

News of the Saints

The Newsletter of All Saints Reformed Presbyterian Church

APRIL 2008

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OBEDIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING

April brings to an end the wonderful experience that Rick Hutton and I have had teaching the class on parenting. What strong interest we have experienced! What a joy to see what our younger parents are doing!



Fred Sloan

Over the course of this class, we talked about the fundamental mistake that many modern parents make when they seek to reason with their one or two year old. The parent seeks to lead the child to understanding rather than commanding and insisting upon obedience.

At this age a child should learn the most important word in his vocabulary, "No." He should learn to obey simply because the parent says so. He should bow his knee to his parent's authority.

This type of parenting is a bitter pill for many modern parents who have rejected the Biblical view of man that was a given for parents in our culture for centuries. This view was rooted in the concept that man is fallen and rebellious and needs direction and training. He will not come naturally on his own to develop righteous behavior. In fact if left to his own, he will more often do destructive things.

Part of the reason that our culture experiences such disarray is that we are reaping the fruit of such parenting. Yet our culture still bows before the secular priests who write the books and do the talk shows.

In emphasizing the Biblical view that obedience must follow understanding for the small child, I began to ask myself how this is different for the adult, and I have come to the conclusion that there are more similarities than differences.

Let me begin with two statements by Jesus in the Gospel of John. John 7:17 says, "If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine whether is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.

Jesus says here that the prerequisite for understanding that His authority comes from God is first of all a broken will. My will that so desires to do what I want must be bro-

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ROBINSON'S REPORT ON INDIA

BEFORE GOING TO INDIA Scott and I had an interest in visiting the Hindu Holy city of Rishikesh, touring a Hindu temple, a Buddhist temple and perhaps seeing Sikhs at prayer. These are not things we could easily see in the United States. The idea sounded, to me, exotic or, maybe even, 'make-believe'. After all, who in this day actually bows down to idols?

But I was naïve. And now I have a very different perspective. These religions are not pretend, and millions of people in India bow down and devoutly worship idols. Rishikesh is not primarily a tourist site nor is it a game. It is a place where Hindu pilgrims travel—often walking in bare feet or flip flops for weeks in order to collect water from the “sacred” Ganges River in order to carry it back home to pour out before their household idols.



India is a country of only 2.3 % (loosely labeled) Christians. The majority religion is Hinduism with about 828 million adherents, composing 80.4% of the population. There are 147 million Muslims in the country making up 13.4 % of the population. India contains 17 million Buddhists (1.5%) and 19.2 million Sikhs. It is a spiritually dark country; a country where our son later told me he 'felt' the evil. I guess that should not be surprising since, as Eerdmans Bible Dictionary states, *“the idol [in Old Testament times] was nothing, but nevertheless there was a demonic spiritual force to be reckoned with, and that the idol therefore constituted a positive spiritual menace.”* And *“the practice of idolatry brings men into deadly contact with these ‘gods.’”* And *“Because of the reality of evil power behind the idol, it is an abomination to Yahweh.”* And *“Idols are both non-entities and dangerous spiritual potencies.”*

But there is a beacon of light in this vast darkness. In the village of Bhogpur, Northern India in the foothills of the Himalaya Mountains, there is a

Christian Home whose mission is to children; one or both of whose parents suffer from Hansen's disease or leprosy. Medical missionaries, Dr. and Mrs. John C. Taylor Sr., started it in 1945. The Home provides a haven of health, security, education and Bible-based Christian training for the 700 children living there. It is a place that provides children and young adults an opportunity to escape very difficult lives, lives of begging and most certain poverty.

Children come to the Home, at the request of their parents, around age three and stay until they have completed their education or job training at around age 22. While living at the Home they are under the hearing of the Gospel and the teaching of the Word from the day they arrive. In a very real sense these children become Covenant children.

Regular attendance at the nearby Presbyterian Church, daily devotions, camp meetings, vacation Bible schools, special speakers and personal counseling all make it possible for them to come to faith in Christ by the time they are adults. In addition the children attend an English-speaking Christian school. Most of them become believers. Usually they marry each other and raise families in the faith. As Eleanor Fiol says, “They love the word of God.”

Over a thousand children have graduated from the Home since its inception and nearly all of them profess faith in Jesus Christ and have successful occupations and lives. Scott, Lexie, Luke and I were privileged to spend time at the Home and meet, in addition to the current students, several former students including the Chief Manager of the Home. We were struck with the realization that this is an excellent way to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ in India!

The All Saints congregation is sponsoring a child, a twelve-year-old girl named Sunita Verma. (When I receive her picture and information I will post it on a bulletin board at church). Other individ-

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uals at All Saints are also sponsoring children. The amount for sponsoring one child is \$60 a month, which can be shared by two people or families. Gifts are tax deductible and may be sent to MTW. The Home needs hundreds of sponsors.

