

The Path to Perfection Santosh Poonen

by Santosh Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of obedience in our lives, as it allows us to follow Jesus' example and become perfect like Him, and encourages us to press on to perfection by understanding the spirit of obedience and purifying ourselves of disobedience.

Duration: 20:27

Scripture: Hebrews 5:7

Topics: "Christian Obedience", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

This sermon delves into the book of Hebrews, highlighting the importance of obedience as seen in the life of Jesus. It emphasizes the journey towards perfection through obedience, urging believers of all ages to cultivate an obedient spirit in various aspects of life. The speaker draws parallels between Jesus' obedience and the obedience expected from believers, emphasizing the transformative power of obedience in overcoming struggles and growing in Christlikeness.

Transcript

So today we're looking at, for those of you who weren't informed earlier, we're looking at a passage in Hebrews chapter 5. I think the young people are aware of it and are going to share, and I'm excited to hear from you all. But this passage in Hebrews chapter 5, Hebrews is a book that is now my favorite, I think, in the New Testament, in the Bible perhaps, and one of the things that did it for me was listening to Brother Zach's Through the Bible CD, and he has three hours on the book of Hebrews. It's a fascinating book because, you know, how many of you have heard of the Romans Road? You've heard of the Romans Road, right? You know the theologians like to talk about how Romans, and it's true, the Romans, the book of Romans very systematically talks about the gospel, starting in Romans chapter 1 with depravity of mankind, all the way to Romans chapter 16, where Satan is crushed under our feet.

You can see that. It's a wonderful study. Now, as I've studied and read the book of Hebrews and listened to messages on it, I see there's a Hebrews Road too.

I don't know if it's as systematic, but sometimes, you know, sometimes spend some time in the book of Hebrews, even if it's a whole year, I think it will do us a lot of good. I haven't done that yet, but I think that would do me a lot of good. But the reason for it, I think, as I've been starting to unravel this book, or the Lord is starting to unravel it for me, is because I feel like it really exalts the person of Jesus as our forerunner into the new covenant.

And you probably know that already, but I was thinking about this again after I was sharing with somebody on Sunday afternoon, with somebody here, that increasingly recently, I've started to hunger and thirst for a greater revelation of Jesus himself, and to ask for Jesus himself, where previously in my Christian walk, I asked for a lot of other things, like the baptism in the Holy Spirit, or for gifts, or I want to know what my ministry is in the church. A lot of us as young people, especially, want to know that. And I think that that's backwards, actually.

I've learned the hard way, and learned from listening to my elders, that the best thing we can ask for is Jesus himself, and for him to become everything to us. And I think of that hymn that says, all in all for Jesus, Jesus will I sing. Everything in Jesus, Jesus everything.

Once it was, the verse goes, once it was all these other things. And this is talking about a Christian life. Once it was all these other things, and then I realized that the best thing I could ask for was Jesus himself, and he would give me all these other gifts, whatever he wanted.

And then it's almost like, I wouldn't necessarily need to ask him. He would give me those things, and I would seek him, but it would be me seeking him. And in Hebrews, you know, maybe I'll share this with you.

Recently I saw this, and if you want a quick synopsis of the book of Hebrews, here's a nice little way to see it. If you'd like, you can do this with me. Just looking at the first verse of each chapter of the book of Hebrews, I saw that it highlighted the theme of the book of Hebrews.

And I've never seen this before. And it's very interesting. It's a little walk through the book of Hebrews.

It's 13 chapters. In Hebrews chapter 1, he begins by saying, God used to speak through prophets to mankind, and that's the people of Israel. Now he speaks through his son Jesus.

And what a precious thing that now we get to hear from the son of God himself, no longer these prophets, kind of second person or third party news about God. Now we get to hear from God himself. And it's beautiful that Hebrews starts that way.

And so he says in chapter 2 verse 1, for this reason we must pay closer attention. Now it's not just an ordinary person speaking to us, it's God himself. Jesus himself is our example.

Before that our example was Abraham and Moses and John the Baptist and all those good people. But now it's God himself in the flesh. So we must pay closer attention.

So chapter 3 verse 1, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus. Meditate on Jesus, the apostle and high priest. And chapter 4 verse 1, let us fear.

Let us fear lest after God himself came down and opened up a way, we would miss it. It would be bad enough if the old, it was bad enough that the Old Testament people, the Israelites missed it when the prophets spoke so clearly to them. It would be much worse for us having God himself come and speak to us through his son Jesus if we missed it.

Then he says in verse 5, now here's the great thing is that this high priest that we have in Jesus is taken from among us. One of us became a high priest. God came down, made in flesh like us.

One of us became a high priest like Jesus so that, look at this wonderful verse in verse 2, chapter 5 verse 2, he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided. I like how my Bible says that ignorant and misguided and I identify with that. Do you identify with that? Ignorant and misguided.

That's us as young people. That certainly was me as a young person in my teens and 20s. I was ignorant and misguided and I'm so thankful I have a high priest and an example who was from one of us who was a young person who was tempted to be ignorant and misguided like all the other young people in his day and age but he wasn't and he set us an example and then he talks about milk and he says chapter 6 verse 1, forget the elementary teachings.

