

## **Obedience: Keeping God's Words** **John 17:4**

My brothers and sisters Jesus did not mince words. Obedience to Christ and his words is one of the most distinguishing marks of a Christian. And my brothers and sisters, spiritual maturity is not reached by the passing of years, but by obedience to the will of GOD.

Obedience is the gauge of our discipleship, the litmus test of his Lordship, and the indicator of our spiritual maturity. Baptist Pastor, Peter Lord, was fun of saying, "What I believe I do and the rest is just religious talk." As Jesus obeyed the Father we are to obey Jesus. Jesus said, **"I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work that you gave me to do."** (v.4)

This prayer revealed three actions that we are to do in regard to obedience. These actions revolve around three phrases that the disciples of Jesus have been **"given to them your word", "Have receive them (the words)", and "have kept your word"**. These three things have been given to all Christian believers. I repeat them **they are your word, receive them, and kept them.**

First, obedience begins with the attitude of the mind. Jesus prayed that we be given the Word, **"for I have given them the words you gave to me and they have accepted them. They know that I came from you, and that you sent me."**(v.8) Jesus also said, **I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of this world anymore than I am of the world.** (v14).

This word, which is not a secret code or a hidden message, is the stated facts or truths that have been clearly recorded in the Bible. They have been given to us. This is the action of God toward us. He has given us steps we are to take, the actions we are to follow, the life we are to live, and here, **we hear the words breathed from the mouth of GOD. The ruach of GOD breathing upon us and leading us by the HOLY SPIRIT.**

Second, obedience continues with the affection of the heart, in a sense, everyone has been given the words of GOD. We are living in an age of and time of the mass production of the gospel.

People hear the gospel, but not everyone believes what they hear. We are not to be merely hears of the word; we are to receive the word and then we must move from head knowledge of the words to a heart understanding of the words.

In others words, it is not enough to take the words into our minds; they have to integrate our hearts, that is enter our hearts and stay there. Because while many people hear the words, they don't receive the words into their hearts. **It's in the heart where we apply the words.**

Third, obedience results in the action of the will. The word kept implies the controlling action of obedience. It shows that obedience moves from an attitude of the mind, to the affection of the heart, to the action of the will.

The whole direction of our lives is moving toward obeying Jesus Christ in all his demands upon us. That is the Christian way. **A Christian is not saved because he obeys; he obeys because he is saved. Here we appropriate the words.**

Let me mention two disclaimers here. One, Jesus is not saying that we will perfectly obey. We have sinned; we do sin; and we will sin. But we are to be characterized by our obedience. We are growing and maturing in our obedience. We are keeping the word. Jesus takes that into account when we confess our sins.

Two, neither is Jesus saying that we can claim to be Christians and live disobedient lives. We often call these people “carnal Christians”, a distinction Paul never indented as a new category for Christians when he rebuked the church in Corinth for their sinfulness and immaturity.

Paul said, “I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed you are still not ready for it. You are still worldly. There is still jealousy and quarreling among you. (Corinthians. 3:2-3).

My brothers and sisters, we cannot and must not give unregenerate sinners a chance to call themselves Christians without living like it. Faith is always evidenced by work. *James 2:18* says:

<sup>18</sup>Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.

Someone will say, your faith, I have works. Show me your faith without works and I will show you my faith by my deeds (works) by what I do.

How do we become the answer to Jesus’ prayer?

We recognize that prayer is a dialogue, but the God we pray to is Lord. When we come to Christ we don’t join a democracy, but we enter into a theocracy. There are no volunteers who chose; there are only servants who obey.

Just as a soldier follows the commanding officer, so do believers follow the instructions of our Master Jesus Christ. Sometimes, unfortunately, when we pray it is as through we are discussing our options with Jesus.

But let me tell you that genuine prayer is to surrender to his service, giving in to him in all ways. I need to ask you a question right here, have you given in to

**Jesus? Have you surrendered you all to the Lord our God? Have you put everything on the alter today? God demands it.**

**We must understand that prayer that doesn't result in action is ineffectual. True obedience will never let mere listening substitute for action. Jesus desires that we do more than share our thoughts and demands that he act when we pray. He wants us to act.**

**Most believers are educated about three years beyond their obedience. In other words, most people have the training, the education and the knowledge of what needs to be done but they don't act on it.**