

Choose to Obey

by Friedel Stegen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility and submission to God's word, warning against the danger of rejecting it and the consequences of doing so.

Duration: 1:02:51

Scripture: Exodus 20:2-3, Acts 7:37-39

Topics: "Obedience"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not allowing Egypt, symbolizing sin and worldly desires, to remain in our hearts and lives. He highlights how easily we can turn back to our old sinful ways, even after experiencing God's deliverance. The preacher emphasizes the significance of accepting and obeying the living word of God, as spoken through the Bible and preached by ministers. He encourages Christians to surrender fully to God and remove any remnants of Egypt from their lives, so that they can live a fruitful and victorious Christian life.

Transcript

We worship Thee, our living Savior Jesus Christ. There is none like Thee, Thou who has the whole universe in Thy hand. We waiting for Thy return.

And may we be ready to be taken up in the clouds to meet Thee. We thank Thee that Thou art not a dead God, but that Thou art alive. And the word Thou hast given us brings life and is life.

And wherever Thy word is proclaimed today, may it be proclaimed in power, may it touch many a heart. And those that are physically not well, wouldst Thou bestow Thy heavenly, Thy risen power in their frail bodies. And all those that are frail in their spirit, please renew those spirits that they might be renewed with new power and strength.

And as we ponder over Thy word, may Thy word be alive and quicken us to newness of life, that we might bring honor and glory to Thy name. Amen. I'd like to read a portion of scripture out of the book of Acts, chapter 7. We all know this portion of scripture where Stephen was had to appear before the high priests.

And in verse 39 we read Stephen said that our fathers refused to obey him. They rejected him in their hearts, turned back to Egypt. In verse 37 we read, this is that Moses who told the Israelites God will send you a prophet like me from your own people.

In verse 38, he was in the congregation in the desert with our fathers and with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai. And he received living words to pass on to us. But our fathers rejected and refused to obey him.

And that pertains to us today. How easily is it that we reject or refuse to obey the word of God? When God's word is brought, we have the ability to accept it or to reject it. And from the experiences of those two young boys, they said we rejected, we refused to submit to the word of God.

And it is like that till this very day. We all have the ability to reject or to accept God's word. And everyone has the choice to choose whether he wants to reject or whether he wants to accept.

God has given us that choice. He never forces anybody, but he allows everyone to make his own decision. And as we are listening this morning to the word of God, we will choose whether we reject it or whether we accept it.

And that is the danger with God's word. Because we are so used to be told what we've got to do and what we've not got to do. And when we have the liberty to choose, we'll always choose the easy way.

We'll always choose the way that suits us best. We'll choose that message, that word which will comfort us, which will bring us to a perfect ease and freedom. Because God never forces anything upon us.

And here we have a people that experienced God's working, God's miracles. God led them out of Egypt. They experienced all those miracles.

And yet, they rejected the word of God. They rejected the man God used to lead them out of Egypt, out of the land of sin. When Moses led them out of Egypt, they all were far too happy.

They walked with him, they went with him, they did what he told them to do. And to them it was something marvelous to see a man hearing God's voice and to lead them out of captivity. And it was exactly the same with us when God delivered us out of the bondage of sin, out of Egypt.

It was something wonderful to us. We accepted the word, we never questioned it. It was something wonderful when God spoke through a person and who led us out of Egypt.

And they all had the experience when God led them through the Red Sea. They saw how God gave them to drink when they were thirsty. God gave them to eat.

They experienced everything which God did through Moses. But there came a day where they refused, where they rejected the word of Moses. And this is the danger in which every Christian lives.

Where in the beginning we were just too eager to receive help, to be helped, to be led, to be guided. And along the way we started thinking for ourselves. And this is what happened to people in Israel, people who were led out of Egypt.

We read that Moses received living words to pass on to Israel. These were living words which God spoke to Moses. Today we have the living word, the Bible, we have in our hands.

Today we have people who expound on the word of God. And if we think how many people, how many preachers go out into the world, they preach the word of God. They preach the living word and yet people reject it.

How long has God spoken to you and to me? And yet we find people who still reject it. They refuse to obey. They know it's the truth.

They know it is the word of God and yet they reject it. They refuse to obey it. They want to go their own way.

They interpret the word of God the way it suits them, instead of accepting it the way God spoke. And that makes it so difficult for so many Christians to live a fruitful life. Because they constantly want to do it their way.

And so much so that they went to Aaron and said, Aaron, make us gods. Gods which will go before us. Although God was leading and guiding them through the wilderness.

You see it didn't suffice anymore that God was in control. They wanted to be in control as well. And when we read in Numbers, where Korah resisted the authority of Moses.

With Dathan and Abiram, where they said, do you think you are holy alone? Can only God reveal things to you? And they said, all Israel is holy. And they became insolent against Moses. They were insulting, disrespectful, insubordinate to the word which God gave through Moses.

