

Mar. 17, 2024
Fifth Sunday in Lent
Jer. 31:31-34, Heb. 5:1-10, Mark 10: 35-45
“Learn The Lost Art Of Obedience”

Why do you think God keeps you from seeing your future? Perhaps it's because if we knew that something bad was going to happen, we would lose our minds worrying and stressing over it.

What if God let you see into your future, and you found out that you were going to die a slow and gruesome death tomorrow morning? It would be a terrible thing, to know that. You'd be a nervous wreck.

On January 26th, 2020, Kobe Bryant, one of the greatest basketball players of all time together with his 13 year old daughter Gianna, and 7 others were on their way to a youth basketball game in the morning hours near Los Angeles.

Because of the traffic in the area, Kobe traveled the way he usually did, utilizing his own personal helicopter but along the way the weather was extremely foggy and cloudy, and the helicopter crashed into a hillside, and all 9 passengers died.

Now tell me, if Kobe knew that this trip would end in a gruesome death, wouldn't he have changed his plans, or canceled them? He would not want that kind of ending for his family. He would have changed his plans.

Jesus Christ somewhat resembled Kobe Bryant. He too faced a horrific death but with one exception. Jesus knew exactly that a tragedy lay ahead, where and when.

He was going to be tortured, and then put up on a cross. He knew that His death would not be instantaneous. He would have to suffer for six hours before he would die. There would be no morphine to dull his pain.

And you know, Jesus had every opportunity to cancel the flight but He didn't. He made the trip. Talk about focus. Talk about dedication. Talk about obedience to the will of His Father. Jesus was obedient to death, even death on the cross for us.

And that's what we are doing to be talking about, Obedience. Today, obedience seems to be a lost art. Kids don't mind their parents. Employers don't like to listen to their bosses. Patients won't listen to their doctors. Drivers will not obey speed zones. It might even be considered worse than a cuss word to tell someone to "obey". Even kids will say, "you can't tell me what to do!"

However, "obey" is NOT a dirty word. It does NOT mean INFERIORITY. It is something that God encourages. So today we will attempt to: "Learn the Lost Art of Obedience!" through two "S"s. 1) By seeing Christ's submission 2) By Receiving From Christ the Source.

Let's talk about the first "s"- submission. The book of Hebrews was written to a group of Christians who were Jewish in background. They were in danger of going back to their old rituals, the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament. The writer tries to show them that Jesus Christ is superior to those old laws and high priests they used to follow. Jesus is the Great High Priest.

Now take a look at his reverent submission. The writer takes us back to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus led his disciples after they had celebrated the Lord's Supper.

Jesus took Peter, James and John deeper into the garden and asked them to watch and pray with him. And while the disciples slept, Jesus prayed. He prayed hard. He prayed long. And this was the content of his prayer: "My father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me".

Jesus knew what was coming and so he asked God if there was some other way, a way that would spare him from the pain and agony. An easier way to accomplish the same eternal goal.

These verses in Hebrews provide some details about Jesus' prayer that the gospels do not. They tell us that he prayed "with loud cries and tears." If there was any doubt that Jesus was a real human being, if there were any doubts that what Jesus was feeling was real, his audible cries and visible tears put those doubts to rest.

Therefore, Jesus knows what you are dealing with, when you are told that you have cancer of the pancreas, cancer of the lung, cancer of the liver. When you cry loudly and shed tears, Jesus says, I've been there, done that. I know just how to help you.

But, didn't Jesus have to go through with it? Didn't he have to feel the whips on his back and the nails in his hands? Didn't he have to go without sleep and food and water? Didn't he have to endure the mocking and spitting and beating? Didn't Jesus die on the cross on Good Friday? Yes, he did.

So how can the Bible say, Jesus knew that His Father could save him from this kind of death and that he prayed to His Father. And that his prayers were heard? Yes the Heavenly Father heard the prayer of Jesus but the Father told Jesus He would not relieve him of the cross but He would ready him for it.

