

**Hebrews 5: 8-11; “Yet He Learned Obedience”, Sermon # 19 in the series –
“Holding Fast our Confession”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on August 9th, 2020, in the Morning Worship Service.**

It says here that Christ as a Son learned obedience by the things that He suffered. And having been perfected He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. If obedience through sufferings is something which our Savior had to learn to be perfected, it is something that we as Christians will need to learn as well, so that we can be perfected. Christ was called by God, as our High Priest, in order to save us from our sins. It was His perfect obedience that makes salvation certain to all who will obey Him. We are called by the Father, through the gospel to become conformed to Christ’s blessed image and likeness. Therefore, let us learn more together at this hour about this important principle so that we might become more obedient to our Lord. I would like to set before you 1st of all – The Truth that Christ, the Son of God, learned obedience. 2nd – The Truth that He was perfected by His sufferings. 3rd – That He became the Author of eternal salvation to all who will obey Him. Let us receive these truths so that we will not be dull of hearing, but that we will press on to become mature and useful as Christians.

1st of all – Let us consider this marvelous truth; that Christ, the Son of God, learned obedience.

The greatness of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ is hard for us to grasp simply because the Son of God always was. He always existed as the 2nd Person of the Divine Godhead. From all eternity He was always holding blessed communion with the Father and the Spirit. The apostle Paul in the first chapter of Hebrews, shows us that God has spoken to us by His Son. In other words, as the apostle John tells us in John 1: 14 – He was the Word of God made flesh to dwell among us. And men beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The Father has only one Begotten Son; begotten of the Father; of the same Essence and Substance, that He might perfectly represent the Father’s Person to all those whom He would create. And so He created all things through Him, and by Him, and for Him. The Father has appointed His Son the heir of all things. In bringing Him forth in eternity past, He begot Him as the brightness of His glory and the express image of His Person.

This word “brightness” in the original Greek is ἀπαύγασμα. (a-pau-gazma) The word from which it is derived from means to send forth brightness, or light, and the noun which is used here means a brightness such as intrinsically comes from light; as the very physical brightness of sunbeams which come from the sun, although it is a dim image of the real and literal spiritual reality. (See the Commentary of William Gouge on Hebrews 1: 3) In other words, this brightness of Christ cannot be separated from the Father. This glory and excellency of the Son cannot be separated from the glory and excellency of the Father. And since the Father and the Son are co-eternal, and they are inseparable in their one Essence, they are of one Mind and they have one Purpose in all that they do as Persons of the Godhead.

And so, we are told in the Scriptures that all that the Father does in relation to his creature man, He does by His Son. He does all things by the word of His power, and His Son is the Word of His power Personified. In Paul’s saying in our text that Christ was “a Son”, he is not saying that he is one among many, but rather, He is one of the same Nature and Essence, the only One Son who was Begotten from all eternity past, to all eternity future; He has always been and will always be, the Only-Begotten of His great Being. Now, when we stop to consider, as our text says, that this One, who is infinitely great and glorious in all His attributes as God, would have to learn something, is an astonishing statement. Because the Son, as God, is Omniscient and He is Impassible in His Being. Nothing can be added to Him as God, and nothing can be taken from Him, as God. All that is in the Son is God. And all that God is, the Son is. He knows all things as

God, and He cannot suffer as God. He has a dignity and excellency in Him which is far and away above the most excellent dignity of any creature, either angelic or human.

Therefore, we must ask – How is it, that even though He was a Son, He had to learn obedience? He had to learn obedience as a Man, because He as God became a Man. He was, and He is, the only intrinsically perfect Man who has ever lived. He was and He is perfect in His sinless nature. He was and He is Fairer than the sons of men. But because He has two natures, the one the nature of God, and the other the nature of man, He had to learn obedience. As God He needed to learn nothing. As Man He needed to learn everything related to obedience; how to obey His Father perfectly in every situation that He found Himself in; in every situation in which He had to do that from the time that He was in Mary's womb until the time that He died upon the cross.

He was led into all of His acts of obedience by the Holy Spirit as we see when during the time of His earthy ministry, the Spirit led Him into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil. And He passed every test there. But we must understand that He passed each and every test that was ordained for Him by the Father to go through. He knew, and the Father knew that He needed to glorify the Father by a sincere, loving, and faithful obedience to all of God's holy law. Our Jesus was born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. In other words, we become the adopted sons and daughters of God, through our exercising faith in Christ's having obeyed God's law fully and perfectly, on our behalf.

