

Apologia Part 5: Obedience to the Faith

God bless you in the name of Jesus Christ and welcome to this final presentation in the Apologia series, Apologia # 5: Obedience to the Faith.

Please turn to the Book of Acts Chapter 5. Obedience to the faith is about obeying God rather than men. Now obedience starts for each of us on a personal level, but obedience to the faith is also about helping our brothers and sisters, because it's a family. This is why the Bible refers to the faith as the "household of faith" in Galatians 6:10 or the "common faith" in Titus 1:4 because we each have the same faith of Jesus Christ in common. So, obedience to the faith is an individual decision, yes, but as a family we help each other as we endeavor to do it together.

As we go to the Book of Acts, we will note that in the beginning of the church as recorded in Acts Chapter 2, the believers really met with little resistance. But it's *after* this, that religious leaders and worldly men arose, setting up a challenge to the new church: Obey God, or obey men? Let's see this, where the apostles answer in

Acts 5:29:

Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

That's at the very crux of this issue of obedience to *the* faith. It's obeying God rather than men. The word "obey" here, means "obey one in authority," and that one in authority is God. He's the One that we're persuaded is first in priority. To obey God can be demonstrated by speaking *boldly*, like the apostles are doing here when they are being challenged.

Acts 5:30-32:

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. [That's bold.]

Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

And we are his witnesses of these things; and *so is* also the Holy Ghost [referring to the gift of holy spirit God gives], whom God hath given to them that obey him. [That's the same word, "obey", used in verse 29.]

So, the gift of holy spirit is involved in our witness. And when we obey God, we exhibit fruit of the spirit, as Galatians 5:22 and 23 note, and we demonstrate power, as Acts 1:8 points out, and we are led by the spirit and walk as lifestyle in the spirit, as Galatians 5 speaks about. That's part of being obedient *to the* faith. Well, the religious leaders didn't like this. Look at Verse 33:

Acts 5:33:

When they heard *that*, they were cut *to the heart*, and took counsel to slay them.

That's their response, "Let's kill these guys." What led these men to such extreme measures in dealing with the apostles? The words "they were cut" are translated from a Greek word that means, "divide by sawing". This was not literally true but the "sawing asunder" happened mentally which resulted in the religious leaders being furious or enraged. It reminds me of Hebrews 4:12 and how powerful the Word of God really is.

Hebrews 4:12:

For the word of God *is* quick and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul

and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Well, these religious leaders got so angry because the apostles spoke the Word which contradicted and exposed how these religious leaders were resisting God. The apostles were bold.

Look at Romans, chapter 1. You know, there's nothing wrong with loving obedience to those who obey God. In fact, that is the right thing to do in the appropriate context. It says in Ephesians 5:21 that we should be submitting ourselves "one to another in the fear [respect] of God [the Greek text reads "Christ" here]." Submitting ourselves to one another is right as we each recognize and demonstrate the Christ resides within us. So, no problem with loving obedience to those that are obeying God. But we're not talking about people who are obeying God here, like we saw in Acts, chapter 5. The religious leaders that challenged the apostles were not obeying God.

Here, in the Book of Romans, we see a key phrase regarding obeying the faith.

Romans 1:5:

By whom we have received grace and apostleship [Paul wrote], for obedience to the faith [of Jesus Christ we all share in the household or family of God] among all nations, for his name.

The Book of Romans starts out with obedience to the faith. And this obedience is a result of attentive hearing. This word is translated from a Greek verb, (this is the noun form here in Romans 1:5), but this comes from a Greek verb, *hupakouō*. It's transliterated h-u-p-a-k-o-u-ō, and it means "to hear." But it carries a sense of stillness or attention while hearing so as to answer.

Look at Acts, chapter 12. Let's see a little bit more about this obedience, this hearing to the end of obeying. "Hearkening

submissively” is one way that this word could also be understood. Here in Acts, chapter 12, in this situation, Peter was taken and put in prison by Herod and the believers were praying for his release. And Peter is released. An angel comes and releases him from prison and then he comes to the house where people are praying, and we’ll pick it up in verse 12:

Acts 12:12-13:

And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.

So, this gal heard Peter knock and she came to the door. She hearkened. The word “hearken” is *hupakouō*. She heard, she paid attention. She heard and responded with *action*. This is what this word “obedience” means in Romans 1:5. But remember, it takes a stillness and an attentiveness to hear. We must pay *attention* to hear God. What we listen to, and who we listen to, determines a lot of our success in life. And it’s important that God gets first place, and He gets the attention of our heart, to hear Him and hear His word. It says in

Psalm 46:10:

Be still and know that I am God...