Oh it is terrible if Christians can't accept the word of God anymore, but that they always know better. Where people always know better. Where people interpret the word of God the way they want it.

Instead of accepting it, being humble, being the least, to accept the word of God. Where you can just accept it. As a little child, accept something what the parents say.

Because the parents have said it, they accept it. Because that child is totally dependent upon its parents. Because the child in simplicity trusts its parents.

But we are constantly busy with our minds to accept or to reject. And that is the danger in which you and I live in the days in which we live today. We want to be acknowledged as well.

We want to be something as well. We want to be a people to whom God or whom God can use. It isn't wrong if we have that desire.

But if we have that desire to become great, to be acknowledged, then it's wrong. And that is constantly the danger in which we live. Or that people want to lift you onto a pedestal.

People want to make you important. And you like to feel important. You like to be acknowledged.

Oh, and you feel so good when that happens. And you don't know in what danger you are to become exactly the same as Korah. When he thought they are all holy, God doesn't speak to Moses alone.

He speaks to us as well. He rejected. He refused.

And he was convinced that what he has and what he feels is also of God. And which can happen. We can be led and guided by God.

But if we start rejecting authority, or if we become disrespectful, then we are in danger. And that is what we find so often amongst us Christians. We don't want to be told.

No, only God can tell me something. Nobody else can say something to me or to whom I am obedient and to bow and to respect. I only have an ear to hear what God says.

And everything else I discard, I refuse, I reject. And eventually, I become a person who doesn't live in this world anymore. Who lives somewhere else, somewhere in the universe.

Because I have become so big and so great that nobody can tell me anything anymore. And that eventually, I reject everything what a person says. And this is what happened to Korah.

He couldn't submit to the authority of Moses. And we always think we know better. And we even do things on our own.

We don't need help. We don't need authority. We don't need a teacher.

We children, we know better. We don't want to be reprimanded. We don't want to accept what those that are in authority tell us.

And in our hearts, we reject it. We refuse to accept what we are told. And that is the problem with our Christian life.

We don't want to be told. Only God must speak to me. And I don't listen to anybody else.

I only listen to that what God says. And that is what happened to these people in Israel. And the result was that they were swallowed up.

The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up. And that is so important and I'll repeat and repeat this over and over again. My Christian brother, sister, never, never grow big.

If I can't accept that what I am told. If I always know better. And if I reject that what is said.

And I refuse to obey. I am lost. But if I stay at that place where I am always open to be admonished.

There where I am told. Whether I see it or not. The great thing is that we will always be a people who will be able to accept what we are told.

And if God's word speaks to me. That I don't reject it. That I don't refuse to obey.

There is nothing more humiliating than that. To be able to bow to accept. To be able to be open to the working of God.

That God can attain his purpose in your life and my life. And in their hearts they turn back to Egypt. That is the danger.

When we start refusing, when we start rejecting. We, our hearts turn back to our old sinful life. Just imagine that Israel, although they were led out of captivity.

They experienced God in a most wonderful way. That it didn't take long. Their hearts turned back to Egypt.

There where they were slaves in Egypt. There where they had to serve the Egyptians. There where they were pressed and humiliated.

There where they were the slaves of the Egyptians. They had to do what they didn't want to do. But they had to because they were slaves.

Just imagine a person who has been led out of Egypt. Who has experienced God in a most wonderful way. Where God has set a person free from sin and the slavery of sin.

It doesn't take long. They want to go back to Egypt. They were far away from Egypt.

They were in the wilderness. They were on the way to Canaan. But we read here that in their hearts they turned back to Egypt.

And you know friends, that can happen to you and to me. We can be on the way to Canaan. We are on the way to the promised land.

We are out of Egypt. And we are walking that way. The way of the Lord.

But our hearts can still be in Egypt. We long to be back in that sinful life. How glad we were when God took us out of that sinful life.

Or haven't you ever come out of Egypt? Are you still in Egypt today? And God has taken you out of Egypt. But your hearts are still in Egypt. You still long to that life.

In your heart you haven't separated from the sinful life you lived. Egypt is still in your heart. You haven't been set free from that yet.

And that's why Korah had that in his heart. Because Egypt was still in his heart. And that is the danger in which we Christians live.

That we haven't come out of Egypt yet. Yes bodily, physically, yes we are out of Egypt. But in the heart we are still there.

And that is so important, dear friends. That we get rid of that Egypt which is still in our hearts. That we get rid of that Egypt which is still in our hearts.

That Egypt where we still want our own way. Where we reject, where we refuse to submit to the word of God. And this was the downfall of Israel.

And eventually we read that there were only two people who came into the promised land. All the others died on the way. Yes, they came out of Egypt.

Yes, they experienced the miracles of the Lord. But they took Egypt with them. And they went with Egypt through the wilderness.

