

The Faith of Jesus for Obedience

By John Thiel, [mp3](#)

Scripture reading: Romans 16:25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, 26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

We want to delve once more into the application of the distinctive description of God's people in the words of Revelation: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, *and the faith of Jesus.*" Why should we spend time enlarging this faith of Jesus?

The third angel's message is the proclamation of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ. The commandments of God have been proclaimed, but the faith of Jesus Christ has not been proclaimed by Seventh-day Adventists as of equal importance, the law and the gospel going hand in hand. I cannot find language to express this subject in its fullness. {3SM 172.2}

"The faith of Jesus." It is talked of, but not understood. {3SM 172.3}

Sister White said she couldn't find the words *to express this subject in its fullness*. It is something that was so profound in her mind that she could not put it into words. *The faith of Jesus*; oh yes, it is talked about, *but not understood*. May God help us, then, to understand the faith of Jesus as we continue on in this important subject. We know that we should preach and teach the commandments; but the faith of Jesus is *of equal importance*.

The Faith of Jesus

The terminology "the faith of Jesus" is cited in the Bible on several occasions, and they are all the words of Apostle Paul, interestingly enough. He says:

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Here it is: "the faith *of* the Son of God." He didn't say, The faith *in* the Son of God. This terminology of the faith *of* Jesus is further expressed here:

Romans 3:22 Even the righteousness of God [which is] by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

“The faith *of* Jesus Christ unto all them that believe.” Can you see a difference of faith to faith there? If you believe, you have faith; but the faith *of* Jesus is unto all them that believe *in* Jesus. There is a difference, then, between *believing in* Jesus and the faith *of* Jesus. He again uses that terminology here:

Galatians 3:22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

The promise by faith *of* Jesus is given to them that believe. There again the terminology leaves you without any hazy representation. To those that believe, the faith *of* Jesus is given. It would double up itself if it said, “If you believe in Jesus then the faith of the belief in Jesus is given.” You already believe in Him, it doesn’t make sense. The apostle uses the language very meaningfully here. The promise by faith *of* Jesus is given to them that believe.

Then if we try to get it visibly and clearly in our minds, there is another form of expression and terminology, which has exactly the same meaning. It says we are to look unto Jesus,

Hebrews 12:2 ...the author and finisher of [our] faith;

The word *our* is not actually there in the original manuscript. He is *the Author and Finisher of faith*. We are to have the faith *of* Jesus, over and above our own faith;

Hebrews 12:2 ...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

So the faith *of* Jesus is something that He has generated, something that He is the author of; and we are to be given the faith *of* Jesus. It is again very simply expressed in a different terminology, where the apostle Paul, writing to Timothy, says:

2 Timothy 3:15 ...from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

The faith that is *in* Christ Jesus is the faith *of* Jesus. We are made wise unto salvation through the faith *which is in Christ Jesus*.

So to be the people of God under the third angel’s message, it is essential to know that our faith is not something that I have generated myself. It must be

faith that Jesus is the author of, not one that I have brought into existence myself. In fact, just as Jesus is the gift to us, that faith is also a gift.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God:

How are we saved? By faith. But it is not a faith *of yourselves*; it is the faith of Jesus. It's a gift. So we are clearly addressed by God's word that we are to exercise the faith of our salvation, which is that which Jesus is the author of, that which He has developed in His own life. This is what we are challenged with—to open our hearts to something that is a gift to me. You can either receive it or say, No, no; I've got my own, thank you. This is quite a challenge in itself when you stop to assess carefully what it means to receive the gift. You might ask yourself the question: How easily do you accept a gift? I find it very difficult to accept a very costly gift; because I'm not worthy of such a gift. This is the point: we are not worthy of the gift that is given us; it is the faith *of Christ*. It is a very costly gift. And we need to open our hearts.

A Very Costly Gift

How can we get hold of this gift? We are told quite plainly that it is by beholding. We beheld the amazing story of Jesus, the atonement; we have experienced the extraordinary detail of the preciousness of Jesus. And as we behold that, as we behold Jesus in the atonement for me, it rubs off on us; it actually comes upon us as a gift to open our hearts to. When we studied it in the previous message on the faith of Jesus, we saw it as a faith that was in action under condemnation. Jesus was under condemnation with our sins; and as He was hanging there upon the cross, He was crying out, *My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* In Gethsemane, He was praying that this terrible thing would pass away from Him; it was too heavy for Him. As He hanging on the cross, under the condemnation, He exercised faith. This is what we saw.

