

Obeying the Voice of God

by K.P. Yohannan

Obeying the voice of God is a movement, not an absolute, and requires a choice to believe, even when we don't understand.

Duration: 32:50

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:28, 1 Peter 5:7

Topics: "Voice Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the theme of obeying the voice of God. He starts by sharing the story of Ananias in Acts 9, who was paralyzed for eight years but was told by Peter to get up and walk. The speaker emphasizes that obedience to God's voice may seem illogical, but it is a movement that requires steps and increments. He encourages the audience to constantly remind themselves of the importance of obeying God's voice and to live a life that reflects God's presence and power.

Transcript

Today's our theme is obeying the voice of God, and we heard from four different passages. Acts 9, that's the story we heard about two huge miracles. There was a man, Ananias, who was bedridden, paralyzed for I think eight long years, right? And Peter tells him to get up.

The man who is bedridden, paralyzed for eight years, and Peter says, the Lord tells you to get up and walk, it defies logic, it's illogical. See, this is where we have to force ourselves to think obedience, it is not absolute in the sense of us. I will do this, I will not do it, but rather it is a movement.

For example, if somebody from back there says, Metropolitan, would you please come and shake my hand? Well, I say, yes I do, that is the response obedience, but how does that work? The steps, increments, movements, I am walking, how long will it take? Well, it depends how fast I walk, I can run, or I can slow down. You know, I mean, it's amazing when people get married, these girls who walk, you know, the way they walk, sometimes you think forever it's going to take. But you see, the obedience started there.

So this is where we get frustrated with ourselves. And you say, well, I repented so many times, I talked to God, but nothing really seems to work. Well, keep in mind, when you made the move, and you're walking, and you're doing it, it's still a motion, a movement.

This is where, when we follow God, obedience to God has everything to do with our thoughts, our hearts. Now, psychologists and people who analyze mind and thoughts, now they say, thoughts are actually the refined, purest form of energy. So, these passages we read, there are many ways to put this together.

One, you can say, impossible made possible by obedience. Or I would explain it, illogical, bypassing logic, obedience. Then, second, I would say, keep your focus on the shepherd, not your circumstances.

Because there's valley, there's problems, there's shadow of death, all kind of stuff. But keep your focus on your leader, the shepherd. Then, number three, I would say, follow him now with the visible life that you have.

Whatever circumstances you may be in, keep following him. It's never evenness. I mean, life is not a bed of roses, they say, but it's even the best of life.

The Bible says, full of troubles and sorrows, physical and emotional, and relationships and tension, all that. But keep following him, and keep moving. Sometimes it slows down, sometimes you stop.

And you say, I don't want to do it anymore, it's too difficult. I mean, honestly, in my own life journey, there are times I pray and half of the way I say, I don't want to pray, because nothing seems to work. Where is God? I have no sense, no feeling, and it's just bare bone, just cold, harsh ceiling.

And I don't know what to do. But then, thoughts are pure energy. And thoughts, you use another word for it, faith.

So, I say to myself, I don't understand it, I can't, but I just have to move. And sometimes I just stand still, I don't know what to do. But then, I don't want to go back.

You see, so, when you do that, there is an assurance with the multitudes that came through the tribulation. No, you think their entire life was full of tribulation? No. But there was a time in their life season that they lost everything, like Job, and their own life.

But the visible world they lived in, what they experienced, was not the end in itself. It was only a doorway to enter into a reality where there is no time and space. And how they could be part of that, it is simply by saying, there is a greater reality outside of me that is God.

And so the choice is with us. And number four, looking at Jesus' discussion with the Pharisees, tells me, religiosity, that is mere imitating spiritual things and saying words and prayer and all that, just acting out spirituality, actually is a bigger hindrance for knowing God's ways and really being part of God's life. And so, how do you know somebody is spiritual, how somebody is really just religious? It is only a matter of their heart.

And now, application of this, I want to go through this because I think, I hope that you will start thinking about this. Obeying the voice of God, let me restate, reading God's word, studying it, hearing it read, what we have in the Bible, it is what we call absolute. That is, you don't need to even think if this is true or not.

It is absolute. That is, psychology, one of the biggest crises about these people, I mean, they are precious, wonderful, educated people, like Carl Jung, one of the most famous psychiatrists and psychoanalysts. One thing that no one could figure out, how to resolve guilt.