In fact the Father sent an angel to strengthen Christ for what lay ahead while he was in the Garden of Gethsemane . You see Jesus' prayer, Jesus' entire life, is a model of submission and as followers of Jesus, it is only natural that we would want to follow in his footsteps.

But many times we don't. We don't want to submit to God in fact we don't want to submit to anyone. John Hopkins University did a study of 400,000 Bypass patients and found that 90% returned to unhealthy eating habits after their surgery. They did not obey the doctors to eat healthy.

We are told to "submit to the governing authorities," in Romans 13 but if we can find a loophole, whether it's legit or not, we are sometimes quick to jump at such a chance.

Sometimes I see bumper stickers on cars that encourage us to "Question Authority." When people lie down in the middle of busy city streets, when protestors throw bricks and bottles at police officers, they are not acting as sterling examples of submission to God's representatives.

God instructs Christians to submit to him like a son submits to his father in Hebrews chapter 12 yet how many kids want to listen to their parents? In fact there are many times when we behave like disobedient children. When we are selfish and are self-centered.

Even if we include God in the decision making process. Even when we do pray to him, it's usually on our terms. We tell God what he should do. We tell God what he could do better. That's not reverent submission. That's the opposite of submission.

And that's exactly why Jesus' reverent submission was so necessary. Jesus submitted to his Father's will for all those times when we rebelled against it. Jesus submitted to his Father's will knowing that it was God's way and the only way to save the world.

But his reverent submission came with a price. Because Jesus submitted to the Father's will, he was forced to suffer. Jesus learned obedience from what he suffered.

As Jesus studied God's Word, it told him that he would be led like a lamb to the slaughter. God's Word told him, "you will be sold for 30 pieces of silver. Your hands and feet will be pierced. The sins of the world will be put on your shoulders." As he experienced that suffering, he learned what obedience is really all about.

Jesus could have bypassed the suffering, if he wanted to – all of it was optional. After all, he was the Son of God. At any moment he could have said, "No, I won't lower myself to that level. I won't do that for the human race." But he knew that this was the only way to save people from total destruction.

And so he submitted to the Heavenly Father, as it says, "Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered." He submitted to the betrayal, to the arrest, to the all-night trials, to the beatings, and finally, to the crucifixion.

When you ask yourself, “Who is Jesus Christ? Why is he suffering on a cross?” Think of the word “submission.” Of all the words that describe Jesus Christ, perhaps one of the best is the word “submission.” This is how he took your sins away. This is how He helps us.

We Learn the Lost Art of Obedience!” 1) By seeing Christ’s submission and now 2) By Receiving From Christ the Source. That is the other “s” in this section, source.

Verse 9 says: “And, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.” Once Jesus completed his suffering, what happened? He became the source of eternal salvation.

So where do you go when you need comfort? To the source! Where do you go when you need food for your soul? To the source! Where do you go when you need forgiveness for the sins you have committed in your life? To the source! Who is your source? Jesus!

There is only one source, and that is Jesus Christ. "once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him." Jesus was made perfect when he rose from the dead.

That was when he completed his goal. That is the moment in history when he became the only place to go to if you are looking for something for your soul that will last forever and ever.

When you realize to what extent Jesus submitted to the Heavenly Father and when you realize that he is the source of our eternal salvation – that changes everything for you.

In him, you find relief from your guilt. You find a sense of purpose, and an understanding of who God really is. In him you find the strength and motivation to change your life for the better –Why? Because he changes it for you. He is the source of all these things, as it says “the source of eternal salvation.”

His life changed the lives of 11 men – his disciples, from doubting cowards to courageous witnesses. It became so much easier for them to be obedient when they could see and understand Christ's submission and Christ as the source to all they needed.

May His life and death and resurrection change your life as well as you learn the lost art of obedience through a submissive heart and a willingness to allow Jesus to fill your life. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.