

June 2019 Newsletter



Sundays At 6:30 AM on



OBEDIENCE

By Eric Chisi

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God has expected His children in every age of time to be obedient to Him. In fact, when they have violated His commandments, it grieves Him and it has aroused His wrath. And on several occasions, His wrath brought a curse, severe punishment, or even death upon those who disobeyed.

When God gives a command, He expects us to accept it for what it says and not try to find a way to get around it. In Exodus 25:40, God commanded Moses to erect a tent. His instructions were “see to it that you make them according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.” Moses erected the tent just as God instructed. As well, God instructed Noah to build a boat of gopher wood, and he did (Genesis 6:14).



Both Noah and Moses respected God by following His instructions. If we follow their examples, we will be true beneficiaries of God’s innumerable rewards. In Exodus 19:5-6, God promised the Israelites that if they obeyed His voice they would be to Him a special treasure above all people, a special kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.

Several other biblical illustrations show that people were punished when they disobeyed.

In Leviticus 10:1-4, the two sons of Aaron—Nadab and Abihu—were punished when they used profane fire, that is, fire that was not commanded. Another example is in 2 Samuel 6:1-7 where God’s anger was aroused by Uzzah when he reached out to stabilize the ark of God when it was falling.

As a result, he died. Uzzah’s idea was good, not allowing the ark fall to the ground, but he disobeyed the Law.

King Saul was another person who failed to obey God (1 Samuel 15:1). The command was quite clear: totally destroy (verse 3) man, woman, infant and nursing child, ox, sheep, camel, donkeys, fatlings, and all that was good. King Saul spared the king and what seemed good to him. Saul was rejected as king.

Many people today believe details are not important, so they do those things that are pleasing to men rather than to God. Details are important to God; and nothing—even fear—should cause us to ignore the details of God’s word. Solomon says, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5). Be it academic or professional qualifications, wealth or political muscle, God’s word is always more important than man’s. What is important is DETAIL. We must keep God’s word just as it is stated. The Apostle Paul warns in Galatians 5:9 that a little leaven leavens the whole lump.

Let us also know that failure to obey the commandments of the Lord is to reject him. 2 John 9 says, “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God.” We have to be well established in the doctrine of Jesus, and we must preach Jesus to please God.

Jesus, though He is the Son of God, did not preach His own but rather the Father’s message (John 8:28). That message

6/2 Sermon #1198

Thou Shalt not Bear False Witness

6/9 Sermon #1199

The Pain that Perfects

6/16 Sermon #1200

Why the Church of Christ? (Pt 1)

6/23 Sermon #1201

Why the Church of Christ? (Pt 2)

6/30 Sermon #1202

Why the Church of Christ? (Pt 3)

was later imparted through the Holy Spirit Who spoke not of himself but rather what He heard from Christ (John 16:13). The apostles also taught the doctrine of Christ as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit who was sent by Jesus (for example, Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:23 and Galatians 1:6-12).

We have seen that the Son is obedient to the Father, the Holy Spirit to the Son and the Father, and the apostles to the Spirit, the Son, and the Father. So, we should have no trouble in understanding that we today should be obedient as Jesus was (Philippians 2:5-8). And Jesus was careful to give attention to details so that He could please His Father instead of pleasing men.

BUT IF NOT

By Landon Hughes

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One of the most certain things about this life is that we can be certain of almost nothing. I'm sure we can all think of at least one day in our life in which events unfolded that we never dreamed of when we woke up on that morning. A sobering reality we all face at some point is that some things happen in life that are simply beyond our control, and we often have no explanation for them. We find ourselves wondering why some innocent children suffer so greatly, why young parents are victimized by tragic car accidents, or why cancer enters the bodies of our loved ones when we need them in our lives the most. These sorrows often leave us desperately pleading to God for deliverance from these struggles. And to our disappointment, many times God's answer to our cries for help is simply, "No."



When painful circumstances arise and our faith in God is sometimes weighed in the balance, I'm reminded of the words of three men we read about in Daniel 3: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego whose faith in God was put to the ultimate test by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. The king threatened to have these men burned alive in a fiery furnace if they refused to bow down and worship his false gods and golden image. With this terrifying fate before them, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego boldly proclaim to King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3:17-18:

"... our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand,

O king. 18 But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

This should be an inspiring passage for Christians during the trials we all face in our lives. Most Christians today will never be confronted with being thrown into a fiery furnace because of their faith, but we still endure difficult struggles that bring painful, undesirable outcomes when God doesn't allow us to avoid them. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew God was capable of delivering them from that fiery furnace if He chose to do so. However, before they knew that God was going to save their lives, they told the king in verse 18, *"but if not..."* They still wouldn't give up their faith in the one true God. These men realized, as we should, that this world is a constant battleground for our faith and trust in God. Bad things do not happen to good people because God enjoys punishing us. Rather, God allows Satan to test us and challenge our commitment to Him, just as He did with men of old like Job, Stephen, the Apostle Paul, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and even Jesus Himself.

Baptized believers in Jesus Christ, who willingly take up their own crosses and humbly follow His commandments, have a reward in Heaven awaiting them, even when they don't understand why they are suffering. Paul writes in Romans 5:3-4, *"we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope."* When your prayers to God are not answered the way you asked for, cling to the everlasting *hope* we find in the cross of Jesus Christ, and not to the sinful alternatives in this world that can destroy your relationship with God.

Always take your burdens and sorrows to God in prayer (Hebrews 4:16). Know that He is able deliver you and your loved ones from sickness, tragedy, loneliness, depression, fear, harm, and all of the storms of life you encounter, if he so chooses. *But if not*, don't turn your back on him. Have faith in His higher plan (Isaiah 55:9) and serve God anyway.

Paul also writes in 2 Corinthians 12:9, *"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."* The strongest Christians understand that God is still with His children when adversity comes our way. Trust in the Lord (Proverbs 3:5-6).



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