**CONNECTING WITH GOD THROUGH OBEDIENCE**

Review:

 The first Wednesday of each month we are talking about our growth plan and setting goals to help us grow in our relationships. In September we talked about growing in our relationship with God by **spending time in God’s word.** In October we took a look at the life of Christ, and you saw His need for dependence upon God expressed in His **prayer life.**

What does your prayer life say about your dependence upon God?

-You don’t really need God.

-You only need God in the big stuff.

-You need God all throughout the day.

Introduction:

Today, we are going to consider connecting with God through our obedience.

Read Luke 5:1-5.

I. Half-Hearted Obedience

 A. Have you ever had one of those days where you felt like it would have been better if you had stayed in bed?

 B. Tell the story of drywalling and hitting a water pipe with a nail.

 C. I imagine that is how Peter is feeling.

 1. He is a professional fisherman. Catching fish is his expertise.

 2. He has fished all night and hasn’t caught anything.

 3. He is exhausted, frustrated & cleaning the salt off their nets so they can go home to bed.

 4. Jesus shows up and begins to teach from Peter’s boat.

 5. After He’s done teaching, Jesus asks Peter to “put out into the deep water and let down the nets for a catch.”

 D. What do you think Peter thinks of Jesus’ request?

 1. Who does Jesus think He is? Does He think He knows more about fishing than we do?

 2. We’re the professional fishermen, He’s just a carpenter. He doesn’t know how to fish this lake.

 3. With nets, you don’t fish at this time of day in deep water. You fish at night in shallow water.

 4. We have already tried all night and failed.

 E. Notice Peter’s response in vs 5.

 1. “Master, we’ve worked hard all day and haven’t caught anything. But because You say so, I will let down the nets.”

 2. Don’t you just sense Peter wants to call it a day?

 3. Peter says, “Because you say so…” The only reason he is doing this is because Jesus is the Master, and He wants to be respectful.

 4. Do you think Peter really thought they were going to catch any fish? Do you think Peter really thought that this was just a waste of time? I think Peter was thinking to himself that he can’t believe he is even doing this. He probably is hoping there aren’t any other fishermen around watching him.

 F. What are reasons that we are tempted to disobey God?

 1. It doesn’t make any sense. We don’t understand why God wants us to obey.

 2. We are tempted to listen to our friends instead of listening to God.

I can just imagine some veteran fisherman saying to Peter, “Peter, you haven’t caught anything all night. Your nets are cleaned & stowed. Don’t waste your time. Don’t add insult to injury. Just call it a day and go home.”

 3. We are tempted to allow our past experiences to guide us instead of God’s Word. Peter’s years of fishing told him that if he wanted to catch fish, he needed to fish at night.

 4. Sometimes it’s not just our past experiences, but we allow our past failures to guide us. “The last time I tried to talk to my friends about Christ, they weren’t interested, and one of my friends stopped hanging out with me.”

 5. Sometimes we are tempted to allow our circumstances to guide us instead of what God says. Peter says they are tired and have fished all night and haven’t caught anything.

 G. How do you respond when you know what God wants you to do?

 1. Do you obey even when you don’t understand, even when all your natural instincts are saying something else, even when others may be telling you something else?

 2. When God tells us to do something, we need to obey immediately.

 a. Two words that don’t go together are “No, Lord.”

 b. How can Jesus be our Lord if we are unwilling to obey Him?

 c. Jesus says in Luke 6:46, “Why do you call me Lord, Lord and do not do what I say?”

II. Results of Obedience Read Luke 5:6-11.

 A. This passage is so amazing. God knows how to capture Peter’s heart. If you want to get the attention of a fisherman, how do you do it? You start catching fish.

 B. Do you think this got Peter’s attention?

 1. They had fished all night – no fish.

 2. Now because they obeyed the Lord, they caught the biggest catch of their entire careers. It says the catch was so big that both boats were full and that the boats couldn’t hold all the weight so they began to sink.

 3. As a result of Peter’s obedience, Jesus just performed a miracle that went to the core of Peter’s being as a fisherman.

 C. Peter’s Response (5:8-10a)

 1. Why did he respond this way?

 2. Peter had doubted Jesus. He had questioned the logic of casting out his nets, and now he has gotten a glimpse of the greatness of God. Jesus is not only Creator, but He is the Commander of all things. If Jesus had wanted to, He could have had all the fish jump into Peter’s boat. This is child’s play for God. The things we think are so difficult aren’t difficult for God. Nothing is impossible with God.

 3. Because of his obedience, Peter has gotten a glimpse of God, and he has also gotten a glimpse of his own heart.

 4. Notice in verse 8 Peter says, “Go away from me, Lord, I am a sinful man.”

 5. Peter no longer calls Jesus “Master” but “Lord” acknowledging that Jesus is God.

 6. Peter is acknowledging his own unworthiness in the presence of God.

 D. God wants to reveal Himself to us.

 1. He wants you to see yourself in light of who He is. For only then can you really begin to see yourself accurately.

 2. You get to see how wretched you are and how much you need a Savior.

 3. God has a wonderful plan for each of us, but it always begins with a proper understanding of who God is.

 4. God is the One that your soul desperately needs. He is the only One who will ever love you perfectly.

 E. What if Peter had said to Jesus, “I know better than you about fishing. I’m not going to put out my nets.”

 1. Peter would never have experienced this miracle.

 2. Peter would not have learned more about God and about himself.

 F. We need God. Obedience is a way for us to express our love for God, and as a result, we learn more about God. Obedience connects us with God in a deeper way.

Read John 14:21.

 “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my father, and I will love him and **show myself to him**.”

 G. Sometimes students will say, “If God is real, then why am I not experiencing Him in my life?” Perhaps the answer is because you aren’t spending time with God and obeying Him.

 H. Notice Jesus’ response to Peter. Read Luke 5:10b-11.

 1. Jesus tells him not to be afraid and calls Peter to follow Him.

 2. Jesus is calling Peter to join His mission.

 3. The passage indicates that Peter left the greatest catch of his life behind. The day his fishing business had its greatest profit, Peter turned and walked away.

 4. I think some of us would have been tempted to say to Jesus, “I can’t follow you now, look at all these fish, I’ve never been so successful in all my life.”

 5. How could Peter walk away in complete surrender & obedience? He found that Jesus was ultimately what his heart was seeking all along. Instead of catching live fish and killing them, Christ was calling Peter to catch dead men and bring them to life.

Application:

How are you in your obedience to God?

1. In rebellion

2. Half-hearted

3. Hesitant

4. Fully committed

Obedience that doesn’t involve the heart is not complete obedience.

I John 5:3: “This is love for God: to obey His commands. And His commands are not burdensome.”

We obey because we love God. This kind of obedience will connect us to God and draw us into a deeper relationship with God.

Small groups:

1. The lesson mentioned 5 reasons we are tempted to disobey God. Which of these do you struggle the most with?

(doesn’t make sense, listen to my friend’s advice, look at previous experience instead of Word, past failures, look at circumstances)

2. Can you disobey God and still have close fellowship? Explain.

3. What areas are you struggling to obey God? What do those struggles communicate to you about your heart? Can you identify what may be in competition with God in your heart?

4. How have you seen God work as a result of your obedience?

5. What does God want you to do in response to this lesson?