



Message Transcript

The Beauty of Obedience

Jon Gaus

Well, good morning, Brave Church. I'm Pastor John Gaus, the director of Brave Global Training and Coaching. Would you help me give a warm welcome to our Broomfield campus? Because you and I both want God to do a supernatural work in our lives, through His word today, let's pray and ask Him to do that. Let's pray.

Father, first of all this morning, we thank You for Jesus, our Lord and our savior, our king, our master, our Redeemer, and Jesus, you even call us your friends. Lord Jesus, thank you that you have given us the Holy Spirit to be our power source in our daily fight against sin and temptation. Spirit, we worship you as our counselor. Spirit, we worship you this morning as our comforter through hard times in trials. And Holy Spirit, you are the perfect teacher of your word, your Omniscience, you know every person who you called into this worship center this morning, you know exactly what each one of us needs from your word this morning. You're so awesome. You can custom fit this teaching for each one of us to help us and to motivate us and to equip us to go to our next step of faith with Jesus. We asked this in his powerful name and all God's people said, amen.

Church, let me start this morning by asking a quick survey question. How many of you remember the very first car that you ever owned? It might have been a junker. It might have been a beater. Maybe your grandma gave it to you, but you remember that very first car you ever owned because it's near and dear to your heart. It gave you freedom. It gave you independence. You could finally go where you wanted to go. Well, my very first car was a 1972 Chevrolet Vega. I always get that response when I say Vega, because we all know the Vega was famous for when you put in a gallon and

a gas, you had to put in a quart of oil because it was a real burner. General Motors only made it for seven years because it was a real lemon.

But I loved that Vega because it was my first car. And I remember a few months after I got that car, I was driving a whole group of friends to high school one cold winter morning in Michigan, and halfway to school, I got my first flat tire. So we all pile out of that Vega. None of us have coats or gloves on because we were, well, high schoolers. And I go to the back hatch and I don't think I've ever even opened it up at this point. And I look back there and I find two things, a spare tire and a lug wrench. That's it. No jack. So I tell these guys, "Listen, if you guys don't want to freeze to death and you want to make it to school today, you four guys are going to have to lift the back end of this car."

So they're really cold. They're grumbling. They're yelling at me, but they lift up the side of the car and we try it that way. That doesn't work. So I say, "Okay, move around to the back of the car." And that finally worked. And after about a 45 minute fiasco, I finally got that tire changed and we went to high school about an hour late. Well, later that night, I was in our driveway and I opened up the hatch to rearrange some things, and I noticed there was this handle on the floor of the hatch. So I turned it and I lifted it up and I saw that there was this false floor and there was a whole compartment underneath there. And I looked in there and guess what was in there? The jack, the very thing that I needed. And you know, a Jack is so powerful that you could basically lift the end of a car with one hand if you have the jack.

Well, that reminds me so much of our daily fight against sin and temptation, that so many times you and I revert back to relying upon our own power, our own effort and our own strength, even though our Heavenly Father has already given us the supernatural truth of His word. And He's given us the supernatural power of His Holy Spirit. So I just want to spend the next few minutes looking into God's word to learn how you and I can begin enjoying more victories in our Christian life. How many of you would like to do that? I think we would all vote for that. We want to enjoy more victories in our Christian life, and how we can be increasingly obeying the commands of Jesus. Well, we're in Romans chapter six. That's where we're going to begin today. Romans chapter six, we're going to look at verses 12 through 14.

Now let me set up the context of what's going on here in Romans six. The Apostle Paul has just spent 11 verses reminding us about our new identity in Christ, that we are no longer slaves to sin, that Jesus has rescued us from the penalty of sin, that Jesus has rescued us from the power of sin, yet because we still exist in these fleshly bodies, and we still exist for the time being in a fallen world, we do have to deal daily with a presence of sin. That's what Paul is going to address here in Romans six verses 12 through 14. Let's read. The Spirit through Paul says, "Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God; for sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace."

