

RED LETTERS CLASS OBEDIENCE

[Start with prayer] Our theme for 2009 is Jesus is Lord! Since Jesus is our Lord, in this class we are looking at the words of Jesus – things he said and taught. Today we will look at Jesus teaching on obedience. In a sense, today's class is about our theme for the year. What does it mean to make Jesus Lord? What did Jesus himself have to say about that? What did Jesus himself teach about making him Lord? Turn to John 13.

Did Jesus ever call himself Lord? A lot of people today are confused about whether Jesus is Lord. They think maybe Jesus taught some really nice things about love and forgiveness, being gentle and kind to others, but that he didn't really emphasize obedience. He didn't really claim to be Lord. Let's read John 13:13. Jesus says **"You call me Teacher and Lord. This is well said, for I am."** That's pretty clear. Jesus called himself Lord. He called himself "Lord" several times. He called himself Lord of the Sabbath (Mat 12:8 +). When he sent the disciples to get the donkey, he told them to say "The Lord needs it." (Mat 21:3 +). He is called "Lord" by the disciples many times. We can be very clear that Jesus is Lord. Don't let anyone be confused about that. A teaching to accept. Turn to Luke 6.

So if Jesus is Lord what did Jesus teach about Lordship? What does the word "Lord" mean? Luke 6:46. **"Why do you call me "Lord, Lord" and don't do the things I say?"** Short and simple; easy to understand. For Jesus, Lordship means obeying him. **He is our Lord; we should obey.** He wants to know: **"Why do you call me "Lord, Lord" and don't do the things I say?"** That's a good question for all of us to ask ourselves in 2009. If Jesus is my Lord, am I obeying him? Not am I perfect or do I never make a mistake, but is obedience to Jesus the tenor and direction of my life? Is that my aim, my goal, my focus? I think this would be a good verse for all of us to memorize and use with each other this year. This could easily be our theme verse for 2009. Jesus is Lord! Amen. Are we doing what he says? Are we obeying him? A command to obey.

:47-49. Jesus paints two pictures for us. Two men building a house. One builds on rock and one builds on sand. What's the first thing that happens at a construction site for a building? What do they do? They dig a really big hole. Deep deep down down. Why? Because builders are Christians who read their Bibles! No. But they do understand the principle. They want to build on rock; on a solid foundation. After they dig a big hole, what do they do next? Who knows what a pile driver is? When I was a sophomore in college at Georgetown University, they built a new dorm right next to mine. My bed was right next to the window overlooking the construction site. After they dug a deep hole, they brought in the pile drivers. Many mornings, I woke to the sound of pile drivers. Clang, Clang, Clang, BOOM. [repeat]. It looks sort of like they are drilling for oil. A narrow tower with a big cylinder of metal inside. A machine pulls the cylinder up to the top of the tower and then drops it. Clang, Clang, Clang, BOOM. What does a pile driver do? It drills holes in the bedrock to anchor the foundation of the building. They want to make sure the building will never collapse. They want a firm foundation.

Jesus says if we obey his commands, that's what we are doing. Building our lives on a solid foundation. This is a promise. If we are not obeying his commands, we are

building on sand. Our lives have so solid foundation. This is a warning. Jesus says storms will come. Richard talked about this last week in his sermon about grace being sufficient. We will face challenges, trials, difficulties. Will our foundation stand up? Is it built on the rock? Or is it built on sand? Will your life collapse when tough times come? You can apply this to any area of your life. Take finances. How we handle money. Are you obeying the commands of Jesus? Thomas Hood is starting up another Financial Peace University class. Great opportunity to get this right. The elders recently called the deacons and family group leaders to examine how money affects our family life. Are we obeying Jesus with your money decisions? If so, you can weather the storm. You can handle financial adversity. If not, your financial life will collapse. We've seen it happen with major financial institutions this past year. It can happen to us too.

