

“Jesus Shaped Life - The Obedience of Jesus”

Scripture: Luke 6:46-49; Luke 22:39-46; Hebrews 4:15, Matthew 5:20; 1 John 2:1-2

Graphics: cross, boxes, GPS, garden, IDP #4 (Life of Obeying)

Big Truth: Followers of Jesus at the Panama UMC are called to take on a Jesus-Shaped life. During Lent, we spend time understanding what that means. A Jesus-shaped life is a holy life. A Jesus-shaped life is an obedient life. A Jesus-shaped life is a life of healthy relationships. A Jesus-shaped life is a life of courage. A Jesus-shaped life is a life of justice. A Jesus-shaped life is a life of mission. Many things shape our lives, but the life of Jesus must be the primary life shaper.

Focus Phrase: A Jesus-shaped life is marked by immediate, complete, and costly obedience to Him.

1. Introduction

A. PRAY!

B. We're taking on a **Jesus-Shaped Life** during this season of Lent.

C. Last week, we started with the holiness of Jesus - that He was set apart for God's purpose to save God's people from their sin.

D. And we learned that YOU and I are ALSO set apart for God's purposes - to be holy - through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. You've been praying this week for the Holy Spirit to FILL YOU and DIRECT YOU. You were MADE to be holy.

E. (cross) Holiness is the foundational aspect of the life of Jesus and of OUR Jesus-shaped life.

F. Today, we'll take a look at the second aspect of Jesus' life, and OUR Jesus-shaped life: **obedience**.

G. In 2020, right before the COVID-19 pandemic changed everything about life, church, school, work, etc., we, as a church, launched our Intentional Discipleship Plan called SHIFT. Remember that?

H. We defined a disciple as *a follower of Jesus Christ for life*. And we had six parts of our plan to grow as disciples. Last week, I challenged you to think about how confident you are (on a scale of 1 to 10) that you'll be more like Jesus in 6 months. Our Intentional Discipleship Plan is what will guide you to being a 10 in growth.

I. In our SHIFT Plan, we talked a lot about growing in a life of worship, a life of community, a life of openness, a life of obeying, a life of sharing, and a life of service. Today, we'll circle back to the pathway for us to SHIFT in a life of obeying...to take on a Jesus-Shaped LIFE of obedience.

J. Obeying God is not about knowing what to do and doing it in a legalistic sense. Having a Jesus-Shaped Life of obedience is about knowing what God desires for you and those around you, and then working together to obey God's commands out of a heart that wants to honor God and grow the kingdom.

- K. So, today, we'll look at Jesus' life of obedience first. Then, we'll take a look at what Jesus commands us about obeying. Finally, we'll seek some practical application for a Jesus-Shaped life of obedience...even when it's costly.
- L. Let's open our bibles to Luke 22, starting in verse 39. Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane right before He went to the cross and to his death. The Father was asking Jesus to be obedient to the plan, even though it would be costly and painful for him. Let's read this...

2. Scripture

A. READ Luke 22:39-46

- i. The life of Jesus was significantly marked by complete obedience. Not only in this passage, but when Jesus was 12, and his parents lost him in the crowds, they found him at the Temple, listening to the rabbis. He declared, "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2:49b).
 - ii. Jesus was obedient to the Father throughout his earthly life.
 - iii. Nowhere is that expressed better than in Paul's hymn in Philippians 2:5-8: "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross."
 - iv. Jesus' life WAS a life of obeying...to the Father...to the plan for his holy purpose to save people from sin.
- B. Yet, in our lives, SIN is the thing that keeps US from being fully obedient to Jesus and his commands in the Bible. Or said another way, NOT obeying God's commands for us is sinful.
- i. There's an iconic scene in an episode of the TV show The Office in which Michael Scott drives a rental car into a lake because he's following his GPS and thinks he's taking a short cut.
 - ii. Let's take a look... (VIDEO CLIP)
 - iii. We are all tempted to say, "I know a shortcut." We also may be listening to the wrong voice telling us where and how we should go.
 - iv. God wants to give us direction.
 - a. Author Steve Cordle says, "Rather than obeying God's best plan about relationships, we may think we know a shortcut to happiness that doesn't involve sacrifice or forgiveness. Instead of adhering to God's standards of integrity, we think we may know a shortcut to financial prosperity. There is a name for those shortcuts: sin. And Jesus told us it doesn't end well."

