

Dvd 07 - Growing Unto Sonship

by Art Katz

Jesus' growth in wisdom and stature is a model for our own growth in character and life, achieved through moral obedience and submission to the will of God.

Duration: 1:32:53

Scripture: Mark 7:32-35, Luke 4:28-30, Romans 8:29, Philippians 2:5-11, Hebrews 5:8

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Obedience To God"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of obedience and growth in grace through moral choices and obedience to God. It highlights the pattern of Jesus as a son who laid aside his deity to walk in obedience, displaying supernatural powers through the grace of the Spirit. The speaker shares personal experiences and challenges faced in obedience, urging listeners to embrace moral crises and communion with God for character formation.

Transcript

The issue of history, which is the issue of the nations, is not a choice. For the mystery of the proclaimed word, thank you, my God. How any man can approach that responsibility without dread, I don't know.

But thank you for the grace, my God, and the great principle of incarnation even in that. Christ in us the hope of glory in that you can speak through our earthen lips. So the whole thing, my God, is caught up in great mystery.

We ask the manifestation of it so as to obtain the faith of your people. That what is proclaimed they will fulfill on the same basis by which the word comes to them through the incarnate Christ. So bless this time, Lord.

Lead us on from the beginning of this morning, we pray, in the unfolding of your great mind and appointed intention for us in these days. Receive our gratitude, Lord, as we look to you for grace upon grace in this remarkable phenomenon of speaking, hearing the word of the living God. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. I think we can begin in Philippians chapter 2. It's called the hymn. Paul's hymn of the remarkable self-emptying of Jesus.

The Greek word is kenosis, that God emptied himself, which I don't think that we deeply believe. We unconsciously or otherwise assume that Jesus had divine enablement and access to things that pertain to

deity that made his earthly walk different from ours. That we can only admire what he performed, but that he had a special source, being the son of God and God, not available to us.

Well, as I go on, I'm more and more at odds with that view. That he's the patterned son because he lay aside his deity. He would not have been a pattern, he would not have been a model, an encouragement for us to sonship if he had a special access through deity that is not available to us.

So, let's just start there from verse 5, where Paul encourages the formerly pagan believers, Philippi, let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name, which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, everything in heaven and things in earth, things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. That has got to be a hymn, not just a doctrinal statement.

That is not too glorious, needs to be pondered and reflected upon, that it took deity for Jesus to take upon himself the form of a man, that this emptying is itself an exercise of divine power. If Jesus were not God and sent from the Father, he could not have performed this. But once having performed it, he was on another basis by which to perform his obediences, not different from ours, so that he grew in grace.

That growth would not have been necessary if he came fully equipped with all of the enablement of deity, but that the scriptures show growth indicates his humanity and appropriation of grace through obedience that formed him as the son of God. Don't look at me like that, like here comes heresy. I think that this is remarkable, and just looking at early episodes in the life of Jesus, even as a boy, before the commencement of his three-and-a-half-year ministry, when he was in Jerusalem for the Passover and got separated from his parents, who fondly sensed his absence and returned and found him, and he explained to them that he had to be about his father's business I'm trying to find that reference.

Anybody have it? I've got two Bibles here. Here it is. In chapter 2 of Luke, at the end of the chapter from verse 48, And when they saw him, they were amazed, and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

And he said unto them, How is it that you sought me? Didn't you know that I must be about my father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spoke unto them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them. But his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. So even in this early incident, we see the process of growth in Jesus as a son of God. He did not come into the earth complete with all the enablement of deity.

He lay that aside. And so he walked and came through a process of growth increasingly to the fulfillment of his messianic call and increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. He continued to increase.

But the word increase indicates growth. And by what means was it obtained? It was obtained by going down with them. Who's the them? The parents who could not understand that he had to be about his father's business.

They were non-compos mentis, even though Mary had visitation from angel and a declaration of what the destiny of the son was that was to be born of her. She did not understand his saying. So when he went down with them, he consigned himself to parents who lacked an appreciation and an understanding of his call.

And his willingness to go down under those conditions was the very key to his growth in stature and grace by going down, by submission to the authority of his parents, by denying himself the gratification of relating to parents who would be knowledgeable about his call and honor him in it. And he went down into Nazareth, which is the anus of Israel. Can any good thing come out of it? So that statement is a remarkable summation of the principle by which growth comes to Jesus and growth comes to us.

Submission, self-denial is the key to increase in wisdom and in stature. We see this at the baptism. Well, let me, before I go on to that, in another one of my Bibles, the child groom became strong, filled with wisdom, was speaking about John the Baptist, who also was subject to a process of growth.

And then Jesus again increased in wisdom and in years in divine and human favor. Another such act is the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan. In the time of the ministry of John the Baptist, when John was astonished that Jesus required to be baptized at his hand and that I need to be baptized of you when you come to me in Matthew chapter 3, verse 13.

But Jesus answered him, let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness. Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him and a voice from heaven saying, this is my son, the beloved, with whom I am well pleased.

In the same way that Jesus went down to Nazareth with parents who didn't understand his call, a similar act of humility is going down into the waters of baptism where he had no need in terms of his own personal sin. But he chose to identify with the sins of the nation by being immersed with them in the place that God has designated as the place of repentance. That's why John the Baptist was astonished.

But Jesus said, it's necessary for all righteousness to be fulfilled. And this act of Jesus, so in keeping with the mind of the Father, opened heaven for him and the dove came down and abided upon him. The dove is the Holy Spirit, the statement of power.

