

Faith, Love and Obedience

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a genuine faith in Jesus, demonstrated by a personal relationship with Him, and loving others as a selfless expression of that faith.

Duration: 1:30:08

Scripture: 1 John 5:1

Topics: "Obedience"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by expressing his struggle in choosing between two sermons to deliver. He then focuses on three fundamental elements in our relationship with God. The first element is obedience to God's commandments, which the preacher emphasizes as crucial for believers. He compares disobedience to rebellion and equates it to witchcraft. The second element is the biblical treatment of one's spouse, emphasizing the importance of showing true love and laying down one's life for their partner. The third element is the love of God, specifically the love of God the Father and Jesus Christ, which is a response to what they have done for believers. The preacher encourages the congregation to reflect on the Easter message and express gratitude to the Lord for His love and sacrifice.

Transcript

Take this service, Lord, and let it be in your hands. From the very beginning, in all that we're going to do, and to the end, Lord, wouldn't you rule by your grace? Amen. We read from 1 John chapter 5. From the first verse to the third.

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves him who begot also loves him who is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome.

We'll read thus far. I am troubled today, very much, because actually I've got two sermons on my heart, and my struggle has been which sermon I should use and which one I should leave. There is so much on my heart.

I was going to speak on this theme that everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ, he is born of God. And to look at this question, what does it mean to believe that Jesus is the Christ? Now that was going to be my sermon, because it is essential for people to know, because it is very easily done to glibly say, yes

of course I believe Jesus is the Christ, he is the anointed one, the Messiah. And then as I considered leaving this one, I decided to use it for next Sunday, until it dawned upon me that it's the wedding next Sunday.

Now it is crucial that we believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that determines whether we are born of God or not. Now believing that Jesus is the Christ is absolutely crucial, and here are one or two points, I'm going to share them anyway because maybe I won't get another chance to share this. If you believe that Jesus is the Christ, you also believe that Jesus is the prophet, the priest, the king.

Now that in itself is just so full of meaning. For instance, is Jesus the prophet to you? Now you do your homework at home, take your Bible, and examine this matter about Jesus being the prophet, what does it mean? And then that he is the priest, what is the explanation? How are we to understand it? And that he is the king, what is the meaning of that? We had a funeral just these days here, and just in passing we looked at the subject of the king. Or of royalty, we looked at the family or the nation of Belgium, where there was a certain law which the Belgian government wanted to be passed.

And I think it might have been related to the abortion issue. And the king of Belgium at that time said, I refuse to sign this into law while I am the king of this nation. So what did they do? The nation of Belgium dethroned him, passed that abortion law, then enthroned him again.

Then put back his crown. That is sheer mockery of the royalty there. It is just rebelliousness against the king of that time.

Now in the Christian faith, many Christians are apt to do the same thing. They understand that their king, King Jesus, doesn't want them to do something, so they just dethrone him temporarily, just for a little while. They do what their craving demands, then they enthrone him again, and they say, alright Jesus, you can be my king again.

And that is a wicked thing. They dethrone him, then they do their own thing, and then they throne him again. You are an evil person.

You are Satan if you do such a thing in your spiritual life. You belong to the devil. That is where you belong.

Now, let me go beyond this theme of Jesus as the Christ, asking, is Jesus really the Christ to you? Now, in these three verses that I've read, John is showing to us three things that are of absolute crucial value to him regarding our relationship to God. Fundamental elements in our relationship with God. In the knowledge of God.

Firstly, faith. Secondly, love. Thirdly, obedience.

Now, there was a certain story I was going to tell you about the nation of the Germans. Now, this is it. In the pre-historical Germany, in the year around about 300-400 A.D., when it was still in the early days, an Englishman came.

Someone came from Britain and preached the gospel there in those Germanic areas. He went up and down the areas of Germany. Now, if this information is correct, it is said of him that he with his own hands baptized 300,000 of those Germanic tribes.

I was going to tell you the story of that Englishman who came to Germany to bring the gospel. For from that, I have to ask the question, preachers alive now in this world, how many have you personally led to the Lord? You Christians. How many have you brought to Christ? The Germans called that Englishman Winfried.

One day, the Lord willing, as we get an opportunity from the Lord, we can look at this man's life. But let's get back to our text for today. John says this, whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, the one who believes or has faith, in the Greek it is pistoio, meaning faith.