- b. In Jesus' greatest sermon of all time - the Sermon on the Mount - he commanded the disciples to obey things like, "Love your enemies." "Turn the other cheek." "Do not judge others." I don't know about you, but that small list convicts me... I HEAR the words, but do I obey them?
- c. Just like every sermon, there's always a temptation to admire the words but not follow them... like having a GPS but not follow the directions. Let's read Luke 6:46-49... this is the parable of the Two Foundations.
- d. "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."
- e. One homeowner took out the loan, planned for an amazing house, hired the excavator, dug down deep, and put the foundation on the solid rock. When the storm came, the house didn't budge!
- f. The other homeowner scraped together to build his house. But instead of laying the foundation on bedrock, he saved money by skipping the excavator and building on the sand. When the storm came, his house was destroyed.
- g. Jesus went on to say that the person who built on the solid rock was like someone who hears his words and puts them into practice - who obeys. When life gets hard, he will be able to endure. This is about obedience to the words of Jesus... the commands of God.
- v. It's been said that the average American Christian is about 3,000 bible verses overweight. That is, we KNOW more about what God says than we DO what he says. That's pretty harsh, but we have to ask why that might be?
 - a. Maybe we think Jesus makes those strong statements about how to live as disciples to get our attention, but he doesn't really expect us to do it.
 - b. Søren Kierkegaard said this, "Most people really believe that the Christian commandments (for example, to love one's neighbor as oneself) are intentionally a little too severe - like putting the clock ahead half an hour to make sure of not being late in the morning."
 - c. But Jesus was clear when he said at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, "Don't just LISTEN to the sermon, DO what it says." In fact, Jesus was obedient to his OWN words: he didn't worry about money or posses-

sions, he was persecuted, but he loved his enemies anyway, he was obedient to the Father.

- d. And, the Bible tells us that Jesus was tempted but did not sin. In Hebrew 4:15, it tells us, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.”
- e. Because Jesus did not sin in his life, he was able to become the perfect sacrifice for us through the (point to the cross) cross.

3. Application

- A. Steve Cordle wrote this, “A Jesus-shaped life is marked by obedience to God’s will and ways. Obedience is the foundation of a life that prevails during the storm. It keeps us from regret and invites the power of God. However, it does not come from mere rule-following.”
- B. The Jesus-Shaped life of obedience is not about rule following in and of itself.
 - i. In the Jewish religious culture, the Pharisees were in charge of making sure the 613 laws were kept TO THE TEE. They ordered their lives around keeping EVERY law. And yet, Jesus was not impressed.
 - ii. In Matthew 5:20, Jesus said, “For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”
 - iii. “How can I be more righteous than the Pharisees!?!?! I can’t keep more laws than they do?”
 - iv. But, see, Jesus wasn’t trying to get the disciples to keep more laws than the Pharisees. He was inviting them to pursue a holiness of heart rather than mere external compliance with 613 laws.
 - v. Legalism has been and is a challenge in the church, and in our lives. The lure of legalism is that, “If you just tell me what to do, I’ll do it and that’ll make me a Christian.” Legalism only deals with the external.
 - vi. One example might be that in an attempt to weed your garden, to just clip off the tops of all the weeds so the garden LOOKS good. Yet, we know the weeds are still rooted and will grow back stronger and in greater numbers!
 - vii. You can attempt to modify your behavior, but only the Holy Spirit can change you from the inside out...so that you desire what God desires.
 - viii. Jesus said YES to God plans because His heart was aligned with God’s heart. That’s what the Holy Spirit is inviting YOU to as well today. That’s what obedience is all about!
- C. Let’s see if we can get some practical application. And, I’ll warn you that this application may be practical, but it’s anything but easy. If legalism is focused

on external changes only, then obedience that's focused on **internal** transformation.

