

## ARE YOU OBEDIENT?

By Pastor Rene Lussier

Matt 21:28 (NIV) "What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.' 29 "'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. 30 "Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.

31 "Which of the two did what his father wanted?" "The first," they answered.

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. 32 For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

2 sons—the first said “**yes**” but did not go (obey)

The second said “**no**” but later did go (obey)

- Both sons knew the request-(commandment)
- The One who said “Yes, I will” but did not go represents the religious world...which includes the church today...

**This morning, my question and topic is: “ARE YOU OBEDIENT?”**

### THROUGHOUT HISTORY, WE SEE MAN DISOBEYING GOD

- We know what happen in the garden of Eden, don't we? (First man and woman who had a relationship with God).
- Before the people of israel were to cross over the Jordan River into the promised land. Moses review their history, and had that to say:

Deut 9:23 (NIV) And when the LORD sent you out from Kadesh Barnea, he said, "Go up and take possession of the land I have given you." *But you rebelled against the command of the LORD your God. You did not trust him or obey him. 24 You have been rebellious against the LORD ever since I have known you.*

Probably the darkest time of Israel history is found in the **book of Judges**. The book opens with a repeated picture of “partial obedience” “**They did not drive them out completely**”

- Then we see a circle of repeated disobedience, turning away from God, then the Lord handed them over to their enemies, they cried to the Lord, the Lord would rise up judges to save them from their enemies, then the people would return to their evil ways...

Judges 2:19 (NIV) But when the judge died, the people **returned to ways even more corrupt** than those of their fathers, following other gods and serving and worshipping them. **They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.**

- Then we read the conclusion of the book of Judges...(last verse)

Judg 21:25 (NIV) In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.

This is a realistic account describing man's relationship to the Lord...No commitment, no obedience

- Do we see a parallel between this generation and our generation? (Last days)

2Tim 3:1 (NIV) But mark this: There will be **terrible** times in the last days. 2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God-- 5 **having a form of godliness** but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

6 They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are **loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires**, 7 **always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth**. 8 Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth--men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected.

The strangest thing in this text is that this negative behavior described here includes people who practice religious activities... (See blue color)

I want to go a little bit further in the OT...

- When we turn to the book of 1SAMUEL, (Samuel is the last Judge in Israel), we read, 1Sam 3:1 (NIV) The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.

- But we learn something about Samuel himself. He became a man of impact. He brought revival in Israel. He was not only a Judge, but one of the greatest prophet in Israel.

1Sam 3:19 (NIV) The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of his words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the LORD. 21 The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word.

### What is the mark of the generation of the last days?

- A generation in which there is not many revelations...(not sensitive to the Voice of the HS, to the guidance of prophecy)...
- A generation where the majority do not follow the revelation of the Lord... and are not seeking for a revelation (indifference)
- But are involved in religious activities...

Is the church any different of the generation in which she lives

Reve 2:2 (NIV) I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance...

Reve 2:4 (NIV) Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. 5 Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

- You see the church doing “*deeds and work*”, but at the same time having lost their “*first love*” for the Lord—which was revealed in “*not doing the things they did at first*”.
- I believe that the verdict of the lord was that they were not obedient to the “still small voice” of the Holy Spirit...
- They did not responded to the inner guidance of the HS. They were not earnestly seeking the will of the Lord anymore... quick to follow instructions, to change their ways...

### HOW IMPORTANT IS OBEDIENCE?

Deut 11:13 (NIV) So if you **faithfully obey the commands** I am giving you today--**to love the LORD your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul**-- 14 then I will send rain on your land... 15 I will provide ... and you will eat and be satisfied.

18 **Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds...**19 Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 20 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, 21 **so that** your days and the days of **your children may be many in the land** that the LORD swore to give your forefathers, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.

- Repeat of blessings—

22 If you **carefully observe all these commands**, I am giving you to follow--**to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways and to hold fast to him...**

26 See, I am setting before you today **a blessing and a curse**-- 27 the blessing if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today; 28 the curse if you disobey the commands of the LORD your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known.

What is the commandment?

- V. 13 To Love the Lord your God... Even the OT calls us to obey the Lord out of Love...
- V. 22... the commandment to follow— **to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways and to hold fast to him.**
- With obedience comes blessings, provision...
- Then comes the warning—that comes with a choice.
- V. 26... **I am setting before you a choice**... having consequences—**Blessing or curse**
- **Curse**— Fit or deserving to be despised, worthy only of being despised and rejected Of little account, to bring dishonor...
- V. 18... You have to fix your mind and heart on the command...

