

Title: **THE FREE OBEDIENCE**
 OF CHRIST

Text: John 10:17-18

Subject: *Christ's Voluntary Obedience*

Date: Sunday AM — November 1, 2009

Tape: John #66

Reading: *Psalm 40:1-17*

Introduction:

In wondrous, condescending love,
Christ makes His grace appear;
He left the shining realms above,
To be a Servant here.

Though Lord of heav'n, He stoops to earth,
To do his Father's will;
Though we esteemed Him nothing worth,
The Lord of glory still!

Fatigue, and suff'ring, toil, and pain,
He, as a Servant, bore,
That all His church might live and reign,
With him for evermore.

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He did the work none else could do,
Then He resum'd His throne,
Still keeping His designs in view,
And gath'ring in His own.

The title of my message is **THE FREE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST**. In the 10th chapter of John's Gospel our Lord Jesus Christ speaks of himself as the Good Shepherd, who gave his life for his sheep. Let me never tire of reading, hearing and meditating upon those blessed words of his: — "*I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep*" (v. 11). — "*I lay down my life for the sheep*" (v. 15). Then, in verse 16, our Savior declares, — "*And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.*"

- "*Other Sheep*"
- "*I Have*"
- "*Which are not of This Fold*"
- "*Them also I must Bring*"

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- “*And There Shall be One Fold and One Shepherd!*”

Then, in verses 17 and 18, he tells us that he must bring all his sheep into his fold by laying down his life for the sheep in his own obedience to the Father as “*the Shepherd of the sheep.*” Oh, what a shepherd he is, who dies that the sheep may live!

John 10:17-18 will be our text. In these two magnificent verses of Holy Scripture, our Lord Jesus Christ describes his own death, the death he must accomplish at Jerusalem, as an act of voluntary, free obedience to his Father.

(John 10:17-18) “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. (18) No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”

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In these verses we have a description of our Lord's sacrificial obedience unto death, even the death of the cross as our voluntary Surety and Substitute.

CHRIST THE SERVANT

Before we look at our text, let's take a quick look the law which typified our Lord's behavior as Jehovah's Servant.

(**Exodus 21:1-6**) “Now these *are* the judgments which thou shalt set before them. (2) If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. (3) If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. (4) If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. (5)

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And if the servant shall plainly say, **I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free:** (6) Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever.”

That is exactly what the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God did for us in the covenant of grace. He became Jehovah’s voluntary Servant, that he might redeem and save his people by his free obedience to the Triune Jehovah as our Substitute (Isaiah 50:5-7).

(Isaiah 50:5-7) “The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. (6) I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. (7) For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be

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confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.”

The death of our Lord Jesus Christ is the most wonderful, astounding, magnificent event in the history of the universe. Nothing that is, has been, or shall hereafter be can be compared to it. Yet, as he was suffering the wrath of God, bearing the sins of his people, dying as the voluntary Substitute for guilty, hell-deserving, hell-bent sinners such as we are, we hear the Son of God expressing the most woeful, unexplainable lamentation imaginable (Lamentations 1:12-14).

(**Lamentations 1:12**) “*Is it* nothing to you, all ye that pass by? **behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow**, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted *me* in the day of his fierce anger.”

(Lamentations 1:13-14) “**From above hath he sent fire into my bones**, and it prevaieth

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against them: **he hath spread a net** for my feet, **he hath turned me back**: he hath **made me desolate** and faint all the day. (14) **The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand**: they are wreathed, and come up upon my neck: he hath made my strength to fall, the Lord hath delivered me into *their* hands, *from whom* I am not able to rise up.”

When I hear those words falling from the lips of the Son of God, as he hangs upon the cursed tree, I simply cannot avoid asking a question. — **Of whom does the bleeding Lamb of God speak these words?** To whom is the death of Christ meaningless and insignificant?

Nothing in all the universe is more wonderful and magnificent in the eyes of God than the death of his dear Son. The Savior himself declares, — “*Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life!*”

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The angels of heaven ever look into the mystery and wonder of redemption by the blood of Christ with astonishment.

Illustration: *The Cherubs Facing the Mercy-Seat*

God's servants, faithful gospel preachers are so overwhelmed with the wonders of redemption and the glory of the Redeemer that they never cease to study, glory in and preach the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Isaiah 6:1-6).