“Be still [or remain inactive in order to be attentive, then we will] know [experientially] that I am God.” God is knocking on the door of the hearts of His people to awake, and listen as He works in us, and then take the appropriate action. We must leave room in our heart for Him to work and not allow the noise of life to crowd Him out.

We’re looking at obedience to the faith we all share in God’s family. And obedience to the faith only allows for God’s judgment in terms of

the worth of an individual and not man's evaluative assessment of the worth of people. And this is very important and foundational when it comes to obeying God rather than men.

Romans 1:16:

For I am not ashamed [Paul wrote] of the gospel of Christ [or that pertains to Christ]: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew [or Judean] first, and also to the Greek [the Gentile].

The Judean and the Gentile are two groups of people noted in the Bible from which God formed a new group called the household of faith (God's family) and called the body of Christ (figurative reference to how Christians can be united in their efforts to represent Christ in his absence). Prior to becoming Christians, these groups represent natural men of body and soul who have not received the gift of holy spirit yet but who can believe God to receive it. The faith of Jesus Christ is the missing key for them.

Romans 1:17:

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith [believe God raised Jesus Christ from the dead] to faith [the faith of Jesus Christ]: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

From believing God raised Jesus from the dead to the faith of Jesus Christ. Natural man, a person who is only body and soul and has not received the gift of holy spirit yet does not have the faith of Jesus Christ, but he or she can believe God to receive it. When natural man believes, confesses with his mouth the Lord Jesus, and believes that God raised him from the dead, Romans 10:9 declares he or she is saved or "thou shalt be saved". Each person can believe this, and then he receives the faith of Jesus Christ. We believe God about the Lord Jesus, represented by the first "faith" mentioned in verse 17 all the

way unto the faith of Jesus Christ represented by the second mention of “faith” in the verse.

God must provide something for man to believe for faith to exist. Faith implies a partnership with God and that person. God provides something for man to believe, like the resurrection of Christ, and man believes that truth and that is how someone gets born again through the faith of Christ. So, faith is in the category of what man does with God, each has a part in it. Believing God is what man does, and God’s part is providing what man should believe. And the faith of Jesus Christ represents what Christ did on earth when he believed God to the uttermost. He accomplished God’s plan of redemption for man as recorded in John 19:30 when he stated on the cross, “It is finished” and then he died.

Look at Galatians, chapter 2. This is at the very foundation of obedience to the faith.

Galatians 2:16:

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

That is so clear. See, justification is the legal decision by God to acquit man of guilt and sin and declare man acceptable to Him. God is the final judge and He’s the one that justified us. It was *His* legal decision to acquit man of guilt and sin. And what got us there is the faith of Jesus Christ.

Look at chapter 3 of Galatians. Now the faith that opens the door to eternal life salvation was not offered until after Jesus Christ ascended into heaven. Christ came to *make* his faith available to us, he did not take his faith with him.

Hebrews 12:2:

Looking unto Jesus the author [founder] and finisher [perfector] of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

When Jesus was all done with his work, he had founded and perfected the faith we have today. To Jesus, it was believing God to carry out God's will, to achieve man's redemption but to us it came as the faith of Christ founded and perfected in the sinless sacrifice of his life. We are eternally linked to his crucifixion and resurrection. Our past is wiped clean of sin, and our future is paved in glory. That is the significance of the crucifixion and resurrection.

Galatians 3:22:

But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that [do one thing] believe.

That's Romans 1:17, we believe Jesus died and was raised from the dead for us which ushers us to the faith of Jesus Christ. That's what bridges the chasm between man and God. That's what gets someone born again. It was his faith accomplished from earth, where he died, reached into heaven to make the connection with God. See, to us, all Christians since Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2, have this faith. Since his work was accomplished, he is no longer laboring to achieve our redemption. It is finished. We are complete in Him, lacking nothing. Like Colossians 2:10 says, we are complete. Look at verse 23:

Galatians 3:23:

But before faith came [that's the faith of Jesus Christ], we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith [What faith? The faith of Jesus Christ.] which should afterwards be revealed.