Do you see the picture that Paul is trying to paint for us? Paul is painting a picture there of a worship service. All the elements are there. Instruments are there, gifts being presented to a deity are there, and choice is there, because there has to be choice for there to be true worship. Because if we don't have choice, then we're just robots who are going through the motion. But it's all there. Paul is painting a worship service. Let's read through those verses again and see if you pick up the worship terminology. "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts. Do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God; for sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace."

All right, that passage leads us to biblical truth number one, in your teaching outline. There is a worship service going on all day, every day, in my life. That's what Paul is teaching us. It's because you and I still live in a fallen world and we live in the fleshly bodies. There is a worship service going on all day, every day, in our life. Every time I'm tempted, a worship service is about to happen. Every time I'm tempted, somebody is about to be worshiped. It's either going to be Christ placed on the throne of my life who's worshiped, or it's going to be sin and self placed on the throne of my life and worshiped.

Now let's look at this in an everyday scenario. Let's say that I drive up to a stoplight and I'm waiting for the light to change, and my mind starts to wander back to someone from my past who really wronged me, really sinned against me. And I am

currently being tempted by the sin of bitterness and unforgiveness. Right at that moment, because I'm being tempted. A worship service is about to take place. Somebody is about to be worshiped. In fact, in the spirit realm, angels and demons are sitting on the edge of their seat, waiting to see how I'll choose. Who's going to be worshiped? Who's going to be glorified?

Now you might be saying, Pastor John, isn't that a little dramatic? Isn't that a little over the top? I mean angels and demons and stoplights? But Second Corinthians 4:18 exhorts us, commands us to focus on the unseen realm that is eternal. That's where all spiritual warfare takes place. Do not focus on the seen realm, which is temporary. So every time that I'm tempted, every time that you're tempted during the day, a worship service is about to take place and somebody is going to be worshiped.

That's what Paul is spelling out. Okay, church. That is a powerful picture, but Jesus himself even raises the stakes higher. Look at truth number two. Jesus makes our obedience to his commands totally personal. Jesus raises the stakes. He makes our obedience to his commands totally personal. Let's turn back two books to the book of John, to John chapter 14. And we're going to see this. The context here is that it's the night before Jesus goes to the cross and he's teaching his disciples that he is not only the infinitely awesome God, who's beyond space and time, and he is, but he's teaching his disciples that he's also the up close and personal God, because Jesus makes everything personal. Our salvation, our forgiveness of sins, having a home in heaven after we die is all personally only through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Jesus showed us that the whole Bible is personally about him.

Do you remember back in John chapter five, he said to the Pharisees, the religious people, "You searched the scriptures for in them you think you will find eternal life. It is they that point to me, but you refuse to come to me that you would have life." And here Jesus makes our obedience to his commands totally personal. Let's start in John 14, verse 15. Jesus says, "If you love me, you will keep my commands." Not, if you love me, you'll have perfect church attendance. Not, if you love me, you'll go into full-time ministry. Jesus says, "If you love me, you will keep my commands." But then it gets even better. Because then Jesus promises, I'm even going to give you the power source to allow you to keep my commands. Look at verse 16, he said, "I will ask the Father and He will give you another helper that He may be with you forever."

That is the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see him or know him, but you know him because he abides with you and will be in you. So Jesus makes it totally personal. He puts a face on our choice for obedience. That means if I'm sitting there one click away on my computer, I'm one click away from the sin of pornography and lust. I have a choice between sin and self and not a list of precepts or a list of principles. It's the person of Jesus Christ. That is very sobering. That is very motivating. That is very personal in our daily fight against sin and temptation. So I'm sitting there and I'm one click away from choosing to sin. And if I choose to sin, what I'm saying to Jesus is, "Jesus, right now I love my sin and I love myself and I love darkness more than I love you."