So I'm going to make a case that every act of obedience by Jesus in keeping with the will of the Father brings the blessing of the Spirit as the seal of the Father's approval of that act and was performed by the power of the Spirit. But in it something is communicated to Jesus by which he grows in grace and in favor both with God and with man. There's an increase with every act of obedience because the Spirit of God is required in the acts of obedience and when the Spirit of God is conferred for the enablement of an act that is contrary to man and in keeping with God's character, not only is the power of God imparted but the character of God because God is the Spirit.

And so by the successive and continuing acts of obedience and the impartation of the Spirit, Jesus grows in grace and in favor into full sonship and the completion of his messianic task which as a son is to offer himself without spot and blemish as a sacrifice unto God. A remarkable little glimpse of this comes in Mark when he was in a crowd of people and people were pressing upon him from every side and this woman who had that condition for 12 years which no physician could heal, pressed upon Jesus and said, if I can only touch his garment, I shall be whole. Chapter 5 of Mark, verse 28-29, straightaway the fountain of her

blood was dried up and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.

And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press and said, who touched my clothes? The word virtue is translated in other versions of this episode as power. But I'm happy that the Elizabethan translators in this gospel retained an ancient word that stands for power but suggests something more. It suggests character as if the power that was resident in Jesus was not some magical endowment but a cumulative increase of God relative to his virtue, relative to his character, relative to his walk and to his obedience.

Because if he felt a measure of it go out from him, it means also that there must have been occasion when it came into him. So the question is, how did Jesus acquire virtue or power? And that the issue of power is the issue of virtue or the issue of character which we have separated in our charismatic generation. In fact, we have been so taken up and mesmerized by power we haven't even asked or looked for or required the issue of character.

And therefore we put ourselves in a place of deception and following after men because they perform impressive things or appear to and then later we're shocked when they fall. But the Lord in his great wisdom keeps in harmony the issue of character and power. So virtue, I'm happy for that word and it's hardly ever used in our own conversation but leave it to Oswald Chambers to pick up on it.

Excuse me as I fumble and bumble my way through. I've got places marked which somehow disappear when you need them. Here, if you have my utmost for his highest you can make a note of the date, December 4th and he titles his selection, The Law of Antagonism because virtue is always going to be opposed.

The earth, the world is inhospitable to righteousness. So virtue is not obtained in some kind of vacuum but in a contention or striving against the spirit of the world of iniquity, of evil, of self-seeking. To stand for virtue and to acquire virtue is a contest and a struggle of a moral kind that builds the character of God and the one who stands for it.

So when Jesus said that he needs to be baptized that all righteousness be fulfilled he was talking about a moral condition and a moral requirement that he could not explain but he intuited that his identification with Israel's sin by coming into the waters of baptism was a moral thing. It was an identification appropriate to a son who's called to be Israel's messiah and cannot perform that messiahship in some kind of isolation or independence or superiority to the people to whom he has come as high priest. The high priest has got to identify with the sin of the people though he himself is sinless and that's righteousness.

It's a moral component and when the Holy Spirit came upon him the statement of the father's favor, this is my beloved son something was imparted to Jesus of the life of God that enables him to grow in grace and stature and then go into the wilderness again to be tested. So on December 4th, Chambers says morally it is the same. Everything that does not partake of the nature of virtue is the enemy of virtue in me and it depends on what moral caliber I have whether I overcome and produce virtue.

Immediately I fight, struggle, contend. I am moral in that particular. No man is virtuous because he cannot help it.

Virtue is acquired. Jesus felt the virtue go out of him as power to heal but how did it come into him? By standing for righteousness and for the things that are moral and acquired in his walk and conduct. So

what's the significance? That the same means by which he grew in grace and in stature is the means by which we grow.

By every act that is moral, that is contended against, that requires an exertion, that requires the enablement of God, an obedience pleasing in his sight requires the spirit because the spirit is given to them that obey him. Not obey him for trifles that we could perform out of our own humanity but obey him in requirements that are contrary to our humanity and that are keeping with the spirit of the world. God never calls us to what we can perform in ourselves.

The obediences are of an ultimate kind that glorify him and stand for righteousness in a world that is inhospitable, hostile. Therefore, God gives the spirit to those who obey him and in giving the spirit, the person who is obeying is not only receiving the power for that obedience but the character of God that resides in his spirit because the spirit of God is not an abstract energy, just a source of empowerment. It is empowerment but it is also God and his nature and character is in his life in the spirit.

So by the multiple and frequent exercises of obedience and righteousness for virtue, the character of God is being formed unto a son. Got the picture? You don't believe it or you don't desire it and in fact you would prefer to believe that Jesus has a magical source that we can only admire from a distance but never hope ourselves to emulate or to obtain. If that were so, he would not be the patterned son.

He is the patterned son because he has no advantage other than that which is available to us which is obtained on the basis of obedience over the issues that are moral, that are demanding and requiring for which the world is hostile and opposed. So it takes something to go down into the Jordan. It takes something to go down into Nazareth with parents who don't understand him and Nazareth being the lowest point morally in Israel and then the next verse says, having gone down, he grew in grace and stature with God and with men.

The act of going down, that moral choice was the key to the growth and so is it also with us. Back to Forsyth on his book, *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*. He writes, page 349, he grew in the grace in which he always was and in the knowledge of it as his personal history enlarged and ripened by every experience and as he was always found equal to each moral crisis, the latent Godhead became more and more mighty as his life's interior and asserted itself with the more power as the personality grew in depth and scope.

That's a remarkable paragraph that I'll repeat and try and take it apart but the first word is he grew. He grew in stature. He grew in sonship.

He was ripe when the time of his crucifixion came. He had come to a fullness of maturity in his character and life or else he could not have been the fit and appropriate sacrifice, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. It was not automatic.