While Christ was carrying out the will of God on earth, he was perfecting faith for us, later to be given to us. It's like the heavenly Father packaged His Son's pure believing of God and gave it to us as the faith of Jesus Christ. He is no longer believing God to achieve our redemption. It's been done, it is finished.

The faith of Jesus Christ is common to all born-again believers or Christians. God is our Father, we are His children, and that's why it's a family. Hence, the household, or the family faith. This is tremendous, because Christians who know and apply these truths, can live a higher quality of life. Not being victims, but spiritual successes, as more than conquerors in every situation. Because a more-than-conqueror mindset is built on the justification through the faith of Jesus Christ that we have. Assigning the role of judge to men, in place of God, opens the door for all kinds of judgment, condemnation, and criticism.

Look at 1 Corinthians, chapter 4, please. When men are allowed to judge the value of their fellow man (I am not speaking about skills, aptitudes, intellect or anything to do with our genetic package, I am speaking about the worth of the life of a human being), when the role of God to judge is handed over to men, problems ensue. Because then the approval, and the acceptance and permission and in some cases even to live, is sought of men, rather than God, who has already given us approval, acceptance, and permission to live free in Christ and speak for Him. This judgment free lifestyle is based on our justification because we have been acquitted of all guilt and sin through Christ, and we're acceptable to God.

That does not mean Christians do not sin or disobey or exhibit behaviors unacceptable to God, but spiritually speaking Christians have unfettered access to God to receive His mercy and move on with grace doing our best to walk in newness of life and not take our cues from a godless world. Even when people violate the laws of men and are adjudicated and sentenced, the Christian may be found guilty in a court of law of men, but their value as a child of God and their access

to God through Christ never changes because God Almighty has determined it so. His will to free His people from sin through Christ cannot be altered by the devices of men.

So, obedience to the faith only allows for God's judgment, not the judgment of men in terms of one's value and acceptance before God. And we'll read about this here in 1 Corinthians, chapter 4, the Apostle Paul writes:

1 Corinthians 4:1-3:

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.

There are three categories of judgment here that we want to note. They are all judging the value of someone using worldly standards, and we want to refuse these judgments.

The first one is from carnal Christians. Paul says in verse 3, "that I should be judged of you." He's talking to the Corinthian church. And the Corinthian believers were carnal Christians, that's why he had to write this epistle to restore them back to the spiritual foundation of the faith of Jesus Christ found in the book of Romans. In 1 Corinthians 3, the chapter before this one, Paul points out their carnality because they were following men when they said some are of Paul, some are of Apollos, "are ye not carnal and walk as men?" They had begun different groups like the followers of Paul, and the followers of Apollos, when Christians should be followers of Christ! So, the first category of judgment of our worth can come from carnal Christians. Yes, even our brothers in Christ can judge us carnally using worldly standards.

The second category of judgment we should avoid is “man’s judgment”, and the word “judgment” is the word for “day”, so a better rendering in this verse is “man’s day.” So, man does the judging in the world today in the Christian era because Christ is in heaven. Man judges everything today — the way we look, the size and shape of our bodies, our age, where we went to school or did not go to school, the clothes we wear, our opinions, and the list goes on ad infinitum. But we don’t want to be open to those kinds of judgments as they pertain to our value as a child of God.

And then the third category is our own selves. Paul writes “yea, I judge not mine own self.” So, we don’t even judge ourselves. We submit to the judgment of God, not to carnal Christians, not to the world and not to our own selves. That’s what it means to obey God rather than men. That is so important when it comes to obedience to faith. The words in verse 3, “I should be judged” and “I judge,” those two phrases, are translated from one Greek word. And it means “to judge again.” Why would we judge again when God has already judged? He’s already justified us through the faith of Jesus Christ. We’ve already been acquitted of guilt and sin and made acceptable to Him. Why would we judge again, when He’s already slammed the gavel, and closed the case? We are free in Christ Jesus.

It also says that a steward is to be faithful. Well, now in this context we understand a little bit more about what it means to be faithful. “Faithful” here is not allowing ourselves to be judged, or to judge ourselves *again*, when God has justified us through the faith of Jesus Christ! We don’t want to overrule God. Our judgment is a finished pronouncement and cannot be overruled or altered in any way by anyone. It’s done. We do not entertain judgment about us that contradicts our God-given justification, and to do so, is to overrule God. But we want to obey God, not men, right?