We're not sinning against a set of precepts or a set of principles. It's against the

very person of Jesus Christ. That is sobering, but that's motivating. That's powerful. Jesus puts a face on our obedience. As we minister to people who have been trapped in the habitual sin of pornography, we don't tell them, try harder. We say, see more. See more of the beauty of Jesus, the worth of Jesus, and you will find that he is infinitely more desirable than the darkest powerful sin. All right, church, these last two passages have been referencing our sanctification. Our sanctification, that daily process where the Holy Spirit is cleaning us up from the inside out, and he is shaping us more and more into the likeness of Jesus. So what role do you and I play in our sanctification? Doesn't God do all the work?

Well, let me share a biblical grid of truth that will help us out a lot. The work of our salvation, being saved, the work of our salvation involves one party who does all the work, and that's Jesus Christ. Jesus is the one who willingly left his throne in majesty, became one of us,, fully God and fully man. He lived a perfect, sinless life on this earth though he's tempted. He was tempted in every way that we are tempted. Jesus is the one who willingly went to the cross to suffer and die to pay for our sins. Jesus is the one who rose three days later from the grave, just as he promised, defeating Satan, sin and death. And Jesus is the one who pursued us when we were sinners with a free gift of salvation. Jesus has done all of the work for our salvation.

That's a great place for an amen. Jesus has done all of the work for our salvation. So in our salvation, there is one party who does all the work, that's Jesus. In our daily sanctification, there are two parties who are involved: the Holy Spirit and us. The Holy Spirit does all of the heavy lifting. He initiates our sanctification. He empowers

our sanctification daily. But we have a role in our sanctification. Our role is that we daily would choose to cooperate with the Spirit's work and surrender to the Spirit's sanctifying work in our life, because you and I are still not robots.

We can choose on any given day that we are going to resist the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and that grieves the Holy Spirit. You know what that looks like? Have you ever seen a toddler who has a really dirty face, and a parent comes up with a wet wipe and tries to wipe their face and they're stiff arming the parent and they're ornery and they're whining and they're turning their head away. That's what it's like when we don't cooperate with a daily sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

Saints, this is great morning prayer for you and I, when we get up in the morning, that we could pray to the Holy Spirit. Spirit, as an act of worship to you, I am going to cooperate with your sanctifying work today. I am going to surrender with your sanctifying work in my life, because that is an act of worship. Well with all of this talk about sin and temptation, that leads to a very logical question. If Jesus defeated Satan, sin, and death at the cross, why does God allow temptation and spiritual warfare exist to exist today? Wouldn't our life be a lot easier if there was no temptation and there was no spiritual warfare that existed? Look at truth number three, church. God allows temptation and spiritual warfare to currently exist for His glory and our good. That's why in this time period, though Jesus has defeated sin, Satan and death God allows temptation and spiritual warfare to exist for God's glory and our good.

Psalm Eight and Hebrews Two tell us that we were created a little bit lower than

the angels. In essence, meaning we can't fly around, we can't become invisible. We were created a little lower than the angels. And if we, in our own power, try to defeat the most powerful fallen creature, Satan, we will lose every time. But if we, the lesser creature, depends upon the Creator inside of us, the Holy Spirit, we will defeat Satan every time and God gets the glory. God also allows temptation and spiritual warfare to exist today because it's for our good. It grows us in our dependence upon the Holy Spirit. It teaches us to fight the enemy with the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, just as Jesus modeled in the wilderness. And spiritual warfare and temptation help us to build spiritual muscle, because in order to build muscle, you have to have resistance. So when we face Satan resistance, if we use the tools and weapons that God gave us, we will grow maturity and spiritual muscle. That's why God allows, in this time period, for temptation and spiritual warfare to exist.

Now let's move on to look at five biblical truths about obedience, and this isn't an exhaustive list, but this is a very powerful and practical list for our everyday life. Because we all said we want to enjoy more victories in our Christian life. Look at these five biblical truths about obedience. The first one is, God calls us to obey his moral law. God calls us to obey his moral law. Why is it important that we define what the moral law is? Because if you look in the Old Testament, there are 613 Old Testament laws.

