

Obedience

by Glenn Meldrum

The sermon emphasizes the critical importance of obedience to God throughout scripture and its implications for believers today.

Duration: 56:40

Scripture: Genesis 2:16

Topics: "Obedience To God", "Idolatry Warning"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of loving and obeying God with all our hearts, souls, and strength. He encourages believers to impress God's commandments on their hearts and to teach them to their children. The preacher warns against idolizing sports and emphasizes that our love and obedience to God should be our consuming passion. He references Deuteronomy 28:47-48, which warns that failure to serve God joyfully and gladly in times of prosperity will result in serving enemies in times of hardship.

Transcript

This morning, I want to look at the subject of obedience. The idea of obedience begins right in the Garden of Eden. Lord gave Adam and Eve a command.

And in the second chapter of Genesis and verses 16 and 17, it says the Lord God commanded man, you are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. For when you eat it, you will surely die. You know, it's an interesting thing.

That's the first command that came in the word of God. And it was the sole command that was a criteria for them staying in the garden. Obedience was a criteria, whether or not they would stay in the garden or be kicked out, not where they did all these other things where they had all this other aspects of their lives, but whether they walked in obedience to God, the sole criteria for staying in the garden or being expelled from it.

And so the word of God begins with the very idea of obedience, and it ends with obedience, because when you go to Revelation, the last chapter in Revelation, you find the last to be attitudes of the entire Bible, which is in Revelation 22, verses seven and 14. Both of them concentrate upon the issue that if you obey him, you will see him and you'll see his glory and you'll you'll you'll be blessed of him in the right way. And so beginning and end of scripture begins with the idea of obedience.

And then all through it, the entirety of the word of God is God's call to a disobedient, rebellious people to come to a place to learn how to become obedient. That's the whole thing we have to understand. God was out to take a people that were a disobedient people that rebelled right from the beginning and to bring them in a place of obedience.

God went and took a people and they were called the children of Israel. And out of that, there came a people that were to be the people of God, a people that were to know God and to walk in intimate fellowship with God and were to know him. And this people persistently went and rebelled against God and constantly God was calling them, sending them prophets and sending them preachers and so on to compel them to return to the Lord again and again, compelling them to obedience, to lay aside their idolatry, their adulteries, their their pride and their self-will and all those things again and again.

He called them to the place of obedience, but yet again and again. And they rebelled. And finally, the discipline of the Lord became great.

And he brought Nebuchadnezzar to destroy the Israel and Jerusalem and the temple and so on and brought the people into place of captivity because their disobedience was so great. And God wanted their obedience, not out of cruelty, but because he wanted them to know who he was. Obedience is not a side issue.

And then the Savior came. The only one to walk in obedience to the father, the only one, because he was God incarnate in flesh and blood, walked in perfect obedience in every thought, word and deed so that he might be an example of what obedience is to the father now. I want to, in the middle of this, look at a situation for a couple of moments and especially with what emphasis we're trying to have of this week to see the move of God.

But I want to look at something that would be should be important to our hearts. We say we want to see the move of God. We say we want to see the power of God flow through the church and to touch a perishing world, to touch hurting, dying people.

But do we want to walk in obedience that will produce that? Moses was called of God to go to the Mount of God. And in the Mount of God, the Lord spoke to Moses and gave him the plans of what is called the tabernacle. And what the tabernacle in the wilderness was, we could think of in very simple terms as a mobile church.

And so whenever they'd move, they'd fold it up and they'd take it to the next place and set it up and they would have church in essence. So it was the focal point of what the children of Israel would come and where they would worship and do their sacrifices and everything. God gave him explicit instructions on what to do and how to make it, what it was to look like, what was to be made out of, how it was to go together, everything about it, how it was even to be transported, everything the Lord gave Moses.

And it tells us in the 40th chapter, in both the 16th and 34th verse, it says Moses did everything just as the Lord commanded him. An important little statement there. He did everything just as the Lord commanded, not part of it, not 99% of it, not 95 or 50%.

He did everything the way the Lord commanded him. And it tells us when they put the tabernacle together and assembled it in my mind, what it was the first time they assembled it. And the first time they assembled it and did everything just the way the Lord said, it says the glory of God came down and filled it

with this glory that the priest couldn't go in and minister.

The reality of obedience, bringing the glory of God, many times we want to see the glory of God, but we don't want lives of obedience. We don't want to walk that place of obedience because we like worldly ways. We like worldly dimensions.

We still like our own, say, our own ways, our own desires to be fulfilled. And then if you follow the story at that situation, they had put the tabernacle together, but the sacrifice hadn't started yet. And the Lord had told Moses exactly how to do the sacrifices exactly how they were to be done.

Every single sacrifice, everything about it. Exactly. The Lord left nothing undone, gave them explicit instructions.

All they had to do was follow those instructions. And so Moses goes to Aaron and tells Aaron before the very first sacrifice, he says, this is what the Lord has commanded you to do so that the glory of the Lord may appear to you. I want to read that again.

This is what the Lord has commanded you to do so that the glory of the Lord may appear to you. And what was the result of that? It says fire came down from the presence of the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and they fell face down.