God’s legal decision to acquit men of guilt and sin and declare man acceptable, is the only judgement to accept. This is what it means to

obey God. Even self-judgment, you know, the whole soul-searching negative introspection thing many engage in, the condemnation of self that can lead to self-loathing and extreme and destructive behaviors, is to overrule God. Without the justification by the faith of Jesus Christ, what happens is, believers seek justification from other people, or even from their own selves. Look at verse 4:

1 Corinthians 4:4:

For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

I want to read to you from the English Standard Version, verse 4:

1 Corinthians 4:4 (ESV):

For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted: it is the Lord who judges me.

What Paul is saying here is he was not even aware of anything that he should judge himself on, but even if he did have something he was not going to judge himself because he was not the judge. He would let God be the judge. That's obeying God rather than men.

Without the justification by the faith of Jesus Christ, Christians fall into the trap of seeking justification from other people. Well, that justification then becomes a source of acceptance, approval, and permission. It comes from men rather than God. Now, if we're justified by God through the faith of Jesus Christ, we can live judgment free. But, if we are justified by men, then we seek acceptance, and approval of men according to their standards and we become respecters of persons. Whomever I deem to be the one I need acceptance and approval from to validate my worth as a person, that person or group becomes the one I aim to please above others. That is a respect of persons. This is not what God wants for our lives. Look at Romans, chapter 8, please. We're considering obedience the faith, which basically, is all about obeying God rather than men.

Romans 8:1:

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

It says, “there is therefore now no condemnation.” This word “condemnation” means “sentence pronounced against”. There is no sentence pronounced against us, now, or in the future, because 1 Thessalonians 1:10 and Romans 5:9 tell us that we are saved from the wrath to come. There is no sentence pronounced against us and therefore no wrath for us in the future. That’s important because we’ve been justified by God through the faith of Jesus Christ. That’s why there is no more judgment in terms of our acceptance by God. He does not reject us, or He does not lessen our value as His child, He has made us acceptable to Him. This is what grace is all about. No amount of effort on our part can improve our being already right with God. But what happens is that when people allow someone else, like men, to justify them, then they open themselves up to all kinds of judgments and moral superiority issues.

Now, obedience to the faith also draws a line between the walk of the flesh and the walk by the spirit. The walk by the spirit is to obey God. The walk of the flesh is to remove God, it is to be carnal and obey men. Look at these verses in Romans 8:

Romans 8:5-7:

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh [this is the carnal walk like the Corinthians]; but they that are after the Spirit [the gift of holy spirit] the things of the Spirit [God].

For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. [That’s what we want.]

Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God [to be carnal is to be against God, it is not to include Him]: for it is not subject to the

law of God [this law refers to inward man of Christ as noted in chapter 7 verse 22], neither indeed can be.

That's right. If we're going to obey God, we must obey the standards He sets in His Word.

Romans 8:8-14:

So then they that are in the flesh [carnal] cannot please God.

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit [that's the gift] of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit [the gift] of Christ, he is none of his.

And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit [the gift] *is* life because of righteousness.

But if the Spirit [the gift] of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit [the gift] that dwelleth in you.

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. [We don't want to walk to live as carnal Christians, so we obey God.]

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Wow! Now look at verse 15.

Romans 8:15:

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption [or sonship], whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Now, this spirit of bondage is very significant here in the context, because we want to obey God, not man. The word “bondage” is from the Greek word *doulos*, which means a “bondslave.” This spirit can *bind* Christians. It can *enslave* them to an earthly identity when all the while they are citizens of heaven seated with Christ at the right of God. Christians who may know what the Word says can be drawn and enticed by this evil spirit to live an earthly and temporal existence so their time on earth is lived without God and without the positive expectation of eternal life. They are tricked into thinking that this life is all there is. This enslaving them to an earthly identity not who they truly are as sons of God. This deception is often subtle and cultural and can be fueled by things like the love of money, ambition for power, or deceitful agendas like underhanded and manipulative success in any field. The result is it makes people afraid to live for the true God as His sons and daughters. The result is Christians do not speak boldly for God and His Son Jesus Christ because they don’t identify and define themselves with Christ but are defined but worldly criteria.

This spirit also endeavors to bind people from walking by that gift of holy spirit that God has given to those who accept Christ. We should speak confidently about who we are in Christ. Often people speak boldly about their favorite sports team but when it comes to Christ we are shamed into silence. Well, when all is said and done in this life, what will be remembered in eternity, the victory in the “big game” or the victory of eternal life?