You've heard about forgiveness and repentance from dead works and faith towards God. Now you should press on to maturity. Good message for us as young people and then he talks about how this Jesus is a priest and a king according to the order of Melchizedek chapter 7 verse 1. Not only is he a priest, he's also a king.

He's conquered, he's overcome, he's ruling and then chapter 8 he says now the main point in what we have said is that this was about worship, that this high priest has taken a seat at the right hand of the throne of the majesty to minister in the sanctuary in the true tabernacle. He's been seated on high and then no chapter 9 it talks about worship. He says this was about worship in the old covenant and it's still about worship which is knowing God and having that God being the center of our attention.

That's what worship is and then in chapter 10 he says for the law is only since it was only a shadow and then he starts to contrast the old testament the new testament. The law was just a shadow but now you got the real thing and then he talks about faith. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen and this is how you can please God and gain approval and then chapter 12 fix your eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith and you know you see he's building to the climax and the climax for me is chapter 13 verse 1 dear brothers and sisters love the brotherhood.

Doesn't that seem see from an earthly standpoint it seems like really after all that love the brotherhood. A lot of people think that love the brotherhood is an anti-climax to everything that he's built up in Hebrews but really it is. The most precious thing we have on earth today is the body of Christ himself.

This same Jesus that we have seen in these 12 chapters now he says now you have it among you that brother that sister sitting next to you that young person sitting next to you is Jesus Christ the part of the body of Christ. If you've committed yourself to it so my dear brother and sister love the church. Commit yourself to the work of God in his body and see if you won't experience that reality of all these wonderful truths we've heard.

So that's that's just a synopsis of Hebrews. I hope that wets your appetite like they say to to really get into this book and I'm looking forward to doing that myself. Let's go back to Hebrews chapter 5 which is where we were actually going to look and this is the thought I would like to share with you this this evening the main thought and that is you know we'll read Hebrews chapter 5 verses 7 through 14.

Let me read those verses. In the days of his flesh he offered up both prayers and supplications with loud cryings and tears to the one able to save him from death and he was heard because of his piety or godly fear. Although he was a son he learned obedience from the things which he suffered and having been made perfect he became to all those who obey him the source of eternal salvation being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Concerning him we have much to say and it is hard to explain since you've become dull of hearing for though by this time you ought to be teachers you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God and you have come to need milk and not solid food for everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness for he is a babe but solid food is for the mature who become who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil and I was thinking you know when we think about Jesus being perfect Jesus lived a perfect life throughout this earth and he's you know he's perfect he and there's a perfection of his to which we are seeking to attain yeah I think you still have that sign is it still there let us press on

to perfection at least it used to be there and that's our goal pressing on to perfection but I want to ask you maybe you can shout out your answer what do you think is that perfection that you're attaining to what is it what is the perfection of Jesus that you're seeking for perfect in what's that suggest that some becoming like Christ yes and what about maybe perfect in love is that one of those okay what else perfect in speech okay perfect in obedience okay perfect in mercy perfect in humility perfect in thoughts it's all right answers there's no wrong answers all right now somebody had the answer I was looking for is perfect in obedience I wonder how many of you have actually thought about Jesus becoming perfect in obedience I've been meditating on this over the last few weeks perfect

in obedience see it says in chapter five verse seven actually verse eight although he was a son although he was the son of God that's a capital s son although he was the son of God means although he was God himself who didn't really need to obey anything on earth because he created everything on earth he didn't need to come here and obey anything on earth although he was you can say it like this although he was the one who created all of this he learned obedience by coming to this earth he learned obedience from the things which he suffered and unfortunately in all the other times that I read this I stopped there and then I continued later on maybe the next day I read the next verse that says and having been made perfect in thought and in speech and in love and in humility and in mercy I

didn't see the connection between those two verses that having been made perfect was talking about his being made perfect in obedience that was an aspect of Jesus being made perfect that I hadn't seen before and I hope you'll see that and and and get revelation from that from from from Jesus himself what it meant for Jesus to become perfect or to be made perfect through his learning obedience that means you know most I think for a long time us as Christians and I did used to think that obedience was for children because Ephesians 6.1 children obey your parents in the Lord what we what should we teach children obey your parents what should we teach young people I think we should teach young people obey what should we teach middle-aged people I think we should teach them obeying what should

we teach old people I think we should teach them obey because Jesus obeyed and obeyed and obeyed and obeyed at the age of 33 he was obeying till at the end on the end of his life when he hung on that cross and said it is finished he said I have finished this path that we have been reading in Hebrews through the veil which is a path of obedience obedience to God and I believe it also means obedience to God and those situations on this earth that he calls us to be obedient to for children it is your parents if you're a child or son or a daughter living at home with your parents it is your responsibility to obey your parents but more than that you know that when we as children who are living at home when I was a child and lived with my dad and mom at home when I obeyed them and the reason