Now, what does it mean if it says, the one who believes? What does it mean to believe in the Lord? In Africa, it has become traditional to think that if a person becomes a Christian or a believer, he puts on different clothing, church clothing, that identifies him as a Christian. Or he does a certain hairstyle. Or putting on a certain covering.

Now, what is believing? Many say they believe, they believe in God. James tells us that Satan also believes in God. The demons believe in God.

But they tremble and shake. While the people of his day, when Jesus was alive, said, well, he's just the son of Mary and Joseph, the demons already knew. They were casting down those who they had possessed, saying, this is the son of God.

So, what does it mean to believe in God? So, James says, don't just easily accept that faith is the real faith, the genuine article. For many will say they believe, but on the day of judgment, be condemned. There is just the statement where a person says, I believe in Christ.

But if that faith is just like the demonic faith where they know, they believe that God is there, Jesus is there, then it doesn't help. So, you must take your faith, examine it, see whether it is the genuine faith or not. John continues and says, What James continues and says, unless you show by your works, by the way you behave, that you have faith, that you believe, your faith is dead.

You might say that you believe in Satan. You might say that you believe, but your faith is on a par with demons. It's a faith that is to be utterly condemned and thrown away with the devil.

So, what is true faith? What is it like? How is it? In the epistles of John, you have to understand this, that believing, or faith, is an object. It is an object. You must understand that it is an object.

You must condemn the world. John always associates believing with the object of that belief, with the object of that faith. It's not a directionless thing, but it has a target, faith in something.

In the epistles of John, you have to understand this, that believing, or faith, is an object. It is an object. You must condemn the world.

Now, in everything that John wrote, in his epistles and in the gospel according to John, when he speaks about believing, it's always in relation to a person. It's faith in a person. Faith not only requires that something is held true, but that someone has entered into one's life.

Grasp this carefully. Listen to it carefully, for without understanding this, you've lost the crux of the matter. According to John, faith is not only, or faith, not only requires that something is held true, that you believe, it's true, but that someone has entered into your life.

So John always assumed faith that was relational, that meant a connection to one who has entered into your life. John never meant faith as in believing a set of historical facts. What a wonderful secret.

What a wonderful revealed mystery. It shines brightly. And it is absolutely clear from John that he didn't mean faith that this happened, that happened, that Jesus was born on earth and that he died and rose again.

All of those facts, demons know that that happened. These are historical facts. But John meant it's a faith that is personal and brings about a relationship.

The one you have faith in enters into you. John, the great counsellor, may be the best and greatest of all counsellors that has ever lived in this world, apart from our Lord Jesus Christ. If you would sit down in his office and he asked you, do you believe in Christ? Then he'd make it clear to you that someone must have entered into your life.

John, the great counsellor, may be the best and greatest of all counsellors that has ever lived in this world, apart from our Lord Jesus Christ. If you would sit down in his office and he asked you, do you believe in Christ? Then he'd make it clear to you that someone must have entered into your life. It denotes a commitment to that person, a special agreement.

And after that, you confess, you say it out aloud. And after that, you confess, you say it out aloud. In the New Testament understanding, faith meant believing in the heart unto righteousness and confession with the mouth unto salvation of what you have believed in.

So this first question on this is, do you believe in Jesus? Some are full of doubtful answers. Well, I hope so, I think so, but this has happened to my life and this has come upon me. To another one, if you ask, do you really believe in Jesus as the Christ? They answer very often as, well, I'm trying to, I'm trying.

But that shows your doubt. You're mixing it with doubt. If I ask a person, If I ask a person, are you married? And they answer, well, I'm trying.

What does that mean? What does it imply? You schoolchildren? If you ask him, are you married? And he has to answer, well, I'm trying. I'm hoping so. What does that mean? And if that man had to say, I'm unsure whether I'm married or not.

Well, that's the type of faith that goes nowhere. If you have that type of faith in the Lord, it means that you belong to the devil. You're on your way to hell.

If I ask a wife, have you got a husband? And she says, I'm trying. I'm unsure. You boys, what would you say? You would say, she's not married.

Because if she's married, you would say, she's not married. If she is, then she's insane. She needs to be taken to a clinic and she needs mental help.

To the one who is married? You can ask him. Well, next Sunday, you try it out. Because there's going to be this double wedding.

