

Series: G-R-O-W-I-N-G in Christ  
Message Title: The **O**bedience of Faith  
Date: Sunday, March 19, 2017  
Scripture: Various Passages  
Speaker: David H. McKinley  
Location: Warren Baptist Church, Augusta, GA

---

## Introduction

If someone stopped you in the hallway at either the Augusta or Grovetown campus and asked, "Can you tell me the mission statement of Warren?", could you provide the answer? Did you know we have a church mission statement? Where would you find it?

*Warren is a community of believers  
surrendered to the authority of Jesus Christ  
and dedicated to advancing the gospel  
together in our neighborhoods and around  
the world as we make disciples and  
multiply disciple-makers.*

The critical phrase in the entire mission statement is this: "... surrendered to the authority of Jesus Christ." We do what we do because of who we are and whose we are. Our mission is not really ours; it is the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This statement is the foundation of our mission. All of our activity, our ambition and our affection flow from and through this filter: Jesus Christ is Lord!

The Lordship of Jesus Christ is the basis of both our membership within the body and stewardship of the gospel message and mission.

While this statement should be obvious, it seems many are oblivious to the reality that to be a follower of Christ is to surrender all of life to His sovereign authority and rule.

Jesus Christ is Lord! Hence, if this is our confession, then obedience will be the consistent attitude and action of every authentic Christian and devoted disciple.

The Christian life is one filled with abundant opportunities, but not many options! No one can say, "I'll have a little "Savior-hood," but no Lordship." No!

"Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His

prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of His name among all the nations, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:1-6 ESV).

To confess that Jesus Christ is Lord is to bring about the obedience of faith in you! Paul uses the term this way: Lord = Undisputed Owner/Master.

"Now to Him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen" (Romans 16:25-27 ESV).

Once again, we see the inseparable association of the person and work, power and glory of Christ, and the “obedience of faith in us.”

Today, we are continuing our *Growing in Christ* series with a message entitled, *The Obedience of Faith*:

We Grow...      By Grace  
                         Through Renewal  
                         In Obedience

“A growing Christian is an obedient Christian. More than a person who has enhanced religious thoughts and opinions, authentic growth results in active obedience.”

The book of Romans is written to define and clarify two polarizing realities:

1. A “guilt-condemnation” on us all because of our sin. (Romans 3:23)
2. A “gift-righteousness” because of Christ and Christ alone. (Romans 3:21-22)

The reality of this gift-righteousness is seen in the life of a man whose footprints are found many places in Scripture. He is the father of faith to all who believe, and his name is Abraham.

“What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness” ... But the words ‘it was counted to him’ were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in Him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord” (Romans 4:1-3, 23-24 ESV).

No one in the Old Testament or New Testament was every made right with God by good works or best efforts. The only way is by faith alone in Christ alone.



## **The Obedience of Faith Means...**

### **1. Confession of Jesus Christ as Lord**

This is the gospel message: Jesus in my place.

“For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly... but

God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God” (Romans 5:6, 8-9 ESV).

What then is the result of this understanding of Good News and our need for redeeming grace?

“For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness... because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved” (Romans 10:3, 9-10 ESV).

If human pride and self-dependence are the greatest expressions of our rebellion against God, then the greatest act of obedience to God is faith in His Son—the Lord Jesus Christ—and His great work of salvation for us.

Biblical salvation is nothing more and nothing less than surrender of your life to

the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This is a work of grace, not of human effort, but a work when effectual, results in a lifestyle of obedience for all who believe.

“... a notable heresy has come into being throughout evangelical Christian circles—the widely accepted concept that we humans can choose to accept Christ only because we need Him as Savior and that we have the right to postpone our obedience to Him as Lord... Salvation apart from obedience is unknown in sacred Scripture.” —A.W. Tozer

“If Jesus is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all.” —C.T. Studd

We come under a new authority in life—the Lord Jesus Christ—and this becomes both a motivating and liberating authority in all of life for us.

This is far more than a *positional* truth. It has many *practical* applications and implications.