Which one of those are we supposed to be following? Which one of those laws are for today? I mean, are you and I still forbidden from touching pigs? Are you and I still forbidden from eating shellfish? Are we still forbidden from wearing mixed fabrics?

Because I'm pretty sure I saw some of you at Red Lobster last weekend, eating lobster with a polyester blend half zip pull over on. Were you sinning? Which one of those are for us today? The Old Testament laws can be divided into three categories. The first one is the ceremonial laws, the second one is the civil laws, and the third one are the moral laws. Now, the ceremonial laws were the whole sacrificial system in all of the Old Testament festivals. They were temporary and they were put in place to cover sin until the Lamb of God came and he would cleanse sin once and for all.

So when Jesus came through his perfect life, death and resurrection, he fulfilled the ceremonial laws. He completed the ceremonial laws and he ended the ceremonial laws. Those are for the Old Testament. Those are for the old covenant. They're not for us. They're done. Then we have the civil laws of the old Testament. These were the laws of the nation of Israel. And those were temporarily in place until the king of Israel showed up, Jesus. And through his perfect life, death and resurrection, Jesus fulfilled the civil laws. He completed the civil laws and he ended the civil laws of the Old Testament they're done. They're not for us.

But then we have the moral law. The moral law reflects God's holy, righteous, moral character and its eternal. So you and I are to follow all of the moral laws and commands. That means that any law or command from the Old Testament that is repeated in the New Testament, is clarified in the New Testament, or intensified in the New Testament is God's moral law, and we're supposed to obey all of them by the power of the Holy Spirit. A few weeks ago, Pastor Jeff taught that nine of the 10 commandments are repeated in the New Testament. They are eternal they're God's

moral law. The one that's not repeated is the command about the Sabbath.

Jesus clarifies it in the New Testament because it had become legalistic. He said, "Man was not meant to serve the Sabbath. The Sabbath was meant for man as a gift of rest." And then the Old Testament command about thou shall not commit adultery, that's God's moral law. And it's brought over into the New Testament and Jesus intensified it in the Sermon On The Mount. And he said, "You have heard it said, do not commit adultery. Rightly so. But if you look upon a woman with lustful intent, you've committed adultery in your heart." He intensified that law. So you and I are called to obey God's moral law. Any Old Testament laws are commands that are repeated, clarified, or intensified in the New Testament are for us.

Jesus has fulfilled, completed and ended the ceremonial laws; he fulfilled, completed and ended the civil laws. So is anyone taken me to Red Lobster? I'm willing to go. Okay. Okay. Next biblical truth about obedience. Obeying God's commands brings us freedom and joy. This is so important to know, that God's commands bring us freedom and joy. Satan, who is a liar, he's the father of lies, he would have you and I believe that God's commands are stifling in our life. That God is a cosmic killjoy. But listen to what the Psalmist says in Psalm 119:45. He said, "I walk in freedom, for I have devoted myself to your commands." The truth is that our Father's commands bring us safety and joy and freedom and blessing. They're not stifling. God is not a cosmic killjoy. These are for our good, and therefore His glory, and therefore our protection.

I saw a great picture of this several years ago when our kids were just little toddlers. We owned a house that had a backyard that was kind of a peninsula, and there was a road that went all the way around our backyard so our kids could not really go out and play by themselves because it was really dangerous. And so we always wanted to let them play out there, but we didn't want them to get hurt. So one day we saved up enough money to have a chain link fence installed all around the property.

And I'll never forget that first day we opened the sliding glass door and our kids ran out into that backyard. Now what they didn't do was take three steps, turn around and go, "What's up with this chain link fence? I mean, don't you trust us? What's on with that? It's very stifling." They didn't say that. They ran out into that yard and they ran around and they played and they danced and they threw balls, because their father had loved him enough to put up a border to separate the dangerous from the safe. And that is what God's commands do for you and I.