It is our hope and prayer that God will move in the hearts of many people to pray for and financially support the Bhogpur Home. The children are cared for and loved but nonetheless, by American standards, they are exceedingly poor. Scott and I made a 17-minute documentary DVD of our time in India and the Home. For those of you who did not see it when we showed it at church, we would be thrilled to let you borrow it. There are also brochures of the Home on the table in the hallway. Please help yourself to one.

Debbie Robinson

Ruth Sutherland Baptized



We rejoice with Matt and Lynna Sutherland upon the baptism of their daughter Ruth Susannah. The ceremony took place at All Saints on Sunday, March 9th and was witnessed by family and friends and the All Saints congregation. We pray that the Lord will build Ruth into a strong and faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church.

Ukrop's Golden Gift Program

During the months of February and March Ukrop's is having their yearly Golden Gift Receipt program. Every time you shop at Ukrop's, you accumulate points which will result in a cash payment to your favorite charitable organization. During the month of May, Ukrop's will mail you a certificate with your total number of points indicated on it. You simply turn in your receipt to the program coordinator. All Saints will be participating in the program this year. Becky Waddill is the coordinator and will be happy to collect your certificates and turn them in for a donation from Ukrop's. In the past we have used these funds to buy some much needed items for the church, particularly in the kitchen area. So, shop at Ukrop's!



February & March

Shop at Ukrop's and accumulate golden gift points

May

Golden Gift Receipts will be mailed to you

June

Deadline for submitting receipts

August

Checks will be mailed to participating organizations

Steinmann Family Getting Larger

Susannah Agnes Steinmann was born at 10:32 Saturday night (March 1st) to former All Saints members Sam and Kyndra Steinmann. She is 21 inches long and weighs 8 lbs 4 ounces. We congratulate the growing Steinmann family and praise God for His blessing upon them!

One Day During 'The Great Awakening'...

Quoting George Whitefield . . . (at age 24)

Journal entry from Sunday, March 4, 1739:

Arose much refreshed in spirit and gave my early attendants a warm exhortation as usual. Went to Newgate and preached with power to an exceedingly thronged congregation. Then hastened to Hanham Mount, three miles from the city, where the miners live altogether. God favoured us in the weather. Over four thousand were ready to hear me, and God enabled me to preach with the demonstration of the Spirit. The ground not being high enough, I stood upon a table and the sight of the people covering the green fields, and their deep attention, pleased me much. I hope that same Lord, who fed so many thousands with bodily bread, will feed all their souls with the Bread which cometh down from Heaven, for many came from far. At four in the afternoon, I went to the mount on Rose Green and preached to over fourteen thousand souls. God was so good to allow all to be able to hear me.



I think it was worth while to come many miles to see such a sight. I spoke with great freedom, but thought all the while, as I do continually, when I ascend the mount, that hereafter I shall suffer, as well as speak, for my Master's sake. Lord, strengthen me for that hour. Lord, I believe (O help my unbelief!) that Thy grace will be more sufficient for me.

In the evening I expounded (the Word of God) at Baldwin Street Society, but could not get up to the room without the utmost difficulty, as the entry and court were much filled with people. Blessed be God, the number of hearers much increases and as my day is, so is my strength.

Tonight I returned home much more refreshed in joy and longed to be dissolved and to be with Jesus Christ. This has been a sabbath indeed to my soul!

All Saints Women In Retreat!

The March 1, 2008 All Saints Women's Retreat was a wonderful time of fellowship and learning. The new format for a one day local retreat was a nice change, and very enjoyable. We met at the beautiful Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens.

The topic was *Prayers That Touch God's Heart*. Our speaker for the retreat was Barbara Markland. Barbara has been a member of Sycamore Presbyterian for 11 years, and is an author of many Bible studies and devotionals. She is also a talented artist, and you can see some of her work on her website.

Through two lectures, she shared examples of biblical prayers and personal applications to improve our prayer life. From Jeremiah 29:12 and Jeremiah 33:3, she talked about how God will always listen and answer our prayers. Barbara used many gospel passages to show examples of how Jesus prayed, so we could model after His example. She also talked about how we need to trust, worship and obey to have a more meaningful prayer time. I think everyone grew in their knowledge and appreciation for how to pray to touch God's heart.

We also enjoyed times of singing lead by Paige Hedgecoth and Becky Waddill. At one point we broke into small groups for further discussion and prayer. This was encouraging to hear from other women about their prayer life.

Linda Trumbo shared a very encouraging testimonial on the effects of prayer in her life. Genevieve Daniel led the group in a fun Bingo game. We had the opportunity to walk around and find out specific bits of information about other women at the retreat, and try to complete the Bingo board. Then it was lunch time! The food was wonderful- crab cakes, roast beef, fresh salad, and yummy

rolls. Some women had the chance to walk around the gardens or do a little shopping at the gift shop over our lunch break also.

