

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, please make me an obedient child. Let me listen and obey your instructions. Give me the ability to do whatever you ask me to do. Do not let me provoke your judgment with disobedience. Enable me to always be conscious that “you see all things and you will appropriately judge all things – either with blessings or disciplines.” In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

BECOMING A FAT HOG FOR JESUS - OBEDIENT!

Sermon texts - John 14:15-21; Mark 12:30

We are two-thirds of the way through our study on “Becoming a FAT HOG for Jesus”. We have looked at being **FAITHFUL, AVAILABLE, TEACHABLE AND HOLY**. Today I want us to consider what it means to be **OBEDIENT**.

It was rather difficult for me to decide what direction to take in this message. There are so many ways to approach the subject of obedience. We could look at the results of disobedience seen in the lives of Adam and Eve early in the Bible. We could look at numerous examples of obedience such as in the life of Daniel or the early apostles who declared, “We must obey God rather than humanity”.

I really wanted to preach from Luke 17 where Jesus said when we’ve done everything required of us we are to consider ourselves to be nothing more than unprofitable servants who have only done what was expected. But I want to go more to the very foundation of obedience and to do that I want to bring your attention to a passage found in John 14:15-21.

On this Confirmation/Youth Sunday, I want to speak to you about how to develop a lifestyle of obedience. I’m afraid we tend to think of being obedient as something we do rather than what and who we are. That lets us off the hook when it comes to certain responsibilities. We can justify our disobedience by bragging about our obedience in other areas. I may not tithe, but I’m faithful in attendance. I may not come to Sunday School, but I always make sure my tithe check is in on time. But if I ask, “Am I an obedient child of God?” ‘Is my life marked by obedience?’ ‘Does obedience describe me and my lifestyle?’”, then the answer is more complex.

In fact, if you want to know what is wrong with the average Christian, it is they are disobedient. In fact, that is what is wrong with the average church. Far too many churches are filled with disobedient people. Therefore, we are not radiant in our faith, we are not joyful in our worship, we are not enthusiastic in our service and we are not victorious in our lives. The old hymn writer was correct when he said, “Trust and obey, for there’s no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Now somewhere along the way, preachers quit saying much about obedience. I’m afraid we’ve preached so much on salvation by grace through faith and told people that salvation being a gift of God, that if we even mention the requirement of obedience people think we’re legalists. But I would remind you that while we are not saved by faith and works, we are saved to work. In fact, in the book of James it amplifies, the kind of faith that does not work is dead and useless.

So, what I want to do this morning is help us understand what it means to live a life of obedience. Why do we and why should we obey the Lord? In our text, John says it is our love for Christ that is the motivation for our obedience.

Now I know there are all kinds of romanticists and sentimentalists who will try to tell you real love doesn’t use words like “if” and “because”. Real love is shown in spite of who we are and what we do. And that’s true. God loves us in spite of who we are and what we do.

But in response to being shown that kind of love and grace and forgiveness, Jesus says, “If you love me, keep my commandments.” And we all understand that. In fact, to the Ephesians, Paul wrote, “Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.” We know that is an unconditional love that puts our needs above those of Christ and makes something of us that we could never be without Him.

So, don't tell me you love the Lord Jesus if you're not obeying him. Those are empty words and you are wasting your breath and making a jester out of yourself. In fact, the Lord makes it very clear and very plain that if we love him we will keep his commandments. The motive for obedience, the secret to living a life of obedience is our love for the Lord Jesus Christ. I don't keep the commandments in order to get to heaven; my way to heaven is paved by the grace of God. I keep the commandments simply because I love the Lord Jesus Christ. So how are we to love the Lord? Listen to what Jesus said in Mark 12:30.

Here is the way we are to love the Lord. We are to love the Lord the same way the children of Israel were instructed to love God. 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. Would you say that describes your love for the Lord? Do you love Him with all of your heart? Is there that burning, passionate, emotional love for the Lord Jesus? You know, people sing and talk about their love for the Lord a whole lot more than they love the Lord. We sing about how our heart longs for the Lord like a deer panting for something to drink. But in reality, our heart longs to stay home and watch sports more than it longs to be with the Lord and His people. But Jesus said we are to love Him with all our heart.

Next, He mentions the soul. What does it mean to love the lord with all our soul? Well, in the Bible, the soul is the self and what the Lord is saying is that the entire self, the entire person shall be given over to him. There is to be nothing held back or kept private. We are to love the Lord with everything we are. Every part, every area is given over to the Lord.

Then Jesus mentions the mind. Love the Lord with all your heart, soul and mind. Now the reason He mentions the mind is because we are to think about His love-respond with emotion. Listen, some of us have full hearts, but empty heads! Just because you have a heart that sings doesn't mean you should go around with a head that rattles.

We are to love God with all our mind and the reason that some of us don't love the Lord is we don't study and learn about the Lord and the reason we don't study and learn about the Lord is because we don't love the Lord. You can't leave your mind out of it. The Bible instructs us to study to show ourselves approved unto God.

Mark also talks about loving the Lord with all our strength. Matthew says, "heart, soul and mind". Both passages are quotes from Deuteronomy 6:5 which says, "heart, soul and strength" and it link what we have in the writing of Moses, Matthew and Mark is a reminder that we are to love the Lord with everything we've got. Our love for Him is to consume and control us. We are to be "truly, madly and deeply in love with our Lord and Savior. It is commanded of us. In fact, Jesus says it is the first and most important of the commandments.

Learn to love God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and with all your strength. Would you say that describes your love for God? Do you love him with everything you've got? Are all your energies focused in love for the Lord Jesus Christ? Is it He that fills your mind and thought processes through the day? Do you think most about pleasing Him and doing His will?

Now let's bring it to a sharp focus. The Lord Jesus is telling us the motive for obedience is that kind of love. And the reason we are not obedient is because our love life is not what it out to be. He said, "If you love me keep my commandments." Don't tell me you love the Lord Jesus if you don't keep his commandments. Are you obeying them? If you love the Lord your God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, with all of your mind and all of your strength, then you'll be keeping the commandments of the Lord. That is the secret to obedience.

So where do find the strength for obedience? Well the strength for obedience is found in the Spirit of the Lord. Jesus said, "I will pray the Father and He will give you another Helper, that he may abide with you forever." So how am I going to love the Lord with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, and how am I going to keep the commandments? Why not just let the Jesus living inside of us do it?

Obedience is just that simple: *I will serve you, obey you, because I love you. And I love you because you've given life to me. To God be the glory, amen.*

