

“The Obedience of Faith”  
Romans 16:27  
(Preached at Trinity, April 22, 2012)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Paul is now rapidly bringing this letter to a close. Paul's benediction is actually a doxology – a song of praise.  
Paul sings his grand doxology to the great God who is able to establish us through the Gospel, the Gospel kept hidden from before the world began, but has now been made known to all the nations . . .  
And then Paul adds: "*leading to obedience of faith*"  
ESV - "to bring about the obedience of faith--"  
KJV - "for the obedience of faith:"
2. The translation hinges upon the preposition εἰς which often prove a challenge. This preposition is most often translated “into” but as with most Greek prepositions it can have several meanings. Εἰς can also be translated “for” as the KJV translates it which carries the idea of the NAS: “leading” or the ESV: “to bring about”
3. What does Paul mean by this statement? What exactly is he meaning by saying the Gospel leads to the obedience of faith?  
There are two possible interpretations, both of which are true.
  - I. Paul is describing the obedience which comes from faith. In other words true faith is never barren but always produces obedience to the commands of God.  
This is the way the NIV interprets it: "**the obedience that comes from faith**"
  - II. Paul is describing faith which itself is an act of obedience. God commands all men to believe upon Christ.
4. Both of these are inseparably connected to the Gospel as it is made known to the nations. Since we have no way of knowing which of these Paul has in mind I want to set both of them before you this morning. This message speaks to both believer and unbeliever. May God bless His Word before us this morning.
  - I. Paul is describing the obedience which comes from faith – the obedience that faith produces. How do you know if your faith is genuine; if it is saving faith?
    - A. True faith is never barren but always produces obedience to the commands of God.
      1. Obedience is at the very heart of faith.  
**Hebrews 11:8 NAS** - "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going."
      2. We are justified by faith alone but saving faith is never alone  
Genuine faith is always an active faith, it has life, vitality
      3. Obedience is the result of hearing and then placing significance upon what you have heard.

- a. People sin against God because they place little significance upon Him and His Law.
  - b. When God saves us He enables us to hear and He gives us a heart to obey – we see the significance of God. We see Him as having the right to rule us and that He is worthy of our obedience.
  - c. We are changed – a radical transformation has occurred  
**2 Corinthians 5:17** – “Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”
4. Paul is speaking of “the obedience of faith.”
- a. There are those who seek to obey God because of a fear of hell and Divine judgment. There is no desire to please Him. It is no more than the obedience of a slave. Spurgeon said this type of obedience is little different from the obedience of a horse or dog.
  - b. The obedience of faith is obedience from the heart which is cheerfully rendered unto God.  
 Paul says in 2 Corinthians  
**2 Cor. 5:14 NAS** - "For the love of Christ controls us"
- B. Many vainly suppose that you can be a Christian without the testimony of obedience
1. This is the most frequent charge of Muslims regarding the Gospel – they scoff that Christians believe that a man can accept Christ and then continue living in sin.  
 Paul exposed such foolish thinking –  
**Romans 6:1-2 KJV** - "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"  
**Romans 6:15 KJV** - "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid."
  2. The charge of the Muslims exposes a complete misunderstanding of the Gospel – sadly perhaps reflecting the theology of some Christians.
  3. Some in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century developed a position that became known as the Carnal Christian Theory made popular by Scofield and his study Bible – that you can accept Jesus as Savior without receiving Him as Lord.
    - a. According to Carnal Christian Theory the carnal Christian does not live in obedience to our Lord’s commands. He does not think or act spiritually. He doesn’t care for spiritual things. He seldom reads his Bible; is bored with worship and preaching. He would never consider attending two services on a Sunday or attending the mid-week service and giving 10% of his income seems nothing short of extreme. The truth is, there is little difference between him and a lost man. There is nothing distinctly Christian about his life. Yet, he has confidence that he will go to heaven because of his profession.

