

The Obedience Of Christ?

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Father, we thank You. Once again, Father, we come to You, in the Name of Jesus. We're here not to listen to the voice of man, because the voice of a man does not profit. It is You and Your Words alone, Father. Therefore, we pray along with Peter, where can we go, Father? You and You alone have the Words of life. Therefore, Father, speak to us, for those bring life, into us, through Your Spirit. You said, Lord, "The letter kills but the Spirit brings life." And therefore, we pray, Father, through the administration of the Word, bring life to us. Let this Word, Father, be tested and be proven in our life. Whatever is of You, God, let it be established in our life and whatever is not of You, let it just fall to the ground. Commit us into Your hands, anoint us even as we hear and even as I speak; to that end, grant us grace and You'll bless this time. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

Okay. So, we'll continue to study in the lines of what we've been looking at in our Church over the past several weeks. And Sundays and Wednesdays, Pastors' conference – we looked at some very important aspects of our walk with the Lord. Especially, we'll come back to that famous portion of the Scripture we've been looking at. We'll revisit this over and over again. It's in line with what we have been studying.

1 Samuel 15:22-23

22 So, Samuel said: "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion...

You see that? Obeying and delight. You need to understand that; what God is pleased with? It is obedience. That's what gives God delight. Not sacrifice; obedience. Obedience will have sacrifice, but sacrifice need not have obedience. Something which is absolutely important for us to understand. Obedience will always have sacrifice, but sacrifice need not have obedience. So, there is one thing that delights God. *Without faith, it is impossible to please God.* Those who walk according to the flesh cannot please God. So, there are ways we can please God and that is only the way of obedience. Okay? Everybody say 'Obedience'. That's what we'll look at today.

...Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.

Look at these two words over here. Rebellion 'is an', can you see that it is in italics. What does it mean? It is not there in the original translation. We'll read that without it 'is as',

...For rebellion the sin of witchcraft...

'Is as' don't exist in the Hebrew language.

...stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king."

So, you see, rejecting the Word of the Lord is essentially is what we call as rebellion. Yeah? And he says this rebellion is as witchcraft. It's amazing. What does it mean? The moment you start rejecting God's Words in your life, you are already in rebellion and then, you are operating not necessarily ostentatiously in witchcraft. You are not going to a witch, but you are already under the influence of spirits of witchcraft. That's what it means. For example, in the New Testament, you will often find people in the Bible where some translations will use the word "this guy is demon possessed". The word is not 'demon possessed', it's 'diamond', which essentially means "under the influence of demonic power." That's what it means. And it's quite possible that many believers, if they are walking in rebellion in that, they have rejected the Word of God; they are walking under the influence of witchcraft. That is what we have been looking at. And those who walk under the influence of witchcraft. You know where you find them. This is important. We'll resist this slide little later but keep that in mind; it's very powerful. Remember, if Samuel would have told Saul, "You are in witchcraft," Saul would have said, "What are you talking

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about? What witchcraft here?" I mean, it's amazing. But you see, it was the beginning of fall and ultimately, ended up with witch. The very witches and the diviners and the sooth sawyers whom he put out of the kingdom, ultimately, he was so hardened in his heart that he visited a witch. That's amazing. So, you have to be very careful. When you say, rebellion is essentially rejecting the Word of God, and where do we find these people who have rejected? Just keep those people in mind. This in mind. Think with this lens now. Witchcraft means rebellion, rebellion means rejection of God's Word, alright? *Revelation chapter 21* will talk about these people.

Revelation 21:6-8

⁶ And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. ⁷ He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. ⁸ But the cowardly, (or the fearful) unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers,

Are those people who are under the influence of witchcraft essentially? They're the people who are rebels because they have rejected the Word of God. This is what it means. Okay, just keep that in mind. When you're reading Scripture, use that lens now.

...idolaters, and all liars...

All kinds of liars – white liars, black liars, they'll all be outside the Kingdom of God. All sheep will be in God's Kingdom. You can be a white sheep, black sheep, whatever sheep; but you're sheep. You know, sometimes, they use, "This guy is a proverbial black sheep." As long as he's a sheep, it doesn't matter whether he is white or black; he will be found in the presence of God. So, all liars, however – white liars or black liars or outliers – they'll find themselves in the lake of fire.

...shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

And what is this sorcery? Where does it find its influence? Remember? You remember the curse that God pronounces over satan? He says, "The dust of the ground will be your food. That will be your food." And it says, "He made Adam from the dust of the earth." So, essentially, flesh is like a dust. And then, you see this in,

Galatians 5:19-21

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, (essentially those who people are rebels who have rejected the Word of the Lord. So, just keep that in mind) hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

You see that this is very important for us to understand. So, sorcery essentially is the work of the flesh and therefore, it says in *Romans*,

Romans 8:8-9

⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹ But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His

So, sorcery is the work of the flesh. Okay, understand that we looked at that. So, how do we tackle the spirit of witchcraft? How do you overcome it? How do we keep ourselves from the influence of witchcraft in our lives? And we cannot, like Pastor tempo spoke to us during these weeks he says, "In marriage, for a man, it could be intimidation and that could be and that could be as long as you intimidate people, you are operating in the realm of witchcraft and for the women, it could be manipulation." All of us can operate in that realm. So, be careful about it and we always constantly keep fighting it, right? So, what is the key? And how do we do it? This is the question. "My people are destroyed because of lack of knowledge." Rebellion is essentially rejection of Word of God, and that is witchcraft. On the contrary, obedience is exactly opposite to rebellion. And by the way, rebellion and pride go together. Only these people who are proud are rebels. And only those people who are humble are obedient. That's a no-brainer. You want to see the humblest people? Those are the

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people who are the most obedient people. Proud people, even in their obedience they are rebels. This is something which we need to look at carefully. So, obedience is the key. And why did God save us? The reason God saved us was this.

