

Obedience

by Harold Vaughan

The sermon emphasizes the importance and necessity of obedience in the Christian life, highlighting its requirement under the old and new covenants, and in paradise.

Duration: 45:06

Scripture: Deuteronomy 11:26-28, Isaiah 1:19, Matthew 6:33, Romans 1:5, Romans 6:17, Romans 15:18

Topics: "Obedience"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal story about his lack of obedience as a child. He emphasizes the importance of immediate obedience to God's commands. The speaker then highlights three key elements in the Bible: facts, commandments, and promises. He explains that facts are to be believed, commandments are to be obeyed, and promises are to be claimed. The sermon concludes with a call to action, urging the audience to write down their areas of obedience and commit to fulfilling them before the return of Christ.

Transcript

Too bad the teenagers and kids have left, because I want to begin tonight with this question. How many of you have ever played Nintendo? Let me see those hands out there, or computer games. Well, a lot of us.

I've got a friend that recently purchased a computer chess game, 77 degrees of difficulty, meaning that he can have it very, very easy, or very, very difficult, or 75 levels in between. You know, I'm afraid tonight that the advent of the computer age has ushered in a brand new type of Bible study. And that means simply that it seems today that the idea is we are free to choose the level of commitment, we're free to choose the parts of the Bible that we want, basically now the tendency is to screen the Word of God, to find those parts of the Bible that apply to me, and those parts of the Bible that don't apply to me.

Of course, the parts of the Bible that apply to me are those comforting truths that will help make me a more balanced person. All of them apply to me. And, of course, the parts that do not generally apply to me are those discomfoting, uncomfortable truths that make a demand upon my lifestyle.

I was speaking with a lady, and she had had a Bible course in some secular college, and she let out right off the bat that she told me she said, well, hell, I like Jesus, but I don't like the Apostle Paul. And then she went on to tell me that the Apostle Paul was a bigot and a woman-hater, and he had all sorts of chauvinistic ideas and so on and so forth. And she said, yeah, man, I like Jesus, but I just don't like Paul.

And I was sitting there thinking, I bet if she ever really read what Jesus had to say, she wouldn't care for that either. But the idea was that it was a pick-and-choose mentality, a cafeteria-style religion, if you will. And it kind of goes like this right here.

Well, pastor, I'll attend church if I feel like it. I'll give when I want to. I'll serve if I'm motivated.

I'll leave my Bible and pray if I have time. And I will work in the nursery if there's a speaker I don't really like. It's this approach to the Christian life and the Christian faith that I think points to the fact that there's been a massive misunderstanding of Bible content.

A massive misunderstanding of Bible content. I find tonight three things in the Word of God. Number one, there are facts.

Number two, there are commandments. And number three, there are promises. Bible facts are to be believed.

Bible commandments are to be obeyed. And Bible promises are to be claimed. Friend, I read nowhere in the Bible where we are free to claim the promises while ignoring the commandments of God.

Let me say tonight, the only thing you can do with a Bible fact is believe it or not believe it. You cannot obey a Bible fact. You cannot obey the virgin birth of Jesus Christ.

You cannot obey the eternal damnation of the lost. You cannot obey the second coming of Jesus Christ. You see, facts are addressed to our understanding.

And all you can do with a Bible fact is to believe it or not believe it. By the same token, you cannot believe a Bible commandment. Because commands are not primarily addressed to our understanding.

They're addressed to our will. And all you can do with a commandment is to obey it or disobey it. And tonight I want to speak on that category of Bible content called commandments in general.

And the Bible commandment of obedience in particular. I want to give you tonight three things about Bible obedience. Number one, the necessity of obedience.

I want you to take your Bible tonight and turn first of all to the book of Genesis chapter 2. First book of the Bible tonight. And I want us to study out tonight something of the necessity of obedience. Obedience is not optional.

The commandment to obey occupies a primary place in the word of God. I'm going to tell you tonight that obedience was required in paradise. Obedience was required before the fall.

It was required prior to the birth of Christ. And it is required after the death of Christ. Notice tonight the necessity of obedience.

It was required in paradise. Genesis 2 and verse 16. Notice carefully tonight what the scripture says.

Verse 16, Genesis 2. The Lord God, what's that word right there? And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Another tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it. For in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.

Notice tonight, my friend, there was no sin in the human race. Yet the Lord God commanded the man. Look in Genesis chapter 3 and verse 11.

