

The second week of August had rolled around. We had been preparing for this week, and yet it seemingly caught us off guard. Danielle and I had been dating for two years to this point. We knew where each other was headed to college, and we knew when. Yet, it came quicker than we thought it would. That evening, everything that I would need for the next year and a few things that I wouldn't were packed up into a borrowed minivan. The following day before the sun would rise, we would be on our way to Chicago. Two days later, after a handful of baseball practices and freshman orientation meetings, my parents would head back to Pittsburgh. A week and a half later, Danielle and her dad would load up all that she would need for the next year, and head off to Philadelphia. Sixteen hours of distance would separate us for the majority of the next two years.

We would develop friendships, life patterns, and have unique experiences that would only be related to the other person by conversation. Then one day, she came and visited. It was during a fall break where she had a few more days off than I did. Four days is all we had together. But in those four days, she would meet my friends, see my life, and make a decision that would change our lives forever. That next semester she would transfer out to Trinity, and things went downhill. See, over that four-day visit, I took her to all the typical Chicago landmarks. And, we went to look at engagement rings. Much to my surprise, this added a great deal of expectation to the relationship. What I thought was a casual exploration of an idea, she understood to be much more serious. Up to this point, we had been dating for four years, with two of those being long distance. Now the idea of being close to one another, and the expectation of what was to come, shifted everything for us. She moves to Chicago, enrolls in classes with me, and is expecting me to pop the question at any time. But that same expectation, it was too much for me. And so, we went through what would be the hardest year of our relationship. Spoiler alert, I'm really good at putting my foot in my mouth, and she is patient and let me come to my senses! And yet, in it, I can look back and see the power of living with expectation. In the simplest terms, it changes how we live.

Today we are going to see how God's power and promises should prompt my obedience because they propel me to live with expectancy.

The two questions of eternal life.

One of the key questions of any religion, let alone Christianity, is that of eternal life. What happens when I die? Or, more specifically, what happens after I die? This is a question that the church is seemingly well versed in answering. Yet, the question of eternal life is not exclusively about the afterlife. It is, in fact, about our lives here and now, our lives after this life, and the promises of God to be fulfilled in this life and the next. Let's look at it with the following two questions.

What am I saved from?

The simple answer is this, sin. We believe that when anyone places their faith in Jesus as savior, they are saved from their sin and resulting in eternal death. We are adopted into God's family

and called his children. And that means that we will live eternally with God now and in the next life. Paul actually tells us that when we are saved from spiritual death, we are actually made to be new creations. The old self has gone, and we are made totally new.

1. We are saved from: Sin / Death/ From the old self.
 - a. 1 Jn.3:3 → We are purified. → **Children of God**
 - b. Jn. 3:16 → Have eternal life.
 - c. Rom. 6:23 → Sin = Death... For the wages of sin is death, but the **free gift of God is eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord¹
 - d. 2 Cor. 5:17 → **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.**²

What am I saved for?

What we are saved from, is only the first part of the eternal life question. We are also, and equally as important, saved for something.

We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

We believe that God not only has the power to change our afterlife, but he also has the power to change our here and now. And so, he has a plan for our lives. He has a mission for us to engage in. He wants us to see how what we are saved from, makes a difference in our lives today. One of the keywords in our passage this morning is, abide. It literally means to stay with, as if you were staying at someone's house. You are not only in close proximity with that person; you are sharing your life with them. John explains to us that because we are now in God's family since we have been saved from our sin, we are to abide with God. And, as we remain with God, he will change our lives. How does that happen?

1. How do we Abide?

- a. Does God make my day? → Am I in His Word and in prayer consistently?
 - i. How can I be with someone if I am not present to them? One of the most central ways that we are present to God's voice, is through his Word.
 1. We believe that God's word is living and active... and breathed out by Him.
 - ii. Am I gathering in worship and connecting in community?
- b. Fleeing Temptation → Practice Righteousness.
 - i. 3:6 – No one who is in him keeps on sinning.
 - ii. 1 Cor. 10:13 - **No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but**

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ro 6:23). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (2 Co 5:17). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.³

iii. We are set free from the penalty of our sin and rebellion. The affect of that freedom, is that we don't run back towards our sin!

1. Yes, we will struggle. Yes, we will fall short. Yes, we will have victory! God's grace is more than enough, and so are we increasing our resistance to sin?

c. The Moral Test: John makes this a central idea in his letters. → You demonstrate the effect Jesus has on your life through your actions / life.

i. 1 Jn. 3:10 – **Love your brother.**

1. 1st cen. = Hospitality → John is literally saying to his readers, if you are not opening your home to your brothers, you are sinning.
2. What does this look like today?
 - a. Work / School / Family / Community?

3. Hospitality requires Humility.

- a. If I am going to practice hospitality it will require me to see others as more important than myself. It will require humility.
- b. I.e. Humility is the opposite of pride and arrogance.

ii. **Practice righteousness.** → Flee temptation & do what's right.