## 2 DECEITFUL REASONING LEADING TO DISOBEDIENCE..

1. One is found in the question, "BUT WHY?"
2. The other is expressed as: "I DON'T CONSIDER IT AS DISOBEDIENCE"

- When people hear rules, regulations, the human tendency is to ask, "BUT WHY?"

Levi 15:31 (NKJV) `Thus you shall separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness when they defile My tabernacle that [is] among them.

- God is concerned with his people's well-being and he knows things we don't.
- Many of problems arise from ignoring God's Word when we don't think his instructions make sense...
- Moses told Israel that God gave rules to his people not only to keep them clean, but that they may be holy before him, and also be protected in this life of discomfort, sickness and death. (dishonor)
- Moses reminds us that God knows what is best for us and for our relationship with him.
- **Be sure to obey your God (whether you understand the why or not).**

## OBEDIENCE IS IMPORTANT TO GOD

*"Life is the total sum of the decisions we make. Every decision has consequences. We decide how we respond to God and to people. We decide which values and principles are worth fighting for..."*

- **Here are some common characteristics of DISOBEDIENCE**
  1. *People forget the big picture- Who God is- **I must be regarded as holy***
  2. *They don't take God seriously; Insensitive, they pay no attention to God's direction*
  3. *They lack commitment and they act half-heartedly (careless and indifferent).*
  4. *They act disrespectfully (spirit of independence )*
  5. *They act with impatience and impulsively. Driven by their ego, they do what they want,*
  6. *They have their excuses. Their reasoning is, "That's good enough"*
  7. *They behave inconsistently. They may speak as if they are concerned about God's will, but their action shows the contrary. (Don't walk the talk)*
  8. *They create poor relationship*

## ILLUSTRATIONS:

Nadab and Abihu ("BUT WHY?")

Leviticus 10:1 (NKJV) Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. 2 So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. 3 And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the Lord spoke, saying:

*`By those who come near Me **I must be regarded as holy**; And before all the people I must be glorified.'*  
" ...

Saul—"I DON'T CONSIDER IT AS DISOBEDIENCE" (Partial obedience)

1Sam 15:13 As Samuel came close, Saul called out, "GOD's blessings on you! I accomplished GOD's plan to the letter!" "The Lord bless you! I obeyed the Lord's commands." etc

19 So why did you not obey GOD? Why did you grab all this loot? Why, with GOD's eyes on you all the time, did you brazenly carry out this evil?" 20 Saul defended himself. "What are you talking about? I did obey GOD. I did the job GOD set for me.

20 "But I did listen to the LORD!" Saul answered. "He sent me on a mission, and I went ... I captured King Agag and destroyed his nation. 21 All the animals were going to be destroyed anyway. That's why the army brought the best sheep and cattle to Gilgal as sacrifices to the LORD your God." CEV.

22 "Tell me," Samuel said. "Does the LORD really want sacrifices and offerings? No! He doesn't want your sacrifices. He wants you to obey him." CEV

The Lord could not have been more specific...

This was the supreme test to reveal whether Saul was fit to lead god's people—He failed.

When Samuel confronted Saul about his disobedience, he offered the lame excuse that he intended to sacrifice the livestock to the lord.

His reasoning didn't impress God at all.

It's a matter of time before the heart reveals its true nature—soft and obedient or hard and self-serving...

Following God involves commitment to obey the commandments of God... whether they fully understand fully or not...

“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams” 1sam 15:22

ABRAHAM—Perfect obedience (trust and commitment)

Gene 22:1 (NIV) Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied.

2 Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

3 Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.

Gene 22:15 (NIV) The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time 16 and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, 18 and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me." {[18] Or seed}

APPLICATION

Matt 6:9 (NIV) "This, then, is how you should pray:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven..."

- How do we truly obey the Lord's commandments in the different area of our lives?

SANCTIFICATION?

1The 4:3 (NKJV) For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; How concerned for personal holiness have you been? Has it been the subject of your prayer?

RELATIONSHIP OR GOD'S WILL?

Whenever our wishes contradict the Father's will, it is wise to yield.

