

OBEDIENCE BY FAITH

By Mike Taylor

Psalms 119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

When I was a child, I followed my parents teachings, because they said so. Being a little guy, these people I called “mommy and daddy” were relied on for everything. They were so much stronger and bigger than me and how could I not do as I was told? When my dad said jump, it was usually “how high?”. Or at least in following his verbal command, I jumped at doing what he said because of fear.



All of us remember as being children, when our parents told us something to do, even though we did not understand why, we did it anyway. Remember being a little person and saying that often uttered word, “why”? In my house, the response was usually, “because I said so”. And if we disobeyed the rules of our parents or the warning not doing as we were told, what was the end result? Correct, we got our behind tanned with a wide belt or a paddle. We obeyed out of fear. Fear of discipline and the pain it would result in.

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

I remember growing up in the Baptist church and hearing messages that could only be described a “hell fire and brimstone” sermons. A lot of people came to the altar to repent out of having the living daylight scared out of them. No one who came down wanted to experience a never ending judgment of torment by fire. Was their basis for repentance based on faith and pure unadulterated fear of an all consuming God? Of course, the answer was fear, but better fear than no response at all. Many of these same people when they felt that had appeased God, returned to their lifestyles, as if nothing had ever happened in their lives. Why is that? Because they got past their fear. Oh, they knew that to sin was not part of their “being saved”, but hey, I did it this time and nothing happened, right? If I do it again, maybe nothing will happen again. God doesn’t see and I won’t get caught. So they keep doing the same sin, over and over and expect no discipline for their actions. They reason “God is love and He saved me, so I’m good”. No need to fear anymore. I have many people email me and lament that the world believes that if they say a simple prayer, that they have a free pass now to do whatever they want and get away with it.

Let us make a bold statement. You can not offend God. God is not a God of meanness. You can not cause Him any injury or inflict harm on Him. God does not sit around just waiting for you to mess up and hit a button labeled “smite”. But God IS a God of judgment. God will ultimately discipline all who He calls His children, just as your human parents did, in love. Why? Because He wants you to grow in His nature and His ways. He wants to spend eternity with His children and cannot abide sin in our lives. God disciplines on two levels, first in correction and in then in

final judgment. Question? How much can you push God, by repeating the same sins over and over and not have correction and final judgment? Yes, God is a God of mercy and patience, but there is a time when God's patience runs out. Ecclesiastes:

8:11 Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

8:12 Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him:

8:13 But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.

Those who have no fear of God and have no need for God, think they can do whatever they please, as they rely on themselves. Godly fear is a product of wisdom and those who do not fear God out of respect and reverence, God calls a fool. Psalms:

14:1 The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.

14:2 The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.

14:3 They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

BLESSINGS AND CURSES

Looking back at the bible's example of a people most blessed, and those most cursed because of their disobedience, we look at Israel who disobeyed God and did not continue to fear Him.

Deuteronomy:

28:1 And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

28:2 And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.

As you read this passage, God explains to the nation of Israel the blessings they will receive if they hearken unto the voice of God and follow His commands. But beginning in verses 15 to the end of the chapter, God warns them of not following His commandments. The curses and judgments are staggering until God says:

28:66 And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life:

Disobedience to the voice of God affected the national character, until many years into the future, God had had enough of their disobedience of His Word and His people, the nation of Israel were sent into exile, not once, but twice until modern day revival of that nation.

JESUS, GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT ON EARTH

Travel with me, many years into their future, after Israel had been returned to their homeland to be rebuilt at the end of the Babylonian exile into the time of the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ on earth. When Jesus began to teach, one of the most memorable of His sermons was the Sermon on the Mount. Here Jesus explained what was meant in the Old Testament of the commandments given to their fathers. What did Jesus say ?

Matthew 5,

5:18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

5:19 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.

In this sermon, our Lord developed what was written in the Old Testament, known to them as the Torah, or Teachings. These were the commandments given by this same God standing before them having fleshed them out in their spiritual intent so it could be understood plainly.

Let me make something very plain to the reader who may misunderstand. This is not about Law keeping, as no one can keep the Law. Paul spoke of this very fact, they were are not subject to the Law and it's penalties, because we have been saved by grace and the Law has no effect on us....in penalty. What does Jesus mean then when He spoke of the commandments of God, emphasized by Himself and preached with authority? Jesus was saying that if you follow the commandments as a way of life, to trust God that He knows what is best for each of us, then blessing will result. If we do not, then curses will follow. Let me illustrate.

Look at any prisoner in our penal system. Have any of these people followed the commandments of God? Of course not, as they have broken norms of society that are based on law. Man made laws came from one authority, Almighty God and based on the Ten Commandments and His judgments. If you follow the law, you will have blessings such as guaranteed by the bill of right and our Constitution, but if you break the laws, as each of these prisoners did, then you have lost your rights and have been cursed and incarcerated for a predetermined amount of time. You have lost your freedom, your property, possibly your family, and ultimately some loose their life.

