

Morning Sermon September 6, 2020

“Lord, Lord vs True Obedience!”

Matthew 7:21-23

When I was younger, in seminary, in my 20s, I heard John Gerstner preach on this passage. His message was new to me as what I had heard from all the churches at the time was opposed to what Jesus is teaching here. They liked the “Trust” part of “Trust and Obey” but counted obedience to be optional, unnecessary or even wrong! It is quite true to say our salvation is not based on our perfect keeping the Law. But it is a lie of Satan to say **SAVED** people do not need to obey! Jesus says we do need to obey...

I. Profession of faith vs obedience to God’s will -

²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Matthew 7:21

1. Mere words don’t cut it, if you call Jesus “Lord” do you mean it if you do not obey Him?

⁴⁶ “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say? Luke 6:46 (NKJV)

2. Whenever we sin, as “Christians” are we not denying the Lordship of Christ?

A. Scripture says –

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. 1 John 1:8–10 (NKJV)

B. But the very same apostle writes –

⁶ Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. ⁸ He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. ⁹ Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. 1 John 3:6–9 (NKJV)

All true Christians say, “Lord, Lord.” But not all who say “Lord, Lord” are true Christians! R. Kent Hughes

II. Great (seeming) accomplishments vs obedience to God’s will -

²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ Matthew 7:21–23

1. Judas almost certainly cast out demons
2. Others professing Christ build huge church buildings, attracting great crowds (many seem to be saved)... but do these things always equal doing God’s will????
3. But Jesus says some who even perform or seem to perform miracles may not be saved, because they practice lawlessness, and also Jesus never knew them!

³ And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. John 17:3 (NKJV)

In our relationship with Christ, how do we show our love for Christ? –

¹⁵ “If you love Me, keep My commandments. John 14:15 (NKJV)

III. How, and why, obedience to God’s will fits with our salvation –

1. Some would say it does not, they would point out passages like –

⁵ But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, ⁶ just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: ⁷ “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; ⁸ Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.” Romans 4:5–8 (NKJV)

It may seem there is a contradiction here between Jesus and Paul. Paul is talking about God justifying the ungodly, through faith, while Jesus seems to be saying a profession of faith does not accomplish salvation, at least not for everyone!

How do we reconcile this seeming contradiction?

2. Paul is speaking about how we are saved in the first place –

His - ⁵ But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly ... Romans 4:5

Fits with Jesus' words at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount –

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. ⁵ Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. ⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. Matthew 5:3–6 (NKJV)

Poor in spirit meant spiritually bankrupt, mourning was mourning over sin, meekness was at least partly because we have none of our own righteousness to brag about and hungering and thirsting for righteousness is because we lack these things, these words do not contradict with Paul and as Paul also says –

¹⁰ As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. Romans 3:10–11 (NKJV)

3. *Jesus in Matthew 7 is not talking about how we are saved in the first place, but how true salvation manifests itself in a maturing Christian -*

A. *See we are saved first by Christ's righteousness imputed to us –*

²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

²¹ But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, ²⁶ to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Romans 3:20–26 (NKJV)

This is why we celebrate the Lord's Supper, Christ died for us, we are saved by His body and blood. However, being saved means not only from the PENALTY due sin, but also its POWER and eventually (when we are in Heaven) we will be delivered from the very PRESENCE of sin!

B. *Christ's perfect righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees & Scribes!*

C. *Yet, our righteousness must exceed theirs as well –*

²⁰ For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:20 (NKJV)

D. *Christ's imputed righteousness is ours; yet we are also sanctified by God's Spirit –*

³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; 1 Thessalonians 4:3 (NKJV)

²² But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. Romans 6:22 (NKJV)

4. *As we grow in Christ, we should become increasingly obedient to God's will, Christians are not those who practice lawlessness!*

Jesus not only saves us from Hell, He saves us “from our sins” –

²¹ And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins. Matthew 1:21 (NKJV)

Continuing in sin, while calling Jesus Savior, or Lord is evidence that He is neither!

“Not only is a bare profession insufficient for the saving of the soul, but it is an insult to Christ Himself. It is a horrible mockery to call Him Lord while we continue to do only what is pleasing to ourselves, to profess to obey Him while we treat His commands with contempt. It is *obedience* which marks men as His disciples and distinguishes them from the subjects of Satan.” A. W. Pink

Obedience makes it clear that we are real Christians and we shine as lights in a dark world –

¹² Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

¹⁴ Do all things without complaining and disputing, ¹⁵ that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, Philippians 2:12–15 (NKJV)

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