

Reading: Matthew 3:1-17

***“We (the apostles) are ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled” (2 Cor 10:6)***

John the Baptist must have learnt obedience from his parents who were “walking in all the commandments of the Lord, blameless” (Lk 1:6). His ministry in turn was “to turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just” (v 17). He accepted to baptise Jesus only when the appeal was made on the basis of fulfilling God’s righteous commandments.

Jesus began His ministry only at thirty years of age. Until then He was practising a walk of obedience before the Father. Approving His spirit of submission and obedience, the Father testified at the commencement of His ministry, “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased” (Mt 3:17).

Evangelism means calling people to “obedience to the faith” (Rom 16:25,26). Disobedient men and women are disqualified to proclaim the evangel. They will only bring dishonour to the Name of God among the non-Christians (Rom 2:22,23). Do we wonder why the Church in India still fails to impress the society? Loud speeches and loud-speakers do not move communities. When we ask people, especially those who can think, “Why don’t you become Christians?” they repeat Gandhi’s saying, “I will become a Christian when I meet one!” Let’s get serious about this reproach on our rank and file.

The Holy Spirit operates freely through those who are obedient and yielded to Him (Acts 5:32). Because of His gentle dove-like nature He does not instantly react to our disobedience to the will of God. He may let us continue operating His gifts of prophesy, healing and miracles. If we take these manifestations for granted, we are in for the most unpleasant surprise of our lives. By the time we would hear the verdict, “I never knew you; depart from Me,” it would be too late to reverse the situation (Mt 7:20-27). After serving this warning at the end of His great sermon, Jesus compared the obedient to the wise, and the disobedient to the foolish.

Mere zeal is not enough to serve God acceptably. After healing a leper, Jesus strictly warned him not to make his healing too public. But he went out and began to proclaim it freely. The result was that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city (Mk 1:40-45). See how disobedience hinders God’s work.

***Satan cannot disobey a man who cannot disobey God!***

*Reading: Mt 3:1-17**Memorising: 2 Cor 10:6*

Almighty God,

We worship You as the One who is, and who was, and who is to come! Great and marvellous are Your works! Just and true are Your ways! All honour and power and might belong to You forever and ever! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your Name? You are the Lord of Hosts. You are mighty in battle.

Forgive us, Lord, for frequently giving in to the push and pull of the spirit of disobedience that characterizes this age. Our self takes the upper hand against Your authority and commandments. Give us, O Father, a heart of flesh and brokenness to obey the commandments of Your Word and the voice of Your Spirit instantly.

Father God, You are forgiving us freely because of Your love for us Your children. Oftentimes we mistake Your love and patience and take advantage of them, and keep going our way. Circumcise our ears and heart, O God! We know, Lord, that nothing pleases You like obedience. But we try to appease You through our offerings and service to You. Forgive us this foolishness, O God! We keep hardening our hearts because You don't punish us immediately. We keep hardening our hearts because You don't withdraw Your blessings quickly.

Dear Father, we beseech You for the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives to bring down our mountains of pride, and to straighten our crooked ways. Help us not to grieve Him who is given to us to enable us walk in the path of obedience. Forgive us for even quenching Him by rejecting His voice repeatedly. We now open our hearts to Him again for His full sway.

Father God, we confess that most of our failures and problems are because of our disobedience to Your Word, and turning a deaf ear to Your warnings. Help us search our ways and turn to You in total submission. Help us walk as Jesus walked in perfect obedience as a sweet-smelling aroma to You. Let us walk with You in perfect alignment and agreement. Each of us want to hear from You, Father, "You are My beloved child in whom I am well-pleased!" What other honour do we need, Lord?

In the Name of Jesus, Your absolutely obedient Son, Amen!

*(Rev 1:8; 15:3; Eph 2:2; 1 Sam 15:22,23; Mt 3:17; Psa 51:16,17; Heb 5:8-10; Ezek 11:19; 36:26; Eccl 8:11; Rom 2:29; Eph 4:30)*