It was not magical. It came through a process in a world that was contending against him by every moral choice that he made came the provision for growth in grace and we have lost this key entirely. We've lost the word moral.

We don't think in terms of growth and increase by acts of obedience by which God confers not only the power and the enablement but the character of his life. Something stature is increased by every act that's cumulative. So if we keep ourselves safe and have timid Christian lives and don't open ourselves for the

requirements of God that are frightening and just want to live a narrow prescriptive life that makes no demand, we lose every opportunity for growth in virtue and in the character of sons and that accounts for our immaturity, our weakness and our lack of being the impressive witness and testimony that God expects for the church to be formed in the image of the pattern son.

Got the idea? Like if you knew what it means to come and begin tonight or this morning or to continue is an act of obedience in which the dimensions are unknown, unfamiliar for which all previous speaking and experience does not fit you. This is altogether new and radical and a requirement. The stakes are high.

This is more than a meeting. This is more than a little successful country outing. Something of an ultimate kind is being propounded not only for those of us who are here but those who will see and hear through the tapes and the recordings so that the man who is on the spot has got to say with Paul who is sufficient for these things and everything that is natural in that man wants to stay in his room locked in safe with his books and just enjoy his own privacy and not risk and come to the place of this kind of requirement that cannot be performed except by the enablement of God by His Spirit.

But in believing and performing as raw and ratchety and awkward as this is something is happening the word becomes event more than instruction and remarkably something happens to the man who allows himself to be that servant and used in all of the fright and dread of being able to bear the word of God which is to say I am going to increase in sonship by virtue of my obedience to be here and to speak on certain things that are untested in which we're finding our way message by message. Got the idea? It's a moral challenge where the temptation is to play it safe speak the familiar thing that will assure blessing rather than take the risk of the uncertain that can prove transcendent and immeasurable in value both in time and eternity. So you see how I'm jerking and turning for once because I don't have this down.

I'm feeling my way through something not just for your sake but for my own. But the fact that I'm willing is a moral choice that imparts to me an enablement by the grace of God by His Spirit but not only am I receiving that grace I'm receiving the character and nature of God with the Spirit so that I will be something more in Australia because we have had these days together in New Zealand and you're receiving a greater benefit because I have already been obedient in Singapore before coming to you. So whatever our life whether we're speakers however we are obedient to the requirements of God and open to the demands of God we are in the process of growth and enlargement as sons and daughters of the Most High.

It's not magic. It's process of growth through obedience and the grace which is given by which I'm repeating myself over and over not only is the empowerment given for the obedience but in the giving of the Spirit is the giving of God. It's what He is in Himself.

His nature and character is conferred in that measure to the person who's obedient and that's how Jesus had virtue. That the mere touching of His body brought a healing because the other versions say the power went out from Him. Yes, the power.

It was power to heal but it was power that came through moral obedience in the following of the Father and His will at the cost to Himself. There was increase. So we need to become conscious of virtue.

The word needs to be restored and that the issue of power is also the issue of character and if we ever allow the two to become separated we're throwing the church into a dangerous condition of just being intoxicated by the display of power without having as much concern for its source and the character of Him

through whom the display comes. Got the idea? That's the road to deception. May we be as insistent upon character as we are desirous of power and never allow the two to be separated.

It was not separated for Jesus, it was not separated for Paul. Paul says, you know what manner of man I was among you from beginning to end. No one can accuse me of in any way bilking the church, taking advantage.

You know what manner of man and before God as my witness and men. Paul was bold in the declaration of his own character and is it no accident that he also displayed apostolic authority and power in proportion to the manner of man that he was in God. That's the apostolic formula different from the charismatic propensity that is hungry for power.

Why? Because we're bored, because the church is gray, because we need some kind of an excitement or stirring because we have not ourselves been walking consistently in the way of the Lord and the process of growth to maturity and sonship. And we need a compensation as excitement. See, it's a very different perspective as against the example that Jesus gave as patterned son and Paul following as in the apostolic way.

So let me read this paragraph again. He grew, I love that word, in the grace which he always was so to speak. He became what he was.

He became the son of God by his own conduct and virtue and character. He attained what he was by his true origin but he didn't come with it as a finished product and say here I am and you can admire me but you can't hope to emulate me. He lay aside what he later obtained through a process of growth through obedience.

We're going to need to hear this tape again and again until this begins to filter in as his personal history enlarged and ripened by every experience. Could that statement be made of you? Do you have a personal history that is ripened and enlarged by every experience so that what happened to you in Singapore when you stuck your face out and took the risk of speaking from Psalm 51 on the nature of man and sin in a favored environment where last time you were there they fell all over you and now you're risking the loss of that relationship by an untested message that they will not likely be able to understand being Chinese. That obedience brought more for you in the enlargement that came to me through that obedience and this obedience as I've said will redound to the benefit of Australians and my obediences in Australia which I cannot even now foresee what the requirement will be as I didn't foresee this.

I didn't come yesterday with a ground plan, I just came. But the obedience in Australia will redound to the benefit of the believers in Africa and so it goes and the process of growth in the personal history which we have by which we are enlarged and ripened by every experience. So I shared with someone today, was it this morning before we left where we were a brother who has known me over the years, he said Art your wine has mellowed something like that this last wine is the best wine I remember you from early years, I was blessed I was impressed, I was touched but now he says the wine has matured, you know it's passed through something and it's visible and I'm tasting something and receiving a benefit of a kind that was not available when you were younger in the Lord.

I'm receiving now the benefit of the mellowing of that vintage by the successive experiences that you've had in obedience since I have seen you last and over the years.

