



## RADICAL OBEDIENCE | CHAD BRUEGMAN

### START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer this question:

**If you were given \$10,000 right now ... what would you spend it on?** (It doesn't need to be a super-spiritual answer)

### SHARE

Throughout this series, we wanted to change it up, to be a little unpredictable. As a leadership team, we prayed and decided that instead of packaging a series together, we could do a series of individual messages. Our prayer has been that these messages would be timely and allow those teaching to have the flexibility to talk about whatever they feel led to talk about from their own individual time with Jesus. Our hope is that first we would all grow deeper in our relationship with God and with each other. Second, that we would really allow God to speak to us individually about our lives, and third, that we would then be in a position to respond and take action.

In this week's message, Chad talked about what it looks like for a follower of Jesus to be radical in obedience. When we hear the word 'obedience,' what comes to mind? Maybe you think of the words submission, duty, or obligation; certainly not very "positive" words. Most of us probably didn't think of the words opportunity, growth, and faith.

One of the reasons we struggle to think of positive words is that not all of us have positive experiences with obedience—mostly because we are obeying flawed people. For instance, an angry manager at work might not be concerned about your well-being, but still expects you to do what he or she asks. We respond in fear and obey to keep our jobs. We value the job but not the manager. This can tend to make us think of obedience as forced submission.

Obedying a loving God is absolutely different. When God asks us to trust and obey, it is because He already knows that what He is asking will enable us to flourish. God asks us to obey because he loves us and knows that obedience will bring us fullness of life, whereas disobedience and doing things our own way will lead to frustration, pain, and eventual death. So even when we have an earthly boss we might not like; God asks for obedience to Him as we do our jobs. This is why it says in Colossians 3:23, *Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.* By obeying the Lord, we trust God will reward us and we will experience life more fully by listening to Him in a tough position. By dying to ourselves and living for God, we will have an opportunity for God to grow our faith in ways we could have never imagined.

Read John 12:20-26

According to Jesus, what must happen to the single kernel of wheat?

In this analogy, what is Jesus telling us about his sacrifice?

## GROW

In God's Kingdom, death is only the beginning, not the end. Jesus makes it clear in Matthew 16:24-25 "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it." Jesus is saying that we must take up our cross, die to ourselves and we will actually find our lives. Like a seed in the ground, in darkness, it is unseen; but not forgotten. As it is watered, it grows into the sun and lives on to produce much more fruit. In the same way, as we obey and die to ourselves, we are given life. There is no better place to see this in action than in the faith-filled story of Abraham's obedience when God asked him to do the impossible.

Let's read Genesis 22:1-19

In L.O. Richards, *The Bible Reader's Companion*, he explains how this test of faith was a prophetic story that points to Jesus being the sacrifice for our sins:

**"Your only son" (22:1-2).** God did not intend for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. The command was a test: a test of how far Abraham would trust the Lord with his most precious possession. Yet the story is also prophetic. God, who was too kind to take Abraham's son, was willing to surrender His Son, His only Son, whom He loves, to win our salvation. In the test of Abraham we see foreshadowed the ultimate test of God's own love. And the proof that God's love for us is real.

**"We will come back to you" (22:5).** These words affirm Abraham's faith. God had said His promises to Abraham would be kept in Isaac's offspring. Heb. 11:19 says Abraham "reasoned that God could raise the dead" if need be to keep His word! Let's be like Abraham, sure that God will provide. Let's trust God completely, even rising early (Gen. 22:3) to keep the most difficult of His commands.

**Lambs.** Throughout the O.T. the lamb is the preferred sacrificial animal. It is the animal most frequently specified in the Levitical law of sacrifice. Leviticus 11. So it's fitting that the innocent, harmless lamb is the O.T.'s prime sacrificial symbol. Jesus, the innocent Lamb of God, offered Himself as a sacrifice for us. He took our place, as the ram of Gen. 22 took the place of Isaac. Through His suffering, the sinless Son of God purged our sins and made us clean (John 1:29, 36; 1 Peter 1:19).

Abraham obeyed God when he had very few details. What kind of mind games do you think Abraham would have had as he hiked up the mountain with his only son?

God did not intend for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, but He wanted to test Abraham's faith in being obedient. Instead of Isaac being sacrificed, God provided a sacrifice. What was symbolic about that sacrifice?

## MOVE

Abraham trusted God's character in the most difficult test of his life. Abraham only received the answers on the other side of obedience. Only after he obeyed could Abraham see the big picture of what God was doing. Reading his story can offend our senses. Any mother or father would be offended at the idea of this act. In a sense, God was offending Abraham and any other person who would hear the story, because ultimately God was pointing to the fact that He, Himself would give his one and only son as a sacrifice for us. *So allow the offensiveness of the story lead us to thankfulness that we serve a God who lays down his own life for us... He takes our place so that we might live.*

Abraham feared the Lord more than the task set before him. Abraham trusted in God's goodness in the midst of laying down on the altar that which was most important to him. He trusted that God had a plan.

### **Proverbs 9:10**

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*

Chad ended the message by explaining that the peace of God is found in obedience and not necessarily when life is comfortable and easy. It is when we are being obedient and walking down that path that might scare us that the awareness of God's presence can be most tangible.

**As we walked through the story of Abraham, did God speak to you about something in your own life that He might be asking you to lay down on the altar?**

**If there is something you need to lay down before God, what stands in the way of your obedience?**

## PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying for each other and the struggles we all face. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to talk more freely.

## TO GO

### **Proverbs 3:5-6**

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.*