Imagine that the glory of God's coming and the glory of God coming in such a way that the mass of people, the tens and hundreds of thousands of people that was there falling face down because the glory of God was revealed, not because they had gifts or talents or abilities or wisdom or anything else, but because they learned this phenomenal thing of obedience, of obedience. Sometimes we think that we can do particular things that will use our gifts, our talents will give sacrifice or something, and it will be good enough for God. But yet we don't walk in obedience to his heart, obedience to his will, and especially to the obedience that he has made basic and simple in the word of God to walk in.

How will we ever see the move of God if we're not going to begin with the place of obedience? How do we think we'll ever see the power of God manifested in any tangible way until we, as the people of God, want to walk in loving obedience? We think so often that disobedience is not a big issue. I want to look at a man where disobedience was a major issue with him. I want to look at King Saul.

Now, this story about King Saul is a story that addresses and relates to leaders. Saul was called to be the king of Israel. And as the king of Israel, he was to lead the children of Israel in a path of righteousness and to be able to lead the children of Israel in the path of righteousness, he had to walk in righteousness.

So this is a story about leaders. And so leaders, every one of you, no matter what situation or position you are in the church, you have to listen and you need to listen to this story very closely because it's speaking to you. But you know what? There's a lot of you that aren't leaders.

And so you're sitting, oh, I'm out of this one. I don't this isn't a big deal. But I want you to understand something.

You see, the scriptures present one standard, one standard. Not multiple standards, not tears, not the idea that that that we can have these Christians down here that that only kind of sort of somewhat walk with God and then but the leaders, they have to be up here. There's one standard and it's the standard

that every leader is to live, but every believers to live every single one of us, not multiple standards, not layers.

There shouldn't be the preachers shouldn't be more holy than the lay people. They should be just as holy. They should be living by the same standard because we've got the same standard, which is the word of God.

So now the responsibility for anybody in this world, in this room is to hear this word. And more than that, they're to cry out to God that you might become one that lives it out and not just gives God some lip service. That means nothing.

The story of King Saul. King Saul was a big strapping man whose the head above everybody else and headwise physically, I mean, he was that he was a huge man, big man, and, you know, looked on a physical nature to be a great king. I mean, he looked at noble part, had the noble brow and the walk and the strut and everything else.

I mean, he looked a part of a king or at least the potential to be. But nonetheless, God was calling him to be king, not because God wanted a king. Listen to me.

It was the disobedience of the children of Israel. At that time, God was king over over them, ruling the people through prophets. But they didn't want that.

They wanted to be like what the heathen nations all around them. They wanted the king like all the heathens had. And they figured if they had a king like a heathen, they would they would be victorious.

They wouldn't be defeated. And then they wouldn't need God as much in their life, of course. But they'd have a king.

And so they complained and they whined, and eventually the Lord gave them what their heart's desire was and gave him a king and gave him all the warnings with it says when you have a king, he's going to tax it to pieces. He's going to take your best young men and put them into his military. And you'll lose your men in battle and so on.

He'll take the best of your crops and your oil and so on. He'll take that stuff from you as necessity of now having a kingdom. You'll have a kingdom you'll have to take care of.

And so Saul was the first king and he was inaugurated and his inauguration was an anointing that happened by the prophet Samuel and Samuel anointed him to be king, gave him some personal prophecy of what would happen to him and gave him a word saying in seven days you are to meet me at Gilgal because there the prophet knew that a battle was going to take place because the moment that the Philistines who were oppressors to them at this time, the moment the Philistines heard that they were raising up a king, they would gather an army to put down these people so they would not rebel against them. And so now Saul was made king of Israel and he gathers an army and seven days later he meets at Gilgal, gathers his army and he's there at Gilgal waiting. But you know, the children of Israel had been a defeated people.

They'd been defeated for a long time and they were conquered by the Philistines and the Philistines were cruel oppressors and they'd been oppressing them for so long. And now here when Israel came to gather against the Philistines and the Philistines were raided with their massive army and all their weaponry and

everything else where Israel didn't have any of that. When all this was going on and here's these men out there, farmers with their pitchforks and pickaxe and not the swords and spears that the army would have when they were these defeated people going out there against this massive army.

Many of them grew scared and when they grew scared and Samuel wasn't there to lead them as the prophet of God, where they thought of Samuel's here, the blessing will be upon us. Many of them started to desert then. They started to run away.

Now Saul grew very scared because his army started dwindling more and more. And so in his fear of man, in his fear of what people would think, in his trembling state of going, what will I do? I'm just a new king. And if I don't appease him right now, I won't be king for long.

And so what did he do? Samuel was to come and when he came, Samuel would offer a sacrifice, a blessing in essence, that the children of Israel would be victorious in battle. And so King Saul decided to do that, which was not his right. And King Saul went and offered the sacrifice that he was not allowed to, according to the law, fulfill.

Now think of this in Saul's mind. He said to people, they're, they're, they're cowering. They're afraid there's some of them are discerning and then there's others that are complaining and, and trying to take others away.

And, and I've got to stop this. And the best way I can do this is for them to think that God is in their midst. And, and so what I need to do is call down God in my own way.