... *I do not seek my own will but the will of the Father*-John 5:30  
nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will-Matthew 26:39

*When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done."* Acts 21:14

... *and if I perish, I perish*- Esther 4:16

*Though He slay me, yet will I trust him*-Job 14:15

*Teach me to do your will*-Psalm 143:10



**In the 1800, Robert Moffat** fell in love with his employer's daughter, **Mary Smith**. He wanted to propose, and she wanted to accept. They dreamed of serving the Lord together in South Africa. But they lived in the days when missionaries regularly died in distant, unmarked graves. Robert's parents, though undecided, were willing to let him go. But Mary's parents refused.

Robert's heart was torn apart. *Should he marry his beloved and remain in Scotland? Or should he surrender to God's will?* He wrote his parents with the answer: *From the clearest indications of His Providence, He bids me go out alone, and He who appoints crosses and disappointments also imparts resignation and grace sufficient unto the day. So I am bold to adopt the language of Eli and say, 'It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good.'*" So on October 18, 1816, Robert and Mary tore themselves apart, and Robert boarded ship, alone and with a broken heart.

But the story ends happily. Three years later, Mary's parents surrendered her to the Lord's keeping and allowed her to join Robert in Africa. The two were married at last, and walked hand-in-hand in remarkable missionary service for the next fifty years.

## COMMITMENT, SACRIFICE AND GOD'S WILL

**Ann Hasseltine**, born in Massachusetts in 1789, grew up in a distinguished family. As a teenager, Ann gave herself to the Lord, praying: *"Direct me in Thy service, and I ask no more. I would not choose my position of work, or place of labor. Only let me know Thy will, and I will readily comply."*



She was a 21-year-old schoolteacher when she met young **Adoniram Judson**, who wanted to become a missionary. When **Adoniram** later wrote to Ann's father asking for her hand, he said: *I have now to ask whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next spring to see her no more in this world. Whether you can consent to her departure for a heathen land, and her subjection to the hardships of a missionary life. Whether you can consent to her exposure to every kind of want and distress, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death....*

Ann, meanwhile, wrote in her journal, she wrote: *God has an undoubted right to do with me as seemeth good in His sight. I rejoice that I am in His hand-that He is everywhere present and can protect me in one place as well as another. When I am called to face danger, to pass through scenes of terror and distress, He can inspire me with fortitude, and enable me to trust Him. Whether I spend my days in India or America, I desire to spend them in the service of God, and to spend eternity in His presence. I am quite willing to give up temporal comforts and live a life of hardship and trial, if it be the will of God. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38).*

So it was that Adoniram and Ann Judson became the first foreign missionaries ever sent from the shores of America

## PRAYING FOR GOD'S WILL

**Robert Morrison** became a Christian at age 15, and shortly after felt called to the ministry. Against his father's wishes, he traveled to London to enroll in theological and missionary training. It was very difficult, especially when his father wrote *complaining that the family business was suffering because of his absence and adding that he himself was not well*. But by return post Robert tried to explain that **having put his hand to the plow, he could not look back**.

One day, the young man wrote this prayer in his diary: *Jesus, I have given myself up to Thy service. The question with me is, where shall I serve Thee? I learn from Thy Word that it is Thy holy pleasure that the gospel shall be preached in all the world. My desire is, O Lord, to engage where laborers are most wanted. Perhaps on a part of the field is more difficult than another. I am equally unfit for any, but through Thy strengthening me, I can do all things. O Lord, guide me in this. Enable me to count the cost, and having come to a resolution, to act consistently.*

His prayer was richly answered. **Morrison** became the first Protestant missionary to China. Though he saw only three or four converts during his 27 years of service, he paved the way for an army of workers to come. -

## CONCLUSION

- Do you find yourself like the Son who answered his father, "I WILL", but did not go?
- Do you say "I WILL" at church, practice deeds and church activities and ignore God's will in your own private life?
- How much have you been concerned with being & obeying God's will? In choices of studies, work, in buying possessions, giving, business...?
- When was the last time you cried for the lost?
- When was the last time you fasted for knowing God's will and receiving guidance into his will?
- When did you sacrifice something costly to be in God's will?
  
- If you find yourself living your christian life with partial commitment and often questioning why you should obey God? Or ignoring God's instructions and still active in going to church, you can change
  
- You can be like the son who "changed his mind and went to do his Father's will.
- You can repent and go do the thing you used to do at first...

**George Mueller** could remember the moment when he died to self, to ambition, to the praise or blame of men, only that he might live in Christ.