(Isaiah 6:1-6) “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. (2) Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. (3) And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory. (4) And the

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posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. (5) Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. (6) Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:”

(**Galatians 6:14**) “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

(**1 Corinthians 2:2**) “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”

Redeemed sinners on the earth cherish nothing, delight in nothing, marvel at nothing,

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like we do the death of our Lord Jesus Christ for us.

(Galatians 2:20) “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

(1 John 3:16) “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.”

(1 John 4:10) “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.”

The ransomed in glory appear to think of nothing and speak of nothing except the dying love of the Lamb in the midst of the throne.

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(Revelation 5:9-12) “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; (10) And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. (11) And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; (12) Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”

Hell itself looks upon the death of our Lord Jesus Christ as a wonderful, unexplainable, mysterious thing. I am certain that this is one thing that Satan himself did not understand — That Christ would triumph over him and crush

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his head by his death upon the cross! Else he would never have put it into the heart of Judas to betray the Master.

Yet, there are some to whom our darling Savior speaks, as it were with astonishment, to whom his death is meaningless, insignificant, nothing!

(Lamentations 1:12) “*Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.*”

Who are these people to whom the death of Christ is nothing? Who is it that thinks little of the sin-atonement death of the Lord Jesus Christ? Our Lord is here addressing himself to everyone who passes by him, passes by his sacrifice, passes by his death as the sinners’ Substitute.

- O unbelieving, Christless soul, it is you!

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- O cold, calculating, heartless, preacher, you who pass by the crucified Christ and take to your lips meaningless, insignificant things, it is you! — Church Incorporation — Abortion — Politics — Bible Trivia — Prophecy — Creeds and Confessions — Theological Debates!
- Christ crucified is mundane, meaningless and insignificant only to unregenerate, unbelieving souls.

Christ, the Lord, from Calvary
Calls the wand'rer passing by;
“Say, was ever grief like Mine?”
Asks the suff'rer all divine.

Here the dying Savior's cries;
Righteous anger on Him lies;
Justice payment full requires;
Jesus suffers, groans, expires!

Angels wonder at the sight;
And the sun withholds its light:

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Earth, and hell, astonish'd view: —
Sinner, is it nought to you?

Ne'er did sorrows equal His,
But they purchas'd heav'nly bliss;
Vanquish'd Satan, sin o'erthrew: —
“Is this nothing?” He asks you ?

Yes, my thankful soul replies,
I now see in Him Who dies,
Pardon purchas'd, peace procur'd,
Grace bestow'd, and heav'n secur'd,

It is my heart's prayer that before you leave here tonight, the death of our Lord Jesus Christ will be the most important thing in all the world to you. I pray that you and I may become totally consumed with the crucified Christ, that our hearts, our lives, every fiber of our souls may be constantly dominated by the death of Christ as our sin-atoning Savior.
To that end, I ask your attention, as I endeavor to

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show you what the Word of God reveals about **THE FREE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST**.

Proposition: Our Lord Jesus Christ declares plainly that his death at Calvary was the free, voluntary act of his own obedience to his Father's will, by which he won his Father's love as a man, as our Mediator and Surety (John 10:17-18).

(John 10:17-18) “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. (18) No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”

Divisions: Let me show you three things from these words which fell from him of whom it is written, “*grace is poured into thy lips.*”

1. The Father's Commandment
2. The Son's Obedience

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3. The Father Love to the Son

THE FATHER'S COMMANDMENT

The Lord Jesus Christ speaks of himself here not as the eternal Son of God, but as the Good Shepherd, the Mediator, the Surety of his people. He says, “**This commandment have I received of my Father.**” With those words he declares that his death as our Substitute was arranged by God before the world began (Psalm 40:7; Hebrews 10:7-10).

(**Psalms 40:7**) “Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book *it is* written of me,”

(**Hebrews 10:7-10**) “Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. (8) Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and *offering* for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure *therein*; which are offered by the law; (9) Then said he, Lo,

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I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. (10) By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.”

The death of Christ was not accomplished by the arrangement of men, or by the arrangement of hell, but by the arrangement of the Triune God (Acts 2:23; 1 Peter 1:18-20).

(**Acts 2:23**) “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.”

(**1 Peter 1:18-20**) “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; (19) But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: (20) Who verily was

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foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.”

