

MAN IN THE MIRROR BIBLE STUDY
BIBLICAL MANHOOD - A MAN CONSECRATED TO OBEDIENCE
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We are doing a series on Biblical Manhood, right, and we are in week 10. This morning I want to talk to you about something that is a very key part of Biblical Manhood, and that is subject of obedience. I don't want to just talk to you this morning about obedience, but I want to talk to you about the subject of radical obedience.

I had a fun time working on this message this week. Jesus says this, "So no one can become my disciple without giving up everything for me." I've been looking at that text and related text this week, and I got really fired up, and I developed this big idea for you this morning.

The Gospel of Faith in Jesus, once possessed, inspires radical obedience. That's the idea I want to unpack with you this morning. The Gospel of Faith in Jesus, once possessed, inspires radical obedience. I was so juiced up on this a couple of mornings ago. I get up pretty early at 4, my wife gets up at 7:30 and my day is half over by the time my wife gets up. Once the kids went off to college, she said, "Okay, that's it. I'm not getting up at 5 anymore." Trust me, she hasn't. When I get up out of bed, I'm ready to go, but when Patsy gets up, she's comatose for about two hours, so she does IV's with coffee and things like that. Often, I'll hear a little rustling around so I am ready to share what I've been seeing in my quiet time, and all of this. This week, I was really fired up about radical obedience, so I went downstairs and Patsy was sitting there with her eyes at half mast and her coffee cup in hand, sitting on the couch reading her Bible trying to get started with her day, and I walked up to her and said, "Patsy, let me ask you an important question. Do you see anything in my life that would lead you to believe that I am not living a life of radical obedience?" She looked up at me with the most withering look I've seen in 29 years of marriage. But, it's a great question. In fact, as we get to the application at the end on the questions, one of the suggested applications you may want to consider is asking your wife or a good friend, "Is there anything in my life that would lead you to believe that I am not living a life of radical obedience?" It's kind of a scary question, but, nevertheless, one that's very interesting.

Now, who would be the greatest examples of these men of the Bible? Who would be the greatest examples of men who lead lives of radical faith and obedience? You can come up with a dozen of them. This is what we're doing in this series. As I'm getting ready for these talks, I say, "Who are the men in the Bible we most admire and why and what do they have in common?" Radical obedience, on the foundation of Faith and the Gospel of Jesus is everywhere. It's everywhere. If you have to pick one, and none of those examples is any greater than Abraham.

I want us to look for a couple of minutes at the story of Abraham offering his son, Isaac. Chapter 22, Verse 1, says, "Later on God tested Abraham's faith and obedience." Now what did He do? He said, "Take your one and only son; sacrifice him. So the next morning, Abraham got up early. He took a couple of donkeys and two servants and his son, Isaac. He chopped wood, and he set out for Mount Mariah." How many of you have been to the Dome on the Rock in Jerusalem, the Holy City? Some of you have been up there. It is now in the possession of the Muslims, but that rock is the traditional site where this sacrifice of Isaac, by Abraham, took place. A year or two ago you could go there, and you could go into the Dome on the Rock, the big gold-covered dome up there on the top of the mount and see this rock where tradition has it that this sacrifice had taken place. They went to the mountain, and Abraham said, "You stay here, servants, and the two of them went up on the mountain. Isaac said, "Father, I see the wood, but where's the sacrifice?" Abraham said, "God will provide a lamb, my son."

Then in Verse 9, let's read together. "When they arrived at the place where God had told Abraham to go, He built an altar and placed the wood. Then He tied up Isaac and laid him on the altar over the wood. Abraham took the knife and lifted it to kill his son as a sacrifice to the Lord. At that moment the Angel of the Lord shouted to him from Heaven," and I don't know how I could ever even repeat these two words, "with justice," but He said something like "Abraham, Abraham. Now I know. Lay the knife down. Don't hurt the boy for now I know you truly fear God. You have not withheld even your beloved son." Verse 13, "Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram. He sacrificed it in place of his son." Verse 14, "Abraham named the place, the Lord will provide. Jehovah Jonah," I don't know whether any of you have heard that song. This is the only place in the Bible where that is mentioned, "Jehovah, Jonah, the Lord will provide."

