

Real Obedience: Sermon Series *Obedience – a choice and a blessing?*

Verse of the Series

"If you love me you will obey what I command."

John 14: 15

Some Preparation

Dear All,

Hopefully you are now aware that we have a series in Lent on the topic of Obedience (see this week's bulletin insert).

I would like you to prepare for this series in prayer and by reading and considering the subsequent material. The following is the background and context of the series; completing the below will ensure that you get far more from the series and that you draw closer to the Lord.

Please read Genesis 1:1 to 3:19; the account of our creation and fall. We see in chapter 1 how God **utters, sees, names** and **blesses**. This reveals a great deal about who God is, who we are, our purpose and the need for and blessing of obedience.

As God **utters** we read God saying, "Let there be...". This is written in what is best described as a 'jussive' tense; we do not have the English equivalent to this Hebrew form. The jussive is a command based on a desire. God wants these abundant and particular kinds; His creation is an active desiring, His love is the motor. How does this make you think and feel; what does it tell you about God and our relationship with Him?

God then **sees** what He has made and that it was good. He becomes a sort of 'recipient' of His creation brought into being by His utterance. What do you see of a beginning of a relationship here?

God then **names** His creation according to their kind; this is a confirming of identity and dignity (or purpose). He later gave Adam the privilege of taking part in the naming of His creation. Do you see a sense of reciprocity here (an exchange of things mutually beneficial)?

To complete His work God then **blesses** His creation (1:22 & 28). He confirms this world has been created by and for love; blessing is the crown. What blessings do you find in chapter 2 and what purposes do you see in these blessings?

Sadly in chapter 3 we see the fall of humankind in disobedience. God's generous giving has been gratuitous; unwarranted and undue. Our response was not to take pleasure in His blessing and relationship but to seek to make the creation work for ourselves and our benefit. What have we lost through our fall?

If we understand and cherish who God is, why He has made us and the purpose we have, we will know that what He intends for us is good; that His love is all embracing. If we understand and know these truths we will see why He wants us to obey Him; we will see our obedience is rooted in His love and is reciprocal in nature.

"But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did."

1 John 2: 5-6

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Dave Labdon



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