

Romans
Message Eight
The Obedience of Faith
Rom 1:1-7

1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,
2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)
3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according
to the flesh;
4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the
resurrection from the dead:
5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all
nations, for his name:
6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:
7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from
God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. KJV

Introduction:

I promise that it is not my intent to see how many messages I can get out of these verses but the extraordinary things that are said here as Paul introduces this book cannot be lightly rushed over. This is an important work, so important, I believe, that if I could only have two of the 27 books of the NT I would want the gospel of John and the letter to the Romans. This book is indeed a masterpiece.

Last week we looked at the important of the title “Son of God” and we considered briefly the fact that through Him we have received “Grace and apostleship.” But, we did not have time to look at the last part of v.5, “for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name...” This will be our focus for the message today.

In a sense it is interesting to see the words “faith” and “Obedience” placed this close together in a sentence as well as in such a profound statement. You all know that the book of Romans is the great proof text and development of the doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, which has been used as is profoundly used in our day to deny the importance of Good Works as well as their relationship to Faith and Justification.

This verse is one that usually gets little attention. It is read over and across without the notice of many. It is interesting because what Paul wrote was not “obedience to the faith” as the KJV has it but “the obedience of (that belongs to) faith.”

Rom 1:5

5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake, NASU

Rom 1:5

5 Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. (from

New International Version)

Even though I think the NIV does a poor job with many texts, I think it captures the thought of Paul here and is consistent with the grammar of the text.

THE GOSPEL CALLS PEOPLE TO OBEDIENCE. This is what the text says and teaches. In fact, it is what all of the New Testament says and teaches.

We have been told and in many ways adopted the idea that the Gospel calls us to ***believe*** something and that is true in a sense but the purpose of ***believing*** is to produce a life change which results in consistent ***obedience*** to the Word of God.

This is the reason we have so many professing Christians who have no interest in obeying God, the message has been altered and perverted to leave out the importance of doing what God says, keeping the Law of God.

To be technical for those who may hear the message who understand something of the language of the New Testament, the two words ‘obedience’ and ‘faith’ stand together with no modifiers except for the fact that ‘faith’ is in the possessive case which means that it belongs to and modifies ‘obedience.’ It is the “Obedience which belongs to faith,” and that is the reason that the gospel is preached, it is the goal of the Gospel to produce faithful obedience.

We have come up in a world in which faith and obedience are usually placed in contrast with one another rather than relationship. It is Faith versus Works in many messages and that is because of the way the gospel has been handled from the 1860's until today by men whose primary aim was producing converts rather than disciples.

When the Second Great Awakening began to die down in intensity there were those who sought to keep it going by devising methods whereby the numbers of converts could continue to join into Christianity. But, since the Holy Spirit had backed away, those who were coming were not being converted in the number they once were and it became necessary to make the path to supposed ‘conversion’ easier for them. And, what could be easier than making conversion mere ‘believing’ with no expectation of good works? And, so the new methods were adopted and developed and improved until the mere saying of a prayer or sometimes the raising of a hand or nodding of a head could be counted as an expression of ‘saving faith’ and, since there was no expectation of good works or a changed life, many nominal believers were accepted and baptized as genuine saints.

But Paul closed that door here right in the beginning of the letter to the Roman church. “We have received grace and apostleship through Him to bring about the obedience that faith produces among all the Gentiles on behalf of His name...” (My paraphrase) The whole purpose was and is to produce faithful service from believing people.

Of course, we know from the epistle of James that there are two kinds of faith, one which saves and one which does not.

James 2:14-20

14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

- 15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,
 16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled;
 notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what
 doth it profit?
 17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.
 18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without
 thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.
 19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and
 tremble.
 20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? KJV

There is a faith which produces salvation and a faith which does not. Of course, the second version is a fraud, it is not real faith. Nevertheless there are millions which hold to such a faith without question and are sure, because they have been told so, that this faith will most assuredly save them.