Of course, we know that Adam unhappily disobeyed God. And look at what happened here in verse 11, Genesis 3. The Lord said, Who told thee thou wast naked? He had no self-consciousness prior to the fall. Wouldn't that be wonderful? No self-consciousness.

Notice what it says right here. God said, Hath thou eaten of the tree whereof I, notice that word, Commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat. My brethren, tonight, obedience was required in paradise.

I'm telling you tonight that obedience was the one condition of man's abiding in Eden. Andrew Murray called obedience the virtue of paradise. It was the one thing that the creator asked of him.

And God warned Adam and Eve that in the disobedience would bring death. For in the day that they would eat thereof, they would surely die. There was only one thing that could separate man from God, my friend.

And that was disobedience. And we all know tonight that Adam fell. And I'm here to tell you tonight, my friend, it was not disbelief that caused the fall.

It was disobedience that caused the fall. Obedience was required in paradise. But I'm here to tell you tonight that obedience was also required under the old covenant under Moses.

Let me just say tonight, God required obedience. Exodus 19, verse 5, God said to Israel, If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you will be a peculiar treasure unto me. If you have any knowledge of the Old Testament scriptures at all, you know that the Old Testament is loaded with commandments.

And friend, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai, he did not come down with the ten suggestions under his arm. He came down with the ten commandments. Moses was instructed by God to build a tabernacle.

And God told him to build it according to a particular pattern. And the Bible tells us in Exodus 39 and 40, it says this. That Moses did according to all that the Lord commanded him.

Nineteen times in those two chapters, you find that wording or the equivalent of it. That Moses did according to all that the Lord commanded him. They did all that God commanded them.

And the Bible tells us that after Moses had done according to the pattern that God had shown him in the mount, that the glory of God filled the tabernacle. My brothers and my sisters tonight, the glory of God. The presence of God.

And the glory of God is nothing short of God's infinite presence among his people. The glory of God filled the tabernacle when their obedience was complete. And I believe tonight that the glory of God will fill the church and fill the believer when our obedience has been complete.

I read in my Bible of a man by the name of Moses, just to give one further example tonight. The Bible says that God commanded him, told him to build an ark. I remind you tonight that Noah acted on what God told him to do.

Arks were unheard of in those days. He had no seminar on ark building that he could go to. He didn't go around talking to other builders to get ideas about how to build the ark.

He didn't even go around preaching to others about the necessity of building arks. He simply did exactly what God told him to do. And the Bible says that Noah did according to all that God commanded him.

Would you agree with me tonight that obedience was required under the old covenant? Would you agree with me tonight that obedience was required in paradise? And would you agree with me tonight that obedience is required under the new covenant? There are a lot of people tonight that relegate this doctrine of obedience to the Old Testament. But it's the New Testament that says he that does the will of God abides forever. They're saying that he that believes the will of God, he that does the will of God, my friend, abides forever.

Jesus said, if you love me, keep mine. Or you say, well, Brother Harold, don't you know that was in the transition time and we can't take that literally today. My friend, we have gone so extreme in some of our movements that we have done more to clip out the word of God than the liberals ever thought about clipping out of the word of God.

I'm telling you tonight, we're obligated to obey the Lord under the new covenant of grace. How does the New Testament tell us? How does the New Testament tell us that love is spelled O-B-E-Y? The book of Acts says that God gives the Holy Spirit to them that obey. Peter said in Acts 5, we must obey God rather than men.

And folks, obedience. There's no better in the world to describe God's people than the children of obedience. And there's no better way to describe the children of the devil than the children of disobedience.

Romans chapter 1, verse 5, the Bible talks about being obedient to the faith. Romans 15, verse 18, Paul talks about making the Gentiles obedient in word and in deed. I believe tonight that to escape the error of salvation by works, we have fallen into the opposite error, and that is salvation without obedience.

But in the New Testament, I find there's no contradiction between faith and obedience, but rather a perfect unity. Take your Bible tonight and look in Romans chapter 6. And one further scripture here tonight, Romans chapter 6, verse 17. Romans 6, 17, notice what it says right here.

Obedience required under the new covenant, Romans 6, 17. But God be thanked that you were the servants of Sion. And folks, we, the serving God, are serving Sion.

That's all there is to it. It's one or the other, and you can't do both simultaneously. But God be thanked that you were the servants of Sion, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you.

Notice it. They obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine that was delivered unto them. James chapter 1 says, be doers of the word and not hearers only, because if you hear and don't do, you deceive your own selves.