I'll do it my own way and I'll do a sacrifice. That's what the people need to see this public demonstration and we'll do a sacrifice and then everything will be fine. We'll go to battle and we'll win, but not understanding.

It wasn't the sacrifice that would bring victory. God doesn't give us victory because we sacrifice. God doesn't make us overcomers because we sacrifice something in our life.

He gives victory because we learn obedience because we come to a place to obey him. Even when it's hard, even when it seems that everything is going against us, even when it seems a battle is going the wrong way. He calls us to obedience no matter what our eyes might see, no matter what our physical, no matter what physically we might be experiencing.

We are called to the place of obedience no matter what we are facing. And immediately after Saul offered the sacrifice, Samuel shows up. And what did Samuel say here? Here, Saul was king for seven days.

Only seven days. And he says, what have you done? You acted foolishly. You have not kept the command of the Lord your God gave you right from the beginning.

There's something we have to understand about Saul is that Saul was not a man who occasionally disobeyed. Saul had a character that was disobedient. He had a lifestyle that practiced it.

He wanted a little bit of God and he wanted a little of his own way. He wanted to do his own thing and he wanted the blessing of God in it and blessing his own ways. He loved, though he may not have understood it as such, he loved his disobedience.

He loved his own way. Now, you know what? Saul's not a strange individual. He's a very typical human being.

Because you know what? We all love our own ways. We want to do our own thing. We love our own ideas.

We want God to bless our ideas. In essence, what we do is we take our ideas, we give them up to God says, okay, God bless them. If you don't, I'm going to do them anyway.

Because it's my life, I can do what I want. Of course, we wouldn't necessarily verbalize it like that because it might shock us. But that's basically what we do.

We pray a little prayer. Give me this. I want this.

I'm going to do this. And then we hope that God will bless us in the process of it. But have we come to that place of obedience to walk in a place that's near to him? And so Samuel continued to prophesy.

Seven days Saul had been king. And then the prophecy came that the Lord would raise up a man after his own heart and appoint him a leader of his people. Because Saul had not kept the Lord's command.

Seven days he was king. And his rebellion lost him after seven days of serving his king. His rebellion, his disobedience lost him that place to be king.

And God says, I will raise up a man who will obey me. Do we understand that God longs for our obedience, commands our obedience, desires our obedience? Doesn't want some Christian actions without the aspect of obedience. He wants obedience in our life.

And our disobedience cannot be just washed away as something that's no big deal because it affects our life. Yes, he's able to forgive it. But we have to understand there's the consequences that come upon our lives for disobedience.

Here the consequence upon Saul was he would lose his kingdom. He would not be able to pass his kingdom on from generation to generation. It would stop with him no further than him.

His kingdom would be limited until eventually God gave it to another man who would learn what it is to obey him. But one thing about the Lord that's so wonderful, he's a God of second chances and third and fourth. Now it's not good for us to test how many times he'll keep giving us chances.

That's not a very wise thing because we don't know where he'll finally say, look it, I have strove with you and strove with you and now it's enough. Jeremiah was praying and interceding for Israel, crying that God would spare Israel. And finally one day the Lord went to Jeremiah and said, stop praying for Israel.

I will no longer hear your prayers because their sins are reaching the heavens. And I, excuse me, and I will judge them. I'm not going to tell you I know where that place is, but I don't want to play with that place.

I don't want to play with that place because I don't know where that place will be. He says, now you have rebelled enough. I will leave you to reap the wages of your sins until eventually you learn the lesson not to rebel against me.

And so the Lord gives Saul another chance. And Samuel comes to Saul with a message from God. And what the message was that the king was to wage war against the Amlekites.

The Amlekites were absolutely evil, cruel, vicious people. And God said that they were to wage war against them. And he went and commanded Saul that they were not to take any spoil from the land, that they weren't to go on as victors, and they would be victorious if they walked in what God wanted.

They were not to take any of the spoils, not the sheep, not the gold, not the material and raiments and clothes, none of it. They were to take nothing as a spoil. Nothing was to be out of selfish ambition.

It was because God was judging these people because of their great, tremendous evil that they had been practicing. And so Saul gathered 210,000 men and attacked Amlek. And they were victorious, defeated them.

But it tells us that Saul disobeyed the Lord and kept the best of the herds for himself. Kept the best of the herds. And you know what he did and his men did? They kept the best of the herds.

And they went and says, we'll sacrifice to the Lord. We'll sacrifice. Now, doesn't that sound great? Well, you know, God, he likes sacrifices.

And so sacrifices are so important. So we'll just keep a bunch of the very best herds and we'll sacrifice all to God. And that'll make them real happy, right? We'll make them really happy by giving a bunch of sacrifice.

That'll take care of it in one sense, thinking that God is a stupid God, a gullible God, and doesn't know the reality of men's hearts. And you know, in the midst of this situation, the story, which is in 1 Samuel 15, twice Saul went to Samuel and says, I have obeyed the Lord. And Samuel says, you have not obeyed the Lord.

You did not keep the command that the Lord gave you. In his own mind, understand what I'm saying here. In his own mind, he says, I am obeying God.