Romans 1:5

⁵ Through Him we have received grace and apostleship to call all the gentiles to obedience that comes from faith

This is what God has saved us from. Obedience that comes from faith. And another place. Another verse. Another author, when you say Paul is always worried about obedience. Look at another author; Peter. Pauline and Peterine.

1 Peter 1:1-2

¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ² elect according to the foreknowledge of God...

A lot of people are worried about who these elect people are. Am I the elect? How do you know that you are among the elect? It's very simple.

² Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience...

That is how you know you're the part of the elect. It's very interesting. Opposite of witchcraft is therefore, obedience. If you want to ensure that you don't operate under the realm of witchcraft, what do you practice? You practice obedience. Question is: what kind of obedience? Answer? Okay. Let's see what kind of obedience He is talking about.

2 Corinthians 10:4-6

⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that (or every thought of rebellion, that's what it means in other words) exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, ⁶ and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

You reject every high thing and the only obedience that is acceptable in the sight of God is the obedience of Christ. That is how we please God. Any kind of obedience, doesn't matter; you can call it 'obedience'. Like Paul said, "I obeyed the voice of the God." No. He says, "There is one kind of obedience, there is only one kind of obedience which I am pleased. This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." When He got into the waters of baptism and when He goes to the Mount of transfiguration and He's hearing about His death, He's discussing the kind of death He is going to suffer and then, suddenly, Peter opens his open and He hears a voice, "This is My beloved Son. I am well pleased with Him. Listen to Him or obey Him." That is the whole idea. That is how we know that our obedience pleases God. Any other kind of obedience, therefore, by default, we are operating in the realm of witchcraft. You got that? So, we are striving for, hopefully, in incremental ways, it doesn't happen in a day; incrementally, we are going towards the obedience. How do we change this? This is the question. First of all, we must know what it is in order for us to strive for it.

Now, let us try to see what it is. The classic text on this is, of course, we know this very famous passage in the New Testament

Philippians 2:5-9

⁵ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

First, remember last Wednesday, we heard about bond servant? Yeah, that's how it starts. It starts by taking this position. Then, if,

...and coming in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient

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Isn't it amazing? He was not already obedient. He didn't cry. He did not have the kind obedience to please God. He took the form of a bondservant, humbled himself, and He progressively became obedient. That is strange, amazing.

...to the point of death, even the death of the cross. ⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him...

Another text. What is this obedience of Christ? How did He become obedient? He became obedient by doing something. That, all of us do when we go to school. What do we do when we go to school? We are doing something. What are we doing? We call our school something very interesting. We don't call it a school; we call it a learning center. We don't call it a school. It is a learning center. When we go to school, we learn. I remember one guy who was giving these pep talks for IIT JEE exam. You know what he says? "Coaching se concept nahi athi hai, learning se athi hai concept." It doesn't matter if you go to 25 coaching centers, you will never learn the concept until you learn it. So, you can run from one coaching center to another coaching center, from Ramaiah to Krishnamurthy to any other area, China; you'll never get the concept by coaching; you'll get the concept by learning. That is the reason why it says, "There are lot of people who're forever learning to speak but coming to the knowledge of the truth." They are going to coaching. They are running from one deliverance conference to another deliverance conference, from one exposition to another exposition meeting, but they have never learnt obedience. It doesn't matter how many Bible studies you come and listen, unless you're learning obedience and becoming obedient even to the point of death, becoming progressively incrementally to the obedience that conforms at least to a certain level through the obedience of Christ, we have not; we are still loitering around in a domain which is uncertain.

So, how did Jesus attain? How did He become obedient? It's a very interesting thing. It's very strange, right? For God to become something. I mean, how can God become something, that is which is already not?

Hebrews 5:7-9

⁷ who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, ⁸ though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

That's remarkable. So, He became obedient by learning obedience, and how did He learn obedience? By the things which He suffered. That is how He learned obedience.

