FAChurch 03.29.23 Weekly Devotion **Obedience Comes from Trust**

**“For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, Who gives you His Holy Spirit.”** **1 Thessalonians 4:7-8**

If you didn’t know already, my favorite hymn is “Trust and Obey.” We obey our parents, our teachers, even our government officials mostly out of fear of being punished, not wanting a failing grade, or threats. But when we truly trust someone, we want to obey and please them. Our obedience to God comes from trusting Him as our loving, gracious, and merciful Heavenly Father. The one Who sent His Son to die for our sins and through the resurrection gives us eternal life.

Have you ever heard anyone say, *“Jesus became my Savior when I was a child, but I didn’t make Him my Lord until later?”* Maybe you have even said this yourself. The problem with this statement is that it is impossible. Jesus is Lord, period. We don’t “make” Him our Lord. We do, however, surrender our lives to His lordship. When we make the choice to follow Him as Lord, He becomes our Savior. The Bible never separates salvation and lordship, so we must not either. Holiness does not happen overnight, however. Spiritual maturity is something that happens throughout the life of Christ’s disciples.

The fancy word for this process of becoming holy is **sanctification**. In layman’s terms, it means that as a believer we are continually being changed from the inside out. Obedience begins in the heart. We cannot “behave” our way to Christlikeness. This is a work that only God’s Spirit can do. We have been learning that we cannot bear the fruit of the Spirit without the Spirits presence in us. We can, however, choose to cooperate in this work. Transformation happens gradually, through the small decisions we make each day. Our minutes make up our days. Our days make up our weeks, months, and years. And our years make up our lifetimes.

At the most elementary and basic level, denying ourselves means obedience to God’s Word. It is aligning our lives with what the Bible says instead of picking and choosing which Scriptures we are comfortable living out. The call to follow Jesus is an invitation to obey, and there is tremendous blessing in that. Obedience isn’t a burden. It is a privilege. We must always remember to view obedience to God, not through the eyes of servants, but as dearly loved children whom the Creator of the Universe cherishes. Obedience is good. There is safety within the loving boundaries of His commands.

**Prayer:** Holy Father, please help me to remember that Your commands are good, even when it is hard to obey. Continue to mature my faith and soften my heart to Your Spirit, so that I am transformed from the inside out. In Jesus’ name, amen.

**On Your Own:** Prayerfully write down any area of your life where you fall short of obeying God’s Word. Maybe it is one of the fruit we have been learning about in our current series? I know I fall short in the area of patience. Look for and write down any scripture that will help you to learn to obey where you fall short. Then practice that area this week.

**Time to Share:** If you desire, briefly share what this means to you.

**Time to Pray:** If you desire, you can pray as the Spirit leads you. We encourage each of you to pray.