And what didn't all come upon them? And that's why so many Christians fall along the way. How many Christians have said, yes Lord, I'm going with you out of Egypt. I want to go to the promised land.

But on the way, they fall by the way. And how often did they kindle God's wrath upon them? Because they hadn't separated from Egypt. Egypt was still in their lives, in their hearts.

Because God's word says, thou shalt not have other gods beside me. God wants to be the sole God in their lives. We sang or we heard the reciting on the piano.

That says, Lord Jesus, you are the one. You are the only one. And you govern the whole universe.

You that govern the whole universe. You who have made the whole universe. And how wonderful would that be if that would be true.

And how wonderful would that be if that would be true. It's a beautiful hymn. But when I listened, I just thought, oh, we so easily can sing that hymn.

But are you the one that governs? That is our whole life in your hand. And who rules my life? That when you say something, that I obey you. Or have I taken Egypt in my heart with me on the way to heaven? And all those that did that, didn't get, didn't enter into the promised land.

It was only Caleb and Joshua. Out of those that did that, only Caleb and Joshua. It was millions of people.

That eventually entered into the promised land. Because all the others, yes, they were led out of Egypt. But they took Egypt in their hearts.

They took it along. And that caused the anger of God that he destroyed each and every person. And not one of them entered the promised land except those two people.

And the question to me and to you is the following one. Have I taken something of Egypt into my spiritual life and walking along? Maybe that is the reason why it is so difficult for you to serve and to follow God wholeheartedly. Yes, I want to go to heaven.

Yes, I want to be with the Lord Jesus. Yes, and I trust Him and I believe that He paid the price on Calvary. And that is what all Israel did.

They all believed the word and they followed Moses. And they went, but none got to the destination. Because their hearts were still in Egypt.

Or they took Egypt in their hearts and they took Him along on the way to the promised land. Have I taken something along from Egypt on my way to heaven? Is there still something of Egypt in my life? Or have I turned wholeheartedly to the Lord? And that there are no other gods in my life? That I have no will of my own? Except the will of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Am I prepared to lay on the altar everything I have, that which is precious to me, that which I took along from Egypt, that I say, it is the end, no more of it, it is only Jesus now in my life.

That you, Lord Jesus, you are the only one. That you reign in my life. That you can do with me what you like.

That I am prepared to submit and to bow to thy authority. That that is the only thing that is important to me. Oh, Lord Jesus, that's why I love you.

That's why I surrendered my life to you. That you can become king in my life. That you can govern my life.

That there is only one important thing in my life, and that is to fulfill the will of the Lord Jesus Christ. That I might lead a holy life, consecrated, submitted to thee. That you take control of my life.

That you are the only one that's got a say in my life. That I might reach the promised land, without God in my life. That you are truly God.

That you are truly the ruler in my life. That you might be able to glorify thyself through my life. That my being, my action, my reaction, will bring glory to thee, to the one who died for me on Calvary.

That there may be no Egypt in my heart. That there is no longing in my heart for Egypt. That I have only one desire, and that is to be with my Lord and Saviour.

To reach the promised land. Brother, sister, tell me, what's holding you back to surrender fully? Is there still something of Egypt in your life? That the Lord Jesus, who has accomplished a full salvation, hasn't been able to fulfill that which he did on Calvary in your life. You know, if we Christians, over the whole world, would once and for all deal with Egypt in our lives, we would conquer the whole world with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in a short time.

The problem is you and I. Because we have still something in our lives which hinders the ungodly, the heathen, the one that isn't saved, because they don't see the glory of Jesus in you and my life. And that is my cry, that the Lord might deal with everything and anything in my life and in your life, which is still of Egypt. And if there is still something of Egypt in your life, then bring it to the cross today.

Let the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ deal with that in your life. Allow the Lord Jesus to take it out of your lives and come to the cross of Jesus. And admit and confess that you've still got Egypt in your heart.

Because he conquered Egypt on Calvary. We needn't have Egypt in our lives any longer. We can live a newness of life.

We can live a victorious life. We can be like Caleb and Joshua. And that is what the Lord Jesus prepared for each and every one of us.

Let us pray. Lord Jesus, we thank Thee for Thy accomplished work on Calvary. But we read that our forefathers, they rejected the Word.

That they refused to obey. And that their hearts yearned for Egypt. And Thou didst see our hearts this morning.

Is there still that yearning in our heart? Is there still that in our heart that we refuse to obey? We refuse to submit. We refuse to accept. But that we are disobedient.

Lord, if Thou hast spoken to our hearts this morning, may there not be a single person who rejects Thy Word. And who has still Egypt in his heart, or longs for Egypt, that he might come to Thee this morning and surrender and bring it to the cross. Thou didst see each heart right now.

And if there is a heart that truly yearns to be set free from Egypt, or a longing to Egypt, please Lord, be merciful and set him free. That we might crown Thee as Lord, King, Saviour in our lives. Amen.

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