Now after the wedding, you go to one of these couples or one of those who have got married and you ask them, have you got a wife or have you got a spouse now? And the person answers, well, I'm unsure. I'm doubtful. I don't know.

You would say that person really has a mental problem. And you will quickly take that person for prayer and say, please, this person needs special prayer and deliverance. They are so confused and their mind is gone.

That is a relationship faith. So you cannot have a person who is engaged or has got married answering back, well, I don't know if I'm engaged. I'm not sure if I'm married.

No, it is a relationship faith. They know because they've entered into a relationship with that person. When they stand before the altar, there is a question asked, do you agree to get married to this person who will be your spouse? And that person needs to say so.

They are making a commitment and they sign that it's true. Then there is no doubt after that. The same spiritually.

The same spiritually. The person who has made that commitment to Jesus Christ saying, Lord, I surrender. I commit my life to you.

Enter into me and I receive you to come into my life. The Lord takes that upon his promise where he has said, behold, I stand at the door and knock. And if anyone opens the door, I will come in.

That shows a faith, which is a relationship faith. It has happened. You don't have to make that commitment ten times or a hundred times.

That first decision, Jesus takes you upon your word and he enters into your life as you commit yourself to him. So genuine belief, real faith means that it's a relationship. He has entered into your life.

The Lord Jesus Christ has come into you. It's no longer a useless faith, which is just on a par with demonic faith or what Satan believes. No, now it is a true genuine faith that has real effect in your life.

Now go to the second point. Remember we had said firstly faith, secondly love. And if it speaks about the love towards God, it means the love of God and agape love.

But it doesn't mean a sensual love, a prostitution type love, a homosexual love. If the Lord spares me for next Sunday, my aim is to speak about love and marriage. Love is not a prostitution.

It is a love of God. If the Lord spares me for next Sunday, my aim is to speak about love and marriage. Real love is a committed love.

It is something that is genuine. It's not a sensual love in the sense of a person sleeping with somebody else and then they move on to someone else. That is not love.

That is just a prostitution, lustful love. Or to cohabit, to live together saying, well I love this person. That is not real love.

You are actually helping that person towards hell. You hate that person. That is not real love.

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You are actually helping that person towards hell. So-called same-sex love is not love at all. Because you are driving that person to death, to hell, because of this type of relationship.

And you don't even love yourself. You are committing suicide. Suicide is self-hatred.

You must know the difference between lust and love. It all starts with hell. But it's two completely different things.

It's lust, not love. It's lust, not love. Marriage means a committed true love.

If a person has been sleeping around and not keeping themselves pure for their spouse, it's a bestial, dog-like love. It is lust and has got nothing to do with real love. Love we receive from God.

Real love brings life. It does not murder. It brings life.

God so loved us that He committed Himself in giving His only begotten Son to die and suffer for us, to give us eternal life. He doesn't bring death through His love. You go to a girl and mess around with her, petting her and causing her to lose her virginity.

Don't bluff her by saying that you love her. That's a lie. You are a hater of that person.

You hate them. You are killing that which is pure and you're sending them to hell. You're a murderer, spoiling, killing her life, her pure, precious life.

You're an evil boy. You're an evil man. You're a murderer, spoiling, killing her life, her pure, precious life.

You're an evil boy. You're an evil man. You're a murderer, spoiling, killing her life, her pure, precious life.

You're an evil man. You're a murderer, spoiling, killing her life, her pure, precious life. You're an evil man.

And so a person who truly loves the one they're going to get married to keeps themselves pure so that they are a blessing in life to their future spouse. Now, in the same way, if you mess around with a person, that is not love. You're flirtatious with them, perhaps by using your cell phone, flirting with SMS and whatever.

And you parent you by that cell phone for your child, with which they can see pornography and all sorts of things. You're showing hatred and not love. You're murdering your own child.

You carried that child. You fed that child. You didn't deport it.

But when it's alive, you strangle it. You kill it. You cut its throat.

You throw her to evil men. Things right out of hell. You're a murderer, spoiling, killing her life, her pure, precious life.

You're an evil man. You're a murderer, spoiling, killing her life, her pure, precious life. You're a murderer, spoiling, killing her life, her pure, precious life.

You're an evil man. Satan is able to enter onto the very tongue of a person where they can speak about loving things and it's actually hatred from hell. Now, I lay this out before you, because I want you to understand.