There is nothing wrong with being a sports fan but even when something that enriches our lives becomes dominant over the things of God, we need to make an adjustment. Perhaps you are not a sports

fan, but you see yourself as a planner. Planning is a very good thing. We get out our calendar, we plan, nothing wrong with that. Planning helps us make the best use of our time and resources. However, the problem becomes when our calendar and schedule run our life and we must serve it as a taskmaster. Eventually such things can become a source of bondage if, and I mean if, it genuinely stifles the spirit of God, or is used as another form of control over our lives. We have been called to freedom in Christ not bondage.

We as Christians come back to the ultimate judge, God. Our justification through the faith of Jesus Christ which is our foundation upon which we are more than conquerors because we do not entertain worldly judgments of our value based on our performance in life. We are sons of God, period! We only have *one* judge, and that's God, and He's made us acceptable to Him. Look at Romans 8, verse 30.

Romans 8:30:

Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified [God's legal decision to acquit men of guilt and sin and make man acceptable to Him]: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

When we walk with that faith of Jesus Christ in our heart, being justified, we look to that glory, which is to be revealed in the future at the return of Christ. It lives within our souls.

Romans 8:31:

What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

Absolutely! If God's already justified us through the faith of Jesus Christ, it's over! We are complete in Christ!

Romans 8:32-33:

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth.

There *is* no more judgment. There is no more criticism. And we don't give into the judgments from carnal Christians, judgments from cultures dominated by worldly standards, or even to our own selves, because God has justified us through the faith of Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:34:

Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

In other words, is Jesus Christ going to condemn us, after He redeemed us? NO, absolutely not!

Romans 8:35:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

These are all challenging situations that if we give into to these temptations and become victims, that is the point we may compromise when it comes to the love of Christ. Victims dismiss the complete picture of Christ. Yes, he was the lamb of God wrongfully executed who gave himself out of love. But he also is the conqueror of death resurrected by God a victor.

Romans 8:36:

As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

That's the victim mentality. When we give into that tribulation, that distress, that persecution, that famine, all those things, that's the victim mentality. But we don't have to do that because our foundation is the faith of Jesus Christ that has justified us.

Romans 8:37:

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Our God-given justification is part of the foundation upon which a more-than-a-conqueror mindset is built. When that foundation erodes, what you see is Christian believers don't have that more-than-a-conqueror mindset. They lose that boldness in Christ Jesus. They lose that boldness to live for God. They're in bondage! They blend into the cultural agendas and do not stand out as a light in a dark world. They lose that boldness to speak for God. That's right! It's because that foundation of justification through the faith of Jesus Christ has been eroded. And they're seeking justification from some other source: carnal Christianity, the world, or even their own selves, like Paul wrote. But Paul said no to this, I don't do that, I don't go for this.

Look at Acts, chapter 6. We're understanding a little bit more what of it means to be obedient to the faith, because we all share in that faith of Jesus Christ which has justified us, and given us a perfect standing before God, through Christ. Not before men. Now in the Book of Acts they didn't understand, and didn't have access, certainly at this point in Acts 6, to the revelation found in the book of Romans because it had not yet been written. They didn't understand it all, but they walked out on what they understood. And they started with the apostles' doctrine. And look at what it says here in Acts, chapter 6, verse 7. We've looked at this verse previously.

Acts 6:7:

And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests [or Judeans] were obedient to the faith.

Look at that! That is tremendous! It says the Word of God *increased*. That word “increased” is the Greek word *auxanō*, transliterated *a-u-x-a-n-ō*. It means in essence, “growth from within, from stage to stage, without compulsion.” It’s that genuine growth from that vitality within. Not being forced to grow, but walking with God, and believing God, and that genuine growth happens. And it also says “obedient to the faith.” The word “obedient” is translated from the Greek word *hupakouō*, we’ve looked at that one: hearing with a sense of stillness and attentiveness, to the end of carrying it out, in essence obeying. Again, we see obedience to the faith or embracing the completed work of Christ would be another way to understand the faith. All Christians have the faith which is how we became part of God’s family.

What’s interesting here, is the word “increased” and the word “obedient,” are both translated from verbs in the Greek, and they are continuous, repetitive, or habitual action, according to the Greek grammatical structure, meaning the believers were constantly growing in the Word as they were constantly being obedient to the faith. So, growth in the Word and obedience to faith are inseparably tied together.