Verse 15, "And the Angel of the Lord called again to Abraham from Heaven." Watch this, this is what the Lord says. "Because you have obeyed me and have not withheld even your beloved son, I swear by my own self I will bless you richly. I will multiply your descendents into countless millions like the stars of the sky and the sand of the seashore. They will conquer their enemies, and through your descendents all the nations of the earth will be blessed all because you have obeyed me." What a perplexing story. It is unimaginable, unthinkable, that God would tell a man to sacrifice his son. You know what? I'm sure this is unorthodox and heretic what I am about to say, but I think it would have been easier to be Jesus than Abraham. I think it would be a lot easier to offer up myself to die than to offer up my son to die. I could not offer my son to die at least I don't think I could. But that was the deal here. What in the world is going on here? Abraham was so possessed of faith in the Gospel of Jesus and, you know, we believe in the Christ of History, right? Did Abraham believe in Jesus? Was he a Christian? Absolutely. He believed in the Christ of Prophecy. Today we believe in the Christ of History, but he believed in the Messiah just as much as anybody else. In fact, he was really, you might say, the first Christian since the Bible does say he is the Father of our Faith.

Abraham, Romans: 4 Father of our Faith. "He was so possessed by faith in Jesus that he was willing to give up the one thing that he most wanted to keep." And I think that is an important question. Would I be willing, would you be willing to obey God even if it meant giving up the one thing you most wanted to keep? That's radical obedience. The interesting thing is that God did not require Abraham to give this thing he most wanted to give up, but Abraham was willing to do so. So the Gospel of Faith in Jesus, once possessed, leads to radical obedience.

Faith, Jesus and possessed. What is the Gospel of Faith in Jesus? Who is He? Why did He come? Does He believe in me? I am not going to give you Scripture references. I am not going to read all of the text. Just listen. "The sun is the radiance of God's glory, and the exact representation of His being. He is the image of the invisible God. In Christ dwells all the fullness of the God held bodily. Jesus said, 'Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. I and the Father are one.'" Alright, why did He come? "God has reconciled the world to himself through Christ not counting men's sins against them. Though He was rich, He became poor so that through His poverty, you might become rich. Although He was a son, He learned obedience from what He suffered, and once made perfect, He became a source of eternal salvation for all who believe."

Now, here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. By His blood, He has purchased men from every tribe, language, people and nation." This is how God showed His love among us. He sent his one and only son into the world so that through Him we might have life. This is love, not that we love God, but that He loved us and sent His son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

What does believing mean? Paul said, "These things I hold up as of being of first importance, that Christ died for our sins, He was buried, He was raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures, and after that appeared to many witnesses. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

How do we know we are Christians? We know that we have come to know Him if we obey His commands. This is how we know we love the children of God by loving God and carrying out his commands. Jesus said, "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me, and he who does not love me will not obey my teachings." The Gospel of Faith in Jesus, once possessed, inspires radical obedience. When you hear a Gospel this great, the exact representation of God's being, "He who has seen me has seen the Father. I am the Father of one." Once a man has comprehended this Gospel, you have to ask the question, why would any of us disobey ever again? What possible reason or motivation would we ever have to disobey the Lord Jesus in anything once we have really possessed this Gospel of Faith?

Paul wrote in Galatians 5: 7, "You are running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?" We are not going to look at Psalm 106 in the lesson here this morning, but it's in the questions. I just picked out six of them. There are probably many more than that. Six different reasons that men disobey, but let me tell you what Paul's quick answer was, his kind of summary answer. In Galatians 5: 7, he said, "Who cut in on you from obeying the truth?" In Verse 9, he answered his own question by mixing his metaphors - just not grammatically correct to mix metaphors, but He did it. He said, "The problem is that a little yeast works its way through the whole batch of dough." So, we're out here in our little Bible study on Friday morning and our little church service on Sunday and then we're out here where all this yeast is. It gets on your clothes, you try to brush it off, it finally gets in your ears, and it goes up your nose. This stuff is all over the place, and once it gets on you, it gets in you, and once it gets in you, it leads to whatever the Gospel of Faith in Jesus is, it leads you to the opposite of it. It leads you to unbelief. It leads you to think, you know, that Jesus is not enough to me to really be happy. I need something else. He's just not enough; he's just not enough. He's just not sufficient to meet my needs. When that happens, the yeast of culture works its way in. There is a difference between a possession of faith, and a profession of faith.

