

Not Disobedient to the Heavenly Vision

by Joshua Daniel

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being obedient to God's calling and the transformative power of the gospel in our lives and communities.

Duration: 59:10

Scripture: Acts 26:14

Topics: "Obedience To God", "Servant Heartedness"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of obedience to God's heavenly vision, highlighting the ongoing revelation of God and the need for follow-through, obedience, and fruitfulness in serving Him. It discusses the power of God's revelation to transform lives, the necessity of repentance and doing works worthy of repentance, and the significance of being valiant for the truth in a world filled with conflicting philosophies. The message also touches on the servant-hearted attitude of St. Paul, the call to serve others selflessly, and the impact of the gospel in changing lives and communities.

Transcript

Now, you know, friends, in the portion of Scripture which we just read together, what did the Lord tell Saul as he had fallen to the earth, 14th verse, Acts 26, And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for you to kick against the bricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared unto you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness, both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto you.

So, we see that God's revelation is always an ongoing revelation. And the unfortunate thing about this is, in many people's experience, they appear to make a start, but there is no follow-through, there is no obedience, there is no fruitfulness. So, God said to Paul, Look, for this purpose, I am going to make you a servant, a minister, and a witness, both of the things which you have already seen, and the things which I will show unto you.

Now, so, God wants to show new things to us. It's amazing. His mercies we sing, you know, often, and we quote that scripture, His mercies are new every morning.

New mercies I see. Yes, we do. And new revelations which propel you to action.

The wonderful thing, when God speaks, there is power, and that power possesses you. And you may be ever so phlegmatic, so dull, but that power of God gives you a thrust. I remember many years ago, when I accompanied my father, revival had broken out in one area, and my dad took me during my vacation, holidays.

I was a boy of 16 at that time, and I could see men and women repenting, putting things right. And at that time, as I was walking through the meeting place, I found a young fellow seated around. I said, Why is this young fellow seated all by himself? Let me go and speak a few words to him.

So, I went to him and spoke a few words, you know, and the tears began to flow from his eyes. The fellow was under conviction, a little older than me, and he turned to the Lord. He repented of his sins.

Later, he became a contractor and got a little muddled up in his ways. But when I met him again, many years after, he came clean with God. And Mark you, my dear friends, he began to take care of one of those mission stations, little work.

You know, if after my meetings, after I speak in some public arena, if there's nobody to follow through, if nobody is there to build the souls, to give them bread in due season, well, it would soon prove to be wasted effort, well, at least to a discernible degree, or what catches the eye. Whatever it is, you know where this fellow's son is today. He is winning some very improbable people in a very difficult area.

Highly educated students are getting converted, turning to God in spite of so many persecutions. And reports go to the police. You know, false reports, of course.

Anyway, in certain quarters, the police want to know what is this conversion all about? What is the money they gave you? And these people tell them, oh, they gave us nothing. But look at our lives, how we are changed. We were drunkards before.

Look at our families. And the police realize that there's something which they cannot really understand, and therefore they give up on us. You know, folks, but here, after this little witness, what does Paul say? Nineteenth verse, Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.

Now, I can never think of how my father began with hardly anything, nothing, but as each person got converted, and the fire spread to others. Faithfulness, obedience to the heavenly vision. God has put me here.

God has a work for me, and I will be obedient to the heavenly vision. The trouble is, today, we are so stressed. We have got so many things, you know, which appear to stress us out from so many quarters.

And with the result, we can only be thinking of our own worries and our own troubles. Let me tell you, that's not Christian living. Now, is there going to be a time when you are never going to have a problem? I have never come across that kind of phase in my life.

There are always going to be problems. First of all, you will have to deal with that problem of the battle inside of you, the battle between self and the will of God. You have to settle it.

Lord, I am going to do your will, whatever it costs me. You see, you will find that one of the serious indictments in Scripture, you will find in the ninth chapter of Jeremiah. Let's read from the first verse.

Oh, that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people. Oh, that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people and go from them, for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. They bend their tongues like they bow for lies, but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth.

Look at that. What an indictment. They are not valiant for the truth.

You see, we have strange philosophies around us today, you know, very strange philosophies. And when I come up against them, I say, boy, can people believe such things? They will say, look, look at our Gita. What does it say? It says, you know, where a principal deity is supposed to be giving this instruction.

Do not hesitate to kill them, for if you do not kill them, they will not be born into, in another form, transmigration. So, you're doing them good by killing them. Can you imagine such rubbish? What does the Bible say? It is appointed unto men once to die, and after death, the judgment.

