

Coach House Church BEACONS

TRUST AND OBEY

14TH AUGUST 2020

There is a well loved old gospel song that says, "Trust and obey for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey." These Beacons have been run-in for quite some time now. They are a series of God given, moments in time intended to help us get harmony in our lives by living in harmony with God. That is what all of the biblical talk about the covenant is about.

But what is the Covenant.? Well the covenant is the conditional promises made to humanity by God, as revealed in Scripture. Throughout the Bible, God relates to his people through covenants. It is through these covenant relationships, which collectively serve as the foundation for God's promise to bring redemption to his people, that we can understand the advancement of his kingdom.

We have over the last few months of lockdown learned that God takes the initiative by inviting us to live in this covenant relationship with him and by promising us a good and significant life and by promising to be there for us to love us and to make life possible for us.

The first part of what we have to do to live in the covenant with God is to trust His promise like Abram did when he set out for the land of Canaan, like Moses and the people of Israel did when they left Egypt and went out into the wilderness. Do you know these stories?

But there is another part of living in a covenant with God. As the gospel song said, we not only have to trust, we have to obey too. Whoa! We were afraid of that. We don't much like having to obey anybody else. We like to be free to do our own thing.

But wait. There is more to this kind of obedience than just saluting and saying, "Yes sir" and following orders. It calls for us to learn to live in harmony with God in an even bigger way. Let's see what it is all about.

I. What kind of obedience does a covenant with God require?

Exodus tells one of the most important stories of covenant making in the Bible. Picture the scene. It is awesome. The people of Israel, recently liberated from slavery in Egypt, are camped near the foot of Mt. Horeb in the desert of Sinai. Horeb is an active volcano and Moses has gone to meet God and to represent the people as God makes covenant with them. God is saying, "You will be my people and I will be your God." Then God gave Moses a set of commandments they were to live by. These were not prerequisites for entering the new relationship with God. God had already received them into the covenant. God had again started by saving the people and calling them to venture out trusting His promise. The commandments simply described what it would be like to live in harmony with God. They were simple, practical rules for living lives committed to reverence, respect, justice and – though it doesn't say so right here – love. We are called to live in harmony with the purpose of God.

Psalm 19 expresses the belief that God is the one who orders the universe – and that His will for all things is good. The law has been given to us to help us get in harmony with the purpose of God.

Jesus taught that the best way to live in obedience to God's purpose is to live in love because God is love. That is not a way of letting us off easy. When Jesus saw the people not respecting the temple in Jerusalem, he cried out, "No! This is all wrong!" and He cleansed the temple. But just following the letter of the law will not really put us in harmony with God. To really live in obedience to God, we must learn to love as God loves. The law behind the written law is the law of love.

II. What would it mean for us to live in obedience to God?

It is not just a matter rigidly conforming to written rules and believing that, by doing that, we can make our lives good. Paul tried that and said it was a big mistake (Romans 7).

It is a matter of first claiming our freedom by trusting God's love for us. We have to take charge of our lives and refuse to let ourselves be ruled by all of the little threats and promises that bombard our lives daily. Trusting God's loving promise actually sets us free to do something bigger and better with our lives.

The next step is to decide to commit yourself to that purpose that is above all other purposes, the loving purpose of God that gives order to the whole creation. At this point, you can stop thinking about obeying and concentrate on letting God love you into loving.

When you really want to live your life in love, look again at the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount and all of the other Biblical teachings and let them show you how to live the life of love. Trusting gives us the freedom to obey and obedience increases freedom and together they lead us into that harmony with God that is the life of the covenant.



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