⁹ And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,

See, ultimately, we're obeying Him. That's what Paul says, "Be imitators of me even as I imitate Christ. Even as you see in me areas where my obedience, you believe according to the Word of God is conforming to the obedience of Christ. Imitate me in those areas." That's exactly what he means over here. So, how did He learn? He learnt obedience through the things that He suffered. That's something strange. How can God learn? What is this? What kind of a paradigm is this? John Piper helped me in this. In one of his, ask John Piper Podcast, very interesting, this is what he says, The paradigm – John Piper. How did Jesus learn obedience? Just look at this and keep this grid in your mind. How did Jesus learn obedience? By starting from untested obedience to suffering, and to tested. That is how he learnt. Untested obedience; He was already obedient to the Father, but then, He had to become a Man and He had to be tested in every point, and not sin, so, He had untested obedience when He was with the Father; He came as a man; He allowed Himself to be tested through all kinds of various trials and situations and relationships. And ultimately, He was perfected in His obedience which was tested. That is reason why He says, "My dear brothers, don't think strange when you fall into many trails and temptations because the testing of faith produces patience and let patience have its complete affect in you." You may be perfect, not lacking anything. See, untested obedience to suffering to tested obedience and this is the paradigm for every Christian. How do we accomplish the obedience of Christ in our lives, in this process? So, let us apply this paradigm to different areas in our lives and see whether how much we have conformed to the obedience of Christ. Can we do that? So, let's come back to the slide again.

Rebellion is a sin of witchcraft, which is essentially is the rejection of the Word of God and obedience is what God is delighting in. So, when you reject the Word of God, you have rebelled, but when you love and accepted the Word of God obedience begins. So, the first way to learn obedience. You know how He learnt obedience? First way He learnt obedience by His attitude towards God's Word. It's amazing, isn't it? 12 years old, He goes to the Passover festival, and He is in the

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temple. It says, He's listening, and He is asking questions. How many of you have questions? Once the class is over, "Ardam ayinda? (Did you understand?)" When you have no questions, for sure, the teacher has failed to convey. If you have no questions and therefore, you have to ask questions and Jesus, that's how He learned. And he went over to the Passover, He might have asked them, "What is this Passover festival?" I'm just speculating. "You know, the Passover, the first born, either the first born had to die or a lamb had to die." "Oh, is it? Why should the firstborn die?" "Otherwise, the angel of death will not Passover." And He was possibly thinking, "I should be the Passover Lamb. I'll be the Passover Lamb and over here for the Passover festival, these guys don't even know Me." I'm just speculating. He is learning obedience. So, your first step is very important – the first step is hearing. That's why I said, "Who has your ears?" It's very interesting, right?

Psalm 40:6

⁶ ***Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened.***

Hebrews will quote the same verse, but it will not from the original Hebrew it will quote from a Septuagint which is a Greek translation of the Old Testament.

Hebrews 10:5

⁵ ***"Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me.***

In other words, he who has your ear has your body. Got that? So, the first step and where most believers fail. I am talking about most believers and I am obviously not talking about many of you. I am not sure what our attitude toward Word of God is. Our attitude to the Word of God determines everything in our lives. That is where Jesus started first and you'll see learning and rebellion connected to the Word of God. But leaning, rebellion, Word of God are interconnected. How do I know this?

Isaiah 50:4-6

"The Lord God has given Me the tongue of the (what?) learned, (learning) that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned. ⁵ The Lord God has opened My ear; And I was not rebellious...

Same word. By the way, the word for rebellion is 'mara' which also means bitter. Same root. That's a Hebrew word. I mean. that is how He learned. Think about it? *The Word who became flesh who was the Word of God in the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and the Word became flesh,* and when He became flesh He had to even learn the Word of God. And His attitude toward the Word of God determines His entire destiny, for several years, morning by morning almost 33 years, morning by morning, He was awake, and He never turned as rebellious and why did He do that? Why did He do this? Look at the next verse.

⁶ ***I gave My back to those who struck Me, And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.***

"Why did I not turn away as one rebellious? Because one day, I should give My back, I should give My beard, and somebody will be spitting on Me for that day. I am getting up early in the morning, I am hearing, I am learning so, that one day, I can allow somebody to spit on Me." Think about it no; we all parents want our children want to go to different coaching morning by morning; my parents also used to wake me up. Why? Not that one; I'll give my back to those who will smite me. I'll sit in the position of authority, I'll have a great job, great salary. That is why they woke me up morning by morning, right? "Mathu vadalara niddura matthu vadalara." My dad used to say. Means, "Please get up, Vijay" And he used to chide us and get up early in the morning. Why? To study; to go to coaching class. Why? So that one day, you'll reign. Jesus was also awakened, morning by morning, to learn so, that one day, He'll give His back to those who will smite Him and His face to those who will spit on Him. I mean, think about it; is that our attitude towards God's Word? Why are we listening to the Word of God? So that one day, we'll be successful? No. So that one day, we'll be ready for persecution. Got that? So, our attitude towards God's Word is so important. So, if you have rejected, this is exactly what Jesus will say in *John*,

John 12:47-48

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47 And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. 48 He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.

Meaning, “If you have rejected Me, it means you actually have rejected My Words.” And that is the reason why He looks at His disciples and says, “They all said this is a very hard Word; who can accept it?” And He looked at His 12 disciples, “Do you also want to go away?” They said, “Lord, where shall we go? You alone have the Words of life.” Attitude towards God’s Word. Okay.

So, how do you learn? For me, there is no substitute for hard work in the Kingdom of God. You know what Paul told Timothy? “Study to show yourself approved unto God.” This is how you learn. I’ll show you an attitude. We can only see the attitude; it is something which we have to desire. Look at an attitude of a learner.

