

**Psalm 119: 137-144; “Christ’s Perfect Obedience”, A Message delivered at
Premier Estates Nursing Home on July 12th, 2015,
by Pastor Paul Rendall .**

It is the will of God for every Christian to remember what Jesus Christ has done for them on a regular on-going basis as they live the Christian life. The Christian, when they remember what Christ has done for them in dying for their sins, will themselves come to value the commandments which He remembered to keep perfectly on their behalf. Christ kept God’s commandments perfectly so that we would be justified, and be seen by God as clothed in His righteousness. Jesus Christ did not forget them, and so in becoming more conformed to His image; by faith in Him, neither should we. The question that we are asking this afternoon is: What is it that our Lord did not forget which we ought to remember as we attempt to live our lives to His glory? As we look at these verses we see that there were 4 components of our Lord Jesus Christ's obedience which made His obedience perfect in the sight of our Holy God. These 4 components secured our salvation and they merit our imitating them in relation to our own growing obedience. They are Zeal, Love, Humility, and Delight.

1st of all - The Component of Zeal (Verses 137-139)

Righteous and upright are You, O Lord, and upright are Your judgments.” “Your testimonies, which You have commanded, are righteous and very faithful.” “My zeal has consumed me, because my enemies have forgotten Your words.” The Lord Jesus was zealous for the honor of God in terms of God’s standard of righteousness. In order to serve and worship the Lord God in a way that is pleasing to Him, we must come to understand what God is, in His essential Being. He is righteous, and everything that He does is right. There is nothing which God does that is wrong; there is nothing that He commands that we should object to. He is righteous in the exercise of His sovereignty. He is always right in the way that He providentially orders all things concerning us in this life. He is not only a God who is intrinsically just; but we must understand that everything that He has said and had written down for us is righteous as well. “Your testimonies, which you have commanded, are righteous and very faithful.” This verse is saying that Christ had this component related to doing righteousness which we should have, but we often find lacking in ourselves - zeal. “My zeal has consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten Your words.” Zeal, when it is righteous zeal, is that great and passionate desire to do what is right in order to see God honored and His name glorified. Unholy zeal leads to the persecution of others; being passionate to kill those whom the Lord does not want to see killed. Holy zeal, under the example of our Lord Jesus, leads to our suffering for God’s cause and for the people that we would see won to it.

It is the zeal of the Lord Jesus Christ that we should value, as it was not fleshly or selfish. Each of us should pray that His precious grace will create the same kind of zeal in our hearts. What do you do when people around you, even Christians around you, forget God’s Words? In verse 139 of the passage that we are studying, it says: “My zeal has consumed me,” and in the margin of my Bible it says, “My zeal has ‘put an end’ to me”. This is what the zeal of the Lord Jesus led to; it led to His own death. It led to his suffering for all whom the Father gave Him. He became the substitutionary sacrifice and was punished there at the cross for our sins. This is what we should remember; that Jesus Christ did not forget the words of God. He knew that God was perfectly righteous and must punish sin and the sinner who commits it. His justice must be satisfied. But He was willing to have it fall upon Himself. Are you zealous to put sin to death in yourself, in your own heart, so that God might be honored and glorified in your life? This is a true zeal.

The 2nd Component of the perfect obedience of Christ was His Love of God's Word.

(Verse 140)

The Lord Jesus loved the Lord His God with all of His heart knowing that His word was very pure. The way that He loved God was by loving His Word. The way that He was sustained and upheld in His ministry upon this earth was by believing this truth. "Your word is very pure, therefore Your servant loves it." Let us ask ourselves now, if this is the way that we regard God's precious Word. Do we regard it as very pure? Do we love it because it is pure? Are we upheld, encouraged, and strengthened to go on to do God's will because we regard God's words as Christ did? We should understand that all men are sinners. They are poor and needy creatures who are afflicted with sin in their nature, and they need the deliverance that will only come by trusting in the proven worth of the Word of God. The love of Jesus Christ for God's holy word was a proven love. Turn over with me to Psalm 18: verse 30. Here David says: "As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the Lord is proven;(it is refined it says in the margin) He is a shield to all who trust in Him." The Lord was the one who gave David this blessed experience of wisdom and strength to accomplish all that he had been called to do in his battles. And God is the one who does the same for us through our Lord Jesus Christ who is the greater David. Hebrews 5: 8 says, "...though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered." "And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him...." Jesus had a great spiritual battle to fight on our behalf. In His love for us, He loved the Scriptures preeminently. In this regard, we by His grace become like Him, so that we can glorify God. Do you love the word of God preeminently?