So, see how mixed up you can get. Oh, you're doing great service by killing him, because if you don't kill him, there won't be another janma, or another reincarnation of this soul. All right.

And when we come to the Quran, can anybody deny that Quran teaches jihad as one of the central and principal things? No one. And you know, we have a system today which says, oh, all this is very peaceful, everything is fine, everything is peaceful. When you come to the New Testament and the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, what appealed to Mr. Gandhi was, in the Sermon on the Mount, turn the other cheek.

That struck him. And he said, this is what I shall do. Now, here is this frail man, and the mighty British army, the police force, armed with guns and strong staffs, batons.

Are you going to batter that frail man when he says, okay, here's my other cheek? No Englishman would want to do that. So, there was no way by which the mighty British empire could withstand that. My dear friends, all right.

Did Jesus stop with that? The Lord Jesus said, love your enemies, bless them that curse you. You know how rich you become when you can bless those who curse you? Oh boy, you just, that means your negativity is gone. In other words, the denominator in your life, one by one, makes one.

One by zero makes infinity. And when that negativity is gone, my, you become such a power. Bless them that curse you.

Pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you. Worlds apart, poles apart, my dear people. And so, when the vision of God's love comes to your heart, can you refrain? Can you stay static? It's not possible.

And here we are told in Jeremiah 9 chapter, they are not valiant for the truth. What do you do with people who say, okay, okay, I believe all these things. Oh, everything is fine.

Everything is true. Yes and no are the same. What do you do with such people? You can't go and get anywhere with such people.

So, you will find in many cases, this is one of the strong traditions of the East. You must not say no to an elderly person. Mark you, I started preaching as a boy, but now, of course, I don't qualify for that anymore.

Whatever. You must not say no to an elderly person. So, the earth is perfectly flat.

Yes, sir. That's what I learned at school too. So, whatever an old fool says, you must say yes, sir.

Now, in that environment, some of our good-hearted missionaries, they just took their yes for a real yes and said, oh, so many are ready for baptism. And you baptize those thugs. The trouble with them is they don't know the difference between yes and no.

And you say, I've got so many converts. I've built so many churches, church growth, you know. My dear people, my dear people, that's not faithfulness to God's word.

They are not valiant for the truth. Truth is precious. And the Bible says, buy the truth and sell it not.

You know, people are ready to sell their souls for money. That's modern culture. They will sell their families for money.

They will sell their bodies for money. They will sell their souls for money. My boss asked me to say, speak alive.

What can I do? Some years ago, when I started preaching in the United States, I said to some of those brothers, some of those preachers, keep the resignation letter in your pocket and preach the truth. And if they don't want it, present them with your resignation. You know, the economic compulsions and necessities of today are driving truth out of doors.

No truth they are not valiant for the truth on the earth. My dear friends, listen, when God's truth comes to you, are you ready to go forward with it? Are you ready to communicate it? Are you ready to stand with the truth? How sad. You know, we like to stand with our own people.

Now, that is another difficulty. You know, some people just cling to their own circle, and therefore, they will sell the truth, hide the truth, bury the truth. But what do they want? My own circle.

What? Are you a tribal of some sort? You see, I see this tribalism as a great hindrance to the gospel. Stay in our tribe. Do what the tribe says.

Dare you go against the tribe. Now, that's how it goes. And all the time, I find myself fighting against these tribal laws and customs in many quarters of the globe.

Truth, buy the truth and sell it not. Never let the truth of God become so cheap to you. Here, St. Paul says, Whereupon, O King Agrippa, 19th verse, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision, but showed first unto them in Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coast of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, and turn to God, and do works worthy of repentance.

You see, folks, some years ago, they said to me in Ulster, when there was a revival there, so many stolen things began to be returned, that the shipyard there felt, we have to build a new warehouse to receive all this stuff. And what would happen in Britain if all the stolen stuff returned? There wouldn't be room to stack them away in our hospitals, in our institutions, in our offices. You know, but look at the difference when Jesus comes into your life.

You do works meet for repentance, worthy of repentance. And what do you begin with? I have stolen this pen, I'll return it. A man said to me, he had to return stuff to Siemens, that big electronic firm.

Of course, they deal in a variety of things. However, yes, so many things. I asked a nurse in Europe, have you taken anything which belongs to the hospital? She said no.

Next morning, she came to me and she said, yesterday I said no, but the fact is, I have been eating the patient's food, I've been drinking stuff in the hospital that doesn't belong to me, and I'm going to put it right. She became a very beautiful person. A sheriff, that's a police officer outside, oh, in Washington, D.C., told me he was summoned to a hospital.