Proverbs 2:1-5

1 My son, if you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you, 2 So that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; 3 Yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, 4 If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; 5 Then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

Otherwise, this all is superficial. Everybody, lot of people are dandies; they just small little dandies they have – chocolates, and candies they have. They don’t have depth; they don’t have meat. Why? Because they don’t seek for the Word of the God. They don’t have this attitude when they come to the Word of God. It’s very interesting, right? So many people, especially, I’ve seen also in universities, also, right? When it comes to solving complex mathematical differential equations, they use their minds. When they come to the Church they put their minds out and they come. They want everything easy. The Pastor has to simply everything for them. They don’t want to think. You know what Paul tells Timothy? He says, “Think on the things that I have taught you. The Lord will give you understanding.” Think! Okay? Most of the believers can’t take hard words, right? I mean, if you tell them good things about them, they’re okay. But if you tell correction, sorry. And if you accept any other word which is not corrective in that sense, you know what it is? It is actually divination. You say, “Vijay! Prove that from Scripture.” I can show you several places. I’ll show you only place.

Jeremiah 14:13-14

13 Then I said, “Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, the prophets say to them, ‘You shall not see the sword, nor shall you have famine, but I will give you assured peace in this place.’”

Meaning, this is exactly what people want. “Oh, you’re so good! So good! You’ll always be successful in life. Nothing will happen to you.” You know what it says?

14 And the LORD said to me, “The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, (And what?) divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart.

Divination! What it means is this – any other word which is not going to really form the obedience of Christ inside of me is not the Word of God. It is actually sorcery. It is divination. We find this again in the New Testament.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12

9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason (Who will send them?) God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

And another place. *Proverbs 17*. This is really amazing!

Proverbs 17:11

11 A rebellious man seeks only evil, So a cruel messenger will be sent against him.

And this is exactly what happened to Saul. I'm not showing you something which is outside Scripture. Look at what it says in,

1 Samuel 16:13-14

¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah. ¹⁴ But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him. (He's only rebelling against the Lord. God says, "I will send you an evil spirit and it will terrorise you.") **¹⁵ And Saul's servants said to him, "Surely, a distressing spirit from God is troubling you.**

See that? So, your attitude towards God's Word is so very important to all of us. Incremental, by the way. We don't become perfect in a day, but we have our hearts towards it. If there is a willing heart, it is not according to what one does not have, but what according to what one has. If you're willing and obedient, you shall eat the best of the land. So, don't worry, okay? If you're trying and if your heart is towards that, it is all right. That's the first thing. Attitude towards God's Word. That is how He learnt – hanging onto God's Word. You should constantly keep praying every day of your life saying, "Lord, never stop speaking to me. Never stop speaking to me." God is not obligated to speak to us. He says, "Those who honor Me, them, I will honor." And if you don't honor His Word, then He's not obligated to speak to us at all. And that's exactly what happened to Saul. Even in his last days, God does not speak to him through vision or through prophets, or any other thing. So, what does he do? Ultimately, he has to hear a voice. So, he goes to a diviner. He doesn't even repent at that time. He doesn't even say, "Why is this happening to me?" He goes to the diviner. So, your attitude toward God's Word is very important. That is how you learn obedience.

Second way we learn obedience. By the way, this is all suffering. This is suffering – to come, to concentrate. Sometimes, when I listen to some speakers, I'm not sure if you'll be able to handle them for fifteen minutes. If that guy were to come and preach from this pulpit, I'm sure in ten minutes, you'll fall asleep. I'm sure. You all have to have animated expressions and dances and everything, you know? I'm sure. How many of you can actually listen to Derek Prince constantly, consistently? He's like one dull monotone. Here, we have to do soprano, alto and everything. We should say, "Ah! Ey! Oh!" All kinds of noises in order to attract you. But he will speak in one dull monotone and unless you love God's Word and you hang on to everything that he is saying, you'll never be able to listen to him. I used to do that over and over again. I heard him so much. That's the first thing – attitude towards God's Word.

Second – How did Jesus learn obedience? Read that. Submission to imperfect authority. Okay? This is something which we cannot circumvent. Alright? This is so important, saints. This is a game changer in your life. Game changer, okay? *Luke 2:51-52*. Your eternal destiny lies in the way you accept this word. Test it and accept it, of course.

Luke 2:51-52

⁵¹ Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was ^[a]subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus (what? He) increased in wisdom (The eternally wise God!) and stature, and in favor with God and men.