How do you deal with that? Well, the Bible says, when we come and say, Lord Jesus, you died on the cross for me, please forgive my sin. The Bible says, a mystery takes place. He forgives and he removes and he cleanses and all of a sudden our hearts are replaced, filled with a sense of peace.

On the surface, you see the storm, the calamity and the tension and the emails and all the gossip and whatever is going on and just get shaken by all that. But somehow, when you pause and read God's word and your heart says, yes, I believe, the pure thoughts, I choose. You see, our conscious mind is the only place where we have any control of.

You know, I can see, I can walk and this is a choice in my... But when it comes to subconscious, our mind, we really don't have any control over that. This is the reason why, reading the Bible continually, meditating God's word continually, what happens? All you read and study, it is, you are perceiving it or you hear it in a conscious mind. We understand.

But then, through meditation, contemplation, you think through this, what happens? Imprints are made on your subconscious and you have no control over that. That's the reason why, often, you run into people, they say, yeah, I knew that's going to happen, I knew this would not work and all that. But what happens, over a period of a long time, they keep working with their conscious mind of doubt, confusion and suspicion and whatever it is, it has a lot to do with people's upbringing and also their learning or their culture.

And so what happens, the subconscious gets imprinted normally with all the negative things. John 10, 10, Jesus, Satan came to destroy and to kill and undo everything that is good, that is wholesome. And God is love, he is light, there is no darkness in him.

This is an absolute that we must believe in. God never does anything evil. But you see, that makes no sense, because I am now looking at this season of my life, a week or two or a year.

And what I am looking at is the sickness and the problem that I have to now carry my body to the hospital. And you say, God does everything good, he allows all good. You see, this is the problem about the imprint on our subconscious, because we are limited with the time and space in which we experience reality.

But then we step out of it, then we realize that part of my difficulty and my rejection and loneliness and my emptiness and sickness actually is the part of the whole. So what is the whole truth? God is love and he is full of mercy. He never, never intends anything for anyone for bad.

As a matter of fact, think about Judas. It says Jesus loved him till the end. Even the very last second when he was given the Holy Communion in our language, the disciples no one knew what was happening.

They thought he was going out to buy something. That kind of tells me the pure nature of the absolute, the loving God now in flesh. And was there a choice, a chance for Judas to think a different thought? We must believe.

But then, go to the other extreme or the pendulum. Now in the totality of what happened, if Judas didn't betray Jesus, where I would be? Where would the cross be? So this actually defies logic and our understanding. So we have to fall back again and again and again to one thing.

I don't understand it, but I choose to believe. And so when I say obeying the voice of God, it is not some crazy prophet or prophetess saying some strange language or whatever and thus saith the Lord. Honestly,

I don't believe in those things.

I still believe prophets are there, God still speaks, but much of this is all just humbug. Just don't fall for that. But God's word, absolute is given to us.

We have God's word, the Bible. And when you read that, you have never any reason to doubt. So when no one has answer for guilt, God has it.

It's a mystery. We seek and we say, Lord, I'm sorry. It's not only forgiven, but it removed and replaced with His peace.

Beyond my logic and my reason, God is working things out. I mean, let me ask you this. What kept Joseph 13 years in prison? Chained, it says in the book of Acts.

And what did he do? What did he do wrong for him to be misunderstood and abused and thrown in prison? How did he survive during those years? Now, let me translate that into your life. What is the person or your pain that you are going through? You know, some days in the morning I wake up and I do pray like we all do and all that. But without any warning, it's like, you know, all of a sudden, much of the night you hear the trees are falling and all of a sudden it's a storm.

Where did that come from? From nowhere it looked like. And I'm hit with anxiety and fear and I just don't know what to do. And I say to myself, where did that come from? What is the reason for it? I can't explain all that.

You see, so this is where we understand in this life journey of ours, when we obey the voice of God, it is not, okay, I'll do this today, I'll do this. No, it is a larger reality of a conscious choice to live with outside reality, which God is. And he keeps telling me, don't be afraid.

So what made Joseph to survive through that? I mean, this intense loneliness. As far as his family is concerned, he's dead. And he's in a strange land.

And he's awfully, awfully in a miserable situation. And he's misunderstood by all the fellow prisoners. And you add up all that pain.