Christ had no sinful nature inherited from Adam like we do. He was born of the virgin Mary. Mary had a sinful nature of her own, inherited from the first man Adam, but she contributed nothing of her sinful nature or Adam's sin to her son. God the Spirit used Mary's womb in His holy formation of the God-Man. He by-passed the usual means of conception. He was fully aware that all the conceptions of any human being but Christ's, have Adam's sin being passed on to the child conceived, through the earthly father's seed, in the sexual act between a man and woman. King David after he sinned with Bathsheba said in Psalm 51: 5 – “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.” But this Child, our Lord Jesus Christ, was conceived in the womb of the virgin by the Holy Spirit's perfect working, so that the conception was beautiful in holiness and God's law was in His Son's heart even there in the womb of Mary, being kept perfectly.

There was no coming forth from the womb speaking lies. Rather, there was grace which was poured out upon His lips, and He would be to all the world, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. And all men who come to the Father would have to come through Him. He was born under the law and under that holy law of God, He learned obedience. He did this in two ways. He learned experientially what it meant to do the Father's will in terms of His body; He coming to know to experience and to understand the human condition; living in a fallen world, and so He was subject to human weaknesses and infirmities. And second, He learned experientially what it meant to do the Father's will, in taking the place of sinners as their Mediator and their Surety, both in terms of keeping the commandments of God and in terms of sufferings related to that.

It says here that He learned obedience, which means that He learned it by experiencing it, as “a man learns the taste of meat by eating it”. (Joseph Benson's commentary) It was in this way that He was said to taste of death, or to experience what was in it by undergoing it. His obedience was His submitting to undergo great and hard and terrible things; to learn to patiently endure sufferings, and have the faith and hope to believe that He would achieve the outcome which He so greatly desired – satisfying God's justice, demonstrating His love, and through sufferings, procuring our salvation.

In 2nd Corinthians 13: 4 it says – “For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God.” Sometimes I think that people think of the Lord Jesus as a Superman; that

somehow He did not have human feelings, that somehow He never felt weak or tired; that He was always able to do all the things that He did because He was supplied with endless strength because of His Deity. You must remember that He set aside His own will to do the Father's will. The Scriptures portray our Savior as being a Man having human weakness at various points because of His obedience. You will recall that in John chapter 4, verse 6 that when Jesus was traveling from Judea and going to Galilee, that it says – “Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey sat thus by the well.” The One who as God neither slumbered or slept, was wearied.

And similarly in Mark chapter 4 after a full day of ministering to the multitudes Jesus told His disciples to get in a boat, that they were going to cross the lake and go to the other side in a number of little boats. And He fell asleep. And the storm was so bad that they had to wake Him up and ask Him if He cared if they were perishing? Jesus answered them in perfect righteousness. He immediately arose and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, Peace, be still! And He had the presence of mind to instruct His disciples at that time, and said to them – Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?

You see, the Lord Jesus was tired and weak sometimes from ministering to others, but He could arouse Himself to help others when He needed to. Even during those greatest acts that He did, in which showed forth His Deity, He was still always thinking of His own, and what they needed. You and I can learn from this, by His grace. And indeed, we should pray to be able to be like our Lord in this holy way, of living by faith in Him, and teaching others around us about how great faith in Him is, as well.

2nd – I would like you to think about this Truth, that the Lord Jesus was perfected by His sufferings.

“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.” So Christ's obedience was manifested in two ways: by doing what God required of Him in relation to all of God's commandments. And doing it on our behalf, and in our place, as the High Priest of our confession and the Mediator who alone can bring us to God. His obedience was even further cultivated and sealed by His enduring in His soul, His mind, and His body, the sufferings related to that obedience on our behalf, which was ordained by the Father to satisfy His justice, and to show us His love. There is no doubt that Christ experienced many sufferings all through His earthly ministry; the scribes and the Pharisees, and the leaders of Israel, all arrayed against Him to try to disqualify Him and His ministry of teaching and healing.

Both His teaching and his healing of people were designed by God the Father to be all the evidence that was needed for sinners to believe that Christ had been sent for their sakes; not only to be the healer of their bodies, but more importantly the Savior and Healer of their eternal souls. But Jesus we read in Isaiah 53: 3 that Jesus was despised and rejected by men, and He was a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. In every way, by word and deed, He declared His mission, that He had been sent by God to His own people the Jews. But His own did not receive Him. They did not esteem Him. They often spoke against Him. In Matthew chapter 12, and verse 22, a man was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, and blind and mute. And Jesus healed him so that he both spoke and could see again. And all the multitudes were amazed, and said – Could this be the Son of David; that is, the Messiah?