What did I say? Untested obedience, to suffering and to tested obedience. And what is suffering paradigm over here? He has to submit to imperfect authority, especially to imperfect parents. I want to ask the young people over here. There's so many people who come from different backgrounds. Some of you orphans. Some of you semi-orphans. Some of you difficult parents. How is your response to your parents? Did you forgive your parents for some things that they've done to you, maybe, in their zeal? Ask yourself this question. Lot of children will say, "When I grow up, I'll never be like my dad." I'll tell you something – today, I'm listening; whenever you say that, that's exactly what you will do. "I will never be like that." Don't say that. "I'll never be like my mother." That means there's something in my heart. I mean, I'll ask daughters-in-law, have you forgiven your in-laws? Yeah? Mothers-in-law, for some harsh words that they might have spoken to you. I mean, I'll tell you; this is so remarkable, because when Jethro comes to meet Moses, one thing Moses does is, he goes and prostrates himself before Jethro and he honors him. And Jethro, who took advantage of him for forty years, taking care of his sheep. You should understand. Did you forgive your parents? Look at this example from the old covenant. This is,

1 Samuel 16:7

⁷But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

You remember this story, right? Samuel wants to anoint. God says, "How long will you grieve for Saul knowing that I've rejected him? Go to one place and anoint this fellow." Samuel will say, "How can I go? If Saul comes to know, he'll kill me." Can you imagine that? "If Saul comes to know, he'll kill me."

1 Samuel 16:2-3

²And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me." But the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' ³Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; you shall anoint for Me the one I name to you."

Then, he goes to Jesse's house and he says, "I'm going to anoint one of your sons." And Mr. Big Man comes, and when you're a big guy in your home, you think that you are the boss. I'm certainly the man, he thought.

1 Samuel 16:7-11

⁷But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."⁸ So Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one."⁹ Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one."¹⁰ Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these."¹¹ And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all the young men here?"...

You know what? Jesse is not even considering David as a legitimate son. Think about it. "This fellow is good for nothing. Good only for the care of sheep."

...Then he said, "There remains yet the youngest, (What is he doing?) and there he is, keeping the sheep."

You know, it's not very easy to grow up in a family where you are not considered really; I know it in homes especially, when you have one guy who is really smart, he's doing really well. All the talents he's got and that fellow becomes suddenly, the blue-eyed boy. And everybody in the family is like, "Look at this fellow! Learn from him!" Automatically, he'll think he's the best. And everybody is considered less. And one guy who's not studying is looked down upon. It's amazing. It happens in families. It's exactly what Jesse did to his son and when David became the anointed one, what did he do to his father? Look at what it says in,

1 Samuel 22:1-2

¹So David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam; and when his brothers and all his father's household heard of it, they went down there to him. ²Everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him; and he became captain over them. Now there were about four hundred men with him.

David took care of all of them. Did he have any animosity in his heart? No. Let me ask you this question: how many of you, young people over here have something against your parents and have not forgiven them? Young and old. Some of your parents might have been dead and gone. Did you forgive them? Or do you say, "Look at my dad. So many things he's wasted in my life." Very important how you submit to imperfect authority. It starts from home. And then, it starts from home and after you grow up, it goes to another place. We call it 'the workplace'. Okay? There, how you submit to imperfect authority matters. Look at this.

1 Peter 2:18-21

¹⁸Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. (Now we have to define who this harsh is. We'll come to that.) ¹⁹For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. ²⁰For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently?

The Obedience Of Christ?

But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. (And then he gives a comparison.) ²¹ ***For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for [e]us, leaving [i]us an example, that you should follow His steps***

So, you have untested obedience, to suffering, to tested obedience. So, what is the suffering paradigm over here? The suffering paradigm is when you have a boss, who is harsh. And who is this harsh boss. Harsh boss is not the guy who gives you a lot of work. You got that? I'll tell you something. The more work that you're getting in your office, it is a good testimony and not a bad testimony. You know, the rebels in your office are the lazy people. We used to stay next to the Rail Nilayam office. Our home was just next to that. Every week, almost, every month, we used to have this Mazdur union. In Telugu, we say, "Pani paata leni wallu. (jobless people)" They all form a union and they say, "Inqalab zindabad! Inqalab zindabad!" They want freedom from work. In every office, you'll find people who are lazy, who are actually the rebels. They will say, "How come the boss is giving me so much of work? Em chestadu? (What does he do?) Naa work antha teeskuntadu! Vadu promotion kottestadu (He makes me do his work and he grabs the promotion.) He will take my work and he will take the promotion." That is a harsh boss. Never worry about more work. Enjoy it! I always say this – don't ever suffer because of your bad work ethics. Are you a hard worker? Warren Wiersbe wrote a very interesting book called, 'On being a servant of God'. In that, one of the very interesting thing he says is – is ministry nourishment or punishment? I went to Gideon's one day. When I looked at all of them, the first Bible study I took in Gideon's. I looked at all of them and I said, "You Gideons, what do you think? Is your ministry nourishment or punishment?" They didn't know what to say. You see. How many of you think your work is punishment? Or is it nourishment? I mean, if you're writing your thesis, I know, sometimes, it is punishment for sure. But, do you enjoy your work? I'll tell you something – I enjoyed my work. I was in university. I was gone. I enjoyed teaching. I enjoyed doing research. I enjoyed it. I may not have been really successful in the worldly terms, not many publications, but I really enjoyed my work. It just gave me an incredible amount of satisfaction when I solved my problem. You see, more the work that has been handed into your life, it actually tells something about you. You see, what happens to Jesus?

John 4:31-34

³¹ ***In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."***

They're all the time concerned about food. This is what – "What did you eat? Thinnava? Thinnava? Thinnva? Did you eat? Did you eat? Rabbi! Please eat!"