Suddenly the gloom lifted from the cross, and in clear, trumpetlike tones, that seemed to resound throughout creation, Jesus cried, "It is finished." "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." A light encircled the cross, and the face of the Saviour shone with a glory like the sun. He then bowed His head upon His breast, and died. {DA 756.2}

What was happening? Why did His face shine?

Amid the awful darkness, apparently forsaken of God, Christ had drained the last dregs in the cup of human woe. In those dreadful hours He had relied upon the evidence of His Father's acceptance heretofore given Him. He was

acquainted with the character of His Father; He understood His justice, His mercy, and His great love. By faith He rested in Him whom it had ever been His joy to obey. And as in submission He committed Himself to God, the sense of the loss of His Father's favor was withdrawn. By faith, Christ was victor. {DA 756.3}

So when we go through this terrible darkness of feeling separate from God, O to embed this in our experience so we don't forget it. It is easy to forget when the darkness gathers around you. When the darkness was gathering about Jesus, the darkness of our separation from God, by His faith He broke through that darkness. This is the faith of Jesus which we studied last time.

Another Dimension of the Faith of Jesus

But now we want to study another dimension of practice of the faith of Jesus. The gospel was being preached by the apostles,

Romans 16:25 ...the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, 26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

The gospel of Jesus Christ is a mystery that we need to understand so that it can produce the obedience of faith in us. *The obedience of faith*; what faith? What is the mystery the apostle Paul is talking about here? What is this mystery that was hidden from ages, but is now made manifest? This language is so important to dwell upon in our minds so that the word of God will be productive of its design:

Colossians 1:27 To whom God would make known what [is] the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

This is the mystery: *Christ in you, the hope of glory*;

Colossians 1:28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: 29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

And for what purpose is this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory? That by the preaching and teaching of it *we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus*; that we may have *Christ in us*, so that the faith that Jesus exercised be-

comes Christ in you exercising that faith. One thing is to exercise the faith of Jesus when we are under condemnation, breaking through the darkness, believing that Jesus is with me even though I am condemned. But now, the other dimension of the faith of Jesus is to be presented *perfect in Christ Jesus; whereunto I also labour*, said Paul, *striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily*. The faith of Jesus, the mystery of Christ in me, the hope of glory—this is a profound detail that needs to be embraced. If I don't embrace it, I will not become perfect. It is the faith *of* Jesus that leads to obedience. This is the only way we can present people perfect in Christ Jesus, free of sin; because the story of Jesus, in His faith, is a remedy for sin. I actually need to have Jesus inside of me as the remedy for my sin.

The Remedy for Sin

Without the grace of Christ, the sinner is in a hopeless condition; {AG 265.2}

Remember, we are saved by grace through faith; but *that not of yourselves*, the faith of Christ.

Without the grace of Christ, the sinner is in a hopeless condition; nothing can be done for him; but through divine grace, supernatural power is imparted. . . . It is through the impartation of the grace of Christ that sin is discerned in its hateful nature, and finally driven from the soul temple. {Ibid.}

Even to discern sin *in its hateful nature* is the activity of the grace of God. So next time you are convicted of the hateful nature of your sinfulness, don't become discouraged; don't drown in a sense of guilt. It is the grace of Christ that is imparted for me to discern the hateful nature of my sin, and finally *drive it from the soul temple*.

It is through grace that we are brought into fellowship with Christ, to be associated with Him in the work of salvation. {Ibid.}

This isn't saying: To be associated with Him in the work of saving others. No; this is being associated with Him in the saving of my own soul.

Faith is the condition upon which God has seen fit to promise pardon to sinners; not that there is any virtue in faith whereby salvation is merited, but because faith can lay hold of the merits of Christ, the remedy provided for sin. {Ibid.}

Christ is *the remedy provided for sin*. So the faith of Jesus is part of that remedy that I need to study. And as the Spirit of Prophecy tells us, this faith is little un-

derstood. How true this is. We understand the keeping of the commandments, but we don't understand the faith of Jesus, the remedy of Jesus.

Only Possible by Beholding

To comprehend this obedience of faith, by which we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, we need to behold Jesus; otherwise we cannot comprehend the faith of Jesus that makes of perfect. I need to behold Jesus. How was He made perfect? Was He actually *made perfect*? When I was still in the Reform Movement, I cited this very thing, that Jesus was made perfect, and one minister said to me, "But He was perfect already; He didn't need to be made perfect." I said, "Well, I'm reading it, sorry." Indeed, *not understood*, even by ministers of the Reform. I couldn't believe it.