The death of Christ at Calvary was accomplished by...

- The Arrangement of An Eternal Covenant.
- The Arrangement of Sovereign Providence.
- The Arrangement of Infinite Love!

(John 3:16) “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

(Romans 5:6-8) “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. (7) For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. (8) But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

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THE SON'S OBEDIENCE

(John 10:17-18) “I lay down my life, that I might take it again. (18) No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”

The Lord Jesus Christ laid down his life voluntarily, as an act of free obedience to his Father. No man forced him to die. God the Father did not compel him to die, or take his life from him. Oh, No! Our Savior died voluntarily, by his own will.

Illustration: *Abraham and Isaac*

(Genesis 22)

Our Redeemer's death was accomplished by his own will. — “*He poured out his soul unto death!*” It is true, “*it pleased the Father to*

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bruise him.” The Father cried, “*Awake, O sword, against One that is my fellow. Smite the Shepherd!*” **But our blessed Lord Jesus, our precious Christ took the cup of wrath in his own hands.** The Son of God willingly pulled the sword of God’s infinite justice into his own heart. Our Savior died by his own will!

Illustration: “*Whom seek ye?*” (John 18)

- Christ laid down his life for the satisfaction of justice.
- Christ laid down his life as the Substitute for chosen sinners.
- Christ laid down his life for the glory of God.
- Christ laid down his life because of his love for us.
- Christ laid down his life that he might take it again.

(Romans 14:9) “For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.”

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(Philippians 2:5-11) “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (6) Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: (7) But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: (8) And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. (9) Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: (10) That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; (11) And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

THE FATHER’S LOVE FOR HIS SON

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Look at the text again. Our Savior says, —
“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life.” I know of nothing in heaven or earth so sweet to meditate upon and so impossible to preach about as the Father’s love for his darling, dying Son. Hear it again. — “*Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life.*”

- The Father loved him for the loveliness of his Godhead.
- The Father loved him for the beauty of his holy humanity.
- The Father loved him because he laid down his life for us!
- The Father loved him as the glorious, saving, effectual Mediator of his people.

God himself never saw anything in all the world so lovely, so infinitely worthy of his love, admiration and honor, as the death of his dear Son upon the cursed tree for his people. — “*Herein is love!*” Because of this

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great act of love, because of this great act of Christ's free obedience to the Father as our Surety, the Father has given his Son everything!

(Isaiah 53:4-12) “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. (5) But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. (6) All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (7) He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. (8) He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of

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my people was he stricken. (9) And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth. (10) Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. (11) He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. (12) Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

(John 3:35) “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.”

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(John 17:2) “As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”

Application: Let us learn from these words of our Lord and Savior that...

- Though God’s child may suffer greatly in this world, often carrying a heavy cross and having the Father’s face hidden from him, yet he is the darling object of his Father’s love.
- Never did the Father more fully love his Son than when he was heaping upon him the fury of his wrath!
- God honors those who honor his Son. — The only way a sinner can honor the Son of God is to trust him.
- The only way of access to God is by the Door Christ Jesus and him crucified.

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- Our only worthiness of the Father's love and approval is Christ.

(John 17:22-26) “And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: (23) I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. (24) Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. (25) O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. (26) And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare *it*: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

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Oh, how God loves us! — God the Father gave his Son to die for us! — God the Son laid down his life for us. — God the Spirit now sprinkles us with the blood of Christ and declares us — “Redeemed!” — Christ, the Good Shepherd, laid down his life for the sheep, gathers his sheep and keeps his sheep by his own omnipotent mercy, love and grace!

Hear the Good Shepherd’s voice;
He calls His trembling sheep;
He bids us constantly rejoice,
For He his flock will keep.

When justice, with a frown,
Pursu’d us while astray,
The Shepherd His own life laid down,
The ransom price to pay.

His sheep He gently folds,
And bids them stray no more;
In His own arm, the lambs He holds,
And feeds them from his store.

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Christ, the Good Shepherd, knows,
And calls His sheep by name;
He leads them forth, before them goes,
And puts their foes to shame.

The lost He'll seek, and save,
And gather them in love ;
One fold they'll make, one Shepherd have,
In pastures green above.

(1 Corinthians 6:19-20) “Ye are not your own? (20) For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”

Amen!