

Thank you... Iota Cocione
Speaker for today

Keeping God's Commandments...Love

"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome."

1 John 5:3

ATTENTION

BUSINESS MEETING
Today, February 15, at 2:30 p.m.

February Birthdays

5 Lyle Graddon 15 Maria Carrillo

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.

Sunday.....10:45 a.m.

Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

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"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding."

Proverb 3:5

- *"Fight the good fight"*
- *"Keep the faith"*
- *"Finish the course"*

Importance of Obedience

By Dan Jenkins

As Jesus began teaching, He went to a mountaintop and with His disciples around Him, He startled those who heard Him by the way He preached. *"When Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes"* (Matthew 7:28-29). So much of what He taught was so different from what most individuals thought about religion.

Many Jews of His day strongly believed that the outward manifestation of their devotion was the evidence of their acceptance by God. They thought that long, repetitious prayers publicly delivered showed that those praying were accepted by God (Matthew 6:5-7). They thought that regular fasting characterized by disfigured faces indicated the holiness of the person fasting (Matthew 6:16-18). They thought that those who gave great gifts to those in need, in such a way so that others saw it, was the proof of great spirituality (Matthew 6:1-3).

Jesus looked at those who taught these ideas and described them as wolves who looked like sheep. He urged His

followers to take a deeper look at these religious leaders and judge them by their fruits (Matthew 7:15-16).

Look at the clarity of His words as He neared the end of this discourse, *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven”* (Matthew 7:21). This was the exact opposite of those who defined spirituality with the wrong measure. Those who did this thought their salvation was assured because they called Him “Lord,” yet Jesus said that such did not guarantee acceptance.

He then mentioned other things which would not bring salvation. At the final judgment there would be those prophets (preachers) claiming to speak for God who would be lost. He said that there would be those who claimed they were performing miracles like casting out demons who would be lost. He said there would be those who claimed to perform mighty deeds who also would hear the words, *“Depart from Me, I never knew you”* (Matthew 7:22-23).

Then, who will be saved? He answers this in one brief phrase and one parable. Who will be saved—those who do the will of My Father (Matthew 7:21)! External religion without obedience to what He says cannot bring salvation. The parable of the two builders vividly shows one’s “spiritual house” does not stand unless the rules are followed.

It is not enough to be religious. The only one who is assured by Jesus of salvation is the one who *“...does the will of My Father.”* True religion is manifested in the life of an individual, but those deeds come from a heart which first seeks the will of the Father. This shows the importance of obedience!

John 14:15

“If you love me, keep my commandments.”

Obeying God’s Commandments

By Kevin Cauley

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

Obedience... answer the call with humility or pride?

Sin takes a toll on our thinking, and we must pay the price of ignorance by confessing that we don’t understand many things. It is fortunate for us that God, in His mercy and love, understands this, and gives us clear commandments to follow in His word. There are some things that I simply do not need to understand to obey God’s commandments. The only question that I need to answer is whether I am going to obey. This is the greatest struggle that we face as God’s people; will it be our own will or God’s will that we follow? We must obey God’s commandments. If we love God, we will obey (1 John 5:2-3). Failure to obey is simply a lack of love for God in our life.

Sometimes, however, there are those who use God’s commandments to elevate self. The Pharisees had this problem. They did not look at God’s commandments as a way to improve their relationship with God, but rather, as a way to elevate themselves over their fellow man. This notion of “obedience” is deceptive, because it isn’t really obedience, it is haughtiness. The problem is the same problem as those who refuse to obey—they love self more than they love God. We learn that we must empty self if we are to obey God in the way God wants to be obeyed (Philippians 2:5-8).

Love God enough to study His word, learn His commands, and obey them, and be free of self.