Look at Acts, chapter 3. Now, verse 7 of Acts, chapter 6, in one way to look at it is a synopsis, summarizing what occurred in the section Acts 3:1 through Acts 6:6. So we’re going to look at a couple of those things to pick up what it means to be obedient to the faith as part of God’s family from the book of Acts that leads to Acts 6:7. Here Peter and John go up to the Temple Gate Beautiful, and they are going to heal a man that’s been lame from his mother’s womb.

Acts 3:4-7:

And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

Wow! Peter and John were living the lifestyle of faith by walking by the spirit which guided them through the deliverance for this man. They gave what they had. They obeyed God by continuing the ministry of Jesus Christ to win souls and heal people. It's again, back to obeying God. It's based on the Word that we know and believe. Look at Acts, chapter 4.

Now this situation, with the man at the temple gate, really stirred up the religious people, like we talked about earlier. But look at how the apostles spoke boldly. That's part of that obedience to God because they stood on the faith of Jesus Christ that had justified them.

Acts 4:10-13:

Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John [speaking boldly, they weren't afraid to speak for God]...

See, these religious leaders were trying to *stop* them from living for the true God and speaking the Word. They were trying to put them in bondage, but the apostles would have none of that. They had a more-than-a-conqueror mindset. They were speaking boldly. Look at verse 19:

Acts 4:19:

But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

Well, “in the sight of God,” is to seek His approval and He is the one want to please. We want to obey Him, and we should listen to God more than we listen to men who don't walk with God. Believers listen to the Word of God over the word of men. And then they say what they've seen and heard. Look what this leads to.

Acts 4:20:

For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

It was like a fire burning within them, like Jeremiah the prophet of old said. The Word of God was like a fire shut up in the bones of Jeremiah and he simply had to speak it. He just couldn't hold it in because the Word was living so vibrantly within him.

Acts 4:21:

So when they had further threatened them [that's usually their modus operandi, to threaten], they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all *men* glorified God for that which was done.

Yeah, public opinion certainly carries sway with these religious people. No question about that.

Acts 4:22-24:

For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said...

They lifted up their voice in prayer with one accord. That one accord is that Greek word *homothumadon*, one passion to move with God. They're praying here. They want to respond to the situation *with* God. They want to get God involved, that's why they're praying.

Acts 4:29:

And now, Lord, behold their threatenings ...

Threats of punishment in response to genuine speaking of the truth come from those who lord over God's people. That's right. These threats can be intimidating. Threats can cause people to give in and blend with the group, corporate, or social culture into an earthly identity even when they know better. The result is people are silenced and no longer live for the true God or speak for the true God. Fear causes great damage when left unchecked. Only the truth releases

people from this bondage. The company of believers dealt with this threat as God inspired them. Look at what they prayed.

Acts 4:29-31:

...and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word. [Man, that's a more-than-a-conqueror mindset.]

By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

Wow! Look at chapter 5. After being straitly commanded by the religious leaders to not preach and teach in the name of Jesus Christ, the same challenge occurs, look at verse 28:

Acts 5:28:

Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? ...

That's that bondage, trying to restrict them in living for the true God and speaking for the true God. Well, we know what verse 29 says:

Acts 5:29:

Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

Acts 5:32:

And we are his witnesses of these things; and *so is* also the Holy Ghost [God backed up their speaking the truth through power of the gift of holy spirit] whom God hath given to them that obey him.

Absolutely! Religious leaders who walk carnally are enemies of God in that situation. They resist the truth and the power of God *working* in the gift of holy spirit in and among the believers.

Look at Acts, chapter 6. We're considering obedience to the faith, how it is to obey God rather than men. It is to accept our justification in Christ, accept our heavenly identity in Christ, and speak boldly on behalf of Christ to win others back to God. Here in this situation, the Grecian widows were being missed, overlooked in the daily distribution of resources. In verse 2 it says:

Acts 6:2:

Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

They set the priority. The Word has got to be our focus today or the agendas and priorities in the cultures of the world will take over.

Acts 6:3-5:

Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost [meaning full of demonstrating the gift holy spirit — the fruit and power of it] and wisdom [spiritual wisdom], whom we may appoint over this business.

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

And the saying pleased the whole multitude: ...