I want it to be absolutely clear that if we speak about this love, that a person's mind is changed. I want this to influence you, that it will bring about a change in your mind, lest you think of something else when we

speak of this. You have a wife.

You have a wife who has borne you children. And she is now a mother of your children. And yet, in defiance of that love, you now say you love somebody else.

You fall in love with some other girl. That is not love. That is hatred.

You're a killer. You are bewitched by a great sorcerer out of the bottomless pit. You think you love that lady.

You don't love her. You hate her. You ought to kill her.

And you kill your own wife and your own children. This is tantra. Is it clear to you? Can we leave this point and continue? Can we continue now to the next point that we don't have to use up the whole time on this? Remember that this love is the love of God.

God the Father. Agape love. And we love Him because He first loved us.

And if we are born of God, we love Him. We love God. We love our Lord Jesus Christ because of what He has done for us.

We love our Lord Jesus Christ because of what He has done for us. You've had Easter services recently. You've heard the Easter message of what Jesus did for you.

How He suffered for you. I ask you, have you been back to the Lord, been on your knees before Him and saying, Lord, I thank you. I praise you for what you've done.

Thank you for your love for me. I love you, Lord Jesus. Have you done it? Or have you not? Have you responded to the love of God like that? Have you been to Him and thanked Him and said, Lord, I love you because you've loved me.

I thank you for suffering and dying for me. If you have not done that, then I doubt that you really understand what the love of God is. We find that in chapter 4 verse 19 where it says, we love Him because He first loved us.

But continue and see where this text takes us to. If someone says, I love God and hates his brother, he is a liar for he does not love his brother whom he has seen. Or if he does not love his brother whom he has not seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? Let me repeat the last part.

His brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from him that he who loves God must love his brother also. And in chapter 5 verse 2 he says, therefore, by this we know the ones who are the children of God when we love God and keep His commandments. The natural thing, if you start verse 1 and 2, then you'll say, when we love God, then we love our brothers in Christ.

But John changes the thing and says, if we love the brothers, then we love God. But John changes the thing and says, if we love the brothers, then we love God. But John changes the thing and says, if we love the brothers, then we love God.

People very easily say, I love the Lord. But if that person doesn't love their brethren and they are fighting with their brethren and they are upset and angry and they are hating their brethren, the Bible says that person is a liar. I'd love the Germans in Germany to hear that.

And the pious people that claim to be children of God, they are liars. Hell will be filled with Christians unless they repent. If you say you're a child of God, you don't love with a divine love, 1 Corinthians 13, your brother, you're a liar.

You don't go to heaven and those people have got to repent. And if they don't repent, don't expect to see them in heaven, you'll see them in hell. We take faith and say, well, that's our tradition.

It belongs to our family or our neighborhood. It's our culture. It belongs to us, to our group.

Everything outside of it doesn't concern me. I can do whatever I like. If you don't love the man who's born of God, you can't love God.

You're a liar. You're living in a fool's paradise. You gossip about him.

You spread lies about him. You speak evil about him. The Bible says, if you don't love your brother who's born of God, you're a liar if you say you love God.

You don't love him. That is the proof that you love God. That is the sign that you love God by loving your brother and your sister in Christ.

Now, let's go further. Let's go further than just speaking about foreign nations and how you feel about them. What about just those that you're with, those that are close to you? Do you love them with God's love, with a holy love? And the Bible says that if you love your brother, you will lay down your life for him.

Or are you doing the opposite? You speak evil about that person. Instead of that love towards them, you're speaking evil behind their back, spreading rumors. You're a person of hell.

So John has taken John has taken this whole matter and dissected it, as it were, for us. He has laid it out for us, laid it out clearly, piece by piece. Because if you look at the Christian world, it is utter confusion, a mixture.

Things are unclear in comparison to John laying it out so clearly. Whether you are a white, with your brothers, now blacks, maybe it's not from your family or from your nation. But you will love whoever is born of God with a sacrificial love, wanting to lay down your life for him.

And it doesn't matter what nation they are from. They don't have to be from your race or from your nation. Whether they are coloreds or Indians or other groups, you will love that person with the greatest compassion.

You will love that person with the greatest compassion. Being related because you are born of God. And that person, doesn't matter where they're from, doesn't matter what racial group or what nation.