Okay. The next biblical truth about obedience is, in my desire to obey Christ, I was not designed to walk alone. This is critically important, that the parts of the body, you and I were designed to be interdependent with one another, not independent. It's the Spirit's plan that we are sanctified in the midst of Christian community, not as a lone wolf Christian. You know, being a lone wolf Christian is very dangerous to our spiritual walk. In First Peter 5:8, we're warned, "Our enemy, Satan, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour."

Now you and I have all watched the nature channel and we've seen when there's a big herd and the lion comes prowling out of the bush. And he chases them. Who does he go after? The straggler. He goes after the one that's running by themselves. You and I were designed to be sanctified in the midst of Christian community. There's a beautiful picture of this in John 11. Flip back a couple chapters to John 11, and we will see a powerful foreshadow of our salvation and our sanctification.

John chapter 11. Jesus is going to raise a man from the dead, his friend Lazarus, and he's going to do this for at least two reasons. The first reason is this is going to be an authenticating mark that he is the real deal. He is the Messiah sent from God. That he is God, the son, God in the flesh, because one of the signs that it's the true Messiah is that he will have power over death. So that's the first reason that he's going to raise Lazarus. And plus he loved him. But his second reason is it's going to give us this whole episode of foreshadow of our salvation through Christ, and then our daily sanctification through Christ.

Let's start at John 11, verse 38. We're moving right up to the climax of this exciting historic account. Verse 38. "So Jesus, again, being moved deeply within, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he's been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised his eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You've heard me. I knew that You always hear me, but because of the people standing around, I said it that they

may believe that You sent me." When he had said these things. He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus come forth." The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him and let him go."

This is a foreshadow of our salvation that Jesus is the life giver. He's the one who has the power to take us, who are spiritually dead, and give us spiritual life and make us brand new creations. Give us a brand new future, a brand new heart. It's also a foreshadow of our sanctification. Look at verse 44 again. "The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around him with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him and let him go."" Notice Jesus commands those around Lazarus to assist, to take part in helping remove his grave clothes that smelled like death. That is a foreshadow of our sanctification, that it's to happen in Christian Community.

He's raised from the dead. That's a foreshadow of our salvation, that Jesus said, "He's alive, but he smells like death. We need to remove all of those grave clothes of his old life," but he asks those around to take part in it. You and I, our sanctification, is supposed to happen in Christian community. That's because you and I need a couple trusted believers in our life who can bear our burdens with us, who can rejoice when we're rejoiced, they can grieve when we're grieving, they can encourage us. When we have a blind spot of sin in our life, they've earned the right to be heard and they can come up and say, "I know you don't see this, but this is occurring in your life. I know

you love the Lord Jesus. I know you want to be sanctified. This is going on in your life." You and I need Christian community around us for our sanctification, because sometimes we need other Christians to rub us the wrong way.

Does that ever happen? That's good, because that allows us to respond with the fruits of the Spirit. Love, patience, kindness, self control. You and I were never meant to be lone wolf Christians. That's a very dangerous place to be. We will not experience victory in our daily walk with Christ if we're lone wolf Christians, because the enemy is after us all of the time. You and I were meant to grow in Christ, to be sanctified in Christian community. That's God's will. So if you and I ask, if we don't have that community, "Lord, bring a couple trusted brothers or sisters in my life that I can walk with in my journey with Jesus," will Jesus answer that prayer? He'll answer that prayer and he will bring them into your life because that's his plan, that our sanctification will take place in community.

All right, next biblical truth about obedience. God created us to be pleasure seekers. God created us to be pleasure seekers. Satan always lies to us and tries to tell us the only place we're going to find real pleasure is by running into sin. But listen to what Psalm 16:11 says. "You make known to me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy. At your right hand are pleasures forevermore." God created us to be pleasure seekers. Now Satan is not only a liar, he's a counterfeiter. And our Father gives us good gifts to enjoy and to bring pleasure into our lives, like love and the gift of sex, but Satan's a counterfeiter and he counterfeits those and he turns them into lust and adultery. And love and sex done God's way bring more pleasure. Satan's

pleasure is for a season, but then always leads to destruction and all the other gifts that God gives us. God created us to be pleasure seekers. "You make known to me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy. At your right hand are pleasures forever more."