- b. Spurgeon – “If the professed convert distinctly and deliberately declares that he knows the Lord’s will but does not intend to it, you are not to pamper his presumption, but it is your duty to assure him that he is not saved. Do not suppose that the Gospel is magnified or God glorified by going to the worldlings and telling them that they may be saved at this moment by simply accepting Christ as their Saviour, while they are wedded to their idols, and their hearts are still in love with sin. If I do so I tell them a lie, pervert the Gospel, insult Christ, and turn the grace of God into lasciviousness.”
2. The Bible teaches clearly that genuine faith is always accompanied by consistent obedience – “The obedience of faith.”
  1. Genuine faith always produces the fruit of obedience  
**James 1:21-22 NAS** - "Therefore putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. <sup>22</sup> But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves."
  2. James made it clear that not every kind of faith saves  
**James 2:14 NAS** - "What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him?"  
**James 2:19-20 NAS** - "You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. <sup>20</sup> But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?"  
**James 2:26 KJV** - "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."
  3. Do you have the obedience of faith? A faith that is proved by your obedience to God?

## II. Paul is describing faith which itself is an act of obedience

- A. God commands men to turn from their sinful disobedience and trust in Christ.
  1. Faith and repentance are presented in Scripture as commands  
 The Gospel commands men to believe and turn from their sins.  
**Acts 17:30 NAS** – “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent,"  
**1 John 3:23 NAS** - "And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us."
  2. Paul always presented the Gospel as that which must be obeyed.  
**Romans 6:17 NAS** - " But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,"  
**Romans 10:16-17** – “But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? <sup>17</sup> So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

3. Lloyd-Jones – “Why should I believe the gospel? The first reason that we all should have for believing the gospel is not that it is going to do this, that or the other for me; I should never preach it in that form. I preach this because it is the record that God gave concerning His Son, and I tell you that if you do not believe it you are making God a liar; you are rejecting the Word of the holy, eternal God, and that is the most terrible sin. We are to preach this gospel and then tell men that, if they do not believe it, they are refusing God, and nothing remains for them but perdition and punishment.”
- B. This is the way Paul always preached the Gospel. He preached in command mode and commanded obedience to the Gospel
1. Faith commands obedience and obedience commands faith
  2. Paul’s great charge was to command obedience to the Gospel in all the nations  
**1 Timothy 4:11 KJV** - "These things command and teach."
  3. Do you share the Gospel in command mode? The Gospel is not an offer, it is a command.
  4. Salvation is by grace. It cannot be earned. It is bought for us by Christ. Yet salvation demands a response of obedience and submission.
- C. Lost person, God commands you to turn from your sin and believe the Gospel.
1. You must obey the demands of the Gospel to turn from your sin and trust Christ.
  2. Every human being has the duty to trust Christ
  3. By refusing the Gospel you are refusing Christ. You are declaring Him to be of no value to you.
    - a. You are declaring yourself without the need of His saving sacrifice on the cross and thus make a mockery of His death.  
**Hebrews 10:26-29 NAS** - " For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, <sup>27</sup> but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. <sup>28</sup> Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on *the testimony of two or three witnesses.* <sup>29</sup> How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?"
    - b. Or it could be that you consider yourself too wicked to be saved. You’ve waited too long and sinned too much. You are calling God a liar because He says,  
**Romans 10:13 NAS** - "Whoever will call upon the name of the LORD will be saved."  
**Revelation 22:17 NAS** - " And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost."

- c. Or perhaps you have sought His salvation and have not found rest for your soul and so you have given up. What! Is it of such little value to you?  
 God says, **Luke 13:24 NAU** - "Strive to enter through the narrow door"  
**Jeremiah 24:7 NAS** - "And I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD; and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart."  
**Matthew 7:7-8 NAS** - "Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. <sup>8</sup> "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened."
4. Do you see that God is calling you to turn from your sin and follow Christ? Jesus said to His disciples, "Follow Me." Will you obey?

#### Conclusion:

1. Jesus commanded each of His disciples, "Follow Me," each time in the imperative—in command mode. He used the same word to the rich young ruler. This is the Gospel message.  
 But then Jesus gave the condition for discipleship:  
**Mark 8:34 NAS** - "And He summoned the multitude with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."
2. Obedience is at the very heart of faith. We trust Christ from the obedience of faith. And this faith always leads to obedience.
3. Look unto Christ. Look at His beauty and perfection. And may the sight cause everything else upon the earth to fade into insignificance in the light of His glory. May this lead you to obey, to obey without ceasing; to obey until your dying breath. May you claim the words of Joshua as your own,  
**Joshua 24:15 KJV** - "as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."