But the reality was, as God says, do this. He did halfway or three quarters of it. And he said, because I did three quarters of it.

It's okay. I've done enough. I'm good.

Look at this. I'm doing that. I used to not do anything.

Now I'm doing three quarters. Isn't it wonderful? Aren't I a wonderful guy now? Not understanding that he had rebelled against God. God is not looking for 95% of our obedience.

He's looking for 100% of our obedience. We may think that hard and cruel, but that's not the reality of it. Because God has a desire for us in that place of obedience that he might reveal himself to us.

Samuel replied to Saul and says, does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifice as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice. And the heat is better than the fat of Rams. For rebellion, listen to this, for rebellion is as a sin of divination and arrogance, pride like the evil of idolatry, because it's self-idolatry.

Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you from being king. You know, Saul was pressured by the people to do what they wanted. He feared the disapproval of men more than he feared the disapproval of God.

So he gave in to the pressure of men because it was his captains and other people that went and helped him and convinced him to take the best of the flocks, as if God would be appeased with that. Not understanding that his rebellion was as an act of divination, worshiping demons in essence. Do we understand how much God dislikes disobedience? Now, those of you who are married, I want you to think about this for a moment.

What would be better? Is it not to have a knock and drag them out fight in the home? And then, you know, or to have the knock them, drag them out, fight, and then come home with some roses? You know what I'm saying here? You understand the point I'm trying to make? We think sometimes that all that we got to do is take care of the problem. It's just, just bring God some roses here. You kind of put your hair.

We had a, well, I had a little fit. Is this flowers good enough? And you know what he really wants? He says, I'd rather not have the fight. I'd rather you learn this place of loving obedience.

Now, I'm so glad that there's forgiveness, that he's a God that is willing to forgive and willing to restore. But, you know, we have a concept within Christianity today of a cheap grace. And what I mean by cheap grace, we have a concept that we can practice sin and that it's not a big deal because we're saved by grace, right? All I got to do is go to Jesus, say, forgive me, and it's all done.

But you know, we have in the Old Testament, just as much in the New Testament, the truth that is presented that the wages of sin is death. Sin always produces death. Whether we're Christian or not, it may not produce eternal death, but I'll tell you what, it produces death in marriages.

It produces death to children. It produces death in relationships. It produces death because that's what disobedience does.

But we have this idea, well, I'm just, I'm just forgiven. Ask a little prayer and forgiveness and this gullible old God that just doesn't know anything. He'll say, okay, no problem because he has to, right? Do you know God does not have to forgive you? If he had to forgive you, he wouldn't be God because he would be bound to you.

He'd be limited to you and to your whims and your desires. God forgives because it's his nature to forgive because he desires to forgive. He does not have to forgive.

He forgives because that's who he is. I want you to think about this for a moment. Does Saul believe that partial obedience was acceptable to God? How many in this room think that partial obedience is acceptable to God? Well, I come to church and I pray and I, you know, I do my Sunday thing and I, I go home at night and I turn on the filth on television.

Partial, I'm a good Christian. Well, I'm doing 95% of it. You're probably not even doing 95%.

You're just, you're just patting yourself on the back as if you were. Or you think yourself a wonderful Christian because you come once a week but then there is no service in your life. There is nothing outside of that which is building your own house, building your own life, living for a selfish ambition of yourself, not for care of a perishing world, not for those who don't know him, not for the church to build the body of Christ, but you live for yourself and you think that one day a week for a couple of hours a day is enough.

As if God was a foolish, stupid God and that's all he needed. Just appease him a little bit. Give him a little sacrifice.

It doesn't matter if I'm not obedient in all things. It doesn't matter if I live in the madness of my own life. It's enough.

Isn't he just a foolish king? You understand where I'm taking this because we have degraded the concept of disobedience because our culture glorifies rebellion. It glorifies rebellion. Look at it from cartoons.

I don't want to be picky here but you know years ago I wouldn't let my kids watch *The Little Mermaid*. Sounds crazy. You want to know why? Because the whole concept of the story is here's this girl who rebels against her father, disobeys her father and gets everything she wants.

Story after story to children and adults glorifies the aspect of rebellion and then we bring it in the church and we think just a little bit I'm somewhat obedient to you God. Isn't that great? I'm somewhat obedient. You know Saul thought that sincerity was enough.

Sincerity was enough. You know that's such a lie. There's going to be a lot of sincere people in hell.

A lot of sincere people in hell. Sincerity has nothing to do with getting into the kingdom of heaven. Now yes we need to be sincere individuals but because you have a dimension of sincerity in your life doesn't mean that you're on obedience to God.

Obedience will have sincerity in it but it will not rest upon its sincerity that makes itself right with him. Do you understand what I'm saying? Some of you are sincere. You come sincerely on Sunday morning and you know I rejoice.

I'm the evangelist so I can preach like this but you know I rejoice you come on Sunday morning. That you're sincere but how about the sincerity of walking with him seven days a week? How about being having a life that is abandoned to him not just for this couple of hours of what we do in worship because if we're not abandoned to him the rest of the week we're certainly not abandoned Sunday morning. He's calling us to a place of loving obedience and Saul thought that sacrifice equaled obedience.