What is the faith of Jesus that made Him perfect, that will make me perfect, and that is the remedy for my sin? Not just the beautiful release from my condemnation, but the actual *remedy* for sin. A remedy is something you take so that you can be healed from the catastrophe of your sinfulness.

I Seek Not Mine Own Will

Let us behold what He says. Here is a simple expression of Jesus that throws profound light upon the reality of the faith of Jesus that will make me perfect:

John 5:19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

What is Jesus talking about? He is really trying to make a point here: *Verily, verily*. He is saying: I can't do anything. I can't be perfect, I can't be sinless. Can you? Can we? I can do nothing of Myself, He says, but what I see the Father do. *For what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise*. He is saying: My faith is in the Father to such a degree that I am not relying for anything on Myself. This is what it is about.

John 5:30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

In other words, He is saying: I want to obey what God says, not what I want. *I seek not Mine own will*; I want to obey the Father. Therefore I know My judgment is just, because I don't rely upon My own will, but on the will of the Father. Just let that sink in and really permeate.

Obeying Contrary to My Feelings

Let, now, the Spirit of Prophecy, the Testimony of Jesus, throw a powerful light on this. This is the faith of Jesus that makes us perfect and that is the remedy for sin.

Jesus, the world's Redeemer, did as He was told even if the task was not agreeable to His feelings. {OHC 264.3}

This is looking at Jesus. Tell me, children, when you are just enjoying yourselves and Mom and Dad say, I want you to come and help me here; what do you do? “Oh, do I have to?” Do you say that sometimes? This is what obedience is: the obedience of Jesus was that He was called upon to do things that may not have been in agreement with *His feelings*. “I don’t feel like doing what I’m told right now.” But He obeyed even though it was *not agreeable to His feelings*.

Obeying with Alacrity

Obedience is an element of true greatness. No one can be truly good and great who has not learned to obey with alacrity. {Ibid.}

What does obeying with *alacrity* means? Obeying with speed, with firm decision. I won’t dillydally and parley; I obey quickly, even though it isn’t in harmony with my feelings. It doesn’t matter. This is the obedience of Jesus that is the remedy for my sin. But I am looking at Jesus; He was my Redeemer, and He obeyed the Father. He said, I can’t do it of Myself; I just simply do what He says. *I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me*. This is an attitude; the faith of Jesus.

Consider this faith. Consider how far He went in obeying what His Father said, even though it was not agreeable to His feelings. We read of Jesus that He

Philippians 2:7 ...made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Death isn’t a pleasant thing. Jesus described it as He was hanging on the cross. It was a terrible feeling. It is a terrible feeling that you want to be free of. “Why doesn’t God stop this?” I know the experience now more than ever before. It gets me by the throat when I think of what I was suffering together with my wife. Afterwards I thought, Well, I’m going to die too. It was a terrible feeling.

And you don't want it! You don't want it. Jesus was obedient even to death. Obedience is something you do even though you don't want it. That's obedience. It is not agreeable to the feelings. We are looking at His amazing faith. He obeyed as a human being even unto death. And this made Him the *Author of our faith* and our salvation.

Let us not lose the vein here. This is an obedience that Jesus exercised and that we are to learn of in His faith; a faith that is little understood, as Sister White expressed. Jesus was a human being in the flesh that we have:

Hebrews 5:7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; 8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

Can you see the linkage here to the words of Romans 16? This is the mystery (*Christ in you, the hope of glory*) that actually produces a faith of obedience and an obedience that is generated of faith. Here lies the importance of this subject. As we are looking at Jesus, we see that He was *made perfect* as He exercised this faith unto obedience. He *learned obedience* by the things which He suffered. And He became the Author of that salvation, the Author of that faith—the faith of Jesus. Now you can see why it says this at the end of that well-known scripture:

Revelation 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

They *keep* the faith of Jesus in action. And it is a struggle, a patience that Jesus demonstrated.

Learning Obedience

So we are to learn obedience, and conquer, and discover the remedy for sin, so that we don't sin anymore, so that we will obey, even though it goes contrary to my feelings. This is what we need to learn together with Jesus. As we read, in the days of His flesh He learned obedience *by the things which He suffered*.

