

Resurrected Obedience

John 14:15-31

Trust and obey, for there's no other way

To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

I've been singing those lyrics since childhood, and as an adult, I've been trying to live them in the very core of my being.

Trust means to have confidence in, rely on, depend on, believe in.

God has set God's people free. God has placed before us all the benefits and delights of belonging to God's family. God has made available God's love, care, and provision in generous measure. Do we trust God?

I think one of the greatest statements of the Bible is John 14:18. Jesus says, "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you." Abandonment is an awful feeling. Sometimes parents will abandon children, husbands will abandon spouses, families will desert each other in selfish strife, but Jesus says, "I will not abandon you." You are mine. Mine now, mine forever.

We don't need more insights, knowledge, or understanding. What we need is more trust. The Christian life in a single word is trust.

As Christians we should be willing to pray about those things which we have done that we ought not to have done, and those things we have not done that we ought to have done.

Are you willing to trust your faults and failures, your blunders and botches to God's forgiving mercy? Or are you still trying to work it out on your own, salvation with self-justification?

I have often wondered what kind of trust it took for Abraham to tread up Mt. Moriah on a convoluted order to offer his son, Isaac, believing all along that God would provide. King David said, "When I am most afraid, I put my trust in God" (Psalm 56:3). Job said, "Even though he slay me, yet I will trust in God" (Job 13:15).

Let us live in the sure and certain confidence that as we push toward our tomorrow, God is already there, going ahead of us to prepare the way. There's never a burden that God will not carry, never a sorrow that God will not share. Our bright hope for tomorrow is built on nothing less than the love of Jesus which surrounds us day by day. As the Hymn says, "Only trust Him. Only trust Him now."

Obeys means to follow, to devote, to love, to serve, to sacrifice.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength."

Christ instructs us, Verse 15: "If you love me, you will obey what I command."

Verse 21: "Whoever has my command and obeys them, he is the one who loves me."

Verse 23: "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching."

Our love for God is demonstrated not by some soft, sentimental emotion, but by obedience to God's will, expressed in loving cooperation with God's commands. Our obedience is grounded in our love. The command to love is the essential demand of Christian existence. To love means to orient one's whole being toward others. Love is an action in which our whole being participates in our doing.

The struggle of human existence is to let God be God.

Denzel Washington says, "I walked into the house one day and feeling full of myself, said, 'Mother, did you ever think this was all going to happen?' She responded, 'Oh please, go wash the windows for me. You have no idea how many people have been praying for you when you were a knucklehead.'"

C.S. Lewis says, "When I learn to love God better than my earthly dearest, I shall love my earthly dearest better than I do now." When we put first things first, second things are not suppressed, but increased.

Love the Lord with ALL—what part of all don't we understand? When we get the all right, everything else will find its place and priority.

Love your Neighbor as Yourself. What do you want for yourself?

I thought about what I wanted for myself, and I think these are things most people want for themselves. I want to love and be loved. I want to be treated with respect and dignity as a human being. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's reminded us that is a basic right of all human beings.

I want a chance, an opportunity. I want to be judged not by the color of my skin, nor by the nature of my sexuality, nor by the part of the country in which I was born. I want to be judged by the productivity of my efforts and the content of my character, and my willingness to apply myself for the common good.

I want freedom to pursue my hopes and dreams with the grace of God to try again. I want to be judged not by the number of times I fail, but by the number of times I get up and try again.

I want comfort in my affliction and help in my time of need. I must not fool myself into self-sufficiency. I need other people. I need somebody on my side when the days are rough, and friends just can't be found. We need people who become bridges over troubled waters.

Jimmy Carter, in his book *Sources of Strength*, tells about interviewing Eloy Cruz, an admirable Cuban pastor, who had tremendous rapport with poor immigrants from Puerto Rico. "What is the secret to your success?" asked Carter. Pastor Cruz replied, "Señor Jimmy, we need to have only two loves for our lives, love for God and love for the person who happens to be in front of us at any time."

"Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey." That song came into being when a young man stood up at a testimony meeting during a D.L. Moody evangelistic crusade and said, "I'm not sure I understand all the dynamics of Christianity, the meaning of the conversion or the power to live a sanctified life. But even though I don't understand it all, I'm going to trust and I'm going to obey."

You may not understand all the ramifications of Christian theology and all the details of Christian ethics. But you can decide today to give as much of yourself as you understand to as much of God as you can comprehend. You can trust and you can obey—and that will be enough.