

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 8/4/2023

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

The Bible talks a lot about obedience. When we hear the words “obedience” or “obedient,” though, our minds usually turn to thoughts of sending our pets to school for training, or children doing what their parents tell them. But as Christians and believers in GOD, we all are called to be obedient, to doing what GOD instructs us to do. In John 14:15, JESUS says, “If you love me, keep my commands.” In other words, “Be obedient.”

But just how obedient to GOD are you? How much do you think about GOD’S commands and instructions, and strive to follow them? How regularly do you renew your obligation to obedience?

When we think about those from the Bible who were “obedient,” we may think of Abraham and Sarah, who left their homeland to go to an unknown place because GOD told them to do so. Or Noah, who without question built a great vessel to save a remnant of all living creatures. Or Moses, who returned to Egypt where he was a wanted man, to demand the release of GOD’S people from their enslavement there. Or Jonah who disobeyed GOD’S instructions and found himself thrown overboard and swallowed by a great fish. Or Mary and Joseph, whose obedience to very difficult directions resulted in the birth of the SAVIOR. Or Paul, who answered the call of CHRIST and rejected his past life to proclaim the good news of JESUS even at the risk of his life.

Perhaps your thinking, “Well, GOD has never told me go somewhere or do something that I really wasn’t sure I wanted to do.” Perhaps you hope that no such directive comes because you’re just not sure how you would respond. And that may lead you to wonder if you are being obedient at all. Oh, sure, you try to do the things that you were taught to do, or the things you think you’re supposed to do, but is that obedience? Are you really even being obedient?

Obedience in great things begins with obedience in small things. And this is something that most of us actually are already doing. Paul admonishes us to be committed to prayer: “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of GOD in CHRIST JESUS for you.” Participating regularly in worship is obedience to the commandment, “Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy.” Receiving Holy Communion is being obedient to JESUS’ instruction to, “Take and eat,” and “Do this in remembrance of ME.” Reading the Bible is in keeping with the guidance GOD gave to Joshua, “Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it,” and then following the instruction we find in the Bible is obedience to what James reveals: “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” Showing love and kindness to others is obedience JESUS’ words to “love one another as I have loved you.”

When you do these things, you are being obedient. It’s important to recognize that this is responding to GOD’S call for obedience. Thinking about it intentionally will lead to you to think of other ways in which you are and ways in which you could be obedient. So, Sunday morning, as you prepare to head off to church, take a moment to say, “Today, I am being obedient.”

In CHRIST'S love,
Pastor Jeffrey