

Trust and Obey

Jeremiah 17:7-8

Introduction

1. We often stress the point that saving faith is that which obeys (**cf. Romans 1:5**).
 - a. This is usually in the context of refuting the error of once saved always saved.
 - b. Salvation is not in ascent to the facts, but in faithful response to such by obeying the word of God.
2. We also need to stress the point – especially to our benefit – that “faith” in and of itself is not merely belief.
3. “Faith” is a word connoting TRUST and is often used this way in scripture.
 - a. *Pistis* – “(1) that which evokes trust and faith, (2) state of believing on the basis of the reliability of the one trusted, trust, confidence, faith” (BDAG)
 - b. Really, the reason we are inclined to obey God is not simply because we believe He exists, or are simply convinced His word is truth, but WE TRUST HIM.
 - c. This is why it is possible for a Christian who believes in God’s existence, and Jesus’ deity, and the all sufficiency of the inspired word to be disobedient – BECAUSE ALTHOUGH THEY BELIEVE, THEY DON’T HAVE FAITH, I.E. THEY DON’T TRUST IN GOD.
4. Christians need to understand “faith” as it speaks of trust and know how that trust is manifested.
5. God calls us to trust in Him – **Jeremiah 17:7-8** – only then will we truly be blessed, when our trust is fully in Him.
- I. The Relationship Between Trust and Obedience
 - A. When Trust is Absent, Obedience is Absent
 - a. Israelites – **Hebrews 3:16-19**
 - i. Alluding to their rebellion as a warning not to follow **“the same example of disobedience” (Hebrews 4:11)**.
 - ii. Did not OBEY – UNBELIEF (**vv. 18-19**).
 - b. Quoted – **Psalms 95:7-11**
 - i. Rebellion (**v. 8**) – Meribah
 - ii. Trial (**v. 8**) – Massah
 - iii. Beginning of wilderness wandering – **Exodus 17:7** – name of place where Israel complained, asking for water – “Is the Lord among us or not?” (Greater, more sinister implications to their complaints.)
 1. After Exodus – 10 plagues, parting of Red Sea, destruction of Pharaoh and army, deliverance.
 2. After bitter waters made sweet.
 3. After Manna and quail.
 - a. Manna – **Deuteronomy 8:3** – it is God who you rely upon, and He always comes through.
 - iv. End of wilderness wandering – (**vv. 9-11**) – especially (**v. 10-11**) swearing not to enter rest accompanied with obstinacy despite God’s works.

1. **Hebrews 3:18-19** – those who did not “obey,” could not enter because of “unbelief.”
2. **Numbers 14:22-23** – despite God’s continual provision/protection they did not trust in His ability to deliver Canaan, so God didn’t let them in.
3. THEY DIDN’T TRUST GOD – **Numbers 13:31; 14:8-9** – People’s report contrasted with Joshua and Caleb.
4. IF THEY DIDN’T TRUST GOD, THEN WHY WOULD THEY OBEY? IF THEY TRUSTED GOD, WHY DIDN’T THEY OBEY?

B. If We Trust, We Will Obey

- a. The point of the Hebrew writer – we, like Israel of old, are in a sense wandering in a wilderness until we can enter the promised land.
 - b. WE MUST TRUST GOD, AND THAT IS MANIFESTED IN OUR OBEDIENCE.
 - c. They were to follow God into the promised land – we are to follow Christ:
 - i. **1 Corinthians 10:3-5** – had Christ with them.
 - ii. **Hebrews 2:10** – Christ is the captain of our salvation.
 1. Captain – *archēgos* – archē (begin, first, start) agō (lead).
 2. “pioneer” (NIV) – Following a pioneer implied trust – they have been that way before so they can show you the way.
 - a. How do you know the best way to go?
 - b. How do you know the general direction?
 - c. You trust the pioneer.
 - iii. **Hebrews 4:14-16** – You turn to Him for help but trust His help.
 1. He has been through it too – can sympathize.
 2. He finished His race – has passed through the heavens. (Contrast with earthly high priest.)
 - iv. **1 John 2:6** – we follow Him by walking as He walked, and that by keeping His commandments.
- C. Failure to obey is not simply a weakness of character on our part, but a display of distrust in God, which implies a perception of His character or person that is somehow less than perfect. (Not able to fulfil promises, not willing, capricious, etc.)