But how did he make it through the storm? How did he make it through those difficulties? The only answer would be he had a dream long before that. And the dream was given by God. This is going to happen.

There is thoughts, there is hanging on. And our problem, my problem, I'm part of this journey, I'm telling you. That is, I try so hard to read books, trying to figure out what to do with this thing, who I should talk to, which way to go.

And we should do what? I mean, you should go to the hospital when you're sick. I'm not saying don't do that. But I'm telling you, there is a different dimension that supersedes all that is our continuous affirming, my God is my Father.

He never allows this thing or that thing, this season, without a wonderful purpose. All things work together for my good. When we realize that whatever season we are going through, God has promised and his thoughts toward me is always good.

And that gives me the courage. Now listen close. That gives me the courage against my own understanding to keep thinking and affirming what God promised.

What did he promise? I am your shepherd, you are mine. And then you read through the verses there in Psalm 23, the great amount of struggles and time and journey. And there is a valley of the shadow of death.

But you are still with me. And the end is, surely goodness and mercy shall follow me. And sometimes it will overtake me all the days of my life, even in the seasons of problems and difficulties.

And then finally, when it's all over, I will be with you forever and ever. So there is eternity and time merging. It's all the same.

We live now as though we are not living here. And so what happened? We are given the ability to live through the storm and then have this absolute confidence that I serve a good God. Okay, let me conclude this by saying five little things that hopefully will make sense.

One, remove by your choice, by your conscious thinking, the negative thoughts which we are born with almost. That is, our mind naturally thinks all the worst and we expect the worst. And the sadness, the hurt and the pain and suspicion and doubt and confusion, all this.

So much comes because it's natural for us because we are living in a fallen world. And the bend we have toward is not great, wonderful, happy, great God and my life is great. No, it is always dark.

It's a choice you make and I make to remove. That is, if you want a glass of water, we talked about that today, the drought that's taken place and all that. If the glass is full of sand, there is no way you can put water in there.

So what do you do? We have to keep removing the negativism, the thoughts the enemy putting in our head. Did you hear me? All your thoughts are not your thoughts. It is not normal.

The devil, demons through other people, emails and Facebook and newspapers, all the circumstances and all the sudden you can think, My goodness, this is really a storm. I mean, my little canoe is going to sink. But it will not sink.

You will not be in trouble because somebody is protecting you. Underneath are the everlasting arms. We have to constantly remove the negative thoughts.

That's one thing. Because obeying the voice of God, he cannot put something in unless you keep removing it. It's a progression.

It's a movement. It's a daily practice. Number two, reprogram.

That is, now start putting in your mind. Okay, obeying the voice of God for what? You think God is sitting in heaven with great agony and heart attack and pain because you and I don't do what he says? He feels sad for us, I'm sure, but it is for our good. If you plant a tree, if you don't pour water, it's going to dry up.

The same thing with our, you know, if you don't eat long enough, it takes 40, I don't know how many days, we are dead. So, constantly putting in your mind. That's the reason why, you know, the other day I sat down and wrote on a sheet of paper about 25 things.

Morning I get up, I say all those things. And when I have a little break, go to the bathroom, I pick my paper and say all those things. And then I go to bed, I say those things.

I mean, what are those things? The Lord is my father. He cares for me. All things be alright.

This problem I'm dealing with is not the larger reality. And, you see, we keep saying those things. That's the reason, read, carry God's word everywhere with you.

And read it and memorize it and keep saying it. Why? Because consciously you are doing that and it's making imprint on your subconscious. And actually the reason we act certain way and we do certain way, we say, Oh yeah, I mean, he always has this temperament, always this way he does, he's always critical and all that.

Actually if you analyze the mind, you'll find the person himself or herself has no clue this way they behave. It is imprinted on their subconscious. And the way you now put new information that your subconscious start directing you, your actions.

For example, I mean, this is a good thing I can tell about me. I've got a lot of bad things I can talk about me. Somebody do something wrong to me.

One of the easiest thing for me to do is simply forgive. It didn't happen overnight. And secondly, I honestly don't hold grudges and hatred toward some of the worst people in my life journey.