they taught me to obey them was because they were teaching me to follow Jesus in that because he obeyed his mom and dad when he lived at home and so by my obeying my parents even though I didn't

know it back then my simple obedience to them when mommy said you need to do this you need to stop playing and need to need to come and do your homework now it might not seem so spiritual that I had to quit playing cricket and come and do my homework but you know that that is the most spiritual thing that I could have done at that moment and in order to be made perfect in obedience I had to obey in that situation and I ought to know that Jesus was one day in that very same situation or similar situation and was tempted to disobey but he became perfect he was made perfect in obedience because

in every situation in his life he obeyed and then I think about situations when he was 30 or 31 and he was not under his parents authority anymore and there were other situations when he needed to wait for instance paying the tax you know that story once when Peter came and said hey you know I think I think Peter was kind of telling Jesus Jesus you're the Christ the son of the living God why do you have to pay tax can you imagine God coming down and and the the mayor you know the the president of India or that uh the tax saying you need to pay tax God that's essentially what was happening but Jesus understood that his calling while he was on this earth was to show us who are living in flesh a way of obedience so that we too could be made perfect and he paid his tax and so he showed that

it's important for us to obey and to live in submission to earthly authorities Romans chapter 13 talks about that it's important for us in every realm in which God puts us to practice this obedience and in that we are pursuing this path of perfection we're pressing on to perfection so that one day at the end of our lives we ought to be able to say like Jesus we look into the our savior's eyes and say Lord I have followed you I finished the course of obedience I have obeyed in every area which you showed me I obeyed when the elders spoke to me I didn't have a resentment that came up within me when the elders said you know watch out for this area in your life or how about you do this or the elders gave me some direction in the church instead of a resentful attitude coming up within me that

said oh why are the elders so strict or why do they treat me like that there was an obedience that came out it may not come easily because we live in a flesh that is sinful and we have lived in disobedience most of our life and so we have to learn to be like Jesus who was obedient in every area not even once when he was under any authority did that rebellion or resentment come up within him because then he would never have been he wouldn't have been made perfect the reason he was made perfect because God the father could attest about his life this is a man a human being who has been obedient in every single area that I gave him to be obedient and I see more and more that the test that God is giving us my dear brothers especially young brothers and sisters is the test of obedience yes it's

I believe that if we can understand and not understand but understand the spirit and the importance of obedience these other areas that we struggle in like lust and anger and love of money and temptations of the world will become so much easier because God sees an obedient humble broken heart spirit within us and gives us grace to overcome in our thought life to overcome when we're on the computer and those pictures show up or to overcome in a situation where there's conflict and I'm tempted to say a rude word and return those those battles become so much easier when God can give us grace because he sees an obedient spirit within us and so I challenge you today as I'm challenging myself my dear brother sister whatever age you are that the the area in which God is calling you to be

obedient perhaps as a wife at home to an ungodly husband or a or an employee having to submit and obey an ungodly rude angry boss and in that situation if God can see an obedient spirit within you where you you don't join your co-workers in speaking evil of your boss and you don't laugh at their dirty jokes because you see God see you have an obedient spirit about you and if you can if God can see that

obedient spirit within us he can do marvels in us like he did in Jesus what he did for Jesus he can do for us too absolutely you know we sing that in that that song we sing that chorus what he's done for Jesus he will do for me but the only way he can do that for me is if I have this obedient spirit so Ephesians 6 1 says children obey your parents in the Lord I urge you my young people

young people obey in the Lord middle-aged people obey in the Lord older people obey in the Lord and you know for the children the promise you will live a long life on this earth for us the spiritual promise from obedience is that we will be made perfect like Christ comes you know it says in 1 John 3 verse 2 that when we see him we shall be like him let me show you that verse as I close 1 John chapter 3 wonderful wonderful verse I this is the hope that you can it says there you can have this hope fixed on you whenever you're um you're fixed on him actually it says fixed on Jesus um so when you're walking through life and you're through going through some trial or tribulation this is that hope that you can just kind of put it like an anchor there's another verse in Hebrew that says our hope

is this hope is like an anchor so this anchor when you're when the when the storms are coming in your boat is tempted to be thrown this way and that put an anchor down what is that anchor this anchor let's read 1 John 3 verse 2 beloved now we are children of God and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be we haven't yet seen what we shall be I don't know what I'm going to look like I don't know what my glorified body in heaven will look like but we know this when we when he appears when Jesus Christ comes we shall be like him perfect in obedience I hope that you're pressing on to that that on that way because we shall see him just as he is and the sentence continues everyone who has this hope fixed on him like an anchor purifies himself just as he is pure and if we put that in the

context of what we just heard purifies myself of all disobedience that means I'm praying constantly day by day Lord is there an area of disobedience in my life is there an area where I should be submitting to somebody and I'm not am I am I living in in in in an unsubmitive way with my parents or to the elders in the church or to my boss or to the government show me Lord because I want to purify myself of that so that when I see you Lord Jesus I too will be perfect as you are in obedience it's a challenging and an exciting way to live may the Lord make it so in our lives amen

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