

Murray Valley Lutheran Community – 21/08/22 – DJK

Christ Church 9.00am, 10.30am

Obedience: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’

Is it just me?

In all our readings I hear the call to obey God.

The subtitle is even says, *“The Lord calls on Israel to obey him”*

He calls me to obey him. Why wouldn't I want obey God?

I know Jesus died for me. I'm forgiven. I know there's nothing I have to do for my salvation.

But still feel I need to obey, and I know I can't – I just makes me feel guilty.

I'm like a left hander – I can't do anything right.

Jesus gave 2 fundamental Commands:

1. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’
2. “Love your neighbour as yourself.’

He says, “No other commandment is greater than these.”

Look to be honest I'm with Paul:

“I do not do what I want to do, but I do the very things I hate” – (the things I don't want to do.) ([Rom. 7:15](#)).

Are you with Paul?

I ask, “If I really love God, why do I do that? Why did I react the way I do? I really wonder if I'll ever be able to quit sin and obey God.

There's got to be some hope.

Today Isaiah says the usual – it's right through scripture – “if” and “then”.

“If” you obey “then” I will bless:

*“If you do away with the yoke of oppression,
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,
“If you keep yourself from breaking the Sabbath
and from doing as you please on my holy day,
...and if you honour it by not going your own way
and not doing as you please or speaking idle words,
then you will find your joy in the Lord,
and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land
and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.”*

That gives me no hope.

I want to ride that Triumph, but first I must obey.

But Isaiah said something else – Which does give me hope:

*Call, and the Lord and he will answer;
cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.*

That is hope – when I disobey or fail:

*Call, and the Lord and he will answer;
cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.*

God made this promise to the most rebellious and disobedient people on earth, the Israelites (our descendants).

Here is another promise he made to them: *“The LORD will cut open and enter your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.”* ([Deut. 30:6](#))

So now God is helping us to keep that command: *“love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”*

The Israelites broke every rule in the book – there was nothing they had not done against God – and they still received the promise.

Now I’m interested – failing people being blessed by God – a promise!

Are you interested?

Jeremiah reiterates the promise:

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with you ... I will put my law within you, and I will write it on your hearts. I will be your God, and you will be my people. No longer will you say, ‘Know the Lord,’ because you will all know me, from the least to the greatest. I will forgive your iniquity (sinful desire), and I will remember your sin no more.”

A New Covenant, God forgives his people and writes his law of love on their hearts.

We know this is pointing to Jesus.

On the cross, he sealed the New Covenant (deal, promise)

Is this familiar?

In the same way he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” [1 Cor. 11:25](#)

I’m not sure how many commandments you have disobeyed – but if you have obeyed the call to receive the body and blood of Jesus – and I know you have, you are spiritually alive, and that new heart of love is ticking away inside of you.

This is good – the Lord is good.

But Satan is an expert – a master – despite the Gospel I look at the command of God and say to myself, *“I don’t love the Lord God with all my heart and with all my soul and with all my mind and with all my strength”*. I wish I could say something different – but I can’t? Am I speaking for you?

At this point the Satan makes me feel unworthy.

Does he make you feel unworthy?

We need to put the Devils accusations aside – he’s the expert, the master of lies.

Yes we are sinful, disobedient – but there is hope. That’s why we are here – to hear promises: *I will be your God, and you shall be my people...you will all know me, from the least to the greatest. I will forgive your iniquity, and I will remember your sin no more.”*

Satan wants us to think we have no hope when we are full of hope.

There is no doubt this side of heaven I will disobey, I will fall because of sin.

Let’s get on top of this.

This why God the Father sent Jesus into the world.

He obeyed the law perfectly for me and you.

He cried, “Father why, oh why, have you abandoned me”?

It was because my sin, your sin, was on Jesus back.

You can stand confidently in this place, in the presence of other believers, and before God the Father because of Jesus perfect obedience.

Every law, every command, even death on a cross, has been obeyed by our brother Jesus.

We are free from the law – we are free to serve each other in thanks.

From Paul *...since we cannot obey the Law because of sin reigning in our flesh ..., Christ came and by his perfect obedience fulfilled everything that was required by the Law.* (Romans 8)

Why do I hate the struggle I have with sin?

Why do you hate the struggle you with sin?

Why did Paul say: I have the desire to do what is good, but I can’t carry it out. What a wretched man I am!

It’s because God has sent his Holy Spirit to live in us.

There would be no struggle what’s so ever if it wasn’t for the presence of the Holy Spirit in our life.

Where the Holy Spirit is there is love and obedience and faith.

There is a technical word for all this.

Our teaching says the law is perfectly obeyed and fulfilled in us by imputation. God imputes us with the perfect, righteous life of Jesus by faith.

Through Jesus we are justified, made right with God despite our imperfect obedience.

Again it's straight out of Romans:

"By sending his own Son in the likeness of our sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin ... in order that the requirement of the law (obedience) might be fulfilled in us. We now walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." [Romans 8:3-4](#),

In Jesus we have perfect obedience to God's will and ways.

In the Holy Spirit we have that inbuilt frustration of our desire to rebel and reject God's ways – I think they call that repentance.

One day the battle against sin will be over. When Christ appears, our lowly bodies will be transformed ([Phil. 3:21](#)), and we will begin to love God and one another perfectly.

Right now, your obedience may feel weak, but there will be a time – when we will obey perfectly – like Jesus.

The promise is that there will be a times when that command *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength"*, is no longer a command but it's what we do naturally and instinctively.

For now let's hear God's promise:

*Call, and the Lord and he will answer;
cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.*

And here is the good bit:

*"then you will find your joy in the Lord,
and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land
and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob."*

Lord our obedience in Jesus who kept the law perfectly for us. We praise him. We ask you to help us live a life of thanks and obedience. Amen.