But just as surely as there are two kinds of faith there are also two kinds of works. One has the *intent* of earning favor with God and it is actually the hope of many for salvation. They do not do horrible things (they think) and they do some good works (in their own minds), in fact, some of them do many profound things that all of us would agree are good things. But the flaw is that they rest on the fact that they have done these good things as the basis of their hope that God will one day look at those things and reward them with an eternal home in His Presence because of them.

The second kind is that which Paul has introduced to us here, those works (obedience) which belongs to faith, is related to faith, is produced by faith. These works are those done by people who are converted by Grace and Justified by Faith. That very Faith which has been given them by God (and it is a gift) not only enables them to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ but also drives them to faithful obedience and service.

Eph 2:8

- 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: KJV

This second kind of faith is what we have Paul referencing here in Rom. 1:5.

Armed with this thought, let us read through the passage again and see that 1:5 is the very heart of it, expressing the purpose of all that is described here.

- 1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,
 2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)
 3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according
 to the flesh;
 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the
 resurrection from the dead:
 5 ***By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all
 nations, for his name:***
 6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:
 7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from
 God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Everything else in the text is incidental to v.5, though they are all fundamental thoughts.

The Reality is that he who believes on the Son of God obeys His commands and there is no room for other considerations.

John 14:12-15

- 12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.
13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.
15 If ye love me, keep my commandments. KJV

Here we see that believing on Him and Loving Him are traits of the regenerated soul and never does one exist without the other. Therefore the one who believes on Him love Him and he who loves Him does what He commands. ***This is the obedience which belongs to faith.***

So many have cheapened this into saying, “God says that we are to believe on Him and we obey Him when we believe.” Now this is true as far as it goes but almost universally in our day serious, faithful obedience is not considered a part of the equation.

Preachers of our time have invented a form of believing that was never intended and have continually preached is as the Gospel. It is as if they have stood James on his head and affirmed the very opposite of what he was saying. They totally disconnect Faith from Works as independent principles which only bear the loosest of connections with each other. Faith, Saving Faith, they say, can be possessed without Works and Works are essentially unnecessary, just an option to follow if one so chooses.

The Truth is, and we all know it well, that anyone who honestly seeks to be holy and godly as a consistent manner of life knows how often he fails and would not dare trust those works as his hope of salvation. He learns by painful experience just what Paul wrote of himself.

Rom 7:18-23

- 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.
19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.
20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.
21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.
22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:
23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. KJV

This is the hopelessness of Salvation by Works. It is not that the man does not ***intend*** to obey God or that he ***purposes to do evil*** but the very intention and decision to consistently obey God reveals his imperfections and they are too profound even in the believing man to produce anything

acceptable to God.

We remind ourselves of Paul's very natural comment that there is an obedience which is inseparably linked to faith and is the anticipated outcome and product of real and saving faith, even though it is insufficient to save. In the mind of Paul it is not necessary to save since the believer has already been Justified through Faith. But contrary to the modern version of Gospel preachers, the fact that Works are not necessary to save does not make them irrelevant or unnecessary.

Paul will assuredly affirm that Justification - a right standing with God - comes by faith and cannot be earned by works, he, at the same time, most assuredly teaches that this same faith which saves produces faithful obedience, the same thing that James taught.

The Bible and the Gospel know of no such monstrosity as true and saving faith which is empty of good works.

Consider the conversion of Zaccheus.

Luke 19:1-10

- 1 And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.
- 2 And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.
- 3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.
- 4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.
- 5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.
- 6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.
- 7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.
- 8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.
- 9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.
- 10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. KJV

Jesus affirmed that the man was truly converted and that apart from any works in order to earn his salvation. Yet even before he was pronounced as one who had received salvation he was committing himself to profound works that cannot be called anything other than "Good." Half of his goods to the poor? Fourfold restoration to those he had robbed? What else are we to think but that the faith that saves produces obedience?

Look with me at the story of the adulterous Samaritan woman whom we call The Woman at the Well.