Praise God for that I'm not boasting myself saints, I'm just wanting you to be encouraged that there's a process of growth available to us all if we're open to obedience to the things to which we're called by God which are contrary to the flesh, will likely not be understood by those with whom we are even close, we may even have to offend our parents or our wives as Jesus himself did because his mother appeal was how could you hurt us like this and stay away and we have to come find you so she's making the Jewish mother appeal which is powerful and to the flesh and to the soul, how could you, she's putting the guilt trip on him but he let that bounce off him like the proverbial word of the ducks back but the answer don't you know I have to be about my father's business it doesn't matter how it hurts you, it doesn't matter that I'm unable to explain to you it doesn't matter that you're unable to appreciate this call of mine I must obey and fulfill in obedience the things to which I'm called even if it hurts you to the quick, many of us will bark exactly at that point when it comes to our own flesh there we draw the line, how can I do this and offend my own children, my own wife, my family they'll not understand, they'll misconstrue I'll be looked upon as radical or forfeiting the I don't know, whatever form it takes that's why the Levites were consecrated in the day when they stood on the Lord's side and strapped the sword onto their sides and went in and out of the camp and every man slew his friend, his brother and his neighbor, they had to cut flesh, they had to slay what was closest or they would not have been ordained as the Levitical priesthood it took that radical separation from one's own flesh and that's what it took for Jesus, that's what it took for Paul who was so hated of his own kinsmen that they threw dirt upon their heads and would not eat or drink or vow and vowed until this man was dead because he was not fit to live the great apostle, because of his greatness because of his obedience, by that same measure was the deepest offense to his own people and bore it, and that's why he grew in stature and apostolic maturity, power and authority that when he came to a pagan civilization like Thessalonica, it says he turned them from their idols to serve the living God because the word that came to them, he said was not the word of man but the word of God that performs a work in them that believe and later on in the assessment of his own apostolic history with the church at Ephesus, when it was time for him to tell them that you'll see my face no more you know what manner of man I was with you from the beginning the consistency of Paul of a moral kind had everything to do with the stature of God in him and the authority by which it was expressed to the upturning of pagan societies to serve the living God and forsake their idols and wait for the Lord who comes from heaven to save them from the day of his wrath.

It's a message today that hardly anyone would have the courage to preach even within the church.

He spoke to pagans with such power and such authority as that they believed it to the uttermost he had a history he was enlarged and ripened by every experience because it's God who calculates those experiences and out of his great sovereignty nothing happenstance every trial, every ordeal, every unforeseen thing that brings us to crisis of decision of a moral kind is engineered by God from the throne of heaven for our growth for our enlargement as well as the fulfillment of the things that pertain to his kingdom and to his glory. He was always found equal to each moral crisis. How come? Because the God who brought him to that crisis was equal in his godhood to provide for it there's no crisis to which you can be brought for which God would not be equal.

The question is are we willing to be brought to crisis or do we prefer to play it safe and so structure our Christian life so as to guarantee that such requirements will not be made of us we refuse to open ourselves to the possibilities of God's call that would precipitate as crisis. We don't want to face it because a crisis is painful and that pain is nothing other than the cross and in the bearing of it something is conferred from God that is more than just enablement it is also his nature and that's how Christ is formed

in us Paul's cry for the church that Christ be formed in them not by any magic but by the same means by which was formed in the Lord himself and by which was formed in Paul as apostle successive obediences to the radical requirement of God in moral issues that are crisis to which we open ourselves and are willing for his namesake that all righteousness be fulfilled so the latent Godhead became more and more mighty as his life's interior and asserted itself with more power as the personality grew in depth and in scope.

Anybody have a question? Thought? Comment? Can't hear you You said that people will be affected by decisions that we make you mentioned why why did you not mention husband?

Because what is the issue to the one is the issue to the other I should have said spouse but whether it's the wife facing the risk of adversely affecting her husband or a husband making a decision that would adversely affect his wife the crisis is the same and it comes to saints who seek to obey the Lord and move on with him and in fact almost invariably the choice of saints I know are in exactly that kind of predicament and their growth comes by facing it which if they chose to play it safe and to placate rather than antagonize they would likely have if not a more harmonious marriage one freer from conflict but they know that if they are obedient they will of necessity antagonize because the spouse is not in a place to understand that obedience I can say in that one statement I'm

describing my life in Christ for 41 years bless my dear wife she doesn't have an inkling of what her husband is about and wonders why it is I can't tell jokes like other speakers and why it is that I'm so often antagonizing audiences when she wants to have them feel nice so I've got a woman, Danish earthly, kind who wants people to be nice just to enjoy so she is agitated beyond measure when her husband in obedience has got to act in such a way as offends people rather than blesses them that's why she's not traveling with me she cannot stand the risk do you think so? so the flesh that is closest to us is the greatest trial and the greatest challenge to the issue of our obedience it's one thing to perform it before strangers but to perform it in a way that will adversely affect your Jewish

mother as my salvation did my mother cried out and slammed the door in my face when I came back from Jerusalem and shouted that the whole apartment house heard her he's gone mad, he's gone mad and I knew her bias against the Lord and what her reaction would be but that there was no choice in following after the Lord but incurring the indignation, anger and upset of a Jewish mother who had all her eggs in one basket me I was her hope and the whole vindication of a lifetime of disappointment and failure rested on her son this is Jewish mothers my son the doctor, my son the lawyer, my son the rabbi but my son the evangelist? so if you've not faced issues like this you have to ask how come is the program of God all finished in society and in your nation that such a requirement has not come to