1. 3:7 – **Whoever practices righteousness, is righteous!**

- a. This is not complicated. John wants us to understand that we are not only to avoid what is wrong, but **we are to actively pursue what is right.**

2. Doing what's right = being light.

- a. 1 Pet. 2:12 - **Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.**⁴

iii. **Bear one another's burdens.**

ii. Gal. 6:2 - **Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.**

God's power and promise should prompt my obedience.

As we are abiding in Jesus, we are watching him change us from the inside out and change our families, communities, and friends. It is then in the power of his fulfilled promises that we are prompted to further and future obedience. To say it another way, His past promises fulfilled in the presence and resurrection of Jesus prompts me to obedience now, and to live with trust, hope, and **expectancy** of future promises. We do not believe that this world will go on indefinitely as it is. Instead, we believe in the future promises of God that he will send Jesus a second time, and will have a final victory over all brokenness.

We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

³ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (1 Co 10:13). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁴ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (1 Pe 2:12). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Danielle came to Chicago, and the way she lived was shaped by her expectations. She thought I was going to propose to her at any point. When that didn't happen, things got rough. The clear truth in this is that our expectations change how we live. And as Christians, we should live with the expectancy that Jesus is coming back, and he will have a final victory over all brokenness when he does. So then, we should live and energetic and wholehearted following of Jesus.

Have Confidence / Live Expectantly – v.28

1. **Our lives:** Here the thought is rather of a **personal relationship** with Christ which **has wholesome moral consequences**, so that *may be confident and unashamed before him*.
 - a. **Abiding (personal relationship)** results in our confidence because we have nothing to hide. I.e. We do not respond in shrinking in shame.
 - i. **Again, not because we are perfect, but because faithfulness grafts us into Jesus relationally (abide).** → **“I in you, and you in me.” (Jn. 15)**
2. **His return:** The doctrine of the Lord's return was part of the primitive apostolic faith.
 - a. John makes reference to Jesus' appearing / coming 3 times in this passage.
 - i. Repetition signifies importance in the Bible.
 - ii. “Hold fast to what you heard in the beginning...”
 1. **God's promise past promise that is fulfilled in Jesus' arrival and resurrection should prompt my confidence in his future promises of a second coming.**
 2. Jesus was convinced of his second coming: Matt. 24:36-44
 3. **The early church was convinced of his second coming.**
3. **Future promises for here and now:** God promises to care for us, provide our daily bread, and work all things for good in our lives.
 - a. As we abide in him, our confidence is increased not simply in the promise of his second coming someday into the future, but also for him to work in our lives here and now.
 - i. **We are filled with expectation for the completion of his redemption plan (second coming), and for his active redemption work here and now (what we are saved for).**

Obedience is God's love language.

If we live a life full of expectant and energetic mission, because we are abiding in Jesus, we will have confidence in our new lives and feel no shame before God. Again, God's power (worked out in our salvation and life change) and his promises (fulfilled by Jesus' first coming) motivates us with hopeful expectation for God's future promises, that will be expressed in our lives through obedience. It is simply this, the people of God will want to be about the purposes of God when their eyes and lives are centered on Jesus.

There is something unique to obedience that we have all experienced. We don't express our care and love for someone by rebelling against them. We express our care and love by being obedient to them. It is the same with God.

God loves our obedience, not because it earns us merit with him. But because it communicates what we believe to be true of him.

1. **Trust** – We believe that he alone is enough for us.

- 2. **Goodness** – We believe that he is good, and that all good things come from him.
- 3. **Love reciprocated.** – We reciprocate love not in defiant behavior but in a mutual cooperation.
- b. Simply put, obedience is God’s love language.
- i. Obedience isn’t defined as perfection.
 - 4. We are made new → 2 Cor. 5:17
 - c. We also see through a mirror dimly. → ¹²**For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.** ⁵ - 1 Cor. 13:12
 - 5. **Obedience is defined as faithfulness.**
 - d. **Abide → Remain / Stay**
 - i. Hold on to what you have heard from the beginning. → 1:1
 - 1. **That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life**⁶
 - e. There is no character in the Bible that is perfect!
 - i. Abraham → Pawned his wife off as his sister. / Got his wife’s servant pregnant.
 - ii. David → Has an affair and murders the husband.
 - iii. Peter → Denies Jesus / Cuts off the ear of a man at Jesus’ arrest.
 - f. **What we see in these characters is not their perfection. It is their faithful following and repentance in the face of their dramatic brokenness.**

The heart of Christianity is not that we have been saved from our sins so that we can hope for an eternal life some distant day off in the future while we toil through the here and now. The heart of Christianity is that we have been saved from our sins and resulting death so that we are able to engage in an energetic and expectant mission with Jesus. Simply put, we are saved for something.

That something we are saved for is fueled and motivated by the power and promises of God. Promises that we have seen him fulfill in his son, Jesus; and in the power of Jesus’ resurrection. This gives us confidence that he will fulfill future promises for our lives now, and for Jesus’ second coming.

As we are motivated by God’s power and promises, we express our belief and trust in obedience. Simply, our obedience tells God that we are confident of who he is and that he is enough for our lives and futures.

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⁵ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (1 Co 13:12). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁶ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (1 Jn 1:1). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.