But when the Pharisees heard it they said – This fellow casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of demons. How this must have hurt the Lord Jesus, to be lied about continually during the whole time of His ministry. But the greater sufferings were yet to come, when it came His time to go the cross. In the Garden of Gethsemane the Lord Jesus knew that His time of suffering was now upon Him. He knew that He must pray and pour out His heart to God with strong cries and tears. As a Man He must learn obedience. As a Man He must not only endure the sufferings related to wicked men reviling Him, and mocking Him and scourging Him and

crucifying Him, but He must also endure the sufferings of the assaults of Satan and the wrath of God, coming upon Him.

Even though He was the Son of God He did not assume that He had the strength, as a man, necessary to endure the sufferings that would come upon Him. He was about to begin to bear the sins of the world when He came to the Garden of Gethsemane. And yet, we find that His love for his disciples also led Him to use that time as a time of teaching to His disciples. He said to them in Matthew 26: 36 – “Sit here while I go and pray over there.” And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed.” “Then He said to them, ‘My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death.’ “Stay here and watch with Me.” “He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed saying, ‘O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.’” So we see here that there is abundant proof that the God-Man, our Savior, had two wills, for take notice of the fact that He addresses His father asking not to be able to do his own will but rather the the will of His Father. In Hebrews 10, verse 10 it says that it is by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. He was not praying to Himself, but as a Man He was praying to God His Father, and asking to have the strength to do what the Father would have Him to do, and go to the cross. So it was with vehement cries and tears that He prayed to Him who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His godly fear.

In verse 40 it says that He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and He said to Peter – “What!” “Could you not watch with me one hour?” “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.” “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Look at the great spiritual strength of our Lord Jesus, to be able to teach His disciples the way to be able to endure sufferings! His spirit was willing to suffer, and yet as a Man He knew that it would be very hard for Him to bear the sorrows and griefs of sinners, and the sins of many, that would be laid upon Him. He prayed until God answered His prayers for that strength. He prayed with great earnestness. He prayed in great agony. He prayed until, as it says in Luke 22, verse 44, that His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” He showed His disciples by His own example, how to suffer for righteousness sake, even though they could not do it yet. By His His words He exhorted them to watch and to pray. He taught them by His reproof and His gentle rebuke and His exhortations, how they should not sleep when sufferings are coming.

In Hebrews 2: 10 it says – “For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” “For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying: ‘I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.’” To be made perfect in this case means that Christ was able to complete and finish the work of sufferings, so as to accomplish our redemption at the cross, and to triumph over sin there. His prayers to the Father were heard. He had humbled Himself to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore, it says in Philippians 2, God highly exalted Him by raising Him from the dead, and giving Him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue should confess that He is Lord.

3rd – Let us see that Christ became the Author of eternal salvation to all who will obey Him.

It is your obedience to the gospel that brings you the free gift of salvation. Salvation is received by your obedience to the command of the gospel; that is to repent of your sins and to believe in Christ’s finished work at the cross. It is the obedience of faith. Salvation is not of works, it is of grace. And Paul says in Romans 10: 6 – “And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace.” But he also says in Romans 1: 5 that through Christ

we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations. Our faith in Christ leads us to obey Him; to love Him and follow Him in accordance with His blessed word. Do you have that desire within your heart today, to obey Christ by trusting in Him for salvation? If you do, it is because Christ is doing a work in your heart that will lead you on, by His Spirit, to further obedience to His word; to love Him and to keep His commandments. And why shouldn't every tongue confess Christ when they hear of these great things that He has done, in dying for sinners, and being raised from the dead for their justification? If they believe they will want to be holy, and to learn to be more holy by being willing to suffer for His name's sake if need be.

There is a response which is demanded from everyone who has received eternal and everlasting life from Christ. When you see that Christ has finished all of the work of redemption on your behalf, dear believer, it should lead you to want to go on to learn obedience by and through the things which you suffer. If you suffer with Him you will also reign with Him. The apostle Peter agrees with Paul in this point. He says in 1st Peter 1: 2, writing to God's elect people, he says that they have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. You see, even your obedience to God's commandments needs to be sprinkled with the blood of Christ, for your works are not perfect in the sight of God; they are not accepted and complete in His sight without their being dipped in His precious blood. It is in Christ that you are complete as a Christian in going about to obey your Lord.

Let us remember in closing that ours is an obedience from faith to faith. It begins with our obedience in believing in the gospel of Christ, and our obedience continues to be known and to be seen by God and by all men, when we live by faith and walk by faith. Listen to Romans 1: 16 – “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” In the context of what it says, “from faith to faith”, the just person, living by faith, just as much applies to the walk of the Christian as it does in their coming to Christ for salvation. We walk by faith and not by sight. There is a work of faith and a labor of love and a steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ which is the appropriate response to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, if you would please God day by day. Let it be so, that you love our Lord in just that way.