you or have you consciously or unconsciously guarded yourself and not opened yourself to such prospect when I gave a message somewhat along these lines in the city where we came from Auckland I ended with a people to invite the Lord to bring the issue of the cross to their lives whatever the form that in his wisdom and love would be appropriate for themselves as individuals and they would pray right there at the conclusion Lord whatever manner or form I'm open and welcome the operation of the cross in my life and I think only a few responded to that invitation but the failure to respond was an act of willful rejection of that prospect of suffering for the Lord's sake that denied them the opportunity for growth and would bring other consequence that is not happy a decision was an

opportunity for decision was put before them and a decision was made for or against God and in fact that ought to be the character of all true preaching that requires of the hearer a decision for or against God but

we have too little of that because our speakers themselves are shrinking from the issue of the cross and are themselves playing it safe with the things that are predictable tested and will bring quote blessing and good feeling rather than agitation and all the rest to continue from Forsyth thus the sinless growth of Christ's character is in the very act of growth also of his objective achievement for us it is the moral process of man's salvation the gradual act of God it was only in history and then its actual conditions that he could realize all that was super historic within

him the deepening of his faithfulness was the emergence of his deity he was not acquiring deity he was unfolding it and especially in his lowest limits his divinest mastery shows the lower the greater the going down the greater the submission the greater the humiliation the greater the opportunity for the formation of the godly character of a son to be formed in him and that was exemplified in taking off his garment and girding himself with the symbol of a slave and washing the feet of the disciples but that one act subsumed all his acts all of his acts were in the character of humility of going down that the lowest limit revealed the divinest aspect of the character of God by which he became son the lower you go the greater the prospect the going down to Nazareth is the increase in grace

and in stature so his true ethical personality grew in an actual historic situation he counted for his age he inhabited the spiritual milieu the environment he filled a mighty place in the social situation of his land and his time he was first and foremost the ever receptive son of the Holy Father and he only did those things which were shown him of God his manhood was in perfectly active receptivity the issue of Jesus's manhood or sonship was in proportion to receiving and acting in obedience to the things that were shown him of the Father his obedience was his divinest achievement he didn't come to a place of the full deity of the truth of himself by a magical thing that he brought with him from heaven which he had laid aside he came to it by the progressive acquirement of obedience to

obedience so that by the time he came to the cross he was in the fullness of his identity of the son of God in his deity formed by obedience which he forfeited and lay aside he had now acquired through continual and progressive obediences to the Father isn't that a remarkable thing and he did it for our sake that we should have a pattern by which we would come to the place of maturity manhood sonship equally by obedience scripture in Hebrews 5 though he was a son yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered and having been perfected he became the author of eternal salvation to all who obeyed him to all who obeyed him Hebrews 5, page 9 take a note of that, in fact read it again brother that is the summation of all that I'm choking and gasping and spluttering and trying to

express that scripture sums it all up though he was a son yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered and having been perfected he became the author of eternal salvation to all who obeyed him good praise the Lord thank you Forsyth says his obedience was his divinest achievement and out of that obedience grew his vast creative commanding and even coercive effect upon the world his kingly rule is but the upper side of his filial sacrifice it's like a coin his rulership lord king is the topside of the underside of his sonship in submission and obedience if there's not the one there's not the other his identity with man lay in no mere continuity of substance but in his assumption of man's condition of personality and in his renunciation of gods he took upon himself the form of

man and that of a slave he didn't choose a select way because of his deity and origin from the father in heaven before his incarnation but chose freely to take upon himself man's condition and renounced his lay aside his deity it lay in his active acceptance of the human sin laden condition of communion with God as to make that that communion possible and real for every person that's what he did when he went down

into baptism in the Jordan he took upon himself the condition of the nation though he himself was sinless he identified with the sin by entering the waters of baptism and of repentance for which he had no personal need it was an act of taking upon himself the full identity of a man and of an Israelite and there was an act that so pleased the father that when he came up out of the

water the dove came down to meet him by the spirit as a sign of God's approval but also to confer something that moved him more deeply in character in the very image of God as a son he chose a way that makes communion possible and real for every personal soul so he's a pattern and a model for us but the first step of which is to be able to perceive the things to which we are called of God as obediences that will always represent a moral crisis of choice and to defer and to avoid is a decision of a kind that robs us of an opportunity for an impartation of God's spirit and character that would have moved us to grow in grace and favor with God as sons we need to recognize Jesus' growth as process but more than that as a pattern by which we also are invited to grow in our own stature in the

knowledge of God and in authority and power by obedience to obedience and to welcome the invitations to obedience that would constitute a challenge that we could not perform out of our own humanity or we would have no need for the impartation of the spirit as power they are radical obediences that cannot be performed except by the grace given but that grace, I'm repeating myself is more than the energy to perform it that grace is in the energy the nature of very God himself and something happens in that act that leaves a residue of virtue that can be tapped at some subsequent time to bring healing or deliverance to another to the degree that virtue has been built up in us so I had a remarkable experience in Malaysia my last trip only some months ago taken to a jungle outpost a camp being

built for the Malaysian army by a wealthy contractor who was my host he just wanted me to see the jungle and so it was an interesting trip but when I saw the camp being prepared something in my inner man said this first use might be for the army as a training post in jungle conditions but its subsequent and ultimate use will be a place of refuge for Jews in flight in the wilderness of Malaysia and when I shared that with this contractor he was overwhelmed he had no such thought and he said you need to pray for the project engineer I said gladly, so he takes me down to that shack where they have their blueprints and so on and I meet the man, he's a Chinese Buddhist and I'm trying to explain the impression that I have that there's a significance beyond what he can understand and as I'm