There in the hospital, they were finding ice missing. You know, the big ice box which is kept where you can pay a dollar and then take off with you a little bunch of ice pieces. They found ice missing, and it was traced to the chief administrator of the hospital.

So this sheriff said to me, the sheriff happened to be a fellow of Indian origin. He was a very good man who had come up in the police force. He said he went over, handcuffed the man, and the administrator said to him, oh, please give me a break.

Let me off this time. He said, no, get in, into the dog cage. Folks, no conscience, no conscience, no truth, and the gospel comes to us saying do works meet for repentance.

Get right with God. Get right with your neighbor. Put things right, and I see people doing it in all quarters.

What a wonderful thing is truth. What a wonderful thing is the word of God. Otherwise, there would be no hope whatever.

You know, looking back at history, when the Goths, the Franks, the Saxons began to attack Rome, somehow the gospel began to go out to those barbarians, and when Augustine was supposed to go to the British Isles with the word of God, in Rome, Augustine hesitated. He had heard of the barbarians, the Anglo-Saxons, and their cruelty, but he brought the gospel to them. My dear friends, we want to do God's work without any risk, any danger, any hardship.

No. Today, we are back to barbarism. You know, in the old days, they used to scalp people and say, my father scalped so many, killed so many, or my father brought home the heads of so many headhunters, but when the gospel went to the headhunters, that stopped.

The gospel, the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. Now, friends, what does the gospel do for us? When you become a disciple, if you turn to 1 Corinthians and the 9th chapter from the 18th verse, what is my reward then? Verily, truly, that when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel. So, St. Paul supported himself.

He said, this is without charge. For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain them all. Look at this.

You know, there was such a world of difference between free men and bondmen. You see, the free man, he had his freedom. The bondman, he was a slave.

You could kill him and no questions asked. But what did St. Paul do with himself? He said, fine, I'm a free man, but I shall make myself servant to all. I'm going to serve them.

You see, if somebody wants to change your status suddenly and put you down one, two, three rungs from your ladder, oh, you begin to smart. You'll bristle. Say, hey, why are you denigrating me? Why are you

putting, de-promoting me? Why are you putting me down? What did St. Paul do? He said, I made myself a servant.

Somebody prayed yesterday, Lord, give me a servant's heart. And Jesus said, I came to be a servant. So, you know, today we think a lot of our rights, you know, even little children.

You know, you spank a child in Britain, you can get into the clinker. The old British method was to lower the pants and apply the Board of Education to the seat of learning. I wish somebody speaks up in the law court and says, hey, what's happened to the Board of Education? My dear people, it's a sad day, but the children are learning to take up the phone and call the police over trifling things.

So, our modern law is breaking into the sanctity of our home. So, the child, instead of learning obedience, is learning rebellion from childhood. What a culture, what a heathen culture.

And Mark, you dear friends, so everybody is talking about his rights and entitlements. And so, if somebody overtakes you in a traffic jam or something, you get so angry, you step out of your car and beat him up right there. What kind of wild society, completely unchristian society.

And that's all happening around us. Why? Because we don't have this servant heart. We are not giving out the word of God.

We're all also very much for our rights, my status, my rights, my privileges. You see, this is a different nature, a new creation. And your heart becomes one which is sold out to service.

You know, you can see certain doctors. I had a very good doctor in the U.S., a man who would be so caring. He told my daughter, one of my daughters, worked for him as a volunteer for some time.

He told my daughter, I tried to convince your daddy against going to Kashmir, but I could see I got nowhere. So, he was concerned for my safety. He did not want me to get in harm's way.

So, I've come across some very caring doctors who work overtime, who just care. However, I cannot understand an officious Christian worker, a man who thinks, oh, these are my rights. I must have my rights.

Or a woman who feels that way. I do not know what it is that made my father persist in serving some of the most difficult and intractable people on the face of the globe. They were a criminal tribe.

When my father started going every year to them, of course, I accompanied him, and I, too, preached alongside of him. And some of the human wrecks, as the gospel began to lift them, family by family. What a miracle.

A man sat before me one day. I asked him his profession. He was a bootlegger.

He told me his profession. He said even the police could not curb my activities. But the man got converted.

I was in a small tent in that hot place, and he came to see me, and I prayed with him. He felt jolted by the questions I asked him, just one or two, but straight to the point, the Lord having directed me in those questions. And he was converted.

And what a power that one man became, healing the sick, casting out devils, doing work which I could not do. The power of the gospel, when you are ready to serve. You know, here in the 22nd verse, St. Paul says, 1 Corinthians 9, 22, to the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak.

I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. You know, I have preached on this text to audiences, and the message just bounced off them like a tennis ball on a wall. They just don't understand.