³² ***But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know."*** ³³ ***Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?"***

I mean, this is always the case. Whenever, he said, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." "Oh! We did not carry any bread." That's exactly what they're thinking. They're always thinking in terms of their stomach. Jesus is looking at them and He's saying, "When I multiplied food for five thousand people, when I multiplied for four thousand, I'm not even talking about the bread; I'm talking about the leaven of the Pharisees. I have food to eat." "O! Who gave you food to eat?" That's exactly what they were thinking. Look at what Jesus says.

³⁴ ***Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.***

"That is what I am – I am a hard worker." He says in *John 5*,

John 5:17

¹⁷ ***But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."***

And even now, we are continuing to work." And I tell you, when you go to Heaven, it will be full of hardworking, industrious, creative, brilliant people. How did I start? Hardworking, industrious, creative, brilliant people. Where is brilliant, last or first? Last. This is very important for us.

John Piper, again; actually, before we go to John Piper, let's look at one verse. Before I go to that verse, let's look at another verse.

1 Peter 5:5

⁵ Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. (Just look at this; this is a principle) Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”

How do you know that you are humble? Because God gives you grace. How do you know that you have grace? How do you know you are humble? Because God gives you grace. These are all qualitative features. Humble? Nobody can see. It's an adjective. Can anybody see humility? You can only see a person who is humble. So, humility is a character. Grace is also an abstract quality but how do I know that I am humble? When I have received grace. How do I know that I have received grace? Look at it what it says in,

1 Corinthians 15:10-11

¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. ¹¹ Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

So, how do I know that I am received the grace of God in my life? I'm one of the most hard-working people wherever I am placed. How do I know that I am humble? I receive grace. How I do know that I receive grace? I am the hardest worker. He says, "I am the most hardest worker." He didn't say, "I am the most intelligent," and let me tell you that Paul was more intelligent than Peter for sure. Peter says, "I don't understand many of the letters what he says." He scratched his head. You know what he says? He won't say, "I am the most intelligent person." No, but he says, "I am the most hardworking person." The grace of God really makes us hard working people. I was listening to a sermon recently by John Piper and this is how he puts it in beautiful words. The grace of God, the power of His grace, in other words, in the heart of a humble believer who utterly depends upon God produces in him incredible energy and industry. I'll tell you something – the hardworking people are the most energetic people; they are full of energy and full of life; they are not sedentary. I mean, they are not couch potatoes. They are hardworking people. You look at their energy in their lives. I can quote from our own Church – I see Sister Ailsa. She is never tired. I see her running around and she sleeps most possibly 4 or 5 hours in a day; even Pastor James, four or five hours in a day and they are full of energy. Why? Because of humility and you receive grace and why does God give us grace? To make us hard working people. So, never get punished because of your work ethic. In many believers, their work ethic stinks. They say, "I don't want to work at this time. Only this time to this time, I will work," and they will use spiritual terms also like, "I have to go to Bible study." Nonsense. Rubbish I say. If you would have gone to Bible study, you should have been one of the most hardworking person in your class and your boss should never have any complaints and he should give you more and more work, you should never be afraid. I will do the work and he takes the credit, you don't have to worry about that at all. Don't ever think that somebody will steal your work. Your work, somebody can steal but attitude, can somebody steal? That's what it says, "*Store up for yourselves treasure in heaven where neither moth nor rust cannot destroy nor thief's can steal.*" They may be able to steal your property but they will never be able to steal your character. They can never do that and what is God looking for is a character and not the result of our hard work. That only, He will give later on, not now. What you see now is not the ultimate. You got that?

So, how do you submit to imperfect authority, especially now, to bosses who take advantage of you? So, let me tell you what he means in this place. How do we produce the obedience of Christ that we would rather suffer the fleeting pleasures of sin? Okay. How do we produce the obedience of Christ under imperfect authority or abusive authority? We all have come cross in our work places may be.

1 Peter 2:18-19

¹⁸ Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. ¹⁹ For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.

You know this harshness is very subtle where you are asked to compromise on your convictions. And because of your work ethic, you have been given so much of work and then, you are asked to compromise on your convictions. How do you deal with those situations where you are being to continue to submit to your authority and you will never succumb nor compromise your convictions? Example, *Genesis 39*, this is talking about Joseph.

Genesis 39:5-9

⁵So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had in the house and in the field. ⁶Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate.

Can you imagine this guy? Completely trusted Joseph and has entrusted every work into the hands of Joseph. That means this guy has got a complete work ethics. So much of work has been entrusted into his hands. Now, comes the test of harshness – madam Potiphar comes.

⁷And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me."

In other words, compromise your convictions and you will find this in every government office especially. But what about Joseph?

⁸But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. ⁹There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

In other words, this man is an absolute man of convictions excellent work ethic and excellent character, tremendous strong in his convictions. What happens to this hard worker? Look at next verse; I think *verse 11*, if I am right and very interesting how the gear shifts.

Genesis 39:11-12

¹¹But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work,

He didn't go to loiter around his master's wife to see if he gets tempted again. No! Very serious, he was absolutely focused in his work. Let me tell you something, I want to hang around people who are absolutely focused on their work. There are so many believers sad to say who have no vision, they don't know what they are doing, they are not focused and they are all over the place. He went to do his work.

