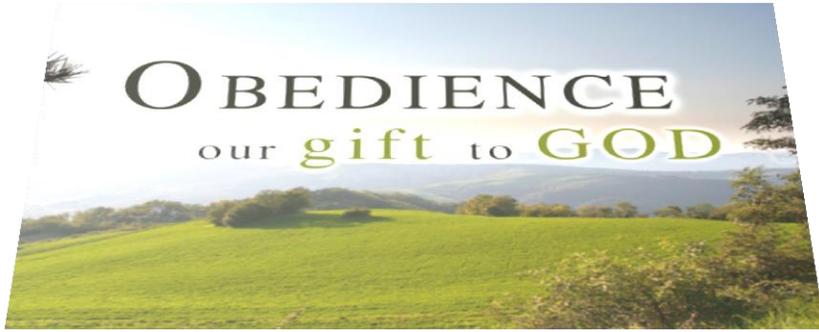


## OBEDIENCE ALWAYS BRINGS BLESSING



He replied, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.” — Luke 11:28

Jesus never passed up an opportunity to help people move to a higher truth. Yes, there were those who criticized him. Yes, there were those who idolized him. He came, however, to bring God's message of salvation and the Kingdom to people who had just about lost hope. He came to share God's truth with folks normally left out of the religious discussion. So, Jesus used both criticism and praise from others to be

opportunities to lead people to a greater truth. The real blessing doesn't have to do with physical ties to Jesus. No, the real blessing is given to those who put the word of God into practice. He has spoken that word to them — and to us!

Prayer - Holy and Almighty Father, thank you for helping me see the very clear and simple truth of my need to obey your word and, through your Spirit, please give me the strength to obey it. Forgive me for getting so wrapped up in the nuances of religious discussion that I forget the profound simplicity of obeying your truth from my heart. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

~~Monday, 24 August 2020 – “Blessed rather are those who hear the Word of God and obey it.” Luke 11:28

Why are those blessed, who hear and obey the Word of God? (Francis Bourdillon, “Short Sermons for Family Reading” 1881)

The Word must be obeyed—as well as heard. We must not hear it carelessly. Nor must we be hearers only, forgetting it as soon as heard. We are to guard it and keep it, to treasure it in our hearts as a precious possession. We are to believe it and to follow it, then the full blessing will be ours.

The Word of God tells us of the Savior, speaks pardon and peace, and opens to us God’s wondrous way of saving sinners. This can be said of no other book, and no other thing. The works of God in nature tell us much, but they do not tell us this. Many books of humanity are written on these subjects, but they are but humanity’s books after all.

They are blessed also, because the Word of God is a sure guide. It is a difficult path through the wilderness of this world. Many difficulties and perplexities meet us and many different rules are offered for our guidance: fashion, custom, practicality, humanity’s opinion, etc. But the Word of God is the only sure guide. A simple, humble, earnest following of this guide is the wisest, happiest, safest course! The poorest and illiterate who through grace take this course have more security for going right than the greatest and wisest who follow any other path. Therefore, they are blessed who hear and keep the word of God because they have a sure guide through life.

The word of God also comforts in trouble, and therefore they are blessed who hear it and keep it. This world has its sorrows as well as its difficulties, sorrows-many and great; but the word of God has comfort for all of life’s sorrows. It is full of comfort. It has promises and declarations of God’s love. It contains examples of mourners whom He has comforted—in great number and variety. There is no kind of trouble for which some suitable comfort may not be found in the Bible. In time of deep sorrow, a comfort and consolation are found in the Word of God which are sought in vain in other books. It is the best of all books for those in trouble.

Prayer - Thank you, Father, for revealing your will to me through the Scriptures. Thank you for wanting to bless me and protect me from evil. Please forgive me for the times in the past that I have ignored your will or neglected being obedient to it. Today, I commit to live intentionally in your will and to live obediently to your word. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

~~Tuesday, 25 August 2020 – Read Luke Chapter 11.

**Wednesday, 26 August 2020** - “As Jesus was talking, a woman of the group said with a loud voice, “The woman is happy who gave You birth and who fed You.” 28 But He said, “Yes, but those who hear the Word of God and obey it are happy.” Luke 11:27-28

Jesus miracles produced admiration in the hearts even of those men in whom it wrought envy. The miracle He produced in this chapter, the dispossessing of the devil out of a man who was dumb, caused the fame of Christ to have great renown though many parts of the world. And though for all this His enemies would not acknowledge the divinity of Christ, yet a certain young woman came and lifted up her voice and said unto Him, "Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the breasts that Thou hast sucked." Now Christ, instead of giving her thanks for applauding Him, rather gives her a rebuke, a check, and said, "I will tell you who are blessed; rather blessed are they who hear the Word of God, and obeys it." Thus, you have the consistency of the words.