John 4:1-30

- 1 When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and

baptized more disciples than John,
2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples.)
3 He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.
4 And he must needs go through Samaria.
5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of
ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.
6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus
on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.
7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to
drink.
8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)
9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest
drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the
Samaritans.
10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that
saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have
given thee living water.
11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep:
from whence then hast thou that living water?
12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof
himself, and his children, and his cattle?
13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst
again:
14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the
water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into
everlasting life.
15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come
hither to draw.
16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.
17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast
well said, I have no husband:
18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in
that saidst thou truly.
19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.
20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place
where men ought to worship.
21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in
this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.
22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the
Jews.
23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father
in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.
24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.
25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ:
when he is come, he will tell us all things.
26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.
27 And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet
no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

- 28 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,
29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?
30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him. KJV

This woman was the initial contact and convert in a mighty movement of God's Spirit upon these people who were thought of as hopeless by the Jews.

John 4:39-41

- 39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.
40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.
41 And many more believed because of his own word; KJV

She went into her town to call the men to come and hear the Messiah.... before it was known whether she repented of her sins (she did) and before she was baptized. She did good works *out of Faith...* she gave testimony to the Messiah, that He had come in the personage of Jesus Christ.

Aside:

I fear that in many places believing women have been talked out of taking the initiative in good works through the doctrine of Submission.

It is true that god has an order established both in the family and in the church but I assure you that it was never intended to hinder and restrain good works... works that are born out of Saving Faith.

Or, shall we talk about the man known as the Gadarene Maniac?

Mark 5:1-20

- 1 And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.
2 And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,
3 Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:
4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.
5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.
6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,
7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.
8 For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.

- 9 And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many.
- 10 And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.
- 11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.
- 12 And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.
- 13 And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea.
- 14 And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.
- 15 And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.
- 16 And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine.
- 17 And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.
- 18 And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.
- 19 Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.
- 20 And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel. KJV

This is one of the clearest examples we have of Salvation by Grace. The demons had full control of the man's mind and will. He could not even cry out for help much less believe or do good works. Yet, it is obvious that he was regenerated in conjunction with his deliverance from the demonic crowd which held him captive. As soon as he was delivered we find him behaving with dignity and desiring to be with Jesus. When Jesus turned down his request and gave him an assignment he went at it with diligence and faithfulness and the work prospered... "all men did marvel."

These are good works that proceed out of faith, the "obedience of faith."

So, we should understand that Paul's almost casual comment in Romans 1:5 reveals his presumption and belief that the Gospel's design is that it produce obedience and holiness.

This has always pushed Christians and the Christian Church (the real one) into an oppositional stance with the world system.

The fact that the early Christians would not worship at the idol's temples even under the threat of torture and death is one of the greatest examples we have. There were moments and places where if one only agreed to offer one animal on a pagan altar he would have been spared an awful death. Some did whose faith was not deep and profound but countless thousands did not and perished under hideous persecution.

Later, people possessing the same faith would be pressed to submit to state churches, first Rome and then others. Just as they had resisted the Roman state they resisted this new form of persecution and, again, thousands died.

Our country was originally settled by people who opted for an unknown wilderness and almost

certain death in order to live in a place where they would not be forced to comply with behaviors and religious requirements they considered to be unbiblical and wicked.

The scriptures actually tell us that everyone who accepts the gospel demand for obedience and holiness will at some point be treated badly.

2 Tim 3:10-13

- 10 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,
11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.
12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.
13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. KJV

If you understand, embrace and practice this reality of the gospel message, that faith produces obedience, you will find yourself under immense pressure to yield and not be so serious about following Christ. Remember the repeated admonitions of Jesus Christ to His Church.

Rev 2:7

- 7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. KJV

Rev 2:11

- 11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. KJV

Rev 2:17

- 17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. KJV

Rev 2:26-27

- 26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:
27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. KJV

Rev 3:5

- 5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. KJV

Rev 3:12

- 12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. KJV

Rev 3:21-22

- 21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. KJV

Overcoming is refusing to bend to the pressure and the threats that come at us for seeking to be faithful and obedient to the Gospel. There are great promises for being faithful and each of them is a threat to those who fold under duress.