- D. No matter what God is asking you to change inside you, obedience is what leads you there. If you keep asking God to seek your heart and know what needs to be changed to be holy, then the next step is to obey what the Spirit tells you.
- E. And when you've prayed, heard the leading of the Holy Spirit, and you are **pretty sure what God is asking**, here are the next steps:
- F. First, **be obedient immediately**.
 - i. Steve Cordle writes, "When God commands us to act, the time to do so is now. Don't procrastinate or wait for conditions to be perfect before acting on what God said. Delayed obedience is disobedience. Author Clare De Graaf teaches believers to follow the "10-second rule." That is, as soon as you are reasonably sure of something God wants you to do, commit within ten seconds to do it. That is a good description of the habit of saying yes to God."
 - ii. The key to this immediate obedience is an awareness of the Holy Spirit's presence and voice. That's why last week we prayed for the Holy Spirit to fill us and direct us. Obey immediately.
- G. Second, **be obedient completely**.
 - i. We often ask our kids, or coworkers, to do some task. And when we do, we have an expectation that the task will get done. And not just partway, but fully. Clean your room. Take this to the printers. Things like that.
 - ii. Jesus told the disciples, when he was ascending, to preach and teach people to OBEY EVERYTHING I have commended you. (Matthew 28:20) Not, some things. Not what's convenient or non-threatening. EVERYTHING! JUST AS HE TAUGHT IT.
 - iii. When you're prompted to obey, not only is God asking for you to obey immediately, but completely...fully...and finally.
 - iv. This might take getting accountability partners to help you resist the temptations of sin. It might take a willingness to stop hanging out with people or in places that are pulling you away from the obedience to God's commands. But this is where the Jesus-shaped life leads you.
 - v. So, obey immediately and obey completely.
- H. Finally, **be obedient even when it'll cost you**.
 - i. There are and will be times in your life when the obedience will cost you dearly.

- ii. It may be that you lose friends. Or lose status in your company...and maybe even lose your job.
 - iii. There are all kinds of debates right now about masks and vaccines and mandates. And even though those may or may not be theological debates, we as followers of Jesus are called to listen to the Holy Spirit, take a step in faith, AND PAY THE PRICE, if there is one. And I'm not advocating one camp or another. There may be a price no matter what you decide to do. That's why we listen to the Holy Spirit and move in obedience.
 - iv. Sometimes, you're trapped in a situation that has more than one option. And you're pretty sure that whatever decision you make, someone will be disappointed. Do you know who you DON'T want to disappoint? The God of the Universe!
 - v. And when you follow the plan He's leading you to, obey, even if it costs you more than you had ever hoped it wouldn't.
- I. If we peek into our Intentional Discipleship Plan, we see that growing in a life of obeying means we're moving from Exploring to Following to Becoming to Centered in our willingness to obey. When you grow (when you SHIFT) along that road, it's about moving from KNOWING to APPLYING. When you first start, you're learning what God commands. When you get to being Centered, not only do you know and apply what God's commands, but you're helping others learn, apply, and teach - to obey - EVERYTHING Jesus said.
 - J. The Jesus-Shaped Life of obedience prevails during the storm because you are applying the life-giving, Holy Spirit inspired words of Jesus to your life TODAY and everyday...immediately and completely, even when it costs you.

4. Conclusion

- A. One of my favorite aspects to my GPS is that when I take a wrong turn, miss an exit, or just misunderstand what it's telling me, it will recalculate. It will find a new path, sometime by making a U-turn, or by plotting a new course.
- B. When the Holy Spirit leads us - commands us to move or change - we won't always get it right the first time. Yet, because of God's grace, He gives us another opportunity to obey...and another...and another. God will recalculate our pathway until we're moving in obedience. That leads to joy in serving God fully with our lives.
- C. (CROSS) Our second box is the box of obedience. A Jesus-shaped life is marked by immediate, full, and costly obedience to Jesus. It's what we're called and invited to do in response to Jesus' sacrifice for your everlasting life. There's no easy way. Yet, in a world that has a million pathways, Jesus invites us to the narrow one...God's path. It's the only path to a Jesus-shaped life.
- D. Let's pray...