...and none of the men of the house was inside, (Mostly this lady would have arranged this circumstance and then what happened?) ¹²that she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside.

This is very interesting. How much will God test you? He will not test you more than what you can bear but with every temptation, there will be door of escape. From the Potiphar's house, he goes into the prison where he will never be tempted by Potiphar's wife again. That is how God honors. Did God save him? Yes, and why? Because he never compromised on his work ethic; he never compromised on his convictions. What if this does not happen? In our Telugu, especially if you work in a forest department or police department and if you are a guy with incredible work ethics and convictions, you know what they will do to you? They will keep on transferring you and if you don't obey orders from the higher authority, you will be transferred to God knows what places. In Telugu, there is a phrase which says, "*Shankari giri manyalu*" which means from shankara giri to manyam. What is shankargiri? One place in a remote village and another place manyam is some other place in some agency land where there are Naxalites. What will they do? If you are a man of convictions, they will transfer to one Naxalite area to another Naxalite area where you will be killed. That will be one of the most unsafe areas only because of your convictions. "*Morning by morning, He awakens Me, I learnt and I was not rebellious so that one day, I can give My back.*" You want to look at another paradigm?

A man who was under wicked authority that was going to take advantage of him and he is going to send him to a place where his life will be at stake only because of his convictions. You know who that man is? Any guesses?

2 Samuel 11:6-11

⁶Then David sent to Joab, saying, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah to David. ⁷When Uriah had come to him, David asked how Joab was doing, and how the people were doing, and how the war prospered.

The Obedience Of Christ?

Deception. He has a very wrong motive. This man is going to take advantage of a servant who is under him and the servant is going to submit to his master and he is not going to compromise in his convictions, to an evil, harsh master. It's very interesting how things can change, how David changes over a period of time. Scary. Remember? He also had a very tough master – Saul, who was after his life but he never, ever raised his finger against his master. Remember that? And even after his master died, he said, "Can I find anybody in house of Saul to whom I can show mercy?" This man now has become so evil and a harsh master, he is going to take advantage of a guy but this guy who is so strong in his work ethic, so strong in his convictions, he is not going to compromise, he is going to rather die rather than succumb to his convictions.

⁸ And David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah departed from the king's house, and a gift of food from the king followed him.

Do you see how he is trying to appeal to his senses? I remember, when I went to the NCC camp, I used to think when we go to NCC camp, we would be given very nice food. It is one of the worst food I have eaten in my entire life. I mean, it is incredible – roti is like one papad and chai which is like water, everything was water and they will wake you up at 4 am and they will give you lousy food, sometimes. It was really terrible food. I used to wonder, "What is this? If soldiers eat this, how can they fight?" Idea is not to keep the soldiers eating good food but to keep them awake and active. This guy, Uriah, is in battle mode. He is in the barracks and was eating the food that army people, when they are fighting, eat, and suddenly, when he comes back home, David gave him food, he said, "No, I am not going to eat this food. How can I eat this food? That is exactly what *Hebrews 31* says, "Pray with those who are in prison, as if you are chained with them." That is exactly what he is doing – a man strong in convictions he is not going to succumb to temptation of food. After food comes temptation for sex; he is not going to comprise on that as well. He would say, "I would rather suffer with God's people than enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin for a season, if I know what is right to do." This is exactly what happened to David; David had become a lazy man. Whenever you become a lazy man, this is exactly what you will invite – idle man's mind is a devil's workshop is maximum that we hear and it is so true.

...So Uriah departed from the king's house, and a gift of food from the king followed him. ⁹ But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. ¹⁰ So when they told David, saying, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Did you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?"

Look at the answer he gives – convictions.

¹¹ And Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are dwelling in tents, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields. Shall I then go to my house to eat and drink, and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing."

And David says, "This guy, I cannot make him compromise." He is already a harsh master but Uriah is going to submit to him regardless of what he is going to do, he is going to write his death warrant; he is going to transfer him to the most difficult place in the battlefield, he is going to take his death warrant. Uriah will say, "My lord, my king, I am going to take it." He is taking his death warrant and give to Joab,

2 Samuel 6:14-

¹⁴ In the morning it happened that David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah.

His transfer orders came. "Where are you transferred?" "Kargil." "From where?" "From Secunderabad cantonment." Hottest battle. Did he submit? Yes!

¹⁵ And he wrote in the letter, saying, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retreat from him, (retreat? Amazing) that he may be struck down and die." (In other words, take away his cover.) ¹⁶ So it was, while Joab besieged the city, that he assigned Uriah to a place where he knew there were valiant men. ¹⁷ Then the men of the city came out and fought with Joab. And some of the people of the servants of David fell; and Uriah the Hittite died also.

The Obedience Of Christ?

To this, you were called – submission to imperfect authority. That is how you learn obedience. How many of you can do this, actually? You know your boss. Some of you, don't worry; you will get him, very soon; or her. If not Potiphar, then definitely, David. That is how he learned obedience.