You know what A.W. Tozer said? He said, the Bible recognizes no faith that does not lead to obedience. The Bible recognizes no faith that does not lead to obedience, nor does it recognize any obedience that does not spring from faith. Revelation 22 in verse 14, blessed are they that do his commandments, for they shall have the right to the tree of life.

May I say to you tonight, I believe, I believe in America, that we are so afraid of works righteousness, that we have literally, literally gone to an unscriptural, unscriptural extreme in many, many cases to try to avoid the error of salvation by works. Let me tell you something tonight. I hadn't met a man or woman under 35 years of age trying to work their way into heaven in the last five years.

Have you? We are preaching things that to a generation that doesn't exist. And I'm here to say tonight, the danger, the danger with our crowd is not trying to work their way into heaven. The danger with our crowd is that they do not know that they are not going to heaven, because they have no conviction of sin, because we have abolished the moral law of God.

Now, brother, there was grace in the Old Testament, and there's moral law in the New Testament. Adultery is wrong under the new covenant. Lying is wrong.

Stealing is wrong. Taking God's name is wrong, brethren. And my brethren, tonight, I believe we need to come to a balance on this thing, because the doctrine of obedience has been soft-pedaled, but there's only one thing that our God requires tonight, and that is simple, universal, unchanging obedience.

The necessity of obedience. It's required under the new covenant. It was required under the old covenant, and it was required in paradise.

Absolutely necessary, my friend. Let me give you tonight a second point, and that being the character of obedience. The character of obedience.

I've got a little overhead here tonight, I think, that's going to help us out. Let's just read through this together tonight. Let's read it out loud together tonight.

Obedience is instantly doing all God tells me to do with the right heart attitude. Let's read it one more time. Obedience is heart attitude.

Now, notice tonight these several things I have underlying. Number one, obedience is instantly. Obedience is immediate.

The psalmist said, I made haste and delayed not to keep his commandments. When Jesus Christ called his disciples to follow him, you know what they did? Immediately they dropped their nets and they followed him. Obedience, my friend, the character of it, it is immediate.

Obedience is instant. Now, my brothers and my sisters tonight, when it comes to the character of obedience, Elizabeth Elliott said, obedience is immediate. Delayed obedience is disobedience.

And disobedience is sin. Obedience is immediate. Delayed obedience is disobedience.

And disobedience is sin. You know, I've never seen God visit a life, I don't think, or a church where there was not radical obedience to God. My wife and I pulled up in a parking lot of a church in Maine.

Out in the middle of nowhere, we've never been here. I'm near Calpaster, a little white church out there in the middle of nowhere. And I said to my wife 12 years ago, I said, honey, what in the world do you think we've gotten into this time? Well, little did we know, little did we know that here was a divine setup.

And these people had been praying and seeking God. And I want to tell you, they had had radical obedience. Little did I know they had a deacon in that church that had run every preacher they had had

there for the last 45 years.

Well respected by the congregation, nobody knew what a scorner he really was. Well, the pastor had been there a year and a half and had eight people respond publicly. Not exactly setting the woods on fire up there in Maine.

But this pastor had these people committed to the authority of the word of God. That if God said it, we're going to do it. Well, they had to exercise a little discipline on this fellow.

And they went to this man with a rife spirit and tried to get him to repent. He wouldn't repent. They said, if you don't repent, we're going to have to bring it before the church.

They hadn't brought anything before the church in 150 years since it had been in existence. He didn't believe it. Well, they brought it before the church.

It caused some real ripples, folks. But you know, it's always right to obey God in the long run, no matter what. Amen.

Just about split the church. But they did it. And nobody left.

They had to shun the brother. That was one thing. Another thing, they were in a prayer meeting on Wednesday night, crying out to God for a revival.

And one of the men said, wait a minute. Hold it. Quit praying.

He said, here we are. And we've got this neighbor here, farmer. And he was driving his tractor across their parking lot and disturbing gravels in the parking lot.

So you know what the church did? They wrecked the defense to keep the farmer and his tractor and big equipment off their parking lot. So they wouldn't wreck their gravels. Well, this fellow stood up in the prayer meeting and said, fellas, here we are praying for revival.

Here we are more concerned about the grout, the layout of the gravel in our parking lot than we are the soul of our farmer neighbor who is on his way to hell. He said, I recommend we quit praying and go tear the fence down. Amen.