You know we've all done it just like I brought the illustration out about the flowers. You know we've done something wrong we try and make up. We try and make up with some roses or some candy or a night out or something like that but you know what's more important is learning that place of right obedience and right obedience to my wife that means that I walk as a man of God and I bring right pleasure to her life and that will take me much further than a dozen rosins would ever make trying to make up for the mistakes.

You see Saul had this thing and I've used this word in the Wednesdays a word that I think is so powerful and I think it's so important that we try to understand it and apply it to our lives and what the word is disinterested love. Saul did not have disinterested love. What do I mean by disinterested love? Disinterested love is love that loves for nothing in return for no personal benefit.

This is the love of God. He loves us because he chose to love us. He doesn't love us just to get from us because he loves us as much as he loves those who are lost and dying those who are rushing to hell right now.

His love is perfect and complete. It has not changed. His love is a disinterested love.

Though he desires our best he is even in that place and we have the example of what Calvary is all about that he would die upon the cross and be abused and broken and beaten and all that went on and crucified

and died as a result of this disinterested love for our benefit. He didn't benefit himself from it. It was for our benefit.

And he calls us to that. Saul was king of Israel with selfish ambition. It was about him.

It was about his ambitions, his desires and it became more evident as life went on which we're not going to take time to look at but became more evident as he continued selfish ambition driving him and how much we allow the selfish ambition into our Christianity that I do what I do to get something from God. I do what I do to be blessed of God. I do what I do because I want something from him rather than a place of understanding that David said made this wonderful statement that his love was better than life therefore my lips will praise him.

Coming to the place that we understand that his love is better than life so we rejoice we obey him not to get something from him but because we found him so good. Because we found him so beautiful because we found him worth the abandonment of our life to because of who he is. Now I want to take a little bit of time and I want to look at the mark of a Christian.

The mark of a Christian. And you know what I'm going to look at here? Is the mark of a Christian obedience. I think obedience is the mark of a Christian but let me broaden this idea of obedience now.

Let me broaden it and let me include the idea of what love is. Francis Schaeffer a philosopher from the last century a Christian philosopher from the last century he wrote a book I bought his complete works of Francis Schaeffer and found out there was a work not in it so it really isn't the complete works. And so I got my hands on that little work which was just an itty-bitty little work called the mark of a Christian and his whole concept of the mark of a Christian was whether we have love one to another.

And so I'm not going to disagree with that I believe that's very true. But you know there's something as we begin to look at the issue of obedience that obedience true obedience will always be a manifestation of genuine love. I want you to think of this you could have an individual in slavery and you know slavery goes on around this world right now.

Slavery is still happening people are still being taken from various countries and many of them Christians and being sold into slavery in tremendous amount of Arab nations. And so here you have these people that are slaves and they are forced to act in a particular way and so they act this way they are obedient not because of love but because of fear and because of abuse which is not true obedience they may act out what they have to do obedience for it to be true and real and genuine obedience must be rooted in love. Until it's rooted in love I don't believe it's true obedience.

We may go and act a particular way because we are conditioned or because society says that or because of the church culture whatever it is we may act in a particular way but that may not still be obedience unless it is rooted in the passion and the desire of love. Go back to the garden and what do you see in the garden? You see that God created man and woman to do what? Walk with him in the cool of the day. We were created for a twofold purpose to glorify God in everything we do and to enjoy him forevermore.

To enjoy him forevermore. The only way I will walk in obedience to God is that I find this place of enjoying him more than life itself. The place that I find the enjoyment of him that I love being with him that I love his presence that I love nearness with that I love his closeness so much that it becomes that which drives me to obedience because I don't want anything to break that separate I don't want anything to break that

relationship to separate me and him.

So this desire of obedience is not this cruel thing not this thing that is just afraid of a bolt of lightning from heaven but it is a desire for God a passion for him a thirsting for his nearness and in that thirsting for his nearness is this desire for obedience because we want him close. Turn with me to Deuteronomy the sixth chapter. Deuteronomy 6 in the third verse Hear O Israel and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in the land flowing with milk and honey just as the Lord the God of your fathers promised you.

Hear O Israel the Lord our God the Lord is one love the Lord your God with all your heart with all your soul with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts impress them on your children talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road when you lie down and when you get up tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates. You know he was saying he was giving the greatest commandment which is what? To love the Lord.

I know I probably quoted this before in some past sermon but I think it's such a profound statement Martin Luther the founder of the great reformation in the 1500s says if the greatest commandment is to love the Lord our God with all of our heart mind soul and strength then the greatest sin is not to. Thank you Debbie. The greatest sin is not to what an astounding thought that the greatest sin we could ever commit is not to love him supremely.

To love him supremely is not just the idea that I have this affection for God but it is the idea that I have this desire this burning desire to be with him that he is the supreme source of my love the supreme source of my joy the supreme source of my desires and when you look at this idea it says when you go along teach it to your children on the road and at home and bind it on your hands and on your forehead and put them on the doorpost of your house it was the idea that we come to the place where our lives are so consumed with a desire of God that it's what fills our minds.