1 Peter 4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; 2 That he no longer should live the rest of [his] time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

The flesh makes you suffer when you have to obey, because the flesh doesn't want what God's will is. So here was Jesus, suffering in the flesh, learning obedience; and that was the faith of Jesus that He was the author of, a faith unto obedience, this mystery.

We are called upon, then, to obey with alacrity, with immediate response; to do what He says even though it doesn't feel right, and it doesn't feel good to my feelings. Next time, children, as you go through an experience where Mom and Dad say, I want you to do this, and there is this feeling inside of you that says, No, I don't want that; what do you do with the feeling? With alacrity you ignore it and go and do what Mom and Dad say. This is what Jesus did. He is our example. This is just a simple example for a child; but for adults it is exactly the same thing.

Dangers of Following Inclination

We don't often really understand what is involved here. The passions have their way of reasoning within us. Is it not our great need to learn this lesson of the faith of Jesus? Because something happens inside of us that is so deceptive that we think we are doing God's will, when really we are not all. Notice every little word that Sister White is here putting across to us under inspiration, and realise what happens inside of you and me, in the flesh:

Those who desire to follow a course which pleases their fancy are in danger of being left to follow their own inclinations, supposing them to be the leadings of God's Spirit. {3T 73.2}

That's how dangerous this is. I have an *inclination*, and it is a fancy, but my passions and my flesh reason within my mind and say, But this is feeling so good; it must be the Lord. This is how serious this is—that we might be *supposing* those inclinations *to be the leadings of God's Spirit*.

The duty of some is indicated sufficiently clear by circumstances and facts; {Ibid.}

Here is a circumstance and fact that tells me, This is what God expects of me.

...but, through the solicitations of friends, in harmony with their own inclinations, they swerve from the path of duty and pass over the clear evidences in the case; {Ibid.}

So the *inclinations* and even *friends* say, Come on, be kind to yourself, do this. For example, in that situation with my wife, she was determined not to take any drugs. But she was told, "Oh, come on, we are trying to help you." *Friends*.

Aren't they lovely? They are trying to help me to not have to suffer the pain. But look at the deadly drug that has been put in their medications. This is just one little occasion to illustrate *the solicitations of friends* and our *own inclinations*. Duty tells me differently, but *they swerve from the path of duty and pass over the clear evidences in the case*.

...then, with apparent conscientiousness, they pray long and earnestly for light. They have earnest feeling in the matter, and they interpret this to be the Spirit of God. But they are deceived. This course grieves the Spirit of God. They had light and in the very reason of things should have understood their duty; but a few pleasing inducements balance their minds in the wrong direction, and they urge these before the Lord and press their case, and the Lord allows them to have their own way. They have so strong an inclination to follow their own course that He permits them to do so and to suffer the results. These imagine that they have a wonderful experience. {Ibid.}

Wow. That really scares me. This is something to cause you to work out your salvation *with fear and trembling*. This is the danger: to let the inclination give me a sense that this is God speaking to me, when in reality, the duty has been clearly laid out. You may feel, No, that's uncomfortable, it doesn't feel good; but that is God's voice. *The voice of duty is the voice of God*. So as I am going through this thing, I need to understand the faith of Jesus as He expressed it: I do not do My own will, but I do the will of My Father, even though it is contrary to My feelings.

True Meaning of Obedience

What, then, does obedience mean, according to all that we have been reading in looking at Jesus? It means submitting to someone who is higher than me and contrary to my will. This is obedience. Can you feel what I feel inside of me when I meditate upon this? The flesh is made very uncomfortable. The inclination is crying out, Do I have to go through this suffering? Do I have to do as I'm told? Just apply it. There is the dress reform, the health reform. Do this; don't do that; all those duties that are given by the Spirit of Prophecy, down to the very minutiae of life. How many people I have ministered to, even among those who once sat in these pews, said to me, "Will you leave that subject alone?" It doesn't suit my feeling; it doesn't suit my inclinations. So they finally walked away. Yes, obedience is doing what God says, even though it is not in harmony with my feelings.

A Constant Conflict

Remember, Apostle Paul said, Follow me, even as I follow Christ. Christ did as He was told, even though it didn't harmonise with His feelings.

Paul's sanctification was a constant conflict with self. Said he: "I die daily." {4T 299.2}

What did he mean by that?

His will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God. Instead of following inclination, he did the will of God, however unpleasant and crucifying to his nature. {*Ibid.*}

Are we getting the picture? The faith of Jesus functioning inside of me—*Christ in you, the hope of glory*—the struggle between the flesh and Christ in me. Obey, or follow inclination. This is the faith of Jesus unto obedience of faith.

