to love God with all our soul?
    - a. What our Lord is saying is that we should love the Lord completely by giving ourselves over to Him. No area is off-limits, no area where we say Lord, keep out, Lord, everything is given to Him.
    - b. Can you say that this morning? Is there any area of your life that you are not willing to turn over to Him?
      - i. Any sin?
      - ii. Any possession?
      - iii. Any person? A mate or a child.
      - iv. Any pleasure?
  - 3. But then the verse goes on to say with all our mind.
    - a. How do you love someone with all your mind?

- b. When we don't know enough about Him, it's impossible to love him with all our mind.
- c. II Timothy 2:15 – “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”
- d. Do you love him with all your mind? Do you search Him out? Do you think about Him? Do you talk to Him & consult Him? Have we given our all to the Lord Jesus Christ today? The Bible says if we truly love Him, we will.
- vi. Look up here this morning, I got to be honest, there are times when I don't love God like I should. I don't show Him my love b/c my actions don't always back them up. But I want to love Him with all that I have, my heart, my soul, and my mind.

## 2. The Measure

- Look at v.15 again. “If you love me, keep my commandments.”
- Go down to v.21 – “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me:”
- Look inv.23 – “If a man love me, he will keep my words”
- If obedience is essential to loving God, how do we know what to obey? How are we going to know how to love God through our obedience? Answer ... God's Word.

### a. Know the Word of God.

- i. You can't keep his commandments until you read them & know what they are.
  - 1. You read history books so that you will have knowledge of the great foundation this country was established upon, right?
  - 2. You read science books so that you can understand the characteristics of this marvelous universe that God created & sustains each day, Amen?
  - 3. The same goes with the Word of God.
    - a. “Pastor, I want to know God's will.” Then read God's Word.
    - b. “Pastor, I don't know how to love my mate.” Then pick up the Word of God & read.
    - c. “Pastor, I don't know how I ought to live my life for God.” The first question I want to ask you is have you ever picked up the guide book to discover God's direction for our lives?
    - d. Church, it is time for us to pick up the Word of God. We don't have time for any more excuses. We are sitting by in our comfortable pews while our own lives, our children's lives, and our families are wasting away. Claiming ignorance when you stand before God will not hold any water.

### b. Obey The Word Of God

- i. Go back to v.15 one more time. “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” One clear, easy way to show that you love the Lord is just by obeying Him. Don't tell me you love God if you don't keep his commandments.
  - 1. It's not just about how much you give,
  - 2. How many verses of scripture you know,
  - 3. How often you attend church,
  - 4. Just as plain as can be, Jesus says if you really love me, you will obey me.
    - a. Over in I Samuel 15, Saul failed to obey the Lord completely and Samuel came to speak to him.
      - i. God commanded Saul to settle accounts with some old enemies, the Amalekites, but Saul only partially obeyed.
      - ii. As a result, God rejected him as king. Saul's sin may seem insignificant to us, but if God says it matters, then it matters.

- iii. God looks at the heart. God sees things that we don't see. And God could already see that Saul's heart had turned away.
- b. Samuel spoke to Saul and said this – “Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”
  - i. Back in O.T. times, the greatest outward act of love for God was to offer a sacrifice. But Samuel said, “Saul it is better to obey than to sacrifice, (v.23) for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.”
- c. Did you know that if you're not obeying God today, if you're not bringing your life into conformity with the Word of God, if you are choosing to disobey God's Word, your sin is as idolatry?
  - i. Sometimes people who blatantly sin think they can make it up to God. They think, *I'll give more in the offering. . . . I'll sing louder at church. . . . I'll go to a midweek Bible study.* But obedience is better than sacrifice. It is not a matter of obeying God whenever we find it easy or convenient or popular. Its about committing to obey Him regardless.
  - ii. This morning God may be dealing with you over some seemingly small area in your life.
    - 1. God may be telling you to go and apologize to someone, you say well, that's such a small thing. It's not a small thing to disobey God.
    - 2. God may be telling you to give your sins to Him this morning & trust in Him, will you obey Him today?
    - 3. God may be telling you to clean some things up in your life or to witness to a certain person, you say well, that's not a big sin, I haven't committed adultery; God says that stubbornness is like idolatry, iniquity and witchcraft.
- ii. I want to show you one other verse while we are on this subject. Go down to v.21.
  - 1. “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him”.
  - 2. Do you want Jesus to be real to you? You want Jesus to show himself to you? Get your Bible, open up His Word, and start obeying God's Word and Jesus Christ will suddenly become very, very real to you and you won't have to be talking about why is God so far off?
    - a. Why do the heavens seem like brass when I pray?
    - b. Why is it that everybody else seems to be happy in Jesus but I'm not happy in Jesus?
    - c. Perhaps it's because you're not obeying the Word of God.
  - 3. Have you ever read a commandment in the Bible and God is very clear on what He wants you to do & you realize you need to make a change in your life, and at the point you say, “I'm not going to do that”, but then we read a few verses later & God makes a promise & we suddenly want to claim that promise. It doesn't work that way.
- iii. The only way we can truly understand this Book & see God move in our lives is when we commit to complete obedience.

➤ **Now let me wrap this up this morning by saying this:**

- If you are unsaved this morning, you have run from God, you know you are a sinner & you have never asked Jesus Christ to forgive you & give your life to Him, you need to obey God's calling this morning.
  - The Bible is clear that God is longsuffering, "not willing that any should perish", but you need to take this opportunity very seriously this morning.
  - If God is speaking to your heart right now, please don't run from Him any longer.  
Today you can find peace & freedom if you will trust in Him.
- For the majority of you today, I want to address this area of obedience. Do you love the Lord today? If so are you obeying Him? Are you living your life in accordance with God's Word? Are you seeking to know Him more by reading His Word?