If you're just thinking of your own type or your clique or your race, then that's got nothing to do with this love, where that brother is in you. You're united because you're born of the same father. I come now to the last point about obedience.

Now obedience is essential. Remember now we've started by looking at faith first and love and now obedience. The word says, this is the commandment, this is the new commandment which I give to you, that you love one another.

Now you've heard that you cannot love God if you don't love your brethren. Now there is a strong connection between loving God and obeying God. Loving God is not just emotional feelings.

It's not just something that is emotional or that you feel. There are some things which you can feel emotionally and it's physical. I once came across a difficult and tragic situation.

It was about a woman who would stand in the front of the church during the worship time and waving her arms with her bright nails and toenails. The very same person who was worshipping the Lord there in church would get back into the car in the parking area with her husband and speak badly to him. Having a fight with her husband and she was worshipping and praising God.

Those things can only happen in the last days. That's an abomination. Just an emotional thing.

If that woman truly loves God, if she truly loved God, she would have been obedient to her husband as well and known what God's word says about her relationship to her husband. She would have listened to him, obeyed him, submitted to him. Instead she sits on his head and does something that is wicked and it's not the oil of Aaron that comes down his head.

True agape love, holy love, always is associated with action. If you truly love a person, that love is a sacrificial love. You are willing to lay down your life for that person.

Ephesians 5. And exactly the same. The same thing applies to the husbands. Ephesians 5 says, Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church.

Is that the love that you have? Or is there something grieving the Holy Spirit and you don't have this love? So out of love and respect for God, we will do what he says. The love of God is not just a superficial thing. Look at Acts chapter 5 where they responded, you and said, well you tell us, who shall we obey? Shall we obey you, earthly authorities, or shall we obey God? Obedience to God is absolutely essential.

Don't make it something less than what it is. It is crucial that you are obedient to God. We must obey God more than men, whether it is your wife, your child, your husband, even your earthly king, or those in authority.

You must obey God more than them. We must obey God more than men, whether it is your wife, your child, your husband, even your earthly king, or those in authority. You must obey God more than them.

You young person, you say you are afraid to give yourself to the Lord. You say I am too scared to give my life to the Lord because my friends will mock me. Well, what are friends anyway? What are human beings? They are here today and gone tomorrow.

Yesterday I saw something where I just had to say, yes, it is true. It was in a newspaper where it was written, the one with whom you gossip will be the same person who gossips about you tomorrow. These three fundamental elements must be there in your relationship and knowledge of God.

These days somebody came to me and said, I met with so-and-so and that person was so angry, they were so upset. As this person told me, oh I spoke to so-and-so and that person was irritated, upset and

angry. Then I said, hey, I don't believe what you say.

I think you're telling me a lie. Can a person be at Quasisabantu and get upset, annoyed and angry? I'm sorry my friend, I don't believe what you tell me. It doesn't go in my head that a person can live at Quasisabantu and get upset and angry.

You must be lying. You can go, I don't accept what you say. I can't believe it, that a person can be at Quasisabantu and can get upset, annoyed and angry.

I said no. That's not true of Quasisabantu people. That's a blatant lie that you are telling me.

I said, go, don't waste my time with you. A person from Quasisabantu doesn't get irritated and angry and upset. Below the top, I cannot accept it.

It doesn't enter into my head. Is there somebody here at Quasisabantu who can get annoyed? Then I say, you child of the devil, repent today. You know where my office is? And come in dust and ashes.

You're a disgrace to us. I expect a holy life from everyone. If you tell me there's somebody who gossips, I say no.

I can't believe it. A person from Quasisabantu should gossip. I want to see that person.

You bring him to me. That's where I stand. Where do you stand? Faith.

Living faith. True and real love. Divine love.

And obedience. From A to Z. Let's pray. We arise at the end.

Help us, Lord, that we won't just be hearers, but doers. And keep your word. That the whole world would acknowledge that we don't have a faith that is just on the level of the devil, or that is a dead faith, but a faith that shows that we are in a relationship with the living God.

Through true love of the brethren, showing that we truly love your God. And a godly obedience that destroys obedience to the lusts of the flesh or the lust for the bottle of alcohol or drugs. We ask you, Lord Jesus, that your grace would be with us, and not only with us, but in us, permeating our whole being.

Teaching us, O Holy Spirit, what it is to deny the world and all of its lusts and everything in the world, and to live for you. Amen.

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