

Jesus Christ's Obedience
(Active and Passive Obedience)
Class 5

Introduction: The obedience of Jesus Christ in his incarnation is absolutely necessary to a right understanding of the person and saving work of Christ. Christ's perfection and atoning work are completely dependent upon Christ's obedience in his earthly life experience. In this talk we will establish the broad main categories of Christ's obedience.

Scripture:

2 Corinthians 5:21 "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

1 Peter 2:22 "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."

Romans 5:19 "Just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous."

1 Peter 3:18-19 "Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit."

1 Timothy 2:5 "For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus."

Christ's Obedience and the Incarnation

1. Obedience in Christ's humanity
 - 1) Incarnational obedience enabled Jesus to put "teeth" in his obedience.
 - i. Jesus really was tempted.
 - ii. Jesus really was tried.
 - iii. Jesus really suffered mental, emotional, and spiritual anguish.
 - iv. Jesus really did choose to be obedient constantly and perpetually.
 - 2) This is the mistake of the Gnostics/Docetics – They rob Jesus of his victory by robbing him of his humanity.
2. Obedience to the Father
 - 1) This is part of the "begottenness" of Jesus.
 - 2) This is reflective of Jesus emanating from the Father.
 - 3) This also reflects Jesus willing submission to the Father.
3. Obedience to the Moral Law
 - 1) The paradox – The One who gave the law obeyed the law in the incarnation.
 - 2) The obedience reflecting the nature of God's goodness – The law reflects God's goodness, and Jesus reflected the goodness of the law in his perfect obedience; thus, the communicable attributes of God contained in his goodness came shining through the life of Jesus Christ in obedience to the moral law of the Scripture.
4. Obedience as the Federal Head of God's People
 - 1) Jesus obeyed the moral law as the head of the new people of God in the new covenant.
 - 2) Jesus achieved real righteousness under the law by his perfect obedience.

- 3) And Jesus is able to provide real righteousness for his saved people through his obedience.
- 4) This is the basis of the doctrine of justification by grace through faith.

Christ's Perfect Obedience and the Moral Law (Galatians 4:4)

- i. The Paradox: The law giver and the law keeper
 - ii. Perfect obedience and the demands of the law
 - iii. Perfect obedience and the blessings of the law
 - iv. Perfect obedience and the fulfillment of justice
 - v. Perfect obedience and the infinite merit of Christ's atonement
 - vi. Perfect obedience and imputed righteousness
- 5) Christ on the cross, representing God's people who will believe in Christ.
 - 6) Christ on the cross and imputed sin; imputed guilt; receiving divine wrath.

Christ's Active and Passive Obedience

1. Active: Christ's active and perfect obedience to the moral law of God, perpetually kept

- 1) Active righteousness of obedience to the law every moment of his life
- 2) Active righteousness of obedience and resisting temptation
 - i. Temptation – the devil tempted Jesus
 - ii. Temptation – the people tempted him to make him king
 - iii. Temptation – even Peter tempted him

2. Passive:

- 1) Matthew 26:39, 42 Christ's praying in the Garden
- 2) Matthew 26:52-53 Jesus restrains Peter from the use of his sword in the Garden.
- 3) Passive obedience of Jesus defined – Jesus' passive obedience means that he withheld his power and authority in such a fashion as to refrain from doing what he could have done, and to do this to obey the Father.
- 4) Passive obedience of Jesus described:
 - i. Yieldedness and Submission
 - ii. Endurance and Trust
 - iii. Love for the Father

Christ's Obedience and the Atonement

The obedience of Jesus Christ must be connected conceptually to his atoning work on the cross and in the context of the gospel, or else, we will not understand the real point of his obedience to the Father. There are several key points to the atonement of Christ. We will consider these from the standpoint of Christ's obedience.

1. Perfect sacrifice – The characteristics of Jesus' death on the cross
2. Perfect payment for sin – the nature of the purpose of Jesus' death
3. Perfect justice achieved – the achievement of Jesus death and the victory of it
4. Perfect substitute for believers – Jesus' obedience means he can be a substitutionary sacrifice
5. Perfect satisfaction for believers – Jesus' obedience means he can satisfy the legal demands of the law
6. Perfect righteousness for believers – Jesus' obedience means he can make believers righteous before God

Christ's Obedience and His Mediatorial Reign

1. Mediatorial reign and Christ's ascended humanity
2. Mediatorial reign and Christ's pleading his atoning merits
3. Mediatorial reign and justification of the believer

Jesus Christ rose from the dead in his humanity, and he ascended back to heaven as the victorious Son of Man who represents his people in his intercession in heaven. In heaven Jesus pleads the merits of his atoning sacrifice for his people, providing justification for those who look to him in faith.

Final Thoughts:

1. The necessity of the incarnation/humanity for Christ's obedience
 - 1) We must rightly understand the biblical teaching on Christ's humanity, so that we might rightly understand his obedience.
 - 2) We must not over emphasize the humanity of Christ to the degree that we exclude or under value the deity of Christ; these must be held in balance.
 - 3) We must also understand the role of Christ's obedience in the context of the cross.
2. The necessity of Christ's obedience and the atonement
 - 1) The perfect obedience of Jesus made the sacrifice of Jesus infinitely significant.
 - 2) The perfect obedience of Jesus relates directly to the atoning work and merit of Christ.
 - 3) The perfect obedience of Jesus is central to the doctrine of justification.
3. The necessity of Christ's obedience and justification
 - 1) The obedience of Christ applied in a vicarious way for the believer satisfies the legal and moral demands of the law.
 - 2) The obedience of Christ applied in a vicarious way for the believer appeases the wrath of God against the believer.
 - 3) The obedience of Christ applied in a vicarious way for the believer becomes the robe of righteousness which the believer wears before God, making him acceptable and righteous.
4. The necessity of Christ's obedience and his interceding for the believer
 - 1) The obedience of Christ becomes the core of Christ's high priestly ministry.
 - 2) Thus, the obedience of Christ enables Jesus Christ exalted to represent the believer in heaven at the throne of God, turning the throne of judgment into a throne of grace.