II. Trust and Obey

A. Trust God’s Presence – Worldly Company vs Fellowship with God

- a. Don’t be conformed to the world – **Romans 12:2** – basic principle of discipleship.
 - i. Conformed – *syschēmatizō*; to fashion alike, i.e. conform to the same pattern. (Strong)
 - ii. Transformed by gospel – contrasting patterns.
- b. Why would there be a temptation to be conformed to the world – **Galatians 5:16-17** – do not “fulfill,” do not do the “things that you wish.”
 - i. There is an obvious pull toward these things.
 - ii. They are inordinate desires we must subdue.
- c. However, consider:

- i. **World (Romans 12:2)** – *aion*; “an age, a period of time,” marked in the NT usage by spiritual or moral characteristics, is sometimes translated “world”; the rv marg. always has “age.” (VINE)
 - 1. Pattern of the time.
 - 2. The way things are these days. (General characteristics of the time.)
 - 3. Satan is **“the god of this age” (2 Corinthians 4:4)**, *aion* – age that is in rebellion to God.
 - ii. **World (1 John 2:15-17)** – *kosmos*; orderly arrangement, i.e. decoration; by implication, the world (in a wide or narrow sense, including its inhabitants, literally or figuratively (morally)) (Strong)
 - 1. “[1 John 2:15] forms an easy transition to the large number of exprs. (esp. in Paul and John) in which the world, and everything that belongs to it, appears as that which is hostile to God, i.e. lost in sin, wholly at odds w. anything divine, ruined and depraved” (BDAG)
 - 2. Has a connotation of the vast expanse which encompasses that rebellious spirit.
 - iii. The human spirit does not want to be alone:
 - 1. **Genesis 2:18** – Lord recognized this.
 - 2. **Ecclesiastes 4:9** – two are better than one.
 - d. When we are tempted to fall in with the majority (the world) we need to trust in the presence of God.
 - i. Who cares if none stand with us if the Lord does – **2 Timothy 4:10, 16-18**
 - ii. The fellowship of God is what fulfills our joy – **1 John 4:3-4**
 - e. We need to trust in the Lord’s presence, and trust that such is enough – **2 Kings 6:16-17** (Elisha to servant when surrounded by Syrian army)
 - f. We don’t need the company of the world when we have the company of God.
- B. Trust God’s Assessment – Sinful Pleasure vs Spiritual Treasure
- a. Peter warns about shortsightedness – **2 Peter 1:9**
 - i. Those who don’t add to their faith are shortsighted – not working toward the goal but sidetracked by what is directly in front of them.
 - b. Every time we sin, we show shortsightedness – WE WANT INSTANT GRATIFICATION, AND WHAT GOD OFFERS IS TOO FAR OFF.
 - i. Essentially, we are saying, “I DON’T TRUST GOD THAT THE REWARD OF HEAVEN IS WORTH WAITING AND SACRIFICING FOR.”
 - ii. Those who object to this thought – **Matthew 6:21** – your heart is where your treasure is, and hearts set on sin MANIFEST SUCH AN ATTITUDE OF DISTRUST.
 - c. God’s assessment – **1 John 2:15-17** – these things are fleeting, but the one who does My will abides forever – possesses the eternal.

- i. **1 Peter 1:3-4** – begotten to an eternal inheritance.
 - d. **Hebrews 11:24-26** – Moses trusted God’s assessment.
 - e. **Philippians 3:7-8** – Paul trusted God’s assessment.
 - f. Paul called the rich to trust God’s assessment – **1 Timothy 6:17-19**
 - i. That trust is manifested in laying up those treasures.
 - ii. Laying up treasures in heaven is accomplished by working for the Lord!
 - g. **2 Peter 1:5-11** – growing in faith (adding to faith) grants one abundantly supplied entrance into heaven.
- C. Trust God’s Promise – Earthly Citizenship vs Heavenly Citizenship
 - a. We are citizens of heaven, and we are to act like it – **Philippians 3:18-4:1**
 - i. We demonstrate such citizenship by standing fast in the Lord – our King’s way who rules from heaven.
 - ii. **3:21** – this way of living is in eager anticipation of that citizenship being realized in the fullest way – inhabiting the spiritual body, and actually being in heaven.
 - b. The kingdom is without observation – **Luke 17:20-21**
 - c. However, one day faith will become sight – **1 Corinthians 13:13** (Love transcends because one day faith and hope will be no more); **2 Corinthians 5:6-8** (we will finally be with the Lord)
 - d. When we sin, we show the mindset of the enemies of the cross – **Philippians 3:19** – mind set on earthly things, citizenship shown to be on earth not in heaven.
 - i. We show a lack of trust in the full realization of what God has promised.
 - e. **Hebrews 11:13-16** – Abraham and company lived as pilgrims because they trusted God concerning the heavenly home He said He had prepared for them.
 - f. Jesus calls us to trust in His preparation of our heavenly home – **John 14:1-6**
 - i. We show that trust by following Him – **“the way, the truth, and the life”**
 - g. We trust the immutability of God’s counsel – **Hebrews 6:13-20** – do we trust His word?
 - h. WE MUST TRUST GOD TO THE EXTENT THAT WE LIVE LIKE WE DON’T BELONG HERE, BUT SOMEWHERE ELSE.

Conclusion

1. We need to realize what we are in effect saying when we disobey God – we’re saying we don’t trust Him – we trust the world, the pleasures of sin, and the certainty of our earthly citizenship.
2. We need not only believe that God is, but we need to trust Him (**cf. Hebrews 11:6** – believe He is, and is a rewarder – trust that He rewards.)
3. We show that trust by obedience to His word.