See, obedience to the faith allows for collaborative strengths, those body of Christ unique members to emerge, because we're not intimidated by each other, meaning, we want each other to contribute, because we each have the same measure of faith. Romans

12:3 tells us that. And that is part of obedience to the faith as well. We encourage an environment where our young people grow and develop strengths and interests, according to the Word. This is the way the Word continues to thrive from one generation to the next. We don't want to squelch them. They may not have done everything perfectly, but they love and are bold in the faith they make their own. This is important to remember. Look at Galatians, chapter 6.

Obedience to the faith is about winning in the spiritual competition, obeying God rather than men. And we fight for our brothers and sisters, not with them. And obedience to the faith rescues us from a self-centered life, and delivers us to a Christ-centered life of service. Because obedience to the faith starts with us, but it's not just about us. Look at

Galatians 6:10:

As we have therefore opportunity [the right thing at the right time], let us do good unto all *men* [sure, we want to be good to all men, that's how we win people to God], especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Obedience to the faith is a household or family thing we can all take part in. To put fellow believers, our brothers, and sisters in Christ as a priority is right. Because God put us in a household, a family, to help each other grow in Christ.

Look at Colossians, chapter 1. Everybody deserves that because everybody has a treasure in earthen vessels. But the excellency of the power is of God, and not of us. And we want to help each member of the family rise their full potential and mature spiritually in the Lord.

Colossians 1:27-28:

To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the

hope of glory [in the future when we all reach the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ in glory].

Whom we preach [we bring it home to each individual so they can understand], warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect [mature] in Christ Jesus.

Every man. No one gets missed. That's obedience to the faith as a family. Because we each have the same measure of faith, the faith of Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:29:

Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily [That's what we labor towards].

Look at Romans 16. We want to see people mature in Christ Jesus, and it starts with that foundation of obedience to the faith. And we said that the Book of Romans has the foundational keys for the Christian era. It bookends obedience to the faith. How tremendous that is! It's established.

Romans 16:25-26:

Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets [prophetic writings], according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.

The obedience of faith should be spread abroad to all nations. Obedience to the faith bookends the Book of Romans which sets the foundation in the Christian era for doctrine. Obedience to the faith, is about obeying God rather than men. And only accepting *God's* judgment because we have been justified through the faith of Jesus Christ. And, with that, we have a more-than-a-conqueror mindset. We are *bold*. We are bold in who we are as sons of God because our identity is in Christ, and we speak forth the Word boldly regardless of any judgment that comes from carnal Christians, the world, or even ourselves.

Philippians, chapter 1 please. When the Apostle Paul had taught the revelation of the great mystery there at Ephesus, and it had spread out through that entire area of Asia Minor, the Word says that "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." What a testimony! Yet, by the end of Paul's life, as recorded in 2 Timothy, he says that all those of Asia had turned away from him, meaning not him, they turned away from what he taught, the revelation of the mystery and the grace given to us by God through Christ. Christianity fell into a dark time when the works of men in religious disguises reigned over God's people through institutions built by men. This is not acceptable in our day and time. That's why we do Philippians 1:27-28.

Philippians 1:27-28:

Only let your conversation [referring to our heavenly citizenship] be as it becometh the gospel of Christ [that pertains to Christ]: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast [meaning stand firm, you stand firm in one spirit or as one spiritually] in one spirit, with one mind [like one person] striving together for the faith of the gospel;

And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token [points a finger to their destruction] of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

Every time we stand together, and strive together, for the gospel or good news about the faith of Jesus Christ we have as a family we are obeying God rather than men, we are accepting only God's value and worth of our lives because we are justified by Him as the judge of all things. We are bold to speak and to live for God. This all points to the adversary's destruction and it points to our salvation.

Obedience to the faith is characterized by obeying God rather than men. We do not fall prey to the judgments of men that claim to overrule God, because we are justified through the faith of Jesus Christ. Obedience to the faith carries a respect that came upon every soul, that treasure in earthen vessels, that Christ-in-you attitude that promotes an environment of collaboration and contribution to flourish as the body of Christ.

In this Apologia series, we've endeavored to provide a roadmap on how to get back to God's grace and living the mystery of the body of Christ in unity. Unity for Christians will continue to be a mystery unless we each come back to the truth regarding the faith of Jesus Christ and by freewill submit. Obedience to the faith is the practical home base, if you will, on that roadmap. And it is, the *homothumadon*, the one accord, to be reached. May God as the fountain of living waters continue to pour forth His grace, mercy, and peace and His abundant blessings to you and yours through Christ Jesus our Lord, Amen.