There is a time to quit praying and get with the program. They went out and ripped the fence down. Came back in and had a prayer meeting after that.

And they did all kinds of radical things. And my wife and I came into this meeting. I'm hearing from AI since the first time we ever had a prayer room in a whole ministry.

It was brand new. I didn't know how it was going to go. But boy, we had to have a good initiation.

Prayer room was packed every night. And, you know, people would stay and we'd have an afterglow in the basement in the fellowship hall. And, you know, there was about a hundred people start coming at first and all hundred would stay.

And they would stay till 11 o'clock at night. Our problem in this meeting was not getting people to come. Our problem was getting people to leave.

They would come and pray all during the day. And I would sit there at night and people would come and share. I'm talking about, I'm talking about barn burner testimonies, brother.

I'm talking about real, real things. And I sit there on the front row and I was not used to having such a good time in church. I smiled and laughed so much.

The muscles in my face got sore. I hadn't used them in so long. And I was having the time of my life.

And after about three days, I said to my wife, I said, honey, God's here. God's here. I don't even know how to act.

Let's get ready and pray that we won't mess this thing up. And it's just like God had taken control by the second Sunday of the meeting on Sunday night. In fact, we called off our service and sent out squads to hit the neighborhood church.

We went to everything. I went, I went to one over in another place and they had them going 200 miles away, giving testimony. And we told them, do three things.

Tell them what God did for you. Number one, tell them what God's doing in the church. Number two, and invite them to come to the meeting.

Number three. So he sends me. We're on for 15 days.

We have people come from 200 miles folks. Just to see what God was doing because of the testimony of the people in that congregation. But did you know why God visited that small country church? Obedience.

And my brethren, obedience is immediate. We were in Whitfield, Virginia. Brother Roberts was doing a prayer partner training in the middle of the thing.

One of the prayer partners came under conviction of sin that he was lost, sprang to his feet, found his pastor, immediately went outside and got saved. My friend, obedience is immediate, but notice second of all, tonight, obedience is instantly notice. Notice these red lines here.

Anybody can pronounce that word right there doing. Now that's the main word. Obedience is active.

I think a lot of times we're looking for a feeling. We're looking for an experience and God is just looking for obedience. Obedience is not believing.

Listen to me tonight. Obedience is not thinking. Obedience is not taking notes.

Obedience is not knowing. Obedience is doing. It's when you activate your will to do what God has told you to do.

Now, later this year, they had a problem. They thought, thought they were rich and increased with goods. God had a different evaluation of their condition.

They thought they were in pretty good shape. They said, man, we're rich and increased with goods. We have need of nothing.

They thought they were doing quite well. But obedience is not what a person thinks. Obedience is what a person is and what they do.

You heard of the survey they took of the five leading industrialized countries of the world, the high schoolers. They found that of all the students in the world, the Americans thought they were the best. The Japanese high schoolers thought they were the worst students in the world.

When the test scores came back, it was the exact opposite. The Americans who thought they were the best turned out to be the worst. And the Japanese who thought they were the worst students in the world turned out to be the best.

And my brethren, tonight, I believe, I believe tonight the greatest mistake that you can ever make is to think that just because you understand some Bible doctrine that you automatically have the experience of it. The greatest mistake you can ever make is just because you believe something in your head, you automatically assume that you've experienced it in your heart. People think if they know about salvation, they think they're safe.

If I know about forgiveness, I must be forgiven. If I know about the exchange life, I must be living it. If I know about humility, we think, well, we must be humble.

If we know about transparency, we think we must be transparent. But brethren, tonight, obedience is not thinking. Obedience is not knowing.

Obedience is not believing. Obedience is doing. Obedience is active.

Leave this third point tonight. Obedience is instantly doing all God tells me to do. Obedience is complete.

And folks, aren't you glad tonight that God doesn't require anything out of us? Except what his grace puts into us. Amen. And folks, God has given us everything that pertains to life and Godliness in Christ Jesus.

The Bible says it's the whole duty of man to fear God and keep his commandments. I'm here to tell you tonight, my friend, it's your duty as a believer to love your mate. It's your duty tonight to be submissive one to the other and to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

It's our duty tonight to be a witness for Jesus Christ. Obedience is complete. Partial obedience won't cut it with God.

You remember in the Old Testament how that Saul, God told him to go destroy the Amalekites? To utterly destroy and spare not. Well, Saul started out well enough. He raised up an army of 200,000 soldiers.