Do you know I have been with church leaders across this country some of them was wonderful to sit down with sweet fellowship some of them all they wanted to talk about was sports and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks there's this place that when we fall in love with him and we're longing to walk in obedience with him that that's what we talk about because that's what burns inside of us it's not force it's not religious it's what's inside of us because we have found this better love I have a better love than sports I'm not condemning sports I will say that the tremendous amount of that it's an idol in America and it's become an idol in the church something that consumes the hearts and minds of men and women there's a right place for it I'm not going to try and get into all

that but there's this place that I am to obey God and in obeying him I am to love him and in loving him that he is to be the consuming fire and the consuming passion of my life how many of you have a desire for him that when you come home from work or you come home from school you can't wait to sit at his feet that it burns in your heart that you wake up in the morning and the first thing you want to do is talk with him and not have a five-minute devotion but have a life of devotion that you yearn for him that it burns in your life because you'll only learn obedience from a passion to be with him you'll never be obedient until that becomes a lifestyle of yours you will have actions and religious actions but doesn't mean that you're in a place of obedience with him now the mark of a

Christian is this place of loving obedience in Deuteronomy the 11th chapter in the 13th and 14th verse he says so if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today to love the Lord your God and to serve him with all of your heart and with all of your soul then I will send rain on the land and its seasons both autumn and spring rains so that you may gather in your grain new wine and oil I think it's such an interesting thing you see he's putting priorities priority says if you love me supremely then what you really the other things you want will come if you love me supremely Jesus brought this out in his own way seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness if we seek him first all the other things will be added to us but you know what we had given to us a message that has

crept into the church of the aspect that you seek the blessings that you seek the prosperity that you seek the wealth and all the other things and what's done is we put aside the savior just a means he is the means to get what we want but he's not to be the means he is to be the very means and the end he is to be the supreme thing not the possessions but he's to be the prize the pinnacle of all that we seek and desire only when he becomes that will we become a people that begin to obey him as what he should and then in the 11th chapter of Deuteronomy in verses 22 and 23 he says if you carefully observe all these commands I am giving you to follow to love the Lord your God to walk in all his ways and hold fast to him then the Lord will drive out all these nations before you and you will

dispossess nations larger and stronger than you you know what he's saying if you love me supremely you'll find victory in your life I remember a statement I read from Smith Wigglesworth and he says you can't cast the devil out of somebody else till it's been cast first out of you I mean you can go and rebuke the devil all day long but if you're holding on him with one hand while you're rebuking him you might as well forget he's ever going to leave many times people as they're trying to supposedly overcome sin they are really loving their sin and because they love their sin they don't want to let go of the hand of the devil that they've grabbed hold of and so it stays right there why do you think we can have the same problem year after year after year after year and never conquer it

because we love our sin and we love our sin then more than we love the Savior love for the Savior would bring us to the place that we would crucify those things the only place we will find victory in Christ is not in the busyness of life is not in all even not in all the teaching and preaching but ultimately in the place of loving Him supremely of a burning passion for Him and out of that obedience to what He would ask of our lives to enjoy Him to enjoy Him what a phenomenal thought to enjoy Him you know what I have found in my years of ministry is I've not found a lot of people that know how to enjoy God I've met people that can pray and some that can pray kind of fiery but to find those who have come to the place just to enjoy Him I don't find a whole lot a woman her name was Hannah

Whithall Smith she said perfect obedience would be perfect happiness if only we had perfect confidence in the power we were obeying you know what she's saying in a very simple way that we would walk in loving obedience to the Savior if we really believed He was who He says He was and would do and does what He says He'll do the problem we have is we're not really yet convinced that He is who He says He is we're not yet convinced that obedience to Him is right because sometimes when we go to obey Him and it looks hard guess what we want to stop obeying Him because we think we know better and so we stop that obedience and we figure we're going to be further ahead rather than obeying Him because it may seem a hard and difficult thing Deuteronomy 28 verses 47 through 48 this is a disturbing

verse church there's a very disturbing verse it says because you did not serve the Lord your God joyfully and gladly in time of prosperity therefore in hunger and thirst in nakedness and dire poverty you will serve

the enemies the Lord sends against you what an absolutely beautiful yet terrifying verse the beautiful end of it you know what He's called us to do is this place to love Him so supremely that He is the joy of our life to joyfully serve Him you know what that means about obedience that obedience is not a burden that obedience is not a hard thing that obedience is this passion and it's just a joy and it's wonderful because what's the prize we get the prize we get is Him to enjoy Him supremely one particular author wrote a book called Desiring God and the subtitle of the book

disturbed me and I bought the book just because it so disturbed me I wanted to see what this man had to say and what the subtitle was it says the confessions of a Christian hedonist you know what hedonism is? hedonism is the philosophy that life is about pleasure and so you pursue whatever gives pleasure to you it's absolute sensual just garbage but here's this man brought this idea of Christian hedonism I'm going how in the world can these two words go together it's an impossibility at least in my mind and you know what he went and said the whole concept of the book was the aspect that we are to have our supreme pleasure in God our supreme pleasure in God that is to burn and rage in our hearts and our lives listen to what Jonathan Edwards said he says God is most glorified in us when we