talking and praying I just went like this and as my hand just flicked his shoulder boom! the man went down like the proverbial sack of bricks, hit the pavement and his lips were moving and demons were pouring out it was like a demonstration of power that caught me utterly by surprise I didn't even come to think to pray that that would be affected and later on I pondered how just the merest touch, the flick of my hand accidentally boom! down he went and then it was at the very same time the Lord was opening to me the theme that I'm sharing with you that virtue went out from him and that if it went out it would also come in but by what means? by character by obedience, by righteousness by the requirement of it the moral choice something was built in Jesus in all of his cumulative obediences

to the Father and that somehow to the degree of my own obediences that there was that measure that brought that man down I've not seen anything like it since, maybe that was all that I had spent and now there needs to be a building up again by process of growth and stature through the obediences to which I'm called, of which my time here is one there's a second means by which the character of God is obtained and that is through communion in prayer and this is as much neglected by most saints as is the issue of obedience particularly prayer that goes beyond petition, where we should have gone on where we stop,

because that prayer is the waiting upon the Lord not for anything that we're going to receive in our utilitarian mentalities that we're willing to invest time waiting on the Lord if

there's a benefit, but that we give to the Lord because he's the Lord because there's an adoration, because there's a worship because there's an appreciation of him as God there's something that he deserves from us in which we should not seek any benefit, but simply make ourselves available to him in communion this is what Jesus did in his times before daybreak in seeking the Father and spending time with him in prayer it was not to press petitions like Father, what do I do today, and what are my instructions and ground plan, it was nothing like that, I don't think that he ever asked it, and I don't think that the Father ever answered it as prayer, but I think that what he did was to seek to be with the Father in prayer as communion and in that, something is imparted in that communion

that later enables Jesus to express authority and power and the character of God in the day that would subsequently unfold so we have two avenues for growth in God, one is obedience and conduct, and the other is fellowship and communion, and we are slack in both dimensions the communion is before day breaks while it's yet dark, and everything militates against it, you need your sleep, you need your rest you're not feeling anything your prayer sounds so hollow and unpleasing to yourself, so it's vain, why continue and why persist very few saints have any kind of continuous devotional relationship with the Lord and therefore they're losing a remarkable benefit because something happens in that communion even though it is unfelt, it is the Lord meeting us, and there's a residue of the

frequency of that communion that we may not be able to measure but will express itself as it did through Jesus and the requirements that were before him in his daily activity, we're weak we're lacking the stature of God in character the power of God in ministry because we are not in the communion by which the life of God and the character of God with that life will be imparted to us so I'll be taking this up again I'm sure before we're finished breaking fresh ground here and I want to disabuse you to whatever degree it remains with you, to think of Jesus in some magical way, that he came down from heaven, equipped in deity to perform the things that he did because he had this special ability not available to us but as we're told in Philippians and elsewhere and the verse in Hebrews that

was quoted to us he forsook, he emptied himself of his divine enablement as being God and took upon himself the form of man and emptied himself so that if there was any activity any miracle, any power, any demonstration it came by a means as available to us as it was to him if we will follow him as pattern sons, which includes daughters yeah what about his sinlessness what about his sinlessness in this well I think equally it was not magical but resisting temptation and walking in virtue in obedience it was the sinless life it was not a magical dimension available to him by which he was immune but in his manhood and struggle and conflict he faced the same issues that we face in our life and resisted sin and did not yield to it because he could not be there for the Lamb of God if in any

way he was in that wanting the lamb that was taken originally in the first Passover was kept four days in observation, it was selected on the 10th day of Nisan and it was slaughtered on the 14th day, the day of Passover why that requirement four days in observation because if there was found any defect in it it could not have served for the blood that would mark the lintel and the doorpost that death would pass over it had to be a lamb and a sacrifice free from all defect or taint Jesus himself had that requirement as the Lamb of God and he himself was on observation before the nation for four years three and a half actually but in Jewish measure a half constitutes the whole so he was sinless but not magically but by the same moral character by which he obeyed the father he also equally

kept himself and not the least of the significance of those obedience was the fulfillment of the requirement in Isaiah 53 that he would go as a lamb to the slaughter silently and when you read of the antagonism at the cross and the baiting by his own kinsmen come down and we will believe you that in his suffering when you're so prone in the anguish that you're bearing physically to be impatient when men will goad you the more and provoke you where you have every last reason to get back and let them have it and say you dum-dums and fools don't you see that what I'm suffering is for your sake and if I come down to gratify you I will have forfeited what is needed for your eternal salvation but instead of being provoked in his humanity to be goaded so as to answer he went as a lamb to the

slaughter silently so from the inception of his sonship to its conclusion it was an uninterrupted succession of obediences to the father under duress and strain not one of his obedience was easy it required an enablement of grace the Holy Spirit coming upon him as a dove and he made it all the way through and therefore the sacrifice was acceptable to the father because it was taken up in resurrection if that body had been found and is available to this day it would be the statement that there was some defect some want of obedience some imperfection in sonship that would have disqualified Jesus as the lamb of God and we would yet be in our sins his resurrection is the statement of the father's acceptance of a perfect lamb rendered through obedience and not through magic now we have a real

basis for worship now we have a real basis for adoration if it was only magical it was only that he came imbued with deity and could not do otherwise but a perfect life we would admire it but we would not worship him the worship and the what's the word adorn not adorn I lost the word adoration would never be a prospect for us if his accomplishment in his humanity was just an exercise in deity it's the basis for adoration because of the remarkable manhood and sonship that came through obedience by the spirit formed as virtue which he had to perform not only fulfill the design of God but to be for us a pattern and an example that we would follow after him in that way see what I mean and when I know that I admire him the more it's more than admiration my heart is tempted to break for the

