

## ***Just Obeying Orders***

*John 15:9-17*

INTRO:

Sometimes we forget that we are **not** simply to love Jesus or to just follow Jesus; we are to **obey** Jesus. *Obedience* is just not a word we talk about so much today. And yet, Jesus loves us enough . . . to **command** us. And we are called to **love** him enough to **obey** his **commands**. We don't follow Jesus just because he is a helpful way of getting what we want out of life; we follow Jesus in *obedience*, confident that when we *obey* him, we are fulfilling what God wants to get out of the world.

ME:

I remember when I was young trying to push the boundary of obedience with my parents quite often. I would try to see how much I could get away with and not get into trouble. **If I did not get in trouble, I was being obedient, right?** That might not be quite right. It sounded great as a child, but as an adult I know there must be more to obedience than staying out of trouble.

YOU:

**What do you think? what was your logic about obedience as a child?**

**Has it evolved much since then?** Let's look together and see what Jesus can teach us about obedience.

GOD:

*John 15:8–17 (NRSV): 9 As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11 I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.*

*12 "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. 16 You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. 17 I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.*

WE:

John's Gospel where Jesus is majestic, often strange and mystical, and sovereign "**Word made flesh.**" John's Gospel, where the Word has been made flesh and stands before us in great glory. God so loved the world

that he gave his only begotten Son for the sake of the world. And yet, in John, Christ is not simply the majestic Son of God who comes among us, suffers and dies for us, and rises from the dead. Here, as we move toward the close of John's Gospel and Jesus speaks his last words to his disciples, Jesus is also the one who **commands** his disciples.

Whatever it is that the Word made flesh wants to work in the world, the project somehow involves some all-too-human help. So Jesus **commands** his disciples to love one another. He puts them under orders not only to *believe* in him, but also to *obey* him.

Here in John's Gospel, there is a very long "**farewell sermon**" in which Jesus patiently repeats to his disciples the specific, practical, worldly consequences of believing that he is the way, the truth, and the life. We will remember today, or discover today, the truth of obedience to Christ, the need to not only adore and admire Jesus, but also to obey Jesus. Christians are those who obey Jesus.

***But what about those parts of believing that do not come easily?***

I read about a University chaplain who often had students come to him who were confused by some aspect of the Christian faith.

***How could they be Christian if they had to believe in miracles or if they had to believe in the virgin birth of Jesus?***

The Chaplain loved intellectual challenges, so he would usually engage in an argument and attempt to win them over to the Christian way of thinking about things and they had some great discussions. Eventually it dawned on this chaplain that being Christian is **more** than a way of *thinking* about things. Christianity is a way of *living*, a matter of *following* Jesus rather than just *thinking* about Jesus.

Perhaps some of you here this morning have **doubts** and **questions** and things about being a Christian that you find **confusing**. We find in John's Gospel that **beliefs** and **ideas** are important. In today's lesson, Jesus prepares to depart from his disciples and go **obediently** to his death. Jesus simply commands his disciples to **obey** him, to **love** him by living as he instructs them.

*This is good news! Sometimes if you can't understand Jesus, you can at least obey Jesus!*

Let me show you what this looks like:

During the Iranian hostage crisis, this chaplain had a conversation with a woman, who was a secretary at the university, who told him that she had gotten to know a graduate student from Iran. She had now received him into her home where he lived with her family. Because of the Iranian revolution, his funds had been cut off and she was trying to find him odd jobs in town to support himself.

Someone whose yard she was trying to hire him to work in asked her if he supported the revolution. The student did and he thought it was all just wonderful.

The man with the yard said it was remarkable that she had befriended him and that she was working to help him out. That she received him into her home. He asked her how she came to do that.

She slammed her fist down on her desk. **“Because I’m a Christian, darn it. You think this is easy?”**

She is someone who simply followed Jesus’ order to love and she is a role model for exact and all of us.

*It’s not political, it’s just doing what’s is right.*

*I heard that recently from a creative and wise woman!*

THE SERMON IN A SENTENCE:

***Jesus wants us to just obey orders and love, love, love the world like he does!***

CLOSE:

Jesus wants us to just follow orders when it comes to loving others so that the world may see him in us, so that they may look at the way we live together and know that he is truly Lord and Savior of the whole world.

A lot of people are very interested in learning more about Jesus, but they do not like what they see in his followers. They struggle to see the difference he has made in their lives. They don't see anybody who says they believe in Jesus really taking him seriously.

YOU:

I wonder, **are they talking about you? Are they talking about me? How will you just obey orders? Can you love others like Jesus does? Can you love them like Jesus love you?** If you can, if you do, **guess what?**

*You'll just be obeying orders.*

*Let pray together now...*