are most satisfied in Him we think so often that for God to be glorified we've got to do and we got to do we got to do we got to do rather than this place that we become a people so satisfied so filled so thirsty after Him and so yet filled on a constant basis that He becomes this passion in our life and in that place of burning desire for Him He is most glorified because it's in that place that holiness comes it's in that place that everything we seek and need is ultimately found at His feet obedience that comes out of a passion for His presence Jesus told us six times in John 14 and 15 that if you love Me you'll obey what I command one of those times He put it in the negative and He says if you do not obey Me it's because you do not love Me do we understand that the core of obedience

has to be love and if I find myself disobedient to God I must confess the reality of my lack of love for Him do you understand what I'm bringing out here church if you're not walking in loving obedience it's because you don't love Him supremely there are other loves in your life there are other things there are idols little idols that you carry around in your pockets in your wallets in your homes in television sets in music or whatever it is idols that you bow down to that are more important to you than your relationship with God that you will pursue those things and cling to those things rather than obedience to God because you think you'll find greater pleasure in those than you'll find in the pleasure of His presence but you know I don't think that there's going to be MP3 players up in

heaven you know I don't think we're going to have cell phones thank God and you know televisions I don't think television is going to be up there you know what we're going to find in heaven we're going to find this place of total complete fulfillment and intimacy with Him and we are struggling with this big time church that place of intimacy you know and I'm just saying this in passing but yet I think it's something very important and I know many of you have very busy lives and stuff like that but sometimes our busy lives can be excuses and there's various things I don't want to make an all-inclusive statement here but there's you know there's many of you that that you could get here in time for for pre-service prayer but is He a passion in your life? is He something that burns in you

that you want to be with Him?

I just challenge you with some particular thoughts because until He becomes the burning passion in our life are we going to see the move of God that we desire? because as we looked at when Moses fully

obeyed the Lord then the glory of God fell 1st John 5:3 says this is love for God to obey His commands and His commands are not burdensome so let me ask a question are His commands burdensome to you? are they hard are there commandments that He offers you or that He commands us to do that is difficult that you don't want to do because they seem so hard to you it's because that we have not come to this place of loving Him supremely that we think His commands difficult because when we love Him supremely His commands will not be a burden they'll be a joy prayer will not be a hard thing it will

not be a cruel task to do to get on our face and commune with Him because we'll love His presence reading His word will not be a burden to us because we'll love what He would speak to us through His word fellowship and worship with the body of Christ and hearing the word of God preached wouldn't be a burden because it'd be a joy because I want to be with the people of God in the presence of God as they worship Him as a community of saints all these things would not be burdensome and hard if we loved Him supremely John Piper made an interesting point he says God is glorified most not merely by being known nor by merely being dutifully obeyed but by being enjoyed in the knowing and obeying God is most glorified when we enjoy the knowing of Him and the obeying of Him what phenomenal ideas

that we could become Christian hedonists making Him the supreme source of our pleasure of our joy of our passion let me share with you final verse and then I'll close Peter told us in his epistle 1 Peter 4 in the 17th verse he gave us a very solemn warning he said for it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God and if it begins with us what will the outcome be of those who do not obey the gospel of God do we understand that in this verse ultimately he's saying what will be the outcome of those who do not obey the gospel of God he's referring to the situation of hell of separation from God to be contingent upon our obedience or disobedience every single person that will end up in hell will end up in hell because they chose to live a life of disobedience to God whether they were

in the church or out of the church every person that will be in heaven will be in heaven because they came to the place where they wanted to start to obey God lovingly obey Him because they found His love better than life and he tells us that a judgment must begin at the house of God and so what's he wanting to do he's wanting to begin with the church crying to the church how can the world come to obedience until you walk in obedience too how can you expect the people you work with to come to a place of obedience in Christ until you come to the obedience of Christ how can you expect your children to come to obedience in Christ until you're obedient to Christ in your home and in your personal life how can we expect others to come to obedience until we are willing to be living epistles of

it in our own personal lives because for the glory of God to fall it begins with our loving obedience and so now let me bring you to a final point of obedience and then I'm going to open this altar up and you know what this point of obedience is it's the point of obedience of repentance God commands us to repent He gives us the privilege of repentance He offers us the privilege of it but it's both a privilege and an obligation we are obligated before God to repent to obey Him and the truth that when we fail His commands when we walk in disobedience when we allow sin in our life He commands us to repent and to turn from those things through John the Baptist he told us to bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance to give the proof of our life of the change of our life the change of the

way we think when we repent that there's literal proof in our repentance it's a command it's a privilege Romans 2:4 tells us that it's the goodness of God that leads us to repentance so you know one challenge we have and one thing we need to repent of and this is a challenge we can have as Christians and you know what that is it's a sin of self-righteousness that we don't see our neediness that we don't see how

desperately needy we are only when I begin to see how desperately I need Him and He becomes something that begins to burn in my heart will I become one to pursue Him with every fiber of our beings only when we love Him supremely and we grow desperate for Him and when we grow desperate for Him guess what we see repentance as this beautiful phenomenal gift that He offers us that He