glory of it and I have a provocation for more than just charismatic acknowledgement but adoration which itself is remarkable because it itself becomes a key of power I don't know how but it's like the final and last release of identification union with God breakthrough that requires the acknowledgement and awareness of what Jesus represented as the son of God who lay aside his deity and took upon himself the form of a man even that of a slave and bore it even unto suffering unto death at the cross the greatest humiliation to which a human being would be put so disgraceful a death that the Romans did not require it of anyone except criminals or rebels others who received capital judgment had their heads cut off as Paul but this cruel and humiliating thing that men bore nakedly before the

exposed eyes of all was the experience of Jesus so he who was very God and was with God eternally in the heavens in his pre-incarnate life left that voluntarily and freely to come down to the earth for this and bore it all the way through to the death even though in the garden when the impact and the weight of what was yet before him in anguish not only in physical torment but the conflict with evil which he himself had to become as sin bearer was so heavy upon his soul that he sweated drops of blood and cried out father this cup might pass but nevertheless not my will but yours went back and found his disciples sleeping and then he went back again and prayed the same prayer went back and prayed the same prayer the disciples were sleeping take your rest now it's over the father was not

bored by that prayer being recited three times it was a cry of anguish but he drank that cup and he drank it dregs to the full or not one of us would be here today and there'd be no prospect for the salvation of the

people Israel this is more than admiration and it's got to strike our hearts and evoke a worship that is long overdue and that the modern church has not been capable of expressing because it has not understood his pre-incarnate life and what he lay aside in order to take up and take it up in full until the bitter end Jesus was an orthodox Jew and he had to be impaled upon the cross between criminals and unable even to cover his privacy and to be exposed before the view of his people in utter shame and to listen to their goads and to their jeers and yet not retaliate in word

but go silently to the slaughter only to say father lay not this into their charge this is a son and whom the father is well pleased and he came to that ultimacy as a son through the succession of every single obedience that he bore in his personal history with the father the same means by which our growth is available also got the picture want to pray for enlargement do you have a personal history are you conscious of it do you see the issues that come before you as being a crisis of a moral kind in which you make a choice and decision and if you say yes to the Lord it's an acknowledgement that you're mere dust and incapable that you're going to stagger and choke and splurge and not know how it will come out and trust God for enablement and in that enablement something is conferred to

the obedient son that he did not have before that act that he retains and a residue is formed by each obedience of virtue and power by which he serves God the more and grows into the stature of a son Lord we love your way I do I'm so happy it's not magical because then we would look at the sleight of hand and admire it but would make no requirement of us but you have established a pattern of what it means to be a son how to grow in grace and in stature as a son and Lord we thank you that the opportunity is before us and we ask you forgiveness that when you had put before us a certain challenge of a moral kind we shrank from it we stepped aside we let it pass we were unwilling to take the risk of offending our flesh of hurting our wives our children or our congregations and we missed the

opportunity for growth as well as the benefit they would have received by our obedience though at first they would have received it as offense so Lord forgive us for every past failure of neglect of not even recognizing what you had put before us as challenge forgive us that whole history of neglect that accounts for our present immaturity and that we're not in the place of sons to the degree that we would have been had we obeyed every challenge that had come till now but Lord let our latter days be more glorious than the former now that you're stressing this now that you're making it clear that it was not magic by which you attained to maturity we ourselves want to follow you in the way and I suspect that before these days are over even tonight there'll be something put before us as

challenge as requirement in which we could say yes or no to God and make a moral decision by which he will confer to us not only the enablement of the grace of the spirit but the character and nature of his life Lord may Christ be formed in us because when he's formed in us in the totality of the body as the church Zion will have been attained out of which the deliverer comes by which Israel shall be saved bring that Zion Lord by the constitution of the body come to maturity as sons and we thank you and give you praise in Jesus name and God's people said amen thank you Lord not easy did you say yes no it's been hardship struggle anguish stupefying it's like a woman I've had this twice now both with European women living on the other side of the moon they have another mentality they have

another subjectivity what seems to me so evident from my Hebraic believing perspective is to them non compass mentis they can't see it can't understand it my wife's devotion to her children like a mother bear with her cubs has been the ruination of my two sons but what does she say to me be careful how you talk to Ariel because it's you who has got him in this condition why you're preaching to him so don't preach the

one thing he needed was preached I mean he needed a word from God here's the tested servant circulated throughout the world blessing but to my own son my wife discourages me from being to him but I am to others and that it's your preaching that has brought him to this condition rather than her indulgence in the flesh that has kept him from responsibility and maturity so what

do you what do I do when I hear that swallow it down suffer it and pray for the day in which God by his grace will bring her to see and to understand as he sees and that he she will be a trophy for the Lord who has already brought her a great distance from her Danish origins being molested by her father raped in her teens a candidate for suicide in her adolescence to a place where she is now tonight serving God in Israel on the West Bank with Palestinian Christians making nice see something is coming together as I often said the best thing I've ever done for my sons my family my wife even the absences that obedience to God has required is obedience he will save them he will deliver them he will bring her to a place of a final maturity of seeing eye to eye it was good for me to bear the

tension and conflict and strain of a gentile woman who's completely different in every point in particular from her husband because that tension and conflict was the shaping of godly character patience forbearance in the image of the Lord he would have done me a disservice if he had given me a raven-haired Jewish wife a believer just like me and we would have gone sailing along in perfect harmony he gave me the best perfect thing for my own growth as a son a gentile carnal earthly woman who loves to fill the walls with bric-a-brac and all the rest and acts in such a way as to make me my hair go straight up it was good for me it was a gift and the turning point is my recognition of that instead of being chafed and arguing with God for having made an unwise decision to recognize the greater

