

“Jesus Cannot Be The Messiah, Can He?”

Exodus 17:1-7

Psalm 95

Romans 5:1-11

John 4:5-30

Obedience is responding faithfully. What does that mean? It means doing what God is asking you to do, no matter how difficult it is. Take a minute and watch the video on the screen of Colin, our oldest son, taking Landon his youngest son shopping for a birthday present for one of Landon’s friends. (Show 1:02 Video)

The way I interpret this video is that Landon took seriously his dad’s invitation to go and find a toy for his friend’s birthday. Landon was obedient to his dad’s request by responding faithfully. Landon starts with Brio track and trains, then to Brio track and cars, and finally lands on two packs of cars and says to his dad, “up?” I believe Landon fulfilled his mission by holding a set of cars for his friend and a set of cars for himself and said “Up!” to his dad. Landon trusts his dad which is obedience responding faithfully.

Exodus 17:1-7, Psalm 95, and Romans 5:1-11 speak to the Big Idea for today’s message which is obedience responding faithfully. Moses responds to the people being tired of change, by letting go of his anxiety and doubts. Moses trusts God which is obedience responding faithfully. The Psalmist challenges the people to listen to God who creates, redeems, and sustains them. They are to trust God which is obedience responding faithfully. Paul challenges the Roman Christians to believe that God’s sacrifice of Jesus lifts up God’s love which no human sin can diminish. The Roman Christians are to trust God which is obedience responding faithfully.

In the 1st Century CE, a Samaritan woman and Jesus were talking. This is scandalous on two counts. Jesus is talking with a woman and the woman is Samaritan. Men are not talk with women, and Jews are not to relate with Samaritans, because Samaritans are bi-racial. Jesus went to a place that Jews were forbidden to go and spoke to a woman, a Samaritan woman, and an adulterer at that. And Jesus walked right into the messiness...no fear...just love...and reframed truth and authenticity.

The Samaritan woman came to the well. She was just going about her daily routine of drawing water. It was noon. And there was Jesus, just sitting at the well. Jesus was on her turf. And before the Samaritan woman knew it, Jesus invited her out of her comfort zone, by asking risky and authentic questions. John relates the following encounter between the woman and Jesus when he writes in John 4:13-18, 28-29,

Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water...' Jesus said to her, 'Go call your husband, and come back.' The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, I have no husband; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true....' Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, 'Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?'

Oh, the Samaritan woman didn't get it until Jesus revealed that she had been married five times and the current man she was with was not her husband. Jesus was in her space to give her peace; to know that she was loved regardless.¹

¹In the three paragraphs above of textual analysis, I have benefited from the thinking of Rebecca Abts Wright, Jane Anne Ferguson, Leigh Campbell-Taylor, Jerome F. D. Creach, Sally B. Purvis, Andrew Nagy-Benson, and Michael L. Lindvall in *Connections, Year A, Volume 2* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2019), 60-62, 62-63, 64-66, 67-69, 69-70, 71-74, and 74-76.

Being born again, that is experiencing conversion, is never safe. It is obedience responding faithfully. And conversion, being born again, is a life-long process with many punctiliar events that keeps one undergoing the process of conversion. C.S. Lewis in *The Silver Chair* describes an encounter between Jill and Aslan, who represents Jesus. Lewis writes,

“If I run away, it’ll be after me in a moment,” thought Jill. “And if I go on, I shall run straight into its mouth.” Anyway, she couldn’t have moved if she had tried, and she couldn’t take her eyes off it...the thirst became so bad that she almost felt she would not mind being eaten by the Lion if only she could be sure of getting a mouthful of water first... “Are you not thirsty?” said the Lion. “I’m dying of thirst,” said Jill. “Then drink,” said the Lion. “May I..could I...would you mind going away while I do?” said Jill. The Lion answered this only by a look and a very low growl...The delicious rippling noise of the stream was driving her nearly frantic. “Will you promise not to do anything to me, if I do come?” said Jill. “I make no promise,” said the Lion. Jill was so thirsty now that, without noticing it, she had come a step nearer. “Do you eat girls?” she said. “I have swallowed up girls and boys, women and men, kings and emperors, cities and realms,” said the Lion. It didn’t say this as if it were boasting, nor as if it were sorry, nor as if it were angry. It just said it. “I daren’t come and drink,” said Jill. “Then you will die of thirst,” said the Lion. “Oh dear!” said Jill, coming another step nearer. “I suppose I must go and look for another stream then.” “There is no other stream,” said the Lion. It never occurred to Jill to disbelieve the Lion...no one who had seen his stern face could do that...and her mind suddenly made itself up. It was the worst thing she had ever had to do, but she went straight to the stream, knelt down, and began scooping up water in her hand. It was the coldest, most refreshing water she had ever tasted. You didn’t need to drink much of it, for it quenched your thirst at once.²

Jill demonstrated that obedience is responding faithfully. Being obedient and responding faithfully, resulted in Jill quenching her thirst. Jill trusted the Lion (Aslan) which is obedience responding faithfully. Landon demonstrated that obedience is responding faithfully. Being obedient and responding faithfully, resulted in Landon getting a set of two cars for his friend and a set of two cars for himself. Landon trusted his dad which is obedience responding faithfully. The Samaritan woman demonstrated that obedience is

²C.S. Lewis, *The Silver Chair* (New York City, New York: HarperCollins, 1981), 19-21.

responding faithfully. Being obedient and responding faithfully, resulted in the Samaritan woman receiving living water...her salvation from the One who knew her the best and loved her the most. The Samaritan Woman trusted Jesus which is obedience responding faithfully. Jesus cannot be the Messiah, can he? Yes, Jesus is the Messiah. My friends, trust Jesus which is obedience responding faithfully. Amen.

*This sermon was preached (for the In-Person and Livestream congregations)
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