He went out to battle and, you know, he wiped them out, but he did make a few small exceptions. He spared Agag, the king, and the best of the cattle. Obedience is complete.

Incomplete obedience is disobedience. And disobedience is sin. You know what Saul was really saying? He was saying, now, I know God told me to wipe out the whole crowd and spare not.

But what he was really saying is my way is just as good as God. Pride is at the root of all disobedience, friend. And what he was saying is I know better than God it's not going to hurt anything.

And, you know, it was a common practice in those days for a conquering king to take the conquered king, bring him home, put him on a cart, parade him through the streets. All the citizens would come out and laud and hail their king as a great military strategist. Perhaps tonight the thing that motivated Saul to disobey God was his desire for the praise of the people.

Pride is at the root of all disobedience tonight. Do you remember the story how Samuel, God's man, God's prophet, comes running out? God told him the whole scoop. And Samuel comes out, and you know what Saul did? He came running out with a bunch of religious talk.

I'm suspicious of people that come running out with religious talk all the time. You know what he did? Saul came running out and he said, I've obeyed the voice of the Lord. We've wiped this crowd out.

Samuel perked up and said, What meaneth the bleeding of the sheep and the lowering of the oxen that I hear in my ear? And old Saul said, Oh, the people spared. Here he is, blame chicken. The people spared the best of the cattle.

Of course, the sacrifice to the Lord, their God. And old Samuel looked at him and said, To obey is better than sacrifice. God rejected Saul.

You know why? Because his obedience was not complete. It was partial, partial obedience tonight, my friend. And I'm here to tell you tonight that complete obedience is not just for missionaries and pastors and Bible teachers and evangelists.

Complete obedience is for every child of God. I think we need a reformation in the ranks, folks. The very idea we got our churches loaded down with people that don't even ever show up and you can get them off the church roll without splitting a congregation.

Our whole idea of the church needs to be re-evaluated. My brethren, tonight, plan the way that we get off of the idea that we can determine what parts of the Bible we want to obey. You're going to say, well, Harold, you're just a legalist, man.

You're just one of them old fundies. That's all you are. Just a bigoted legalist trying to tell everybody what it is.

You know what a man told me this week? He said, Brother Harold, we can't enforce our opinion on people. We can tell the people what the Bible says about alcohol, but the church cannot draw up a policy about alcohol. We can tell them what the Bible says about immorality and divorce, but we cannot have a church policy on immorality and divorce because we're imposing our views on them.

Did you know tonight, my friend, you don't determine what's right and wrong by consensus. You determine what's right and wrong by the word of God, and if the Bible speaks to an issue, thus saith the Lord, it's where it's at. Are you with me tonight? Listen, folks.

This sloppy agape incognito, it ain't helping the cause of Christ. It's going to put us out of business because the obedience is always complete. Jesus said in Matthew 28, going to all the world, teaching all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you, and, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.

Now, listen. Obedience is instantly doing all God tells me to do and doing it with the right heart attitude. The children sing that chorus.

Obedience is the very best way to show that you believe. No, sir. It's the only way to show that you believe.

You know what Jesus said in Mark 12? Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, for this is the first commandment. You know what the right heart attitude for obedience is, what our sister here shared tonight? You know what it is? You obey God because you love God with a heart of love for God. And I think what the Bible teaches is that going through the motions is not enough.

Outward conformity is not enough. Near external righteousness is not enough. Listen.

It's not enough to be involved in a missions conference if we never witnessed anyone during the week. It's not enough to have your tithes in the offering plate if your heart is full of covetousness the rest of the time. It's not enough to have your Bible in Sunday school if you never open it anywhere other than that.

You see tonight, it's not enough just to be faithful and never miss a church service if you're having a cold war with your neighbor in Christ. You see tonight, man looks on the outward appearance, but God is looking on the high. And God is looking not only for outward, external conformity to the word and will of God, He's looking for the right heart attitude, and that is love for Jesus Christ.

I want to tell you the bottom line, folks. Our major problem, our major problem, all of our major problem tonight is we just don't love God. You boil it all down, and it comes right down to that point right there.

It's a lack of love for God. The right heart attitude. Let me ask you tonight.

Is your spirit sweet with the Holy Spirit? Oh, the right heart attitude. Now, when I was a kid, Saturday morning, I was a very active child. I didn't like studying.