“Obedience is the grand object of the work of grace in the hearts of those who are chosen and called: they are to become obedient children.” —C.H. Spurgeon

For Abraham (the man whose life enables us to see “gift-righteousness”), there was a total redirection of his life by faith.

## **2. Confidence in God’s Authority Over Our Lives**

Given a new authority in Abraham’s life, faith was active and evident. Some people pit the Apostle Paul against James. Paul said Abraham was faith alone without works—true! But James made it clear: “Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works” (James 2:18b ESV).

“So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead” (James 2:17 ESV).

Faith is not the result of good works, but good works are the result of genuine faith.

See Hebrews 11:8-10. Abraham’s faith changed the course of his life. God had a plan and it required a walk—footsteps of faith—that followed God’s directive in Abraham’s life and for his future.



Abraham gave up and gave over the control of his life and future to God, and in so doing, honored his faith by relying on God's faithfulness to Him.

Abraham's call to obedience was disturbing (let go), but it was also comforting and securing (let God). Nothing is harder for us given our stubborn individualistic attitudes in western culture. We are so driven by rights, choices, options and control that we really struggle to accept and embrace a life of submission to Christ.

Yet, this is a call to an obedience/reliance on an Authority outside ourselves to dictate and direct the action of our lives. We are so accustomed to hearing our own voice and the plethora of voices around us, we can struggle to hear and obey the voice of God and allow it to shape our decisions and actions.

For all who come to Him in faith and seek Him in obedience, God demonstrates His goodness and faithfulness.

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen... And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him” (Hebrews 11:1, 6 ESV).

God honors faith because faith honors God.

“For faith is only real when there is obedience, never without it, and faith only becomes faith in the act of obedience.” —Dietrich Bonhoeffer, influential pastor/theologian martyred by Nazi regime

Abraham not only believed God for righteousness; Abraham proved God in faithfulness!

In 2013, after spending a year seeking God’s guidance for us as a church, we began to take steps in faith to launch a second campus. Frankly, it would have been easier to do nothing—life was good at Warren. But faith never allows us to rest on success; faith always calls us to look ahead. That is why it is *faith*!

In 2012, a team of twelve were appointed by the church (like spies in the Old Testament/ Joshua), but brought a good report—one that could/would demand something of us, but one that would challenge our faith.

Show video.

Notice the final appeal. God seems to be saying and His question to us is this: “Will you trust Me?”

Look at that phrase in our mission statement again: “surrendered to the authority of Jesus Christ. . . make disciples.”

We began to consider, investigate and ultimately act on an opportunity, not just to gain a small presence in Grovetown, but also to take ground for the future—40K commercial warehouse, primary frontage. Big risk, yet a bold faith.

Three years ago today on March 16, 2014, we opened the doors and this new mission outpost began.

## God has blessed and honored faith:

- 69 testimonies through baptism
  - 187 new members added to church
  - 16 Life Groups
  - 11 Discipleship Groups
  - 1,100 kids/volunteers, Fall Fest 2016
  - 60% of those on campus are children
  - 577 2016 VBS (preschool - Grade 5)
  - 2 Ft. Gordon service trainings for personnel
  - 1 Ft. Gordon Military Appreciation Breakfast  
hosted by Jeff Strueker (Blackhawk Down)
  - 1 Ft. Gordon Military Date Night
    - location for Columbia County Charter School, SAIL, public forums
    - location for Columbia County voting facility
- and...*
- 2 families commissioned and sent to serve as full-time missionaries:
    - Spraggs = Swaziland ([spaggsonmission.com](http://spaggsonmission.com))
    - Wilkins = Knysna, South Africa

The facility? It was renovated and will be owned free and clear in the fall of 2018! God has blessed His people; not because we are good, worthy or anything; but simply we have sought the obedience of faith and God honors faith that honors Him.

We could fail, but that is not our concern.  
Our only fear is to fail to believe God.

For we will not obey God if we do not believe. How about you? What about today? Have you believed on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ?

I proclaim the Lord Jesus Christ and His “gift-righteousness” today in order that you may come to the obedience of faith—to disbelieve is to disobey. It is the greatest human defiance!

Yet, to come to Christ by faith is to follow Christ in obedience.