I want to clarify something. Richard has been preaching about grace. We know we are saved by grace not by works. We can't earn our salvation. But grace should motivate us **to obey Jesus, to make him Lord**. So many people want to be religious, but don't want to make Jesus Lord. Grace is free, we can't earn it; but Jesus sacrifice on the cross requires a response from us. If we don't make Jesus Lord, grace is not having the intended effect. Many people in the religious world get this wrong. Many churches teach all you have to do is believe. Obedience has no part in it. "It doesn't matter how you live as long as long as you believe." Many people who otherwise follow the Bible hold to this doctrine. This is a false doctrine. Let's leave the words of Jesus briefly and turn to Romans 10. We are saved by grace, amen! We can't earn our salvation, amen! But we still have to make Jesus Lord. Rom 10:9. Have you ever had anyone teach or quote this verse and say it means all we have to do is believe in order to be saved? Is that what the verse says? Let's read it again. Confess Jesus is Lord. Can we say that and not mean it? Say it and never do it? The next time someone quotes this verse to you, simply ask them, what did Jesus say about calling him Lord? Mat 7:21 literally says you can call Jesus Lord, be religious and still go to hell. Why do I mention this? Because this false teaching is so pervasive it influences our thinking. We think "my obedience doesn't matter much as long as I am saved. I don't really have to change my life if I have grace. I can just rely on my salvation and not worry about Lordship." That is not what Jesus taught (or Paul). Jesus wants us to feel secure in our salvation; secure in his love, **but he also wants us to obey. He is our Lord**. I am not saying we have to be perfect. I am certainly not perfect. I am saying we must face areas in our lives where we are not obeying. We must face Jesus question, **Why do you call me Lord, Lord and not do what I say?** We must repent. Good things happen when you repent. Amen!

Turn to Luke 11. How many of us want our lives to be blessed? To receive blessings from God? Jesus tells us how. Very simple way to receive blessings from God. Let's read :27-28. "...**those who hear the word of God and obey it are blessed!**" Here is a promise from Jesus. If you hear and obey the word of God, you will be blessed. Your life will be blessed. You will see good things happen. We talked about a solid foundation during tough times – but this means more than just weathering storms. This is the good stuff. Blessings. Joy. The desires of your heart. All poured into our lives from the hand of God. Jesus tells us all we have to do is obey. Hear the word of God and put it into practice. Again, you can apply this to any area of your life. How about parenting?

Do you want to be blessed in your parenting? Are you hearing and obeying the word of God? Putting it into practice? I sent several emails to teen parents recently about lessons we can learn from parents of the teens who have been baptized. These families are setting a great example. Hearing and obeying the word of God and enjoying the tremendous blessing of their teenagers baptized. Let's follow these examples. Jesus warning about building on sand applies to parenting too. If we aren't obeying God's word in our parenting, we will see our efforts fail; we will see our parenting collapse in ruin. I'm not talking about the world. I am talking about us. It can happen; it has happened. I don't want that for anyone. I want to see all of us blessed in our parenting, our finances and every other area of our lives. Let's claim this promise and act on it!

Turn to John 15. Jesus also set us a great example in obedience. He didn't just tell us to obey; he modeled the behavior for us. v10 **"If you keep my commands you will remain in my love just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in His love."** Jesus obeyed God. He obeyed the Father. Jesus did what God wanted him to do. He obeyed even when it was tough. He didn't shrink back from hard things God wanted him to do. From suffering. Hebrews 5:8 says Jesus learned obedience from suffering. That's the real test of obedience, when we face resistance, when it causes us pain. That's why we give up on obedience sometimes. It is hard. It is difficult. It requires perseverance. We need to remember the example of Jesus. Fix our eyes on Jesus, our pioneer (Heb 12), who blazed the trail for us. He didn't give up. He didn't quit. He obeyed even to the point of going to the cross. Of dying for us. That example should motivate us to obey even when it gets tough.

In v. 10 Jesus mentions remaining in his love. Turn back just a few verses to the end of John 14 and we will close out talking about obedience and love. Look at v. 14. **"If you love me, you will keep my commands."** That's pretty straightforward, isn't it? This might be a good verse to memorize as well. Focus our obedience on the motivation behind it. Why should we obey? Because we love him. Look further down in verse 23-24. Jesus says **"If anyone loves me, he will obey my word"** but then Jesus also says, **"The one who doesn't love me will not keep my words."** Obedience is evidence of our love for Jesus. The one who love him will obey. The one who doesn't love him won't obey. Obedience is the real test of our love. Where the rubber meets the road. When it becomes more than talk. Again, I'm not talking about perfection, we all make mistakes. I'm talking about the basic focus and direction of our lives. Are we living obedient lives? I've heard people say things like "Jesus knows in my heart I love him." What they usually mean is you can't judge me by my behavior; you can't see my heart. There is truth to that; obviously we can't see into each other's hearts. Jesus wants us to love him from the inside; we can't just focus on outward obedience like the Pharisees. **But Jesus does want us to obey. He is our Lord.** Our love for him can't be invisible; people should be able to see it. We know when somebody loves us. We can see it by how they act. If love is just talk, we figure it out soon enough. *Players only love you when they playing.* It's the same with Jesus. He wants to see our love in action. Obedience demonstrates our love for him. It shows that our love is real not just words. Love for Jesus affects how you live. **You obey him. He is your Lord.** **"If you love me, you will keep my commands."** [Let's pick up our kids quickly and be back here for worship.]