I liked to really do things, go places, and very active child. But on Saturday morning, I made an exception because I had to watch the cartoons. These were the good old days when we had Christian cartoons.

Amen? Bugs Bunny, Woody Woodpecker, and Fred Flintstone. Christian cartoons, man, Christian cartoons, I'm telling you. I got into a bad habit as a youngster, laying on the couch watching these cartoons.

If you ever start this habit, you'll never get out of it. It's a bad habit, laying down on the couch watching these cartoons. Well, my mother, she always had lots of chores, and she would often come when I was laying down during the one time I really was serious about television, watching these cartoons, and she would often come and say, Harold, would you take out the trash? On one occasion, I said, yes, Mom, I'll take out the trash.

Ten minutes later, she came back, Harold, have you taken out the trash? No, Mom, but I'm going to take out the trash. Ten minutes later, she'd come back, Harold, have you taken out the trash? No, Mom, but I'm going to take out the trash. Now, I had a good intention, but was I obedient? No.

Why? Because obedience is immediate. It's instantly doing all God tells us to do. Now, I remember one time she came and said, Harold, would you take out the trash? During commercial.

Leaped at my feet, ran to the kitchen, got that garbage, ran outside, we had a burning barrel in those days, threw it in the burning barrel, rushed back in. My mother came back ten minutes later, Harold, have you taken out the trash? Yes. She said, did you take the trash out of the bathroom? No.

Living room? No. Bedroom? No. Was I obedient? Why? Because obedience is complete.

It's doing all we're told to do. Well, my mother just persisted with this trash thing on Saturday during the commercial times, and on one occasion she came in and said, Harold, would you take out the trash? And I just got tired of hearing about taking out the trash. I said, yeah, I'll take out the trash, Mom.

I leaned to my feet, ran and got all the trash, put it all together. I got some things that she wouldn't have considered to be trash, some of those housekeeping magazines, amen, and took the whole thing, went outside. I even put the trash can in the burning barrel.

Man, I'm telling you, my attitude wasn't so hot. I threw it over here and burnt the whole thing. Was I obedient? Was I obedient? Not a chance.

Well, I did what I was supposed to do, did I? Yeah, but my attitude stopped. So you see tonight, obedience is instantly doing all God tells me to do and doing it with the right heart attitude. Now, folks, I don't think there's anything that's more destructive to a person's wrath of God.

I don't think there's anything that can do more to deaden a person's conscience than to be exposed to the truth and not obey fully. I believe this is why so many have been stunted and stymied and stagnated in their walk with God. And they have not learned the blessing of obedience.

Point three, the blessing of obedience. Deuteronomy chapter 11. God said, Behold, I set before you a blessing and a curse.

A blessing if you obey the commandments of the Lord, and a curse if you will not obey the commandments. Now, folks, in the Old Testament, obedience brought blessing. I'm here to tell you tonight that obedience brings blessing.

Yes, even today. You can't ever go wrong by obeying God. Obedience brings blessing, and disobedience brings conflict, guilt, worry, frustration, torment, fear, doubt, unbelief.

Disobedience brings all these things, but obedience brings blessing. Now, I want you to see one Scripture verse tonight. One more.

Isaiah chapter 1, verse 19. Look at it this evening. Why are so few apparently enjoying the abundant life in Christ? Well, this may be part of the answer.

Isaiah 1, verse 19. God tells these people to come and reason together with Him. Though their sins were like scarlet, they were going to be like wool.

But look in verse 19, Isaiah chapter 1. God says to His covenant people, He says, If you be willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land. Now, I want you to notice tonight, God did not just, God did not say, If you be willing, you'll eat the good of the land. He said, If you be willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land.

You know here on Tuesday night, I bet you, I bet you, I bet my bottom dollar tonight, 98, 99% of us here tonight, we're willing, we're willing to obey God. I bet. I don't think tonight we've got a house full of rebels.

I think tonight primarily there are people here that are willing to learn how to pray. People here tonight willing to learn to love their mate. People here tonight that are willing to give and invest in eternal things.

People here tonight that are willing to make restitution, willing to forgive, willing to join the church, willing to get involved in a discipleship group, willing to memorize scripture, willing to confess their sin, willing to read the Bible. But the Bible doesn't say, If you're willing, you'll eat the good of the land. It says, If you're willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land.

Now, you should have got a sheet of paper on your way into service tonight. Get it out if you would and something to write with tonight. Did you get that sheet of paper? We didn't.