Now I am left with this little dark cloud over my mind that says, But do I have to go on like this for the rest of my life? As it says, *Paul's sanctification was a constant conflict with self*. "I don't like this; do I have to have this constant conflict all the way?" Paul said, *I die daily*. "His will and his desires *every day* conflicted with duty and the will of God. Instead of following inclination, he did the will of God, *however unpleasant and crucifying to his nature*." *I die daily*. Is this the Christian life? So many people have said, Well, I don't want it. Of course, I understand well.

Obedience Made Sweet

Does this mean a miserable life for the rest of my existence? Jesus erased that thought when He suggested something beautiful in His following words. Here is a very important adjustment of understanding:

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

In other words, If you love Me, obey Me. If you love Me, do what you don't feel like doing, because you love Me.

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

Tell me, isn't it something very beautiful and precious to have someone living with you whom you love and who loves you? Is that a misery? And consider who is speaking here. The Majesty of universe coming and abiding with us; is that an indictment to my happiness? You see, to obey, even though it is contrary to my feelings, is made sweet when I love the one whom I am obeying.

As I contemplate the atonement for my soul, what Jesus has done for me, it fills my heart with such love that I break out in tears many times. I just become overwhelmed; I think, Oh, this is so precious; Lord, I love you! I said that many times. If you would be watching me in the distance, standing on the top of the hill where I am walking, amongst the beautiful bush, you'd say, There's a person who's gone crazy; because I am lifting my hands in gratitude to the Lord. As I appreciate my sinfulness and my ugly characteristics, my own will that sends me into darkness, and I see His love for me, my heart goes out in love to Him, and I want to do what He wants me to do. But if I lose sight of Him, I am tempted to go the other way again.

As it is written, marriage is a symbol of the relationship of the Godhead. When I love my wife, she wants me to do certain things which are not necessarily my thing. Do I love her enough to do it? And if I really love someone, I will run into any complications for the satisfaction of that person's requests. And it is a joy! because love is in action.

So if I have the Lord ever fresh in my heart, my inclinations become turned; the inclinations of the flesh are turned into something else, because I am motivated now by the story of God's love.

His [the truly righteous man's] nature is so thoroughly imbued with love for God and his fellow men that he works the works of Christ with a willing heart. {ML 251.4}

All who come within the sphere of his influence perceive the beauty and fragrance of his Christian life, while he himself is unconscious of it, for it is in harmony with his habits and inclinations. {ML 251.5}

"It's natural; I'm glad to do this. It's in harmony with my habits and inclinations." Not the flesh, but the love, the Spirit.

He prays for divine light, and loves to walk in that light. It is his meat and drink to do the will of his heavenly Father. His life is hid with Christ in God; yet he does not boast of this, nor seem conscious of it. God smiles upon the humble and lowly ones who follow closely in the footsteps of the Master. Angels are attracted to them and love to linger about their path. They may be passed by as unworthy of notice by those who claim exalted attainments and who delight in making prominent their good works: but heavenly angels bend lovingly over them and are as a wall of fire round about them.... To man is granted the privilege of becoming an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ. {Ibid.}

This is what happens when you fall in love with God. This is the faith of Jesus with whom I have fallen in love.

We are first to take heed to ourselves, receiving with humble hearts the principles of truth and working them out in perfect obedience. This will bring joy and peace. Thus we eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God, and we grow strong in His strength. Our lives are assimilated to His life. Our spirit, our inclinations, our habits, are conformed to the will of Him of whom God declared: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matthew 3:17. {7T 270.1}

To have the faith of Jesus is to have the remedy for sin, the remedy for disobedience; it is to become so impacted by the story of Jesus who did what He was told, even though it was not agreeable to His feelings. What a love. And as I go through my challenges in putting away the things that God is not comfortable with in my life, and I am growing and discovering more and more details that I have inherited from my wrong life of the past; as I discover that God's will is different to my own inclination, I obey with alacrity; and I will go deeper and deeper into the joy of my love with Jesus; and we will be presented perfect, as the apostle said. To love as He loved, to have love as the motive to obey, this is our call.

May God help us to really search this out thoroughly in our being and discover the path of self-denial, of resisting our inclinations, because duty, the voice of God, tells us different to our inclination. I pray that the faith of Jesus will become firmly encapsulated inside of us.

Amen.