I've mentioned this here before, I'm sure. I've mentioned this here before, I know. You see people all the time who say, "I'm a Christian, I'm a Christian, I'm a Christian." Then they live like "I'm a pagan, I'm a pagan, I'm a pagan." You wonder, how does this match up? Well, it doesn't, does it? You see it in the Scripture. We see the parable of the sewer people confessing faith with great fervor, then some kind of pest comes along and they fall away or life's worries and pleasures choke the word and make it unfruitful. You hear this all the time. I hear it myself.

Well, the theologians have helped us because they've helped us understand there is a difference between a profession of Faith in Christ. Everybody who says, "I believe, I believe, I believe," that's a profession of faith, but there's a difference between a profession of faith and a possession of faith. There are a lot of people in the church who fall away, and they said they were Christians. Can you lead to salvation? You can't lead to salvation if you can't profess that you're a Christian and it not be true. Let me tell you, if you are not willing to give up everything for Jesus, watch this, if you are not willing to give up everything for Jesus, if you are not willing to say, "I would be willing to obey you even if you asked me to give up the one thing I most want to keep." _____ that I would be willing to give up the one thing I most want to keep. Just ask yourself, am I a professor or a possessor? This Gospel of Faith in Jesus is radical stuff. He's not playing around with us. We get it by grace. In fact, the law _____ no value to gain possession of his faith and yet, once possessed, it is the delight of every Christian to obey Jesus Christ radically so, radically so.

The Gospel of the Faith of Jesus, once possessed, leads to a radical obedience. Is there anything about me Lord that suggests that I am not leading a life of radical obedience? Ask yourself. "Is there anything about my life that suggests that I am not leading a life of radical obedience? Lord, where's the yeast in my life? Some of you, it just occurred to me, some of us in this room with so many men no doubt are snorting yeast. You're looking for it. I mean it's one thing to be willing to give up some good thing. But brothers, men, are you willing to give up that sinful thing? Do you love Christ enough that you would be willing to obey Him even if He asked you to give up the one thing that you most want to keep, her, it?

Two and one-half years ago some of you who have been around for a while heard me tell the story that one morning I was out in my backyard kind of just counting the blessings and so forth and just looking up into the starry hosts and just praising the Lord. In one moment I said, "Lord, I don't need you now." I was thinking about how blessed the ministry was and how blessed my family was and me, "Lord, I don't need

any this is. All I need is you. You are all I need." The problem is that when you make statements to God that we really mean, he will make us meaner. So that put me into a tailspin for about six months so all the blessings got tested. The Lord was saying, "Will you still obey me if I ask you to give up the one thing you most want to keep?"

Now, today, the circumstances are reversed. I am not under, well, I am still under God's blessing, but every ministry in America, right now, is struggling financially. I had to do something yesterday that violated everything I've been working for since January 1, 1987 and that was to have no debt. I had to borrow money that's set aside to pay some bills that come due in August to make payroll yesterday. I hate it, and you want to know something? I feel like God failed me. The key would be "feel." I "feel" like He's failed me, but I know by faith that He did not. I don't know what's going on here. "Is this the one thing, Lord, you want me to be willing to give up? Okay, you've got it." I was just struck with this, and I was recalling this time of saying, "Lord, I don't need any of this," and I thought about this set of problems that I'm going through. I said, "You know, Lord, these problems, I don't need any of this. All I need is you. You are all I need." That's radical obedience. Now the Gospel of Faith in Jesus, once possessed, inspires radical obedience.

So what do you want to do? I want to hear Scott come and sing, that's what I want to do.

Let's pray:

Ask yourself, where is the yeast in my life, the thing that has caused me disobedience? Then ask yourself and tell the Lord the answer. "Lord, is there anything that I would not be willing to obey you in to give up knowing that we are sinners, that we will fall and will need to be lifted up again? If I can make a pledge of fresh obedience to Christ by Faith," take a moment to tell Him that, too. Some of you, with this many men together, need help to live up to your own desires, so I just want to encourage you to get that help. Tell the men at the table this morning that you need help. Amen

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