And the memory still evokes pain, but I honestly don't, I cannot, in my conscience, I cannot tell you somebody in my life journey that I hate, that I don't forgive. No, I mean, the evil they did is real and it is just pain is real. But you see, so what happened? You reprogram.

Why? Because that is a greater reality of God for you to naturally enter into this life of God. Obeying is not an external activity, rather it is a way of thinking. Okay, number three.

Engage faith. That is, the present tense will never help us. Because in present tense, I got pain, I got problem.

Or I got the seven star, the best of luxury in the world. Either that or this. What Paul said, you know what? Okay, I'm in a hut, in a shack, on the roadside, having hardly any clothes to wear.

Or I'm in seven star facility with the best of luxury. It doesn't matter. It has no meaning.

There's something beyond that, greater and overshadowing. You see, this is how faith come into play. That is, Joseph said, yeah, I don't know how long I'm going to be here, but I know this is what God promised.

And he will do it. And my time and my understanding is not going to interpret that. And God said to Abraham, you will have a son.

But two years, five years, ten years, twenty years and twenty-five years goes by before what God said would take place. And in between there were times he just stopped. He took side trip and different things.

But finally, God says, he looked at his body, Romans 4, recognized it is dead. But he did not consider the present reality of his experience and believed in a God who calls things that are not as though they are.

So, obedience, engage, faith.

What is that? Again, please don't misunderstand me. It is thoughts. It is not simple illusion.

It is I make me think what God says. And my conscious mind is now processing what God said. And now it begins to work on my conscious mind, but it goes deeper in the subconscious and imprints are made.

And then I respond. So, the journey becomes easier and faster. And so, the next thing I would say is you plant a seed, any kind of seed, mango or I don't know whatever else, rice or corn.

There is a time of germination. There is a time to grow. There is a time, there is space.

So, don't give up hope and get discouraged and throw your life away, which I am tempted to do many times. There are times I say I don't want to do what I am doing. I wish somebody else would do this thing.

But I had to tell me no. I had to choose. So, continue this, repeat it every day, these steps I already told you.

And finally, there is no substitute for doing what we need to do. Would you please come and shake my hand? I say yes. But I need to do what I can do.

I never expect this could happen instantly, but I can do the little steps. One simple, maybe not so great illustration. When I was a youngster, 17 years of age, somebody told me, be faithful to give to the Lord what belongs to him.

And when I was told this by a 35 year old man, honestly, in my head I said, what is he talking about? I have not even one rupee. Then he would explain it. When you get 10 rupees, give one, this belongs to the Lord.

When you have 100, you give 10. When you have 1000, 100. Then he went on adding, and the bigger the number, God.

I said, no, I can't do that. I mean, in my imagination here, he was talking about lakhs and lakhs of rupees, and then you give to God what belongs to him. And I was taken fast forward into a world where I couldn't handle it.

But I took the baby steps. When I got 10 rupees, one-tenth belonged to the Lord. When I got 100 rupees, 10 rupees belonged to the Lord.

When I got 1000 rupees, what? He's calculating, his brain is working. You see, so, I can say, I can preach and teach about tithing and giving to God all I want, but, to do the little what I should do, the word, you're laying here eight years, paralyzed, you can't even move your finger. The Lord says, get up.

And he must get up with something that he can't see. And Jesus said, if you don't thank God, the rocks will praise God. That's what Jesus said.

Isn't it sad that you and I, we have choices to make, and we are worse than rocks? Let me take you back to the beginning of this discussion. Matter, as we think about it, it is tangible. We can hold, we can touch, but it's pure energy.

So, whatever you pick up, whatever you look, it is moving, it is alive, it is real. And we are asked to enter into this wonderful world of God who is everywhere and on our side. And so, obeying, it's not something that we can possibly explain with our limited logical world.

It is a way of thinking. And the Lord gave all of us his understanding, and you read Bible, and all of a sudden, you read that a thousand times, now you read it, something, you know, comes alive. And you know that is for you.

And I pray the Lord help us, not to live that kind of life just for us, but for everyone. We come in touch with our neighbors, coworkers, friends, and people we write and talk to on the telephone, emails, whatever else. And so, we become this invisible, powerful energy, not negative, but positive.

And the smile, the words we say, the things we think, I wish I can tell you, follow me, I'm the perfect example. No, no, I'm still trying to walk, and I invite you to join me in this journey.

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