The 3rd Component of the Lord Jesus' perfect obedience which secured our salvation is Humility . (Verses 141 and 142)

"I am small and despised, yet I do not forget Your precepts." "Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness." The Lord Jesus was small in His own eyes and despised in the eyes of men, but He knew that it would take this to perfectly establish God's righteousness in His obedience. "The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom, and before honor is humility." (Proverbs 15: 33) Philippians 2: 7 says of the Lord Jesus, "He made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of bondservant, and came in the likeness of men...." He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. When the Lord Jesus came into this world, he came in true humility; in true obscurity, making Himself small in the sight of men, not great. Our Lord was called to this for our sakes, because we are not great or mighty in our own obedience or holiness before God. Indeed, because of our sin and unbelief we are very small. He was destined by His Father to become very great, but in terms of the way that He looked at Himself; in terms of the obedience of humility, He knew that He must become very small.

Have you learned this tremendous secret of obedience? This is one of the keys of true greatness. You see yourself as small, yet you do not forget God's law. There is a tendency in the sinful human heart to think this way. If I am small and insignificant in the sight of God and man, then it does not matter how I live. Beloved, this is very wrong reasoning. Christ was God's servant at this very basic level, and so we also should be. When the Lord Jesus looked at His ministry, how He was so despised and rejected of men, even by his own countrymen and people, He might rightly say to Himself, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain...." But here is where He exercised faith. Here is where he knew that He was small and despised, and yet "He did not forget God's precepts." No, He had faith in God. He said in His heart, "Yet surely my just reward is with the Lord, and my work with my God." And so it was. O beloved, do not be deceived into thinking that your life means nothing in the sight of God. It means very much if only you could see. But it is hidden from you so that in your smallness and littleness you should see God's greatness and the greatness of the gift of Christ.

God considers it a very great thing that you should be “content to fill a little space”, that He might be glorified in your obedience in the sphere in which He has placed you.

The 4th Component of Christ's obedience that established our salvation is Delight

(Verses 143 and 144)

The Lord Jesus delighted in keeping God's commandments even when it came His time to suffer for our sakes. It was not as though he delighted in pain. Obviously not! He says, “Trouble and anguish have overtaken me, yet your commandments are My delights.” This is how the Lord Jesus was sustained during His time of trouble and anguish. His delight was to do reflect upon, and to remember the Father's will, and to please Him during that awful time. Was it God's will that the Lord Jesus think of the delights of His obedience as He suffered? Very definitely. In Psalm 22, verse 6 our Lord says prophetically, “But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised by the people.” “All those who see Me ridicule Me; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, ‘He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him; let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!’” What was His delight at that time? His delight was that even though men were reviling Him, dishonoring Him, scourging Him and crucifying Him; even though His own Father must see Him at this time upon the cross as the sacrifice and substitute for sinners, and as a criminal taking our place; yet His delight was in God. He knew that if He was victorious in death, as a sinless sacrifice, that everyone believing in Him could be transformed by the grace that He would purchase by His death. O how this ought to draw out your heart to Him today; the King of Glory suffered on the cross for you the sinner. But rejoice even more in this; the King of glory who suffered for you was also raised from the dead. He said: “The righteousness of your testimonies is everlasting; give me understanding, and I shall live.” Jesus Christ knew, and He was given this understanding; that if He was willing to endure these sufferings that He would live! “Behold,” He says, “I was dead, but I am alive forevermore!” This proves the righteousness of God's testimonies is everlasting. For the work that our Lord has accomplished has brought in the everlasting righteousness which we call our own, in Him. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. This you should delight in forevermore.