Turning to the born again Christian who follows after Jesus in belief and faith. What has happened to this person? They have become a new creature in Christ Jesus and they follow His example. What is His example? Following what He said beginning with the Law of God handed down to mankind and ultimately to His sermon on the mount. Jesus gave us commandments to follow for a reason. It is the recipe for a productive and meaningful life. The world follows after their own lust and do what is right in their own eyes. Right or wrong, they follow their own

humanistic idea of what is good for them. They have no need for God. Why? Because they do not trust Him. They don't wish to know Him because they love their sinful ways. We who are called of God, have put our trust in our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus who knows the beginning from the end, and ultimately what is best and right for each of us.

Each of us choose consciously who we will follow. Jesus said in John:

14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

14:7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

Our Father in Heaven, God Almighty, knew that we could not keep the letter of the Law. It is not in our nature or character to seek God or to know Him.

Psalms:

10:3 For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth.

10:4 The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.

10:5 His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them.

Man by nature, who is mortal, and prone to sin, does not follow after God or search for Him. God seeks us and draws us to Himself, through the work of the Holy Spirit to see Jesus, the only payment for the sins that we commit.

John:

6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

6:45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

When we accept Jesus Christ by faith, as our Savior and Redeemer, we use that faith and belief to follow His way of life. Why do we follow His example and live His commandments? Because we TRUST Him! To follow after Jesus produces blessing in this life, and all of eternity. To not follow after Jesus, accept Him as personal Savior by faith, leads to the flip side of this life, curses in this life and for all eternity. Follow Jesus produces right living and being obedient to His command produces another by product of our belief.....character. Through trials and life's never ending struggle to put on the new man and avoid evil, we become more like Jesus Christ and less like the world. It will never be complete in this life, but will be accomplished finally when our Savior and Lord changes us into what He is....Immortal Spirit.

Romans:

5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

5:2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

5:3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

5:4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

NATIONAL DISOBEDIENCE

As the individual decides to follow or to not follow after God, it permeates into all of society when a society has thrown the commandments of God to the curb.

I have seen what I never thought I would see, but I have. What I have seen in our nation is an apathy for doing what is right in political office. Never would I have thought to have seen that the office of the leader of the most powerful nation on earth, the President of the USA be given a pass over lewd behavior, or lying to the people, or trampling on our freedoms. It didn't just start with this president, but has been going on for decades. We saw Bill Clinton who had an affair while in office and nobody held him accountable, they even glorified his behavior stating "When Clinton lied, nobody died" meaning GW Bush was guilty of lying and then gave a pass for a Liberal President for sexual misconduct and lying while in office. OH, Bush had his grievous errors in judgment and people blame him for starting unneeded wars, but this President that now graces our TV's most every night, by and far, takes the cake.

And we the people, do not hold our elected officials that are supposed to be speaking for us to a higher standard of conduct. This includes our Congressman, our Senators, and our local officials at the state levels. No, we have become them. They are a reflection of the moral decay and the departure from common decency and following after God's commandments, and the commands of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in both halves of the Holy Book we call the Bible. Remember what we just quoted in Deuteronomy 28 concerning blessing and curses? The national tone is one of moral bankruptcy and a decline in righteous living. No other nation has been given so much, as to require even the more.

Luke 12:48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

All the world knows better but ignores the God of the Bible. As for mentioning the USA, she has turned her back on the benefactor who made her great. Nation after nation has fallen because they did not follow the ways of God and chose not to honor or reverence Him. The USA is not any different. She has been blessed more abundantly than any nation on earth. She has had her zenith and her star has shown to the ends of the earth, but she has rejected her God and taken on pagan gods of idolatry and filth of perversions.

It all starts with you and is a reflection of our national tragedy. You who read this, are you following the commandments of God? Have you followed His way of living based on the life of Jesus Christ? Have you believed in your heart, repented and decided that you have no hope apart from Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on Calvary's cross to be the substitute for what you and I both deserve, which is death? Put your trust in the only hope you have for blessings in this life and the next. If you feel down, depressed, hooked on drugs or alcohol to numb that empty feeling of hopelessness you feel inside, then look up from the bottom of that pit you are living in and see the outstretched arms of God in the flesh, Jesus the Christ. He seeks to deliver you from the life you are living and only wishes to fold you in His arms. Feel and listen to that still small voice who speaks to your inner being? Jesus is the way, the only way and there is NO other way to be saved.

OBEDIENCE BY FAITH!

Obey His voice and His calling by faith. Accept His invitation to repent of those sins you have committed and will commit in this mortal life. Stand before Him with a broken heart and a contrite spirit and ask for forgiveness and mercy to cleanse you from all unrighteousness...You know what? He will do as you ask.

John 6:37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

6:38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

6:39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

Paul the apostle wrote in Romans

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (ALL OF US)

Romans 10:9-10

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

John 3:16

3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Romans 8:38-39

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Revelation 22:17

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

by FAITH. That Water of Life, is Jesus Christ. He paid the penalty for disobedience to His righteous law that convicts us all. To come to Him, is to make a personal choice to follow Him, to trust Him, by faith and actions to live as He lived to the best of our mortal ability TILL HE COMES. SO COME LORD JESUS.

This is pastor Mike Taylor, praying you obey that still small voice calling you to repentance and accepting Jesus as your personal Savior,

If you need prayer, counseling, or just a listening ear, email me at realteam1999@sbcglobal.net, or visit me online at www.churchofgod-usa.org. God bless you, till we meet at Jesus feet.