

Obedience is Love

March 15, 2015 ~ 1 John 5.1-3

Obedience is Important to God

- ❖ Obedience is much maligned today / Outside the Church – but inside as well
 - ✧ “But obedience is important to God... It is perhaps most important to God”
- ❖ Our message today is topical ~ I’ll refer to our original text but only briefly
- ❖ Before we examine the text let’s review obedience in 4 states (*or timeframes*)

Four States of Man in Which Obedience Functions

1. Innocent State (State of Innocence)

- ✧ **Read Gen 2.15-17** ~ “Of every tree of the garden .. you shall surely die.”
- ✧ Adam was free to choose good or evil in the Garden
- ✧ Adam chose evil (*i.e., to disobey*) resulting in temporal and eternal death

2. Fallen State (State of Sin)

- ✧ **Read Gen 6.5** ~ “Then the Lord saw .. only evil continually.”
- ✧ **Read Rom 8.7-9** ~ “Because the carnal mind .. he is not His.”
- ✧ Fallen man cannot do good because good requires God’s presence

3. Regenerate State (State of Forgiveness)

- ✧ **Read Gen 8.1** ~ “There is therefore now no .. according to the Spirit.”
- ✧ **Read Gen 8.10** ~ “And if Christ is in you .. because of righteousness.”
- ✧ Regenerate man can choose good or evil (resulting in increase or decrease of joy)

4. Resurrected State (State of Perfection)

- ✧ **Read Rev 21.3-4** ~ “And I heard a loud voice .. former things have passed away.”
- ✧ Just as God cannot sin & remain God – we’ll not be able to sin & remain His child

1. Man chose evil in innocence with horrendous consequences

2. Fallen man cannot choose good and he has no regrets concerning it

3. Regenerate man can choose good or evil leading to greater or lesser joy

4. Perfected and resurrected man cannot choose evil

The Role of Christ’s Obedience

- ❖ Jesus prevailed by obedience during His state of human innocence
 - ✧ Jesus suffered the punishment due to us in our fallen state
 - ✧ His obedience became our obedience . . .

Xition: Let’s look at our text in 1 John . . .

v2 ~ “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.”

- ❖ A proof is presented by which we are to know whether we love God’s children
 - ✧ IF we love and obey God THEN we love God’s children
- ❖ Jesus repeatedly defined love of Him as doing what He commanded
 - ✧ Jn 14.15 ~ “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”
 - ✧ Jn 14.21 ~ “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me”
 - ✧ Jn 14.23 ~ “If anyone loves Me he will keep My Word”

v3a ~ “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.”

- ❖ Obedience to God and His Word is the definition of God’s love
 - ✧ To disobey God or to disregard His commands is not love
 - ✧ To disobey God is to disrespect God, to show contempt for God, to hate God
 - ✧ Obeying or disobeying God in OT directly correlates to blessings and curses

A Sheep Transforms into a Wolf (Rob Bell)

- ❖ Rob Bell founded Mars Hill Bible Church in Grandville, MI in 1999
 - ✧ By 2005 attendance had swelled to over 10,000 each week
 - ✧ By 2011 he left it / Now he’s an Oprah Winfrey spiritual lapdog
- ❖ Authored books
 - ✧ Danced on periphery of orthodoxy for years – but steadily abandoned it
 - ✧ 2005 – Velvet Elvis – questions trappings of Christianity
 - ✧ 2007 – Sex God – reaching lonely people
 - ✧ 2011 – Love Wins – rejects hell, adopts universalism, salvation apart from Christ
 - ✧ 2014 – Zimzum of Love – openly embraced homosexuality, abandoned church

v3b ~ “And His commandments are not burdensome.”

