

Scripture for Obedience

The Covenant

Now Israel, what does the Lord, your God, ask of you? One thing: to fear the Lord your God, to follow all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul, to keep the commandments and laws of the Lord, which I am laying down for you today for your own good.

Look, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth and everything on it; yet it was on your ancestors, for love of them, that the Lord set his heart, to love them, and he chose their descendants after them, you yourselves, out of all nations, up to the present day.

Circumcise your heart then, and be obstinate no longer; for the Lord your God is God of gods, Lord of lords, the great God, triumphant and terrible, free of favouritism, never to be bribed. He sees justice done for widows and orphans, he loves the stranger and feeds and clothes him. The Lord your God you must fear and serve: to him you must hold firm; in his name you must take your oaths. Him you must praise, he is your God: for you he has done these great and terrible things which your eyes have seen.

Deuteronomy 10:12-21

I have loved you just as the Father has loved me.

Remain in my love.

If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love,

Just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love.

I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you,

and your joy may be complete.

This is my commandment: *Love one another as I have loved you.*

No one can have greater love than to lay down his life for his friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command you.

I shall no longer call you servants,

because a servant does not know his master's business.

I call you friends, because I have made known to you

everything I have learned from my Father.

John 15:9-15

Sacrificial Obedience

He threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, this hour might pass him by. "Abba," (Father) he prayed, "for you everything is possible. Take this cup away from me. But let it be as you, not I, would have it."

Mark 14:35-36

During his life on earth, he offered up prayer and entreaty, aloud and with silent tears, to the one who had the power to save him from death: and he submitted so humbly that his prayer was heard. Although he was Son, he learned to obey through suffering; but having been made perfect, he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation, and was acclaimed by God with the title of high priest of the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 5:7-10

The Pivot of Redemption

By one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by one man's obedience many will be made upright.

Romans 5:19

The only thing you should owe to anyone is love for one another, for to love another person is to fulfil the law. All these: *you shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not covet* – and all the other commandments that

there are, are summed up in this single phrase: *You shall love your neighbour as yourself*. Love is the only thing that cannot harm your neighbour; so love is the fulfilment of the Law. *Romans 13:8-10*

Discipleship in an alien world

The Lord has given me a disciple's tongue,
so that I may know how to give a word of comfort to the weary.
Morning by morning he makes my ear alert, to listen like a disciple.
The Lord has opened my ear, and I have not resisted. I have not turned away.
I have offered my back to those who struck me, my cheeks to those who plucked at my beard, I have not turned my face away from insult and spitting.
The Lord comes to my help; this is why insult has not touched me, this is why I have set my face like flint, and know I shall not be put to shame. *Isaiah 50:4-7*

Obedience is practical

“Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on rock. Rain came down, floods rose, gales blew and hurled themselves against that house, and it did not fall: it was founded on rock. But whoever listens to these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a stupid man who built his house on sand. Rain came down, floods rose, gales blew and struck that house, and it fell, and great was its fall.”

Matthew 7:24-27

Other relevant passages can be found in the meditation on Wisdom, which can be found in the first chapters of the books of *Proverbs* or *Wisdom*.

The longest Psalm (176 verses), Ps 119, is an endlessly obedient meditation on the Law of God, seen not as a mechanism of oppression, but as a perfect entry into life. You can read this psalm through, listening to its verses like heartbeats, or the rhythm of waves; or you can repeat a single verse over and over. Jewish readers used to imagine many of the Psalms as being spoken to God by King David. Christian readers imagine them being spoken by Jesus to the Father.

The Gospels tell us of the obedience of Jesus; *John 8*, especially, has Jesus claiming the authority of the Father for everything he says or does. It is this obedience of Jesus that enables us to call him “the Word of God” and “the Light of the World”, and when at his death he says “It is accomplished” it is his vocation from God that he is fulfilling. His death is therefore the ultimate sign of his “coming from the Father”; no-one dies for a cause he has invented for himself.