**FAITH AND OBEDIENCE ARE LINKED!**

One of the most misunderstood concepts in the Bible is “faith.” Many who claim to be Christians insist that “faith” and “obedience” are completely separate concepts. As long as that misunderstanding continues, we will never be in agreement with our denominational friends. Nevertheless, the Scriptures are very clear that “faith” and “obedience” are linked concepts! Would you explore this with me?

Let us begin with the definition of “faith.” Basically, to have faith is ***“to trust in; to depend or rely on.”*** In terms of saving faith, we speak of ***“trusting”*** ***in Christ*** (Jn.3:16). Now if you “trust in, depend on, or rely on” someone, you will do what they ask! If you fail to do what they ask, it means that you do NOT “trust in, depend on, or rely” on them! This can be illustrated with your personal physician. When he tells you what is wrong, and prescribes a treatment, you will accept his diagnosis, and take the treatment! It’s just that simple!

This brings us to Jesus as the great Physician. “And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, ‘How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?’ When Jesus heard it, He said to them, ***‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance’”*** (Mk.2:16-18). If “Doc Jesus” gives us a prescription for our sin-sickness, we would be well-advised to take it! (cf. Jn.12:48)

In commenting on this understanding of “faith,” W.E. Vine says this: *“The main elements in "faith" in its relation to the invisible God, as distinct from "faith" in man, are especially brought out in the use of this noun and the corresponding verb, pisteuo; they are (1) a firm conviction, producing a full acknowledgement of God's revelation or truth, e. g., 2 Thess. 2:11-12; (2) a personal surrender to Him, John 1:12;* ***(3)******a conduct inspired by such surrender, 2 Cor 5:7****. Prominence is given to one or other of these elements according to the context.”* Notice that third element very carefully! Biblical, saving “faith” requires a certain “conduct” from us! This concept of “faith” can be seen in a number of Scriptures. Let’s examine a few of them.

In Romans 10:16, we read this: “But they have not all ***obeyed*** the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘LORD, who has ***believed*** our report?’” If you will take note, the word “obeyed” is equated with the word “believed” in that passage! This just confirms in a direct way what I have said, namely, that “faith” and “obedience” are linked! Now let’s consider another example.

In Hebrews 3:16-19, we read this: “For who, having heard, ***rebelled?*** Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who ***sinned,*** whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to ***those who did not obey?*** So, we see that they could not enter in because of ***unbelief.”*** This passage confirms what we have already observed, but from the negative perspective. Those who “rebelled,” “sinned,” and “did not obey” did so “because of unbelief.” Now, let’s consider one more example.

In John 3:36, we read this: "He who ***believes*** in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not ***obey*** the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (cf. ASV, NASV, ESV). Once again, the one who “believes in the Son” is clearly the one who will “obey the Son.” In fact, the words “faith” and “obedience” are so linked that they can be used interchangeably (cp. KJV, NKJV).

It should be clear that those who try to “disconnect” faith from obedience are grievously mistaken! Those concepts are linked in Scripture. To “believe in Jesus” is to “obey Jesus” (Mk.16:16; Ac.8:12; 18:8; Ga.3:26-27; Col.2:12). Now, the only question which remains is: ***“Do you TRULY believe in Jesus?”***

--Lanny Smith