wisdom and to bow before him and thank him for the privilege of what he has given me as unspeakable gift and that she herself is a sufferer because she does not have a husband and house and white picket fence and the kinds of things that her carnal heart would have delighted she's got a man who's all over the world and gone and she's facing also the tensions and the differences not understanding that she is that provision to bring her husband to a Christ-likeness and that she will share in the reward and the eternal glory of it so she suffers it without understanding which is the greater suffering so how many of you are in situations like that and don't look upon it as some inadvertent happenstance that has just happened receive it as gift grace and the sovereignty of God who knows the

end from the beginning and he's perfect in all his ways because the issue of Christian character and Christ-likeness which we will bear through all eternity will far eclipse any anguish that we've had to bear in the course of the difficulties that have been our experience through these means we've got to see the end knowing where he had come and from whence he was going he was able to rise knowing where we have come and where we're going we're able to bear so Lord we thank you you do all things well unquestionably and you don't even have to explain it to us there's not one of us whose spouse has not been selected by you because you knew exactly what we needed left to ourselves our choice would have been flesh gratifying but not a factor for growth and character so we bless you Lord and

bless those spouses who have had to suffer us and be to us what was needed without understanding and that there'll be an eternal recompense and a joy unspeakable for the mystery of all this Lord as a fellow sufferer with those who have and are presently in the situation I have an ability to bless them and that my blessing is not a little chintzy beep but is substantial and authoritative to the degree that I'm a son of obedience and have borne this I can pray blessing on those who are bearing it bless them Lord and sustain them by your upholding spirit and give them fresh encouragement in what seems to be the face of

utter hopelessness if not despair that after all these years nothing has happened and in fact if anything the situation seems more despairing and hopeless than ever but Lord

when it's darkest we're the closest to the breakthrough and to the hope and we know that you do all things well and that it's a privilege to bear in some measure your suffering if we're not persecuted from without we're persecuted from within and under our own roofs and in our own homes and from our own flesh and blood so Lord we thank you for the provision of it give us the grace to understand and to receive it with gratitude that its purpose might be fulfilled and that you might have a people for your name a Zion out of whom Israel's deliverer comes and we thank you and give you praise for the mystery of your will and the perfection of it in Jesus name Amen Good I'd like you to make a couple when you talk about your wife being in the West Bank and trying to make some kind of

communication between Christian, Palestinian and Zion that will be blessed by God since it's its purpose that people will make peace and a couple of months ago this young man at the church came to me when I was talking about making peace about the Middle East he came and told me Lord no no I hear you you're very wrong what we need first to do is to make peace with Lord before we can make peace in any other way and I find it very twisting because I thought that the Lord purpose already has given us the capability to at least try to make peace with ourselves and maybe when we are able to make peace with ourselves then perhaps we'll be able to make peace with the Lord.

Paul said in his early conversion so much as in me lies I preach the gospel so much as in me lies I make peace I'm not waiting for us to be perfected and then I will try to be a minister of reconciliation so much as in me lies I act now.

My precious wife saw to it that she brought 12 wedding gowns from Bemidji Minnesota to Abud on the West Bank of Israel so that the matriarch, the wife of this little clan, Christian Arabs would have a source of income by renting out the wedding gowns to women who could not afford to buy them and that this would be a livelihood for a people whose former income derived from their employment in Israel is now cut off I would not have thought of that in a million years nor would I have bothered myself to pack and bring and deliver 12 wedding gowns, this is my anger, this is anger so she's a precious woman and a very special vessel in practical ways though she says why can't you tell jokes like other speakers okay thank you Lord, be in prayer for every session, we're on a divine course, you can

hear even the way as we began tonight how awkward to begin to break ground that alters our understanding and is part of the content that the Lord is putting before us and that he will conclude it joyously but I don't now know what tomorrow morning will be, so session by session the Lord has to give it and he doesn't give it in full, he gives it with a hint or a whisper or suggestion, you take all your Bibles, your sources, don't even know what's going to be quickened or employed and you begin in obedience trusting the enablement of God as grace, okay so we prophetic men are required not only to exposit but to demonstrate the word that is being set before you hope you see that and appreciate that bless you about Yeshua in his time on earth twice I sort of thought there were times when he

displayed a little bit more than humanity, one was that time when he had everyone besieged and they were going to throw them over a cliff and he disappeared in a crowd and the other time when he healed the deaf and the dumb and that was a messianic sign because they knew it was only Mashiach to deliver them but they said no it wasn't from God when they knew it was somebody's going to have to interpret you for me because there's something about your voice that is very difficult for me to hear, can somebody sum

up what this lady is saying, she's saying that when the Lord was on the earth he displayed some supernatural powers and things like that and she's asking I guess how that fits with the man having no more access than we have it wasn't just for healing, it was a specific healing and

that was when he infuriated the pharisees because he healed that man that was deaf and dumb and they knew that only Mashiach could do that, that was the sign of Messiah but his every miracle was performed in the power of the spirit as any and every miracle must and the Holy Spirit is given to them that obey him so he received with every obedience the enablement by the grace of the spirit that's my whole theme tonight he didn't come with it full blown and then act out of his deity and an ability to perform supernatural things he performed them out of a grace given in the obedience by the spirit by which virtue was built up in him because it was a moral choice to confront the pharisees and to antagonize them but he never withheld himself he was an obedient son to the father in every act and

that way he's the pattern had he come with a magical resource being God the miracles would have been performed but the issue of character and the pattern for us would have been lost that's the substance of the whole that we've been speaking tonight desire thou to be sons? that's ultimate it's a choosing and it's not automatic

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