

Series: John

Title: Christ's Commandments

Text: John 1: 43

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John 1: 43: The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

Subject: Christ's Commandments

Proposition: The Lord Jesus Christ is sovereign God whose command makes his people do his will. Thereby, our God and Savior gets all the glory for anything that we do in spirit and in truth.

John 3:27: John...said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

Philippians 2: 13: [Paul said] It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

When Jehovah walked this earth, bodily, our Redeemer was in one place at one time. But while in this earth he was still the all-knowing, ever-present God. Next time we will see that he saw Nathaniel under the fig tree and knew his inward heart though our Savior was in another location.

Now that he is risen in a glorified body, Christ is seated at God's right hand. But he is still all-knowing and ever-present with his people. That which he promised his disciples is promised to all his people, "*Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*" (Mt 28: 20) Brethren, let us meditate on that in our heart. The Lord is in our midst working his will and shall never leave us nor forsake us. The Spirit of Christ dwells in his people all the time. When he has assembled his church, he promises that he is in our midst. The apostle Paul said, therefore, that we should do all things with fear and trembling.

It is only when our sovereign Savior speaks his command into our hearts in power that we obey him.

Isaiah 26: 12: LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.
13: O LORD our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.

Hebrew 14: 20: Now the God of peace...21: Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

So as we see how our Lord called Philip, be assured, this is what our Lord continues to do for us until the end.

TO SEEK AND TO SAVE

John 1: 43: The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

Our Savior came to seek and to save his lost sheep. He "*would*" go forth into Galilee. Why? It is because he knew one of his elect who he everlastingly loved was there and he must call Philipp to himself. In another place "He *must* needs go through Samaria." Why? It is because one of his lost sheep was there and he must call her to himself.

Luke 19: 10: For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Then what happened?—"and he findeth Philipp." Right now, at God's right hand, the Head of the church is the all-powerful, all-knowing GodMan, Mediator, who filleth all in all his people. He knows where his chosen, redeemed people are in this world. He seeks them. And he finds them.

We are sheep. And sheep follow him. But sheep also stray. Still, Christ is the Shepherd who always finds his lost sheep or his straying sheep and brings us home.

Let's hear our Lord speak. The Pharisee's did not know they were the worst sinners of the lot. Like us, apart from God's Spirit, they could simply not fathom that they were guilty, unrighteous, unholy sinners. The result is always the same. They criticized and accused our sinless Lord Jesus. They charged him for eating with sinners. So Christ gave them a few parables. They did not know what he meant. By the Spirit we know that he meant he did not come to seek and to save the righteous. He came to find his lost sheep who are sinners and to bring us to repentance, uniting us as one-fold under one Shepherd. As our faithful Shepherd he continues to shepherd us if we wander from the fold. So Christ said to them,

Luke 15: 4: What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? 5: And when he hath found *it*, he layeth *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6: And when he cometh home, he calleth together *his* friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. 7: I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. 8: Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find *it*? 9: And when she hath found *it*, she calleth *her* friends and *her* neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. 10: Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

There is joy in Christ our Shepherd who sought us and found us. And that is how he grants repentance. Christ is our Shepherd who always finds his sheep and brings us to himself. Like a woman searching for a lost coin, Christ finds them that are his.

AN EFFECTUAL COMMAND

When the Head of his church found Philip, what did he do?—"and saith unto him, *Follow me.*" The Lord Jesus *commanded* Philip in power and the result was that Philip *followed him* in saving faith.

Brethren, when we think of God's commandments, we are prone to think of the ten commandments. We think of *us* reading his commandment. But this is the commandment of our Lord himself. This is Christ himself speaking to one of his redeemed—"Follow me." Be it the doctrine of regeneration or sanctification or mortification or obedience, this is the essence of it all. This is how all works of grace are accomplished in God's people. It is by the Lord Jesus commanding his child, "Follow me."

It is Christ word, coming from Christ to us, that gives spiritual life. Many learn doctrine in the head. Many begin following Christ by their fleshly will. Some are constrained by men, others are seeking to please men and some are simply turning over a new leaf. For instance, a great multitude followed Christ after he fed the multitude. But in time they were offended. The multitude were offended because Christ told them they could not believe on him unless the Father drew them and taught them in the heart. So they went away. But Christ said to his disciples, "Will you go away also?" They answered, "Lord to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life and we are sure thou art the Christ the Son of the living God." The difference is that Christ had spoken effectually into their hearts.

Brethren, if Christ has not spoken into a sinners heart, the sinner cannot make himself follow Christ together with his people. But when Christ speaks into the heart, his disciple cannot do otherwise. Christ's commands which Christ speaks into our hearts are the words of eternal life. Christ's word purifies and sanctifies. He prayed to the Father, "sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." Christ gave himself for his church, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph 5: 26-27).