I am made all things to all men, that by all means I might save some. Look at that whole attitude. Is there pride there? Is there vanity there? Is there a clinging to position or privilege there? No.

I am made all things. Well, if the creator of heaven and earth can be made all things to all men, and become as the filth of this world, to be cast out of the city as a criminal, how much more can I be made the filth of the world? What's wrong about it? I see nothing wrong. I'm filthy enough.

Can't I serve? Can't I love? Must all eyes be focused on me, and all hands must do this, that, and the other? You know, one of modern diseases appears to be loneliness. When I first came across this disease in Europe, on the continent, many years ago, of course, it was a strange sickness to me. Here were people becoming mentally obsessed and tortured.

They were feeling lonely. You see, I had never felt that way. You see, I could go anywhere, be anywhere, enjoy the presence of God, and the Lord would be with me, and so there would be no problem whatever.

No loneliness, certainly not. If you want me to tell you, just the day after we went on our honeymoon, my wife got chicken pox, good discipline, and I turned nurse for the first time in my life. And mark you, dear friends, there it was.

A few months after, with very minimal, minimal time together, I was away in Birmingham for one and a half months almost. Actually, it was a period of five, five months, five to six months before I went back. But, yes, isn't the Lord there? Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.

So, to me, this seemed like a strange disease. But the more I labored in Europe, the more I saw that this was a real disease, and that people's nerves were getting affected. What does the Bible say, but they that wait upon the Lord will be as eagles.

It must be rather lonesome up there in the skies, don't you think? But they soar and they soar. They don't come around looking for your garbage. No, they shall be as eagles.

They shall renew their strength. They shall run and not be weary. You see, now when you give way to negative stresses and prove like a sitting duck, you see, you and I should not be sitting ducks inviting all the bullets that are passing us.

That's nonsense. You are not made to be a sitting duck. And what, what is the outcome of that? Your sickness or your obsession or fear soon begins to swamp the feelings all around you.

You know, it begins to influence a lot of people. But the joy of the Lord, you know, it makes people stronger. And when people come under your influence, they see, well, there is a way by which I can handle and tackle my problems.

The Lord is with me. No, I am with you all the way, even to the end of the world. The Lord is with me, so I can handle my problems.

I don't need anybody to weep over me. I don't need anybody to fuss over me. I am okay.

I will lift others. You know, it's a different attitude. And this miracle the Lord does in our hearts.

It's a serving attitude. Hey, what am I sitting pretty here? Let me get cracking and do something for God. Let me be useful.

You know, you become a different person. Your attitude is different. Oh, my beloved people, I have made all things to all men that by all means I may save some.

You know, instead of being obedient to the heavenly vision, if you and I succumb to our own feelings of self-pity and spend our lives in a pity party, you know, you can spend your whole life that way. What are you doing? Partying. You're having a pity party all on your own.

My dear people, I have not been disobedient to the heavenly vision. Let us pray. Let us tell God, oh God, I do not want to be disobedient to the heavenly vision.

I do not want any of these modern obsessions or sicknesses to assail me. And even if they attempt to assail me, I'll throw them out. I have no time for a pity party.

There are better things to do with my life. Cleanse me, Lord. Wash me, Lord, in your blood.

It's not in me to serve. It's not in me to give. I love self.

I love to pamper self. My lazy body says, come on, sleep on for a little more time. There I am, just yielding to self, self, self, self, dominated by self, or even by my environment, my circle.

But Lord, I want to be moved by your spirit. I want the spirit of Christ, the nature of Christ, especially at a time when the tide has to be turned. I need a new kind of vitality and dynamism.

Oh, Lord, touch me now. Touch me now. You are able to make me to lift many, many, so that they will serve you.

Gracious Father, I do not know how many are the talents that are latent in all these dear people. I do not know what great things thou art going to bring out of their lives. Yes, in weakness, in sickness, in from darkness, we come to you.

To whom else can we go? Is there some shrine or idol or something, guru or something that is able to give to us deliverance? No, Lord, no. We know that you died in our place, that you loved us, and you rose again from the dead, that this resurrection power might work miracles in us. Do the miracle.

Do the miracle now. Instead of being so lethargic, help us to be touched with your fire and become zealous for the truth, valiant for the word of God. Please, Lord, do it, we pray.

Do it in all our hearts at such an hour when the nations are choosing to return back to barbarism. Oh, my Father, please, Lord, help us to go out with this message of hope, this message of love, this message of light. Father, hear our prayer and bless each one here with your touch.

We ask this in Jesus' almighty name. Amen.

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