- ❖ “Are God’s commands to you burdensome?”
- ❖ God’s commands do appear to be a burden to many modern Christians
 - ✧ His Word is burdensome to them / an embarrassment to them
 - ✧ It’s hard to believe that some modern Christians read God’s Word at all
- ❖ Rob Bell began by empathizing with people
 - ✧ He blamed the established Church for not ministering to people
 - ✧ But that transitioned to blaming God’s Word – and eventually our God

Xition: Let’s look at another recent example of this trend . . .

A Reformed Church Redefines Obedience

- ❖ City Church of San Francisco – (*Letter from Elder Board ~ March 13, 2015*)
 - ✧ Years ago left PCA for the RCA because of liberal trends
 - ◇ Embraced hermeneutic justifying female elders/ leaders
 - ✧ Just openly embraced the LGBT attendees as orthodox members
- ❖ Extensive Excerpts from letter
 1. “**great empathy**” ~ The people in a different place are those that find it wrong
 2. “**eager to live faithfully**” ~ But refuse to live biblically
 3. “**demanding lifelong celibacy**” ~ We have been so harsh and uncompromising
 4. “**unwilling or unable**” ~ Unwilling yes – but unable . . . ?
 5. “**boundaries of exclusion**” ~ It’s not their sin that divides us / our rules do
 6. “**different conclusions**” ~ This is their basis to accept homosexuality
 7. “**counsel humility**” ~ Don’t criticize this new policy or you’re out
 8. “**we are unified**” ~ This is policy – the 2 elders that couldn’t accept it are gone
 9. “**all members**” ~ They cling to same-sex marriage as validating this
 10. “**all can voice . . .**” ~ Note the progression from concern to discovery
 11. “**hold our views with humility**” ~ The two elders that left couldn’t do that

Permanent Relevance of God and His Word

- ❖ **Read Hebrews 13.1-4** ~ “**marriage is honorable among all**”
 - ✧ God will judge the heretics and the heresies of our age just as in all ages
- ❖ **Read Hebrews 13.5** ~ “**be content**”
 - ✧ City Church made this change to address the discontent of its LGBT attendees
 - ✧ The church said their “**practice of demanding celibacy was causing harm**”
 - ✧ But God’s Word does not cause harm / the pain of crucifying sin – yes . . .
- ❖ God’s Word addresses Oprah Winfrey and Rob Bell
 - ✧ Oprah Winfrey asked Bell when the church would accept same-sex marriage
 - ✧ Bell said, “**culture is already there, and the church will continue to be even more irrelevant when it quotes letters from 2,000 years ago as their best defense.**”
 - ✧ **Read Hebrews 13.8-9** ~ “**Jesus Christ is .. established by grace**”
 - ✧ That is God’s answer to Rob Bell, Oprah Winfrey and to us . . .
- ❖ God’s Word also addresses the remaining elders at City Church
 - ✧ **Read Hebrews 13.10-16** ~ “**no right to eat**”
 - ✧ City Church is tossing out saints and retaining sinners . . .

Xition: Obedience is important to God . . .

Obedience is Important to God

- ❖ This message began by emphasizing the importance of obedience
 - ✧ The disobedience of Adam cost all mankind their souls
 - ✧ The obedience of Christ (*unto death*) paid the price of disobedience for us
 - ◇ His obedience restores believers to a right relationship to God
 - ◇ His obedience fuels our spirits to endure in this sinful world
- ❖ It is easy to become discouraged in life
 - ✧ Sometimes we seem to fail more often than we succeed
 - ✧ We can get so lonely, feeling so isolated from God and everyone
 - ✧ Wolves always prowl the edges of God's flock picking off the weak
- ❖ But God's Word is our sure defense
- ❖ God's Word is relevant – and addresses all of our cares on this earth
- ❖ And God's Word will remain relevant long after City Church folds
- ❖ And 2,000 year old letters will age, growing even more relevant over time

- ❑ “For this is the love of God,”
- ❑ “that we keep His commandments.”
- ❑ “And His commandments are not burdensome”

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,

And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

To God our Savior, who alone is wise,

Be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.

Amen *pause* Go in peace . . .