offers us this gift that we could be restored that we could get those things out of our life that separate those things that break His heart those things that quench His spirit in our life that we could get those out that we could get ourselves right with Him because that's what Calvary is all about that He made a place that we can run to that we can find forgiveness where there's a fountain that flows of cleansing of His blood that we're in cleansing to our sins and we can run to that cross and find at the foot of that cross that fountain that never ceases flowing this fountain of blood that will bring cleansing to the worst of sins to the worst of rebellion and so first we have to begin with the church judgment has to begin with the house of God and so I'll begin there how many in this

room are having the problem of disobedience in your life you know what you should be living you know how you should be living you know what should be in your life and you're not doing it and in the process of you're not doing it you have somehow justified in your own mind says I'm a Christian I'm a good person everything's okay I just got this little problem maybe somewhere down the road I'll take care of it but you are now justifying your disobedience you're making excuses for it in just a few minutes I'm going to open this altar up church and I'm going to open up for you to come to this altar and deal with disobedience in your life I want to say something about that as well this altar is for people no angels are going to be all called to this altar repentance because they don't need it

it's going to be people and so we're in that condition and don't let pride keep you where you are in a place of self-righteous you need to see the disobedience and come before God in honesty as honest as you can and say God this is an area of disobedience man I have constant problem here and I know the preacher's right I still have this struggle with disobedience because I love my rebellion more than I love you would you help me to love you more that I would be willing to crucify this that I'd be willing to nail it to the cross that I get it out of my life because I want you to be the supreme source of joy there's many of you in this room that you don't know Christ as your supreme source of joy and I'm talking about Christians you have come to the place to be born again and that's good

but you've never come to the place to understand the wonder of what it is to know this God in intimate fellowship the wonder of what is to enter into fellowship with him to know the sweetness of his embrace to know his kiss upon your forehead to know the tender mercies of God being poured upon you he wants to bring you to a place where you know the tenderness of God in your life so you have to see that he's calling you to that type of life and you have to be willing to say yes Lord I will walk that path I will follow you no matter what the cost is now I want to take a couple of minutes and just speak to those who are not Christians anybody in this room that's not a true Christian your life is defined by one thing disobedience to God there's no hope of salvation for anybody in this room

that's not a believer until you come to the place to realize that all sin is disobedience all sin that your sin is an act of rebellion against God and you know the greatest form of rebellion against God it's not homosexuality or fornication and adultery and that those are all acts of rebellion yes but the greatest act of rebellion is the one that goes to God and says I will not surrender my life to you that is the greatest act of rebellion and disobedience that every unsaved person is at that place in their life where they says I will not bow my knee to you I will not make you my God I will serve other gods I will serve the gods of my own

heart of my own mind the gods of our culture but I will not bow my knee to you and so anybody in this room that's not truly a born-again Christian you

know the wonder of this God is he's calling you to a place to stop the rebellion he's calling you the place that you don't have to anymore be at war with God at odds with him you can come to the place to know his tender mercies the sweetness of his life and of his love and of his kindness you can know the wonder of who this God is but you have to stop the rebellion you have to stop a life of disobedience you have to come to a place and say God I've lived my rebellion I'm sorry for it it's caused me pain and agony in my life God can you forgive me? can you cleanse me? would you cleanse me? and as you cry out to him for forgiveness there is a God that will meet you and bring salvation to you if you want his salvation but you must come on his terms because if you come on your own terms

you're not coming in obedience you must come on his terms in that place of repentance and giving up your life to him you know I was a young man that was strung out on drugs before I came to Christ and you know when I gave my life to Jesus I surrendered to him my entire life as I could understand at that moment and that's what he's asking for you to give your life in its entirety as you understand it right now he'll take you on a journey and take you deeper in relationship with him but it begins with you coming to him and saying God I give up my life I give up my sin I give up my drugs I give up my fornication I give up my adultery I give up all the things I give up the rebellion the lawless ways of my life and God I'm weary of it I'm sick of it would you forgive me? would you change me?

anybody who wants his salvation he will freely offer to you this morning but you must abandon your life to him you must give up your life to him and so now the question is what will you do with Jesus? will you rebel against him or will you submit to him? will you obey him or disobey him this morning? if you don't know him you are brought to a decision will you accept him and surrender yourself to him and obey him or will you walk out of the doors of this church and say I will not give my life to him I will walk in my disobedience because anybody that's not a believer this day you will make a choice of obedience or disobedience to God you cannot stay where you are you cannot remain neutral you will make a choice because you've heard the truth now what will you do with that truth? how will

you respond? could I ask a couple of the musicians to come up at this time?

I'm gonna see everybody stand please and so anybody that's not a Christian you're not the real thing you know you're not surrendered to Christ I knew I was in rebellion before I gave my life to Jesus I knew it there was no maybes about that nobody had to convince me I was a sinner I knew I was and so the question is do you understand that you're a sinner and that your sin is placed at war with God do you want his salvation do you want the gift he offers to you this morning do you want the gift of eternal life that he gives you but the greatest gift of all do you want to know him do you want to know the wonder of this God the beauty of who this God is do you want to know what real love is all about do you want what he has to offer and so you're brought to a decision what will you do with Jesus? what will you do with Jesus?

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