

PARK HILL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
MOTHER'S DAY
REV. JOHN L. THOMPSON
"LOVE AND OBEY"
John 14:23-29
May 9, 2010
9:15 & 11:00 A.M. SERVICES

Today is **Mother's Day!** It is a wonderful day to welcome you to our church. The fact that we all survived childhood means that we should all be thankful to our moms. Can you imagine a better lesson for Mother's Day than the one read this morning? Jesus said to his disciples, "*Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them . . .*" Obedience is important to our spiritual lives. However, obedience is also an important part of helping a family run smoothly.

A professor was giving a lecture on company slogans and was asking his students if they were familiar with them. "**Joe,**" he asked, "**which company has the slogan, FLY THE FRIENDLY SKIES?**" Joe answered with the correct airline. "**Brenda, can you tell me which company has the slogan, DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT IT?**" Brenda answered quickly with the correct credit card company.

"**Now John, tell me which company bears the slogan, JUST DO IT?**"
"**That's easy,**" John answered, "**It's my Mom.**" (1)

Well everyone has heard mom say it: "**JUST DO IT?**" Why? "**BECAUSE I SAID SO!**"

Jesus said to his disciples, "*Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them .*"

There is an undeniable link between love and obedience. We can threaten a child to be obedient. We can punish an act of willful defiance. But the only way that our children will internalize the values we want for them will be if they know they are connected to us by a bond of love that cannot be broken. So it is in our relationship with God.

It is important that we obey God's commands. That may sound obvious, but this is almost a lost teaching today. We have become so permissive – a sort of “**do your own thing**” society. The lines between right and wrong have become blurred. Even some people who proclaim they believe in God have a particularly hard time with obedience.

There are some people with serious character flaws that either they don't recognize, or simply don't care about. They get into politics, into sports, education and even in ministry. Usually it can be traced back to a failure to submit to ones parents, especially to mom.

Our prisons are filled with people who say; “**If only I had listened to my mother.**” Too many of us are offended by the notion of obedience. We want to be the captain of our own ship, but obedience is an important trait of a successful life-particularly obedience to God. God is a God of abundant grace, but that does not mean God that does not have expectations for us. The Scriptures are full not only of God's promises, but also of God's instructions for how we are to live our lives. Obedience to those instructions is vitally important.

A family cannot function without some measure of discipline. We can begin to transform the world simply by obeying our parents. We cannot serve Christ unless we exercise discipline over our spiritual lives. We are to obey Christ's commands. We are to love our neighbor. We are to observe the Commandments. We are to help the poor. We are to welcome the stranger. We are to forgive those who wrong us, pray for those who insult us.

Our obedience grows out of our love for God. The bible is not suggesting blind obedience without exercising our brains. Neither is it suggesting obedient out of fear of divine punishment. We seek to live according to Christ's teachings because we love God. The closer we get to God, the easier it becomes to obey

God. The closer we come to God the more we are reminded of God's love for us.

“Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching,” Christ says to us. But listen to what follows, *“My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.”*

It's appropriate on this special day that we compare God's love to that of a mother who loves her child. Young people should know that when your mother gives you a rule to follow, even one as bland as **“Be sure to put a jacket on . . .”** or **“Be in by midnight . . .”**, you should know down in your heart, she's doing it out of love. You are at the very center of her world and she wants you to be safe. She wants you to be happy. She knows that this is a dangerous world. There are some things that might bring us a few moments happiness that in the long run of life can spell ruin for us. She's not really being mean. Overly protective, perhaps, but not mean. And, yes, Moms are human. They make mistakes, but 99% of the time, they make those mistakes in love. They really want your well-being.

Let me close with this story of a mother's love. Pat Williams, in his book **Mr. Little John's Secret To A Lifetime of Success**, tells of attending a very special Atlanta Braves' baseball home opener on April 8, 1974. It was a night game against the Dodgers and it was a complete sellout. Williams looked around to see that, seated immediately behind him was singer Pearl Bailey. Up at the plate: the immortal Henry Aaron. On the line: Babe Ruth's record of 714 career home runs. Aaron had tied the record and tonight he was aiming to break it.

This was 36 years ago. An African-American player was about to topple the great Babe Ruth--and a lot of people in the country didn't like it. Aaron got a lot of mail that year--more than 930,000 letters in all, far more than any other person in the country. Most were fan letters--but about 100,000 of them were hate letters, some containing death threats.

Williams says he was on the edge of his seat when Dodgers pitcher Al Downing hurled the ball toward the plate. Aaron swung and connected. The crack of his bat echoed through the stands. The ball was gone. Home run. Babe Ruth's record was shattered. The ballpark erupted!

“As Aaron rounded second base,” says Williams, “a couple of teenagers-- both white--jumped over the retaining wall and ran onto the field, chasing Aaron. For a moment, no one knew what they had in mind, but then it became clear: they were celebrating and cheering Aaron on. As Aaron crossed the plate, the dugout emptied as the Braves streamed onto the field to surround him, cheering and whooping it up. But amid all those ballplayers around Aaron was a short, sixty-eight-year-old black woman. She latched onto Aaron and wouldn’t let go of him.”

“Henry Aaron turned and said to her, ‘Mom! What are you doing here?’

“‘Baby,’ said the mother of the new home-run king, ‘if they’re gonna get you,’ (thinking of the death threats Aaron had received) ‘they’ve gotta get me first!’” (2)

That is love only a mother could have for her child. **“If they’re gonna get you, they’ve gotta get me first!”** There is not a mother here who will not die for her children. And there are some of us here whose mothers did die for our survival. **Happy Mother’s Day!**

1. Internet

2. Mr. Little John's Secrets to a Lifetime of Success, (Grand Rapids, MI Pat Williams with James D. Denney (Contributor), 2000), pp. 109-110.