The speech of the woman was a proverbial speech among the Jews. When any person did some achievement that was praiseworthy, they would cry out and say, "Blessed is the womb that bare Thee." And from this proverbial speech note this: Good children are a great praise and blessing to their parents. This woman could bless the mother of Christ, who bare such a son as He was. Solomon says, "A wise son makes a glad father" (Proverbs 15:20). And in many other places you read what great blessing and honor accrues to parents whom the Lord has blessed with wise and godly children. And, on the contrary, the Scripture marks those parents with a brand of reproach who bring forth wicked children into the world; children to increase the number of the damned, to fill hell and to pollute the earth. Therefore, it is that you so often read in Scripture that a wicked child is a shame to his parents (Proverbs 10:1, 5).

The use is to teach you, whom God has blessed with good children, to be exceedingly thankful unto God, for it is a greater blessing unto you than if God should fill your house with silver and gold. And you whom God has thus afflicted, in suffering bad children to come out of your loins, oh, mourn under the heavy hand of God that He has made you instrumental to bring forth children into the world which shall increase the number of the damned in hell.

Prayer – Dear God, please give me a humble heart to yield to your instructions at all times, so that I can prosper. Help me to obey you and let me be flexible for Holy Spirit’s guidance. Let me follow when you lead, and let me be willing to receive your blessings whenever you are ready to hand them over. For in the name of Jesus Christ I pray. Amen.

~~Thursday, 27 August 2020- “As Jesus was talking, a woman of the group said with a loud voice, “The woman is happy who gave You birth and who fed You.” 28 But He said, “Yes, but those who hear the Word of God and obey it are happy.” Luke 11:27-28

"Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the breasts that gave Thee suck." But Christ said, "Rather blessed are they which hear the word of God and keep it." Christ said, "rather blessed." He does not say that His mother was not blessed, but that the woman dotes too much on His mother, to think that she was so greatly blessed only for bearing Him in her womb. He said, "I tell you who indeed is the blessed man and woman, even they that hear the word of God and obeys it." Christ would not give way to her applause, but He gave her a mild and loving rebuke. Hence observe that you must take heed that you are not tickled with pride when you hear yourselves commended. Christ would give no way to the woman's commendation. She thought that the Virgin Mary was the happiest woman in all the world, yet Christ put a "rather" on those who make conscience of hearing the Word of God and keeping it. A believer hearing and obeying Jesus Christ is more blessed in so doing than the Virgin Mary was merely for bringing Christ into the world, although it was the happiest birth that ever was brought forth! Oh, how should this be a spur unto you to hear, and to practice what you hear, seeing that by so doing you are thus blessed!

Prayer - Father, I realized that you will perform great wonders for anyone who faithfully serve and obey your instructions. Therefore, I want to obey you and maintain good a relationship with you. Please help me to shun every form of ungodliness so that I can enjoy you deeply. Let me love and serve you well, and let me qualify to receive your undaunted blessings on earth and in heaven. For in the name of Jesus Christ I pray. Amen.

~~Friday, 28 August 2020 & ~~ Saturday, 29 August 2020 - True Blessedness

The teaching is precise: Listen to the word of God and keep it. A little earlier Luke tells us: "Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. And he was told, 'Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you. But he said to them, 'My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.'" Luke 8:19-21.

Now we have an additional instruction: Listen and keep it, yes but put it into practice. Keep it and ponder in the heart. Listen, keep, put into practice, ponder in the heart. It is not by chance that all these actions are centered around Mary. St. Anselm says: "She so listened to the word of God that it took flesh within her." Mary is the model of one who listens, keeps the word and puts it into practice in her life. But she is also the model of one who ponders the word of God.

The directions: Keep, listen, put into practice, ponder - their strength lies in their being found together; the quality of our lives, as Christians, will depend on the extent to which we manage to unite them. To listen means to pay heed, to have an attentive ear, to be quiet. In the Old and New Testament, hearing is more important than seeing. Seeing is good but for the biblical writers hearing is more important.

Why the primacy of hearing? Because God spoke and speaks to his people. God's word is also creative. "He spoke and all things were made." The words "He said" are the first thing that we are told about God. Our relationship with God is a mouth to ear relationship. How often the prophets say: "Listen!" Recall the number of times when Jesus begins preaching in parables - and says, "Listen".

To these instructions we may add: Pondering in the heart. "Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart" Luke 2:19. The Greek word means to ponder-over. It is a process which has been described as a gentle chewing of the word that slowly releases its inner riches. In Hebrew, the word for pondering means murmuring, meditating. "How blessed are those... who finds their pleasure in the law of God, murmuring that over, day and night."