All right, biblical truth number five. Growing in love and obedience to Jesus will cause us to get violent with sin. As we grow in love and in our obedience to Jesus' commands, it will cause us to get violent with sin. A few weeks ago, Pastor Jeff referenced Jesus's words from Matthew five, where Jesus said, "If your right hand is causing you to sin, it's better to cut it off and lose a member of your body than have your whole body cast into hell." Well, we know that that was preachers hyperbole. Jesus is making a point there. He's not telling us to literally cut off our hand. He's not a masochist. What he's saying is, is there something in your life, is there something in your environment that is constantly drawing you to sin? You have to get violent with it and you have to cut it out of your life.

A few years back, I was teaching on this topic in one of our church plants. And after the service, this man approached me and he said, "I need to cut something out of my life. And I want to tell you about it, because I want to confide in you. And I want you to pray with me that I'll have the strength to do it." He said, "I am asking the Lord to renew my heart and renew my mind through His word because I am addicted to pornography, I want to get rid of the internet in my house because that is a dangerous place for me to be." I thought, that's pretty violent. He wants to get rid of the entire internet out of his house. You think of all the practicalities of online banking and all

these other type of things.

So we prayed together and he said he was going to go home the next day and completely cut it off because he needed to get violent with sin, because he wanted to honor his wife and he wanted to honor the Lord Jesus. Well, about three weeks later, I went to a meeting at a coffee shop and I saw his wife there and she had her laptop open and she was responding to emails. And I said hi. And she said, "Well, I'm here because I wanted you use the internet. So I come to the coffee shop to use the internet, because we don't have it anymore."

And you know, when she told me that, she wasn't frustrated, she wasn't ornery. She had a big smile on her face, because she knew that her husband was taking that command seriously and that he really wanted to love her. And that he really wanted to honor her. Growing in love and obedience to Jesus will cause us to get violent with sin. Well, church, along those same lines, I want to close this teaching by reading you the shortest book in the world. It's only four chapters. Chapter one. A man walks down the road and falls into a hole. Chapter two. The same man walks down the same road. This time he plans to only walk up to the edge of the hole and look in,. He falls into the hole. Chapter three. The same man walks down the same road. This time he plans to walk by the hole without even looking in. He falls into the hole. And chapter four. The same man chooses to walk down a different road.

Let's pray. Father, we thank You for answering our prayer earlier that You would do a supernatural work through your word and by the perfect teacher, Your Holy Spirit.

And Lord, I pray that this word that You've placed in our heart and in our mind and our imaginations would be turning over all week that we could not get away from it. Lord, the reality that there is a worship service going on all day, every day in our life is staggering and fascinating and amazing. That every time we're tempted, somebody is about to be worth shipped. Lord, we thank You for showing us that, we thank You that when we are tempted, You always provide a way out by the power of Your Holy Spirit. Lord, we thank You for Your honesty, Lord, because You know what real life is. You know where we live. Sometimes we have to get violent with sin in our life and we have to do away with thing and we have to cut things out of our life.

I pray if that's true for any of us, You are speaking very specifically about what that is. Lord, for some of us, we need to go down a different road. We thought by willpower and good intentions and our own strength, we would be able to defeat certain sins and temptations that have become habitual in our life. But You are so merciful to bring us this morning because You love us, and you're telling us, go down a different road. Lord, we want to show You that we are increasingly loving You more and more by increasingly obeying Your commands. Thank You for this morning. We pray that You are honored and glorified and pleased by our worship through song. And thank You for showing us that every day, all day, we have the opportunity to worship You with the members of our body, our thought life and our imaginations. In Jesus' name. Amen.