We're going to fire the deacons. All right. Where are they at? Trustees.

All right. We're going to fire the whole bunch. Where's the paper at, brother Larry? About four of you grab those sheets and hand them out, would you? Prime case of disobedience here tonight.

Amen. All right. Now everybody needs something to write with.

If you don't have a pen or pencil, find a woman with a big pocketbook. She's got lots of ballpoint pens that don't write, hadn't written in years. Just get something to write with tonight.

Get a piece of paper, a little exercise that's going to help us out tonight. Now, right at the top of your paper, this word right here, willing but not yet obedient. Just write these words, five words, willing but not yet obedient.

Now, we're going to have a little exercise here. We're going to take a couple of minutes tonight and I want us to construct a list tonight of things in which we are willing to obey God. We want to obey God.

We know we should obey God. But for whatever the reason, we have not yet obeyed the Lord. You say, Harold, what are you talking about? We're talking about those people that we need to forgive that really did us wrong.

We're talking about getting reconciled with people that have offended us or we have offended them, getting our conscience clear. We're talking about those instances where God has prompted our heart to witness perhaps to our neighbor. In a church in Illinois, a guy that lived next to the church, 80 years old, God spoke to one man's heart about going over and sharing the Lord with him.

He had never done it all the years and he put on his list that he wanted to witness to this neighbor, but this man died in the middle of the night. Never had the opportunity to witness to him. Put down tonight those things in which you are willing to do.

You know you ought to do. You know God wants you to do. You're willing, but you're not yet obedient.

You say, Harold, what are you talking about? I'm talking about humbling yourself. We're talking about going to the prayer room if you need to. We're talking about giving a testimony.

We talk about talking to your friends at work and at school about Christ. You know, the Bible says that those that believe Jesus is coming again, he that hath this hope in himself, in him purifies himself, even as he is pure. You know, the doctrine of the second coming of Christ was not given so we could guess when the date was going to be, but it was given so that we could purify our hearts and be ready when the Lord showed up.

Amen. What tonight would happen if God peeled the roof off of this church right here and let an angel down in the middle of the auditorium? He blew a trumpet, made an announcement, and said three days from today, Jesus Christ is coming back to earth. Now, what if tonight you knew that Christ was going to come three days from today? Let me ask you tonight, if you knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that three days from right now all earth would be behind you, all eternity would be before you, I want to ask you tonight, how would you spend these last three days on planet earth? How many of our friends tonight, family, parents, children, would go to hell if Christ came three days from tonight? You know, tonight I think there'd be some people, if we really knew Christ was coming, there'd be some people that would never go to bed.

They'd weep. They'd fast, pray, stay up all night, plead with the lost. Some would unplug their television sets.

Some would throw away their cigarettes. Some would get their conscience clear. Some would obey God in scriptural baptism.

Some people would get saved. Some people would be getting broken. People would be witnessing.

I think we'd be doing everything we possibly could to be thoroughly ready to not be ashamed at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. I want you to write down tonight on your list everything you can think of in which you need to obey God about that you would want to do before Christ comes again and put it on your paper tonight. Just take about two minutes tonight.

The things that you're willing to do, you know you ought to do willing, but not yet obedience. And let's construct our list. I'm going to be quiet for two minutes tonight.

From now to the end of the message, I want you to have the liberty to add to your list as God speaks to your heart. Obedience brings blessing. We're waiting on God to move.

And God's waiting on us to obey. Folks, I want to tell you, if you have no intention of amending your way and bringing your life in conformity with the revealed will of God, you're wasting your time in praying for revival and God's blessings on you and your family. You know, a lot of people say, well, Harold, I just don't understand it.

A lot of people are mad at God. Why won't my mate get saved? Why won't my kids get right with God? Why can't I get anything out of my Bible study? Why do I get so little out of church? How come I can't find the will of God? How many people in Beckley, West Virginia have gotten stuck and can't discern and find the will of God? How come I can't have victory over sin? I think the answer might be this tonight. Conviction without commitment brings confusion.

When we know what we ought to do and we're not doing it, there ain't any use to ask God what else to do because God doesn't have anything to say to you. The Scripture says if any man will do his will, he will know the doctrine. And I'm telling you, sometimes you just need to go ahead and obey God, whether you know all the ins and outs or not.