We closed this wonderful 2008 retreat with group prayer and sharing, and then fellowship and chocolate! Could anything be better than that?!

I went home feeling refreshed and thankful to have such a godly, wonderful group of women to call friends here at All Saints.

Thank you Katharine Bullock, Carrie Ludovico and your wonderful team for putting together such a great retreat!

*If you are interested in signing up for Barbara's weekly email devotional, or would like to purchase any of her Bible studies, please visit her website: www.timeforablessing.com.

Lisa M. Garnett



“Obedience” continued from page 1...

ken, and I must seek to do His will. This is another way of saying that I must obey His Word. It is only after this occurs that one can know that Christ is the Son of God and not merely some charismatic teacher who gathered a crowd. Clearly, understanding follows obedience.

Consider a second example, John 8:31, “. . . if you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.”

If we begin with freedom and ask ourselves what produces freedom, we find that freedom follows truth which comes from His word, but one must interact with that word in such a way that one abides in it. This clearly points to a life of faithful obedience. Again the pattern is that understanding follows obedience.

How does this come about? A child learns as a toddler that he must obey the words of his parents because they are his authority. In light of what Jesus said in John 8 regarding words and freedom, we can see that the parents who train their child this way have taken a big step toward his becoming a godly person because Jesus says that adults must bow their knee to His authority before they can understand.

Why is bowing the knee to authority so important? Failure to bow my knee means that I sit in judgment on God’s authority. I am like the judge who sits in his court and listens to arguments and decides which one is right. I place myself over God and His authority to decide if He was told the truth. This is the height of arrogance and a great sin.

In addition, I assume an omniscience that says I completely understand all the implications of following my own way. Can a teenager understand and appreciate the implications of sexual immorality? Is he not far better off to obey through very hard years when his hormones are very strong allowing God to show Him over the years of his life the blessings of obedience?

All of this is not to deny the importance of reading,

study, teaching, and arguments for the truth. What begins for the toddler as a simple “no” is much more sophisticated for the growing child and the adult, yet at the core for the most brilliant adult is the very same issue as for the toddler at the coffee table – understanding follows obedience.



From this I would suggest three aspects of understanding all of which are critical. First and most fundamental is the recognition of God and His authority that calls for my submission and obedience. I must bow my knee to His “no.”

Second, understanding involves the interaction with the words by which that authority expresses its commands. The Bible is a very large book full of the words and wisdom of the authority of the mind of God. I must devote myself to that study with a heart of submission and obedience. In both of these aspects the emphasis is more on the “what” of God’s authority. What has God said? What will I do in response to what He has said.

For example, parents of older children and teenagers should talk to their children about sex and sexual morality from the point of God’s authority. They should seek to persuade them that this is truth. They should hold up to them the consequences of obedience and the fruits of disobedience. But the level of understanding is still rudimentary and more on the level of bowing the knee to God’s “no.”

In the third aspect this changes somewhat as I begin to see more of the “why” behind God’s wisdom. I reap the benefit as I experience God’s goodness through the fruit of obedience. Like a snowball rolling down a hill, my heart is filled with awe and wonder at the mind of God who blesses us beyond our faintest imaginations to a thousand generations. I see through the eyes of experience how wise our God is. Who is a god like our God – to quote a great pastor!

Let me conclude with a gospel challenge. Satan likes to fill our hearts with guilt of our failings in this area. Certainly all sin has its consequences and those consequences can be bitter. But the prophet Joel (2:25) says that we serve a God who is able to restore what the locust has eaten. Think of that! A massive swarm of locusts have come through and eaten all the crops -- the equivalence of a massive depression. Yet, Joel says that our God is able to restore all that!

My challenge to you is that wherever you find yourself, bow your knee to His "no," seek to know more of His "no" in His Word, seek to obey that "no" no matter how weak or faltering your obedience may be, and He will begin to fill your heart with the joy of understanding.

Fred Sloan

HAVE YOU SEEN THE FERGUSON BLOGSITE?

It's a great way to see what Stuart, Beth and Gwennyth have been doing during their missionary stay in Romania! Photos, comments, and prayer requests can be found there...take a few moments and check it out! Just point your internet web browser to <http://fergusonsinro.blogspot.com>



Newsletter Submissions

Articles in the News of the Saints express the opinions of the author(s).
The views of the Session and Diaconate are available in the minutes of those bodies.
For more information, please speak to any elder or deacon of the church.

Submissions of articles, announcements, photos, etc. for this newsletter
should go to:

Fred Hedgecoth
(richmondscribe@verizon.net).

You may also mail them to the church (address on front page)
or there is also a mailbox in the church office where submissions may be left.



Deadline for the April issue of News of the Saints: **Sunday, April 20th**