



The Freedom of Obedience

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Genesis 18:1-15; Proverbs 15:15; Proverbs 13:12; Genesis 21:1,6

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Prayer:

So we keep on praying for you, asking our God to enable you to live a life worthy of his call. May he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do. ¹² Then the name of our Lord Jesus will be honored because of the way you live, and you will be honored along with him. This is all made possible because of the grace of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ. **2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 (NLT)**

Discussion Starter

- Has there ever been a time you were in the lowlands of life, looking up at the highlands but didn't know how to get there? If you're willing, share about that time. Did you make it to the highlands? How did you get there?

Sermon Summary

What is my disposition? What is the condition of my heart? "All the days of the oppressed are heavy," says Proverbs, "but the cheerful heart has a continual feast," (15:15). The heart of a slave can be timid or pessimistic because she worries that God and the world are laughing *at* her (Gen. 18:12-15). But a child of promise believes that God and the world are laughing *with* her (Gen. 21:6) and so she is free from the fear of failure and lives with a disposition of joy, wonder and confidence.

Sermon Review Questions

- Think of times in your life when you were "low." Did it feel like God was ignoring, rebuking, or mocking you? What was that like?
- Have you ever felt alone and has God ever revealed you during those times? (Maybe someone noticed you or you were brought from the darkness to the light.) Share what that was like.
- How have you seen God redirect or redeem situations in your life or in the life of someone else? Share that story.
- Think about the people who are "step flashing" in your life.
 - Who are your friendships of the soul? What are those people like?
 - Who keeps you accountable? How do they do this? Are you still giving them permission to keep you accountable? Are you being honest with them?

- Do you have a small group for discipleship? Is that small group truly making you a better disciple? If not, how would the group need to change in order to help each other grow in discipleship?
- Do you have a spiritual guide? Who are they and what do you talk about?

Transformation Questions

1. What do you think God is saying to you?
2. What is keeping you from doing this?
3. If you were to do it, what might be a good first step?
4. Who will you tell? Or who will you ask to help you?

Habit

Find the people who will be step flashing and set up times to meet with them regularly.

Quote

“Celebration is at the heart of the way of Christ. He entered the world on a high note of jubilation: ‘I bring you good news of great joy,’ cried the angel, ‘which shall come to all the people’ (Luke 2:10). He left the world bequeathing his joy to the disciples: ‘These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.’ (John 15:11)”

Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*