Keeping the word is the work of sowing a seed, allowing it to take root. It presupposes a climate in which it can germinate and become rooted in the heart. Once we have heard the word we must make it stay in us, not keeping it in cold storage but allowing it to grow through successive stages in our lives.

It is not said, "Blessed are they which hear the Word of God," for there are many sorts of hearers who come short of blessedness. But blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it, who incorporate it into their souls and become transformed into the image of it. There are four sorts of hearers spoken of in Matthew 13, and three of them fall short of blessedness. All hearers, although it is the Word of God which they hear, do not attain unto blessedness. It is not hearing, but keeping and observing the Word of God which makes humanity blessed.

Neither it is said, "Blessed are you who keep the Word of God in a disjunction from hearing," but "in a conjunction with hearing. Blessed are you that hear and keep the Word." This is in-keeping with what Christ commands, but it is a disjunction from hearing; they leave off hearing the Word. But only those are blessed in the esteem of Jesus Christ who hear and keep the Word of God.

Prayer – Loving God, we are not of this world system but have a heavenly inheritance, reserved for us in heaven, and so I pray that I will no longer be conformed into the pattern of this world and squeezed into its mold, but day by day be increasingly transformed into the image and likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Help me to take every thought captive and to surrender my heart and life to You in true obedience and godly humility. May we who are Your children be drawn closer to each other and to You as You do a good work in each of our lives. Build us up into a spiritual house I pray, where Christ is the cornerstone and may Your indwelling Holy Spirit, prompt and guide us, encourage and train us. Lord, I surrender all I am to You today and pray that I may walk in newness of love and humble obedience all the days of my life. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

## ***PRAYERS & CONCERNS***

- Mr. William “Bill” Hornung, experienced a fall and fractured femur. Mr. Bill had surgery Monday, 17 August 2020. He will be going into rehabilitation. Cards of support and encouragement can be mailed to: W193N16339 Lea Fon Circle, Jackson, WI 53037  
Also, keep his wife, Ms. Ginger in your prayers as well
  - Prayers for Bishop John Yambasu of Sierra Leone who died in a tragic road accident; he was also chancellor of Africa University.
  - Ms. Carrie (Anthony) Kuhaupt, on the passing of her aunt, Elaine Pischke. Cards of sympathy can be mailed to: 1008 Waugoo Ave, Oshkosh 54901
  - The family of Annette H. (Williams) MacFarlane, on the passing of their mother.
  - All children, youth, young and older adults that are returning to various forms of educational venues.
  - Our highest "good", of course, is becoming more like Jesus (as Paul says in v 29). God can bring good even from this undeniably bad situation—transforming us into the likeness of his Son. Romans 12 v 2 Paul says, “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Amen.
  - Ms. Norma Chitwood has been placed in hospice care.
  - Mr. Ted Meilahan, for restoration of strength mobility after a fall.
  - Ms. Debra Matthies, healing and diagnosis.
  - Ms. Doris Mohr, for healing and strength after a fall.
  - Mrs. Barb Koehler and Family on the passing of Dr. John Koehler. Celebration of Life Service, August 29, 2020 @ 3:00 pm @ 5th Avenue United Methodist Church. Visitation August 29, 2020, 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm.
  - Mrs. Dot Edison and Family on the passing of Mr. Robert Edison. Funeral plans are pending; to be held in Illinois.
  - Mrs. Jeri Bowerman and Family on the passing of Mr. James “Jim” Bowerman.
  - Ms. Carrie (Anthony) Kuhaupt, on the passing of her father, Mr. Charles “Chuck” P. Pischke.
  - Ms. Linda Green - more chemotherapy. (Sister of Ms. Debra Matthies)
  - Ms. Nancy Whitson - prayers for healing.
  - Mr. Dennis Liepert - prayers for continued healing.
  - Mr. Bob Krell - prayers for healing.
  - Mr. and Mrs. Roger and Nobi Sacia restoration of strength and healing.
  - Mr. Steve Siebenaler - continued healing. (son of Mr. & Mrs. Allan & Janice Liepert-Kempf)
  - Those that find their cupboards, wallets, and purses - empty.
  - All those that are caring for others.
  - 5th Avenue Pastor, Staff, and Laity.
  - Wisconsin Annual Conference.
  - Our World - Jesus said, “In this world you will have trouble, but take heart! I have overcome the world.” John 16:33
  - Those you lift up in the secrets of your hearts: \_\_\_\_\_
- The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, Brothers and Sisters. Amen.

Obedience to God is a proof of our love for Him. It demonstrates our commitment and faithfulness to God. Obedience opens God’s door of blessings to our lives.