If you know it's right, go ahead and obey God and the understanding will often come later. Conviction without commitment brings confusion. Jesus said, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and you don't do the things that I say? The Scripture said, be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

You see, the only way to go forward in continuous revival is continuous obedience because obedience brings blessing. And here in this place where you have such excellent Bible teachers and excellent Bible teaching, I'm convinced tonight the need to be out is not for more knowledge. It's not for more doctrine.

It's not for more teaching or more motivation. The need right here tonight is for more obedience to Jesus Christ. That's our need tonight.

We already know more than what we are able to live up to. We don't even know anything else to become accountable for that. We need to act on what we know right here tonight.

Listen, if you're lost, you need to pretend and get saved. If you've not followed the Lord and linked up with a Bible preaching church and identified with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection, you need to go ahead and obey God, friend. You see what I'm saying tonight? We need to give up God's program.

What would happen tonight if an usher came flying down the aisle, pushed you on the shoulder, handed you a three-by-five card, and you read that card and it said, President George Bush is on the telephone and he wants to speak with you right now? You know what would happen? Your eyes would bug out of your head and you would read it one more time. President George Bush is on the telephone and he wants to speak to you right now. You know what you'd do? You'd casually pull out a pen out of your pocket, turn that card over right on the back, tell Mr. Bush, I'm busy listening to an interesting sermon, tell him to call me back in fifteen minutes.

Hand it to the usher. Is that what you'd do? Not a chance. I'll tell you what you'd do.

You'd fly out of that seat. You'd walk these pews here tonight. You'd think you'd be in a Pentecostal meeting.

You'd walk down these pews. You'd rattle every chair. You'd call attention to yourself.

You'd have such a commotion going on. And on the way out of the auditorium, you'd scream out at the top of your voice, President George Bush is on the phone and he wants to talk to me. And you'd probably hurt yourself running back to get on the telephone.

That's what you'd do. But you know something? You'd come to a church service like this and you'd let the boss of President George Bush speak to your heart about something that you're living in disobedience about. You know what we'll do? Lord, not now.

Not here. We're embarrassed to fully obey Jesus Christ. Embarrassed to witness to your lost family members.

Afraid you're going to run them off. They're going to hell. You can't run them off.

There's nothing you can run them off from. We're afraid. Well, I don't know how they'd take it if I really got my conscience clear.

It don't make a difference how they take it. Are you willing to obey God tonight? That ought to tell you your heart's out of tune with God. If you could even entertain these kinds of suggestions tonight, folks.

Brothers and sisters tonight, I was in a meeting in North Carolina. God spoke to my heart. You know, I had a list.

I've got one here tonight. Somewhere. I had a list of things that I needed to obey God about.

I want to confess of sin, do you? It's stated in my Bible for close to a year. I was willing. I had every intention of obeying God.

And I was waiting for the right opportunity. You know, sometimes you need to quit waiting for the opportunity and make one. Well, this was one of those situations.

I'd lied to my father when I was a teenager. He'd ask me about a certain thing that happened in a certain place, and I knew exactly what it was. I'd done it.

And I said, well, I don't have so much idea about that thing, Dad. I lied to my father. Dad at that point was 79 years old.

79 years old. And I got to thinking, I wouldn't want him to go on into eternity. I never told him this.

So I excused myself from the meeting. I didn't stay for prayer meeting. I didn't stay for lunch.

I went home, got with my dad, went walking down the road, him and my son. I said, Dad, you remember when I was a teenager way back when, you asked me about this situation that happened up here, and I had to explain the whole thing. And he didn't remember a thing.

I tried to reconstruct it for him. I said, well, Dad, I want to tell you that you asked me about that, and I want to tell you I lied to you. You know something, folks? I needed to say that.

It wasn't for him. It was for me. And I want to tell you something.

My conscience was freed. Came back to the meeting that night. That old tension wasn't there.

That old weight wasn't there. That old burden wasn't there. Obedience brings blessing, folks.

And I'm here to tell you that revival is obedience. And obedience is doing exactly what I'm told to do, when I'm told to do it, and doing it with the right heart attitude. You say, well, Brother Harold, I don't even know where to start obeying God.

Well, let me recommend that you pull out that list and start with number one. Right there. And as God speaks to your heart, you might be able to add to it, but let me tell you something tonight, folks.

Everything on your list tonight is disobedience. And everything on that list is sin. Because obedience is instantly doing all God tells me to do.

And doing it with the right heart attitude. Let's start right here tonight. Let's stand together and talk to the Lord for a moment tonight.

Would you pray with me this evening?

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