Third – how did He learn obedience? How he gives, makes us learn obedience? He loves an imperfect wife. That's amazing.

Ephesians 5:22-24

²² ***Wives, submit to your own husbands, (Not to others husbands, to own husbands, just in-case) as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.***

But look at husbands,

Ephesians 5:25

²⁵ ***Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved (an imperfect wife) the church and gave Himself for her,***

You think it is easy? John Piper wrote a book called, 'This light and momentary marriage'. It is actually taken away from the verse, "*Light and momentary afflictions.*" It's not romantic all the time; it's battle. You have to really be at it. It's death. That is how He's going to sanctify us through our marriage. Marriage is a tool for sanctification for to produce obedience of Christ, no other thing. Pleasure and all is just fights.

Ephesians 5:27

²⁷ ***that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.***

You know this. What about wives?

1 Peter 3:1

¹ ***Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, (You know what this, 'Likewise is?' This is exactly after talking to imperfect bosses. Peter is talking about likewise wives) that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,***

I can only read Scripture. In the Tuesday Bible study, I am the minority. Absolute minority actually, am the only guy, most of the times and everybody else is the ladies. And, sometimes I have to read this verse, I am looking at them, from the board in the corner of my eye sometimes, just to ensure that I am not looking at them. But, this is not me, this is what God is saying.

1 Peter 3:1-6

² ***when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. ³ Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel— ⁴ rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. ⁵ For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, ⁶ as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.***

When did she called him 'lord?' Whenever he made a decision, she called him 'lord'. Please, go and say, "You are my sister." "Yes, lord!" After she conceives, "Tell Abimelech, that you are not my sister." "Yes, lord!" Amazing.

1 Peter 3:7

⁷ ***Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of (what of life?) the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.***

The Obedience Of Christ?

I am not going into the details. So, that is how obedience of Christ is produced. Marriage, by the way, children who want to get married, why is marriage given to us? Why? Simply, so that God can produce the obedience of Christ inside of us. That is the reason why marriage is given to us. It is a great mystery. Great is the mystery of godliness. Great is the mystery of marriage. There are only two mega-mysteries in the Bible. The mystery of godliness and the mystery of marriage. Others, are just normal mysteries.

Finally, the obedience of Christ. How do I know that I have the obedience of Christ?

1 Peter 3:8-11

⁸And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. ⁹Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

I am not doing this for exaltation here; I am going to work for the exaltation that comes from God alone. That is the reason why, when people don't appreciate your work, when you're on earth, praise God. You know what is happening? Obedience of Christ is being made perfect in you.

1 Peter 1: 6-7

⁶In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to (result in) praise, honor, and glory (when?) at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

Whose praise? Your praise. Whose glory? Your glory. Whose honor? Your honor. When? Not now; at the revelation of Jesus Christ. We're not looking for things now. This is what obedience of Christ is. Any other obedience is not obedience. Any other obedience is rebellion. Any other obedience, therefore, is operating in the realm of witchcraft. So, let me tell you something, saints, if you haven't taken anything from today's Bible study, one of the things that you can always check, if you are really, really humble person – a humble person is a hard-working person. He works hard. You know, it says, "It toils." Paul says, "I toil, I labor," and he calls his co-workers, 'co-laborers.' It's labor, it's hard-work. And God is not going to give anything easy in our lives. If God has a plan for your life, and He has spoken something into your life, you're not going to get it easy, it is going to be hard-work. And it has to be hardwork. And a humble man, humble woman will be a hard-working woman, so that the obedience of Christ may be produced in us. Amen? Let's all stand up and let's pray.

Whenever we come to the study of the Word, we don't get condemned. We get convicted, conviction is of God. Condemnation is of the devil. God only rebukes, those whom He loves, and every Word requires from us. Now, this evening, just check. How was your work ethic, in your offices? Children, in your homes, when you study, has work become punishment or is it nourishment? Laboring, but getting discouraged? This evening, just surrender to God and just say, "Lord, help me! Help me, Lord. Forgive me. So many times, I did work to please men and not to please you."

Closing Prayer:

I pray, Father, that You will find in this house, men and women who would want to please You. Obedience which pleases God, and that obedience is the obedience of Christ, which pleases You. Father, teach us every day. Father, enable us not to resist the things that You are allowing into our lives. Father, because You said, "All things work together for good of those who love Christ and are the called according to His purpose." Because You are confirming us to the image of Your Son and image of Your Son is produced only by obedience of Your Son. And, I pray, Father, that You will find in this house and in the weeks to come those who hear to this Word. You will find people, Father who are sincere in striving to attain to the obedience of Christ. Grant us grace to that end, we pray; that we will be hardworking young men, young women; older men, older women; not lazy people. Forgive us, our sloth; quicken us in our mortal bodies. And enable us to be hardworking people who will look for exaltation, only which comes from You, and not from anybody else. You said, in Your word, "Exaltation doesn't come from east or west, it comes from You alone and You alone." Frant us grace to that end we pray. Once again, we remember Pastor James and Sister Ailsa. Keep them, Lord. I pray, Father, for Pastor, even as he travels, be with him. Thank you, Father, for this time that You have blessed us with. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.