When Christ word sanctifies a sinner within then he gives us a new will. God the Father glorified his only begotten Son with that very word, saying, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Christ's word gives ability to obey. When he commanded "Follow me" immediately, in his heart, Philip left family,

friends, his business, even all things and followed Christ. When Christ called Matthew, before Matthew wiggled a toe, “He left all.” Then we read, “And rose up and followed him.”

The word first works in the heart. Without a new heart all is vain. But that is how Christ brings our bodily members into subjection to him. That is true mortification of the flesh. We can struggle and struggle and not be able to mortify the flesh. But when Christ speaks we cannot do otherwise. This is our only hope in the face of every trial, every sin, every perplexing providence. We often get in our flesh and make terrible mistakes. Remember, an error in judgment does not make you a false child of God. If that were so then we could all take our place as false. But the good news is when Christ speaks then we submit and follow him.

Christ said, "Lazarus come forth." And Lazarus came forth from the dead. Christ said to the man with the withered hand, "Stretch forth thy hand." That man had never been able to even use that hand. But with Christ's command "he stretched it forth." The impotent man had never used his legs. But when Christ said, "Arise. He stood up and leaped with joy."

THE OBJECT OF CHRIST'S COMMAND

This is so important. The object of the command is always Christ himself—"*Follow ME!, Look unto ME, Come unto ME!*"

Brethren, this is not only so in the first hour but from first to last, it is Christ speaking his word which makes him all unto us. He is all in salvation and Christ is all we need at any given time in our lives. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves [as worked up by us]; but our sufficiency is of God" (2 Cor 3: 5).

Let me give you some examples. When the gospel is preached or some particular doctrine, on one day you may be having trouble understanding, even have trouble believing. But when Christ speaks into our heart, the commandment comes, "Follow me," "Look unto me!" then the word becomes true in our hearts because Christ the Truth spoke into our hearts by the Spirit of Truth.

When our faith is weak and unbelief strong then we are troubled. But then Christ commands us as real as he did his apostles and says,

John 14: 1: Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

That is Christ's command. With the command comes comfort from our compassionate High Priest. He renews us in spirit this way. He declares into our hearts,

John 14: 2: In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3: And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

By Christ's command and comfort, he makes us look to him. We find our hearts fully persuaded that Christ is able to save us to the uttermost. He brings his child to know with new grace that Christ shed his precious blood for his people. He makes his redeemed each know that Christ laid down his life for you particularly. He makes you know with assurance that you are righteous and accepted in him!

When your love is not as strong as it was, what makes your heart burn within you? What renews love in us for Christ and his people. It is when you hear him say, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (Jer 31: 3).

When your peace is disturbed by your own sinful flesh or enemies round about, when you have no peace with God, no peace with your brethren, and you cannot find peace anywhere, Christ speaks the command, "Peace be still" (Mr 4: 39). He calms the waves of tribulation. With the command comes the peace in the heart of knowing Christ is my Peace. "Being justified, by faith, we have peace with God" (Rom 5: 1).

When you grow fearful and about to faint and you have no strength then Christ speaks the command,

Isaiah 43: 1: Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. 2: When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. 3: For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour:

We can read that promise a thousand times and have no peace. But when Christ speaks into the heart, he gives us assurance that he will never leave you nor forsake you. He redeemed his people and his people are his. He speaks to us, promising, "Lo I am with you always even unto the end of the world!" (Mt 28: 20) He makes you behold him on his glorious high throne ruling everything for your good and his glory.

When his minister is to preach, we are up all night praying for those our heart aches for or we are preaching in a new place and know we shall be opposed, then Christ speaks, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city" (Acts 18: 9-10). It is as powerful and as real as when Christ spoke that to the apostle Paul concerning Corinth.

When we are in a trial and do not know what to do, we may be looking for direction in his word or hearing his gospel or praying but as soon as Christ speaks the command then you know exactly what to do.

Isaiah 30: 20: And *though* the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: 21: And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This *is* the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

His word comes with the power and creates the willingness and ability that you did not and could not have in your sinful flesh. Have you experienced that? What you could not do, then you can do! Our sin has taught us that it is not of us—"our sufficiency is of him!"

Psalms 119:50: This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.

From the first hour to the last it is Christ's word spoken effectually in spirit and in truth into our hearts that is the life of our life, the faith of our faith, the will of our will, the power of all ability. And Christ is always the object he directs us unto—"Follow ME!" *Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth for I am God and there is none else! Come unto me!* At every time, in every need, his word reveals to us that HE meets our need! In every trial or need in this life only Christ meets our need! In every need of salvation only Christ meets our need! When we try to run in our own strength he speaks,

Psalms 46: 10: Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

It would be wonderful if the Lord Jesus would come forth today, here in Ewing, find his lost sheep and command, "*Follow me.*"

Amen!