



Light from the Word

Obedience

Theme verse: *“For it is God which worketh in you both to will **and** to do of his good pleasure”* (Phil. 2:13).

Throughout His ministry, Jesus taught obedience to God's commands. In the Sermon on the Mount, he spoke of the need to keep the *least* of the commandments, and as He ascended from the Mount of Olives, He instructed His disciples to teach all nations to observe (obey) *all* things that He had commanded them. In His words: *“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven”* (Matt. 5:19-20).

One of the great deceptions throughout history is the notion that the fact that Jesus is the “end of the law for righteousness”—which He is—means that there are no “rules” in a Christian's life. This clearly contradicts Jesus' teaching which included many commandments. In addition, if we understand that the Gospels do not contain all that Jesus did, (*as John said in the last verse of his Gospel*), and understand that the disciples undoubtedly carried out Jesus instruction to teach all things, we can also embrace the teachings of the Apostles as the fulfilling of Matt. 28:20, wherein they teach us to observe all things that Jesus commanded.

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matt. 28:18-20).

The clarity of Christ's last words on earth should call us to a great awareness of His instruction and a great willingness to put it into practice in our life.

Why is it so easy for those of us who are believers to dismiss some of Christ's commandments? Perhaps one of the major reasons is because outward and observable obedience can seem to validate one's faith while we may be neglecting the Lord's commands to love, forgive, be merciful, etc. Is it possible that the hypocrisy of self-righteousness in some has caused others to overreact? Perhaps some have rejected the importance of obedience by embracing “grace alone” as the key to salvation, while failing to remember the very *purpose* of that redemption.

The Apostle Paul writes that we are saved by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. Yet, as is often the case with our finite human minds, it is difficult to grasp the fullness of “all the counsel of God.” We are also taught by Jesus that our righteousness should exceed the righteousness of the law. Righteousness is right living—not just right thinking.

What are some of the key commandments that Jesus taught?

In the Sermon on the Mount alone we find many: Love your enemies, resist evil, don't swear an oath, don't take revenge, don't judge, be merciful, make things right with your brother before you approach God, don't do good things for show, and love God and your neighbor. The Lord taught us to go above and beyond the Law of Moses rather than dismiss it. The Gospels emphasize that we are to love God with our whole being, love our neighbor as our self, and love one another as Christ loved us. The Epistles expand on these and teach application for daily living.

The Apostles conveyed more specific teaching as they wrote to young churches and helped them

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understand the fullness of the Gospel. Perhaps we can summarize it like this:

God's commands are not simply random rules.

God commands us to do good unto others and abstain from actions that harm others.

He recognized that as humans, we are incapable of this on our own.

From the beginning it was planned that Jesus would shed His blood to redeem us – to reconcile our disobedience to Himself – and to carry that load for us.

He did not pay that price so that we can freely continue pleasing self. We are bought with a price and are not our own anymore.

We are purchased by the blood of Jesus for the express purpose of obeying God's commands and demonstrating the love of God to all men.

His commands are both broad and specific. Grand instructions to put off obvious sins such as lying, adultery and the like are followed by very specific instruction to encourage each other with hymns and spiritual songs. Magnificent entreaties to abound in mercy and love are followed by a very specific instruction that fathers ought not to provoke children to wrath. The Holy Spirit moving in the Apostles brought to their remembrance *all* that Jesus taught them. They shared it with the early church (*and us*)—demonstrating that God understands the big picture and also sees the details that make up that big picture. As God's children, we are called to obedience in both great commandments and small.

We can do none of this without the graciousness of God providing us with the overwhelming power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish these things. Nobody can do these things of

their own strength. But if we have been “born (again) of our Father,” we will love to be like Him. If we have His Spirit, we will love to act like Him. If we spend time in His presence, we will love to imitate Him, just as a little boy picks up a tool and tries to imitate his father. He calls us both to have confidence in His ability and to be diligent in our personal efforts.

“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13).

“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Pet. 3:14).

Put quite simply, He calls us to both Trust and Obey—in the great commandments and in the small.

Duties of Husbands

Gen. 2:24 *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*

Prov. 5:18 *Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.*

Eccl. 9:9 *Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.*

Eph. 5:25 *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*

1 Peter 3:7 *Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.*