

Chesterfield Seventh-Day Adventist Church Prayer Meeting 2023

Theme: Seeking Revival

29 March 2023 - OBEDIENCE THROUGH JESUS

(reading taken from "10 Days of Prayer 2021")

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Steps of Faith

Remember when Jesus performed His first miracle during the wedding at Cana? Mary, the mother of Jesus, told the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it" (John 2:5). By saying this, Mary built the confidence of the servants in Jesus. When He asked them to fill the water jars, they did exactly as He asked. Then Jesus said, "Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast" (verse 8). Once again, they followed His request, even though it seemed strange—and they soon realized they had just witnessed a miracle. Take a look at the individual steps again:

1. By her instructions, Mary built up the servants' **trust in Jesus**.
2. The servants expressed their trust and willingness by doing just what Jesus asked. In other words, they took the **preparatory steps** that allowed for the miracle.
3. **Then Jesus alone performed the miracle.**

The servants did nothing to turn the water into wine—but would the miracle have happened without their preparatory steps? This is how the obedience of faith works: We choose to trust Jesus, place our will at His disposal, and take obedient steps of faith. But Jesus—and Jesus alone—performs the miracles.

How It Works

The apostle Paul explains that a mystery has been revealed in us for a definite purpose—to bring about obedience of faith (see Romans 16:25-27). What is this mystery? According to Colossians 1:27, it is "Christ in us." And what is the result when obedience of faith is achieved in Christ? "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). We have a new life through Christ living and acting in us. We are new creations!

When we have "Christ in us," our attitude toward His commandments changes. "His commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3). "For My yoke is easy," Jesus said (Matthew 11:30). "I will delight myself in Your commandments, which I love" because they are "better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver" and "sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psalm 119:47, 72, 103). "Great peace have those who love your law" (Psalm 119:165). Obedience of faith is a pleasant thing because God, in His love, has given us only the best rules.

And while obedience matters, it never earns our salvation, and it never happens by our own goodness. Ellen White says, "He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. Man cannot be saved without obedience, but his works should not be of himself; Christ should work in him to will and to do of His good pleasure" (*Faith and Works*, p. 94). Three points are worth highlighting:

1. It is impossible to reach heaven by my own works. Trying to earn something from God is futile.
2. However, obedience is an indispensable part of life with God, since Jesus' followers are called to live in conformity with His will.
3. Obedience should not be our own work but a miracle accomplished by Christ in us.

What Part Do We Play?

Once again, we cannot do anything to save ourselves, but God respects human free will and allows us to choose. According to Ellen White, “The Lord designs that divine power shall cooperate with human effort” (*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 10). What does that mean?

1. **We trust.** We choose to develop our trust in Jesus, who works in us “to will and to do” (Philippians 2:13). He creates in us an attitude of willingness and shows us what we need to do.
2. **We decide.** We must choose to do God’s will. Since He completely respects our individuality and will, He will only intervene if we make the decision. He waits for it.
3. **We take preparatory steps.** We express our decision in steps of obedience, which can be large or small.
4. **God alone** does the crucial work of salvation.

And remember, even our part—trusting, deciding, and taking preparatory steps—is done only in God’s strength, when Jesus lives in us through the Holy Spirit. This makes obedience a joy.

Praying God’s Word

Obedience allows us to fully experience God’s love.

“He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him” (John 14:21).

Father, thank You for showing us how to attain the best life possible. Forgive us when we reject Your law and Your love. Lead us to trust You fully and surrender our whole hearts to You.

God is pleased when we ask for obedient hearts.

“So give your servant an obedient heart. . . . The Lord was pleased. . . . I will do according to Your words” (1 Kings 3:9, 10, 12, translated from the German Luther Version).

Lord, please give us obedient hearts. Give us complete trust in Your leading and principles, even when we do not understand. Teach us to see obedience through the power of the Holy Spirit not as a burden but as a delight.

More Prayer Suggestions

Thanks and Praise: Give thanks for specific blessings and praise God for His goodness.

Confession: Take a few minutes for private confession and thank God for His forgiveness.

Guidance: Ask God to grant wisdom for current challenges and decisions.

Our Church: Ask God to bless the efforts of our local, regional, and world church.

Local Requests: Pray for current needs of church members, family, and neighbors.

Listen and Respond: Take time to listen for God’s voice and respond in praise or song.

Song Suggestions

SDA Hymnal: Trust and Obey (#590); Live Out Thy Life Within Me (#316); I’ll Go Where You Want Me to Go (#573); He Leadeth Me (#537); O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee (#574).