

SYNOPSIS

In this final message of the Grace Bomb launch series we invite the congregation to a regular habit of obedience to Jesus, and together, a movement of obedience that we were made for. There are many ways that we can tell God, "I love you back," and this message focuses on the emphasis of putting Jesus' commands into practice as found in the Upper Room Discourse in John's gospel. First we establish that obedience really is the primary way we should express our true love for God according to Jesus. But at the same time, as proud creatures, we have a natural aversion to the idea of "obeying" or "obedience" itself. We then practically dispel the myth that obedience to God is in some way a threat to living our best lives, but rather it is how life works best. If obedience then will allow us to walk in our purpose as human beings, the natural question that follows is which commands of Jesus should we obey? Our landing point for this series is obeying the command to love our neighbors, and to take practical action in doing so as we seek to make Grace Bombing a new habit leading to many new adventures of faith as Grace Built People. We could very well create a new world, awake a sleeping church, and quicken a lost and dying world, with the rumble of obedient steps of faith that run over our neighbors with God's leading edge of kindness.

BIG IDEA

God's love language is obedience and we all have one right next step to take.

KEY TEXTS

John 14:15

1 John 5:2-3

John 15:9-11

Ephesians 4:10-13

Matthew 16:23-25

SERMON OUTLINE

Introduction: Love Languages

- Most people are familiar with the popular 5 love languages book – a reference of the 5 is helpful (gifts, acts of service, physical touch, quality time, words)
- A recommended opener of a story about YOUR love language works great here – or a time when you were speaking the "wrong" love language toward a loved one.
 - [this sets up the big idea that God Himself has a love language]



Transition: Did you know God has a love language? We see it clearly in Jesus' teaching known as the "Upper Room Discourse"

In the Upper room discourse (context) Jesus drops some intense, heartfelt teaching and prayer which is where we run into this text:

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments." John 14:15

- "Keep" – is to not just learn, but to practice... to OBEY.
 - Example: Parents – big difference between your kids hearing and doing.

SLIDE 1

- We love Him when we DO what He says – not in a book, shelf, or walls of our mind.
- In other words:

SLIDE 2

God's love language is obedience.

Jesus repeats this several times in the upper room:

SLIDE 3

Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me... John 14:21a

SLIDE 4

Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. John 14:23-24

SLIDE 5

You are my friends if you do what I command you. John 15:14

- When Jesus repeats something over and over – it's a big deal.
- And obedience is a whole Bible theme... because the proof of love was in action.

Don't confuse this with what Jesus is not saying... "If you obey me, then I will love you."

The crazy love of God moves first:

SLIDE 6

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:6-8

- This is the amazing Grace of God that pursues us, even when we are not pursuing him.



Let's keep it real: OBEY is a dirty word today; conjuring thoughts of blindly following authority.

- And we should be suspect of obeying anyone with absolute authority.

Transition: Blindly following an absolute authority is sketchy – UNLESS – that person is God Himself... Let's bust a few myths about obeying Jesus:

SLIDE 7

Myth #1: Obeying Jesus is picking up religious baggage

God gives me a massive to-do list of rules and religion.

Myth busted:

SLIDE 8

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. 1 John 5:2-3

- Example: walking on eggshells on the Sabbath vs. Jesus healing on the Sabbath

This is how Jesus himself puts it:

SLIDE 9

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30

- Many were laboring under a heavy religious burden and Jesus offers lifting the burden
- Rest for your souls - Many are on a hamster wheel for achievement and performance
 - Jesus offers a slow walk with Him.

SLIDE 10

Myth #2: Obeying Jesus is a Cosmic Buzz Kill

Obeying God means that I will have no fun and a boring life.

Myth busted:

SLIDE 11

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. John 15:9-11

- We see our theme again here of obedience – and the result is FULL JOY.
 - [This is a good place for a story about when you have seen unhindered JOY]
- Unfortunately the world has us chasing after JOY in the wrong places.
 - We usually end up in bondage, not freedom – shackled by debt and shame.

- Remember that God invented beauty, intimacy, power, and fun, and has our best interests at heart.

SLIDE 12

Myth #3: Church Leaders do the “real work”

Obedience is for the professionals.

Myth busted: It's true we need leaders, but leaders should equip and empower all the saints for the work of ministry:

SLIDE 13

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,” Ephesians 4:10-13

- The role of God-ordained leaders in the church is to equip the saints to build.
- We are all saints with a role to play in helping others be built up.

SLIDE 14

Myth #4: Obeying Jesus is Easy

Ok so you're saying that obeying Jesus is not a cake walk?

Myth busted:

SLIDE 15

Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” Matthew 16:24-25

- Taking Jesus seriously will often involve **self-denial**
 - We'd rather stick to loving God the way we want to – perhaps by only speaking our love language to Him.
 - Loving others like Jesus is costly – requires giving without reciprocity

And these steps of obedience are usually risky – because we don't know the outcome...

- We really don't like insecurity!
 - [This is a great place for a personal story about when you took a step of faith without knowing the outcome]



Question: So God has a clearly defined love language, and obeying Jesus is the best decision you can make... so now what?

SLIDE 16

We all have one next right step of obedience to take.

And in its simplest form – Jesus distilled the commands of God to loving God and loving people.

Today some might need to step toward God

- This might be trusting in Jesus by placing your full faith and confidence in Him for the first time.
- This might be getting back up with Jesus because it's been a while.
- This might be making learning from Jesus a daily practice.

Today many of us need to step toward a neighbor

- Load – Grab some Grace Bomb cards and be ready to drop a taste of grace.
- Listen -- Obey the tug on your hearts, and ask God to help you
- Let 'er GO! – bring the love to life!
 - Stories [In message 5, the congregation was asked to share a Grace Bomb story to spur one another on to love and good works – this is a great time to close with a story or two – of recent steps of obedience toward a neighbor]

Optional interactive ending:

One step by itself is not very loud. But lots of steps, all together, create a rumble and even an intimidating roar. Envision the world in the path of a church stampeding with obedience to Jesus – they will get run over by love, and swept up in experiencing God's grace, but instead of being left for dead – they will be brought closer to true life. This is a movement of obedience, and it starts for our town here – and it starts for our town today. Can you hear